



**SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY, KOLHAPUR**

**CENTRE FOR DISTANCE  
AND ONLINE EDUCATION**

**B. A. Part-II : English**

Semester-III :

**Indian English Literature :  
Indian English Poetry and Drama**

Semester-IV

**Indian English Literature :  
Essay and Novel**

(In accordance with National Education Policy 2020)  
(Academic Year 2025-26 onwards)

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Shivaji University,  
Kolhapur. (Maharashtra)  
First Edition 2025

Prescribed for **B. A. Part-II**

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Copies : 200

*Published by:*  
**Dr. V. N. Shinde**  
Registrar,  
Shivaji University,  
Kolhapur-416 004

*Printed by :*  
**Shri. B. P. Patil**  
Superintendent,  
Shivaji University Press,  
Kolhapur-416 004

ISBN - 978-93-49570-69-6

- Further information about the Centre for Distance and Online Education & Shivaji University may be obtained from the University Office at Vidyanagar, Kolhapur-416 004, India.

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- **Dr. Manohar Sanmukhdas Vaswani**  
Department of English,  
Shivaji University, Kolhapur

## Preface

Dear students,

This book contains self learning material on the Semester-III, DSC (Major) 04 & DSC (Major) 06 - entitled Indian English Literature Poetry & Drama (DSC 04) and Indian English Literature Essay & Novel. (DSC 06). You are advised to read the syllabi prescribed for these papers carefully. The syllabi include general topics as well as text of poetry, Drama, Novel & essays. Each module contains a detailed summary of the prescribed text so as you will understand & comprehend it well.

Each module is interspered with 'Check Your Progress' exercises. These exercises are in accordance with the pattern of question papers. The model answers, too, are given at the end. You are advised to check answers only after you write your own answers.

Each module provides a list of reference books for futher reading. You are advised to read them in order to cultivate critical insight. Exercies in the format of broad answers & short notes are given. With the help of SIM. you can answer them. (v) wrote answersin your own English and try to refer the SIM Books.

We wish you all the best for your studies & Examination.

### ● Editors ●

**Prof. (Dr) Kalpana Gangatirkar**  
Mahavir Mahavidyalaya, 7/E,  
Bhausingji Road, Kolhapur

**Prof. (Dr) Rajendra Thorat**  
Venutai Chavan College, Karad,  
Tal. Karad, Dist. Satara

Centre for Distance and Online Education  
Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

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**Essay and Novel**

**Writing Team**

| Author's Name                                                                                                | Unit Number |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------|
|                                                                                                              | Sem. III    | Sem. IV |
| <b>Dr Tejaswini Dange Patil</b><br>Arts, Commerce and Science College Kasegaon<br>Tal. Walwa, Dist Sangli    | 1           | -       |
| <b>Prin. (Dr) Uttam Patil</b><br>Night College of Arts and Commerce Azad<br>Chowk Kolhapur                   | 2           | -       |
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| <b>Dr Balkrishna Waghmare</b><br>Krantiagrani G.D.Bapu Lad<br>Arts College, KUNDAL-416 309 Tal-, Dist-Sangli | -           | 3       |
| <b>Dr Satosh Rajguru</b><br>Balwant College, Vita<br>Tal- Khanapur Dist-Sangli                               | -           | 4       |

● **Editors** ●

**Prof. (Dr) Kalpana Gangatirkar**  
Mahavir Mahavidyalaya, 7/E,  
Bhausingji Road, Kolhapur

**Prof. (Dr) Rajendra Thorat**  
Venutai Chavan College, Karad,  
Tal. Karad, Dist. Satara

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Each Unit begins with the section objectives -

Objectives are directive and indicative of :

1. what has been presented in the unit and
2. what is expected from you
3. what you are expected to know pertaining to the specific unit, once you have completed working on the unit.

The self-check exercises with possible answers will help you understand the unit in the right perspective. Go through the possible answers only after you write your answers. These exercises are not to be submitted to us for evaluation. They have been provided to you as study tools to keep you on the right track as you study the unit.

Dear Students,

The SLM is simply a supporting material for the study of this paper. It is also advised to see the new syllabus 2025-26 and study the reference books & other related material for the detailed study of the paper.

## Module - 1

# Introduction to Indian English Poetry & Drama

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After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- understand the concept of Indianness in Indian Literature in English
  - understand the trends in Pre- Independence and Post-Independence Indian Poetry in English
  - understand major concerns in Indian Poetry of Women Poets
  - understand the contribution of Indian Poets in English
  - understand themes in Pre- Independence and Post-Independence Indian Drama in English
  - understand the contribution of Indian Dramatists in English
- .....

### 1.0 Introduction:

The concept of Indian writing in English is applied to the literature created by Indian writers in English language especially during and after the British Raj. Before we understand the literature, we should understand the concept of Indianness.

#### 1. Concept of Indianness:

The concept of ‘nation’ discussed by Selton-Watson in *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (1977: 5) has gained widespread acceptance. It states:

“All I can find to say is that a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one”

Taking this as an outline, it can be said that nation includes political as well as cultural aspects. Sometimes, a ‘nation’ is not governed by the same political ruler but still, it is considered as a *nation* because of its cultural unity. The best example is India. From ancient days, though different parts of India were ruled by different rulers, it was considered as one *nation*, ‘*Bharatvarsha*’. So, this unity is reinforced by Rabindranath Tagore in the National Anthem as, “Punjab, Sindhu, Gujarat, Maratha, Dravid, Utkal, Banga”. Thus, Indianness has multi-faceted interpretations. It includes the concepts like Philosophy, Mythology, Culture, History, and also Folklores that are intrinsically connected to Indian Identity.

Indian philosophy essentially begins with its deep religious roots in Hinduism and the tenets of *Bhagvad Gita*, *Vedas* and *Upanisadas*. These tenets include the

concepts of rebirth, Sthitprajna, Omnipotence of God, theory of Karma, Shadripu, etc.

The holy books of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are the core religious books that have provided India innumerable mythological figures. There are deities, demons, Yakshas, Apsaras like Menaka, Rambha; the legends like that of Lord Siva, Vishnu, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Lord Krisna, Balbhadrha-Subhadra, Dashavtaras, Lord Murugan, Dushyanta-Shakauntala, Putana, Hiranyakashyapu and so many others. The Bhakti sect is a major aspect of Hindu philosophy. Along with Hinduism, there are other sects such as Virsaivas, Vaisnavas, Buddhism and Jainism as the integral parts of it. In the phase of Muslim invasions, the Sufi cult also joined the nerves of India. Thus, Indian myths are remarkable and outstanding in World Literature.

Indian culture represents ‘unity in diversity’. Its all-inclusive nature is a specific feature. The united family structure, patriarchy, amalgamation of various religions, multi-lingual status, and heterogeneous traditions are all brought together under the roof of Indianness. Indian culture shows the impact of history on it. Being a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, a variety of festivals is celebrated in India. The saints of various sects have also influenced the Indian society in different ways. Though they are different in their geographical regions and languages, some are known and followed all over India. There are different rites and rituals after birth and death of a person in different religions.

History constitutes a remarkable impact on Indian culture. The Indian subcontinent shows its roots in past since Indus Valley Civilization followed by Vedic civilization and further gets extended to *Mahajanapadas*. There were various politicians who ruled and left their impressions on the coming centuries. They include- Magadha, Mahavira and Goutam Buddha with their Shramanic philosophies; Maurya Empire spreading Sangam literature along with the great emperor King Asoka and his Peace edicts; Gupta Empires bringing the Golden Age of India. After the centuries of the rules of other dynasties such as Pala, Gurjara, Pallava, Chalukya, Chola, the early medieval period was influenced by Indian mathematics. After this period was the period of Muslim invasions which was followed by British Rule. All these political rulers left their profound impression on their contemporary society and life-style. The struggle for Independence is also a remarkable phase in Indian history.

All these aspects of Indianness have deeply influenced the poets and writers up to present time. Their works exhibit them inevitably.

### **1.1. The Phases of the Period:**

There are different phases of the period. Many critics have distinguished them with the help of the major influences and the period distinction such as

Colonization and Decolonization; Colonization and Post-Colonization; Pre-Independence and Post-Independence; Neo-Classical, Modern and Post-Modern.

These periods or distinct groups are clearly found out in the Indian Literature in English. These movements, influences and periods are spread over the period more than 175 years- the period of Colonialism (1825-1900), Nationalism (1900-1950) and Post-Colonialism (1950 onwards). The Pre-Independence period of Indian literature is measured from the 1820s to 1947/50 and the period of Post-Independence English Poetry from 1950 onwards which is sub-categorized as Modern (1950-80) and Post-Modern (the late 1980s onwards) eras of Indian English Writing.

## **1.2. Indian English Poetry:**

### **1.2.1. Pre-Independence Indian English Poetry**

Literatures in Indian Native Languages appear to possess a substantial body of significant expression of Indian Philosophy, Religion and Culture, Various sects reflected in Vedas, Upnishadas, Puranas, Bhakti literature, Sufi literature (influenced by Muslim invasion), Buddhist literature, and folk literature. Deeply rooted in Indian Socio-cultural grounds, Indian Poetry in native languages also possesses remarkable and profound base which can be clearly observed in the poetry in all Indian languages inclusive of Sanskrit, the language of ancient classical Indian Literature.

After the Mughal rule, the British succeeded in securing foundation which further spread as the British rule. India was handed over to British Colonizers. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, they had established their reign over a vast sub-continent. As time passed, they began paying attention to the arts of peace, i.e. education. As rightly pointed out by K. R. S. Iyengar (1945:3) in his *Indian Contribution to English Literature*:

“The three significant factors that emerged at this moment and acted as a solvent of the doubts and perplexities of the situation were:

1. The new intellectualism and renascent ardour among the Indians, as symbolized in Raja Rammohan Roy,
2. The perseverance of the Christian missionaries; and above all,
3. The persuasiveness and metallic clarity of Macaulay’s prose style”

These factors, combined with the activities of the Christian missionaries, went a long way in defining, with unmistakable clarity, the course of education in India for the next one hundred years and more.

In the beginning, Indo-Anglian poetry may be said to have emerged under unfavorable conditions; but as the conditions changed, this type of poetry became more and more homely, indigenous and patriotic. Though it emerged under British Literary influences and through British mode of expression, there was strong resistance

to use English, as the rulers' language still, the need to express real Indianness and its real spirit to the British as well as English speaking people made the Indian poets experiment with English.

In this regard, the opinion of David McCutcheon, a contemporary British critic, has surveyed the history of Indian Poetry in English from its inception with the publication of the first book, *The Bengali Book of English Verse* in December, 1818. He has pointed out how in the period of harmony with English and its charges, English language and literature provided new inspirations to those who were closely introduced to English in schools and colleges. It gave lift to vernacular literature in its conventionalized decay. A young generation of India was attracted towards British or European writers and literature and was influenced enough to use the foreign language for creative purposes. They were influenced by the Romantic, Victorian and Georgian poets at the same time as they confronted them simultaneously.

The categories by R. Parthasarathy are as I) Imitation, II) Indianization and III) Individualization through his collection of poetry *Rough Passage* which is divided into three parts I) Exile, II) Homecoming and III) Trial.

The poetry in the initial period was inevitably incompetent in nature. The young writers like Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Kasiprasad Ghose, Girish Chunder Dutt, Hur Chunder Dutt, Govin Chunder Dutt, Prafulla Rajan Ghose, Manmohan Ghose, Toru and Aru Dutt were greatly influenced by the Romantic and Victorian Movements in English Literature. Some of these poets had visited England for various purposes including education.

In this regard, the first Indian poet of note, Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-31) was the son of an Indo-Portuguese father and an English mother. The first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the period of incubation for Indo-Anglican poetry and Derozio was its moving spirit. As a poet, his achievements are creditable. His sonnets and poems are sustained by deep feelings and executed with wonderful craftsmanship. He is quite individualistic in his love of India, in his passion for social reform, and in his tender and courageous humanity.

After Derozio, Kasiprasad Ghose continued the spell of Indian English Poetry by publishing *The Shair, or Minstrel* in 1830. He wrote several poems on Indian Festivals. His poetry shows the influence of Romantic Revival on him.

The publication of some good poetical pieces by writers like Gooroo Churn Dutt, Raj Narain Dutt, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, and Shoshee Chunder Dutt achieved prominence during the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But amongst them, the works of Madhusudan are noteworthy. He was the first to write the blank verse a Bengali epic called *Meghnad Badh Kavya*, an English rendering of which came out in 1879. He is chiefly remembered for his work, *The Captive Ladie* which is Byronic and Wordsworthian.

In the meantime, the Dutt family had distinguished itself for its literary activities in Bengal. *The Dutt Family Album* was published in London in 1870. It included 197 poems composed by Govin Chunder Dutt, Omesh Chunder Dutt, \*Greece Chunder Dutt and Hur Chunder Dutt.

The quality of the verse, the range and variety of themes, the command of several metrical forms, and the restraint and dignity of the style are sure to capture the reader's attention. The Romantic impact is further converted into Victorian weariness of Tennyson.

Being born and bred in such a highly cultured family, it was but natural for Aru and Toru to be skillful writers. In a short period of creativity, Aru Dutt wrote merely eight poems in all which are included in Toru's *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Field*, Toru's other publications are *Bianca, or The Young Spanish Maiden* (1878), *La Journal de Mademoiselle d Arvers* (1879) and *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindusthan* (1882).

Acquisition of language, especially a foreign language, in the colonized India was a difficult process. Obviously, the language use is incompetent for the supreme cause of any language, creation. The poems of the contemporary period may not equal the poems of native poets of the language but, it was the beginning. The poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt, in later stage, preferred to be the first modern Bengali poet.

This phase is defined as the phase of imitation because the new language was being perceived by the native poets of India. It was a natural thing to follow the scholars, classics of the nation of origin. It can further be conceptualized as 'an exile' into another language- the solitary enterprise undertaken willingly by any poet.

\*Greece Chunder Dutt is the original name.

In the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Romantic and Victorian influences were clearly seen in the writings of Swami Vivekananda, Harindranath, Meherji, A. F. Khabardar, N. V. Thadani, Nizamat Jung, and Ananda Acharya. But, at the same time, there was the new trend of Georgianism observed in the verses of Robi Dutt, Joseph Furtado, P. Sheshadri, J. Vakil, G. K. Chettur, S. K. Chettur and Kabraji. In this period, the outcome is not much.

The second phase is 'competent expression in contemporary modes being less experimental'. There was upsurge of nationalism and the discovery of the glorious past of India. Along with the struggle for Independence, there was the spiritual movement in India. It was the need of the time to create awareness, pride and nationalism in Indians reconstructing the glory of the past. The movement inspired the leaders like Vivekananda to establish Ramkrishna Mission, Sri Aurobindo to be founder of Pondicherry Ashram, and other organizations like Arya Samaj, Shiv Ananda Ashram, Maha Bodhi Society, etc. They published their journals in English

which included poems also. This period can be underlined because of the works of Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Sarojini Naidu.

Rabindranath Tagore, primarily a Bengali writer afterwards occupied a significant position in Indo-Anglican poetry. He translated his own originally Bengali poems and plays into English. Apart from it, he wrote *The Child* along with prose works- '*Sadhana*', '*Nationalism*', '*The Religion of Man*', '*The Personality*', etc. originally in English which were meant for international public. His '*Gitanjali*' (1913), a prose poem, compelled world-wide attention because of Nobel Prize for Literature. He was a versatile writer having various facets- the poet, the story-teller, the novelist, the philosopher, the educationist, and the prophet of humanism. Many critics have accepted Rabindranath Tagore to be the great poet of origin as an exception.

Manmohan and Sri Aurobindo Ghosh received their education in England. In collaboration with Arthur Cripps, Laurence Binyon and Stephen Philips, Manmohan Ghosh published a volume of verses entitled *Primavera* in 1890. His young brother, Sri Aurobindo, a patriot then teacher, was a strong freedom fighter in the struggle of Independence. He afterwards turned to Yoga. He had mastered many languages- Greek, Latin, French, English, German, Italian, Sanskrit and Bengali. He later became a Mahayogi. He is known as a poet and a critic of life and letters. He had a multi-faceted personality with superb command over language, so, he is known as unparalleled as a translator and narrative poet, as a metrical and verbal craftsman, as a lyricist and dramatist, as an experimenter and explorer in the field of literature, and as a 'futurist' poet with a meaningful utterance. His works have prophetic appeal, finest mysticism and beautiful articulated narration. His '*Savitri*' has created a new kind of epic poetry. Sublimity is the hall-mark of Sri Aurobindo's work.

Other poets active during this period were: Swami Vivekananda, Malabari, J. M. Tagore, A. M. Kunte, Brajendranath Seal, D. L. Roy, N. W. Pai, Nizam Jung, Peroze P. Meherjee, Ardesir M. Modi and Ezekiel Cohen. The Literary activities of these poets contributed much towards the diversification of Indo-Anglican poetry.

Sarojini Naidu, too, started as a poet, but later got involved in politics, playing a central role in Gandhian Era. Her mastery over verse forms made her write the flawless lyrics such as '*To a Buddha seated on a Lotus*', and '*The Flute-Player of Brindavan*'. As a true lyricist, she spoke of her 'private voice' and didn't mention the burning problems of her day. Sarojini Naidu's poetry is remarkable for her hunger for God in this land of religion and spirit.

Her younger brother, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya has also written some brilliant pieces of poetry. Many of his poems are marked both by a devotional note similar in the Vaishnava and Vedantic awareness God's omnipresence. He also believed in Marxist ideology.

It was the period of realization of the national identity which was a prerequisite for Independence. It is the period of 'Indianization' which made even the readers to be aware of their being heir of the great tradition of spirituality and religion. In the words of Parthasarathy, it is 'Homecoming', being relieved from the foreign influences. The poets got their inner voice free from the influences/ boundaries of foreign structures.

In the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more poets emerged with different qualities such as- the mystical tradition in Nolini K. Gupta, Dilip Kumar Roy, Nishi Kanto, J Krishnamurthy, Nirodhbaran and Themis Carry, the humanistic trend in V. N. Bhushan, S. R. Dongerkery, T. P. Kailasam, M. Krishnamurthi, and Armando Menzes, the modernistic techniques in Manjeri Isvaran, and P. R. Kaikini, the surrealistic lyrics of Saklatvala, Appal Swamy and Humayun Kabir.

The third phase, in David McCutcheon's opinion, is 'the poetry which is odd without necessarily being incompetent'. He places the post-Independence poetry or 'new poetry' in this category.

### **1.2.2. Post-Independence Indian English Poetry:**

#### **Writers' Workshop:**

'Writers' Workshop' was an organization formed by P. Lal in 1958 in Calcutta. It played an important role in making the modern Indian English Poetry popular. It provided a 'native' flavor to Indian Poetry in English. It gave the Indian poets their own identity as poets. In this phase, there is no glorification of India. Realism, surrealism and experimentation can be marked as the features of this poetry. P. Lal started this movement deliberately. P. Lal, Dom Moraes and Nissim Ezekiel are the precursors of this movement. The poets gained their individual identity apart from their Indian identity. It was because of the various experiments with themes and techniques. In the post-Independence period, it is the work of more than a dozen poets who stood apart for their authenticity and originality.

The scrutiny of self and society has been remarkably pointed out by the poets like A. K. Ramanujan, R. Parthasarathy and Arun Kolatkar. They are all preoccupied with the problem of roots. The Hindu ethos has been examined in several directions by them. Ramanujan collects his early familial memories with a total recall of the childhood. He is keenly aware of his racial burdens also. His mind seems to be indulged in the areas of strength and deficiency of his Hindu heritage. R. Parthasarathy, another Tamilian, is equally obsessed with his native heritage. His *Rough Passage* has the theme of identity exposed to two cultures- viz. the Indian and the Western. Arun Kolatkar's *Jejuri* won the Commonwealth Poetry Prize which discloses the surrealistic similarities between rigid Hindu religious tradition and an equally rigid scientific civilization represented by the railway station.

Nissim Ezekiel, in his poetry, is conscious of his alienation as he had spent most of his life in highly westernized circles in cosmopolitan Bombay. He becomes a detached but sensitive observer of the characteristic Hindu response to evil and suffering. Adil Jussawala views the contemporary Indian scene through the compassionate eyes of an exile returning to India. He is also in search of his identity that is 'Missing Person'. Gieve Patel has accepted 'The ambiguous Fate of Gieve Patel, being neither Muslim nor Hindu in India'. K. N. Daruwalla is determined to avoid sentimentality; but deprivation and misery, disease and death move him acutely, often making his satire drip with 'bile and acid'.

Dom Moraes, a Goan Christian, who became a British Citizen, is a poet in whom alienation is total. Consequently, his poetry is turning inward, product of highly personal expressions. It is persistently confessional in tone and obsessed with loneliness and insecurity. He so, escapes to the land of imagination. Shiv K. Kumar successfully points out at the emotions felt intensely, creating patterns out of being, "Twisted, Knotted, and Tortured".

Kamala Das is outstanding among the post-Independence women poets. Her persona is not nymph-like, but a serious quester trying to understand 'her identity' and her wish to grow. Her poetry is known as confessional poetry.

The works of several other modern poets reveal a great variety of mood, tone and technical strategy that forms the scene of Indian English Poetry today. Jayanta Mahapatra is striking for his ironic reflections on both personal and social landscape. There we observe the graceful celebration of beauty in P. Lal, the tempestuous energy of Prithvi Nandy and A. K. Mehrotra's surreal experimentation.

This phase has the impression of 'individual' existence. They are under 'trial' for identity. Their 'inner persona' is tried to find the real one. So, there is encounter with self in Nissim Ezekiel's poetry, 'missing person' in Adil Jussawalla's poetry, self-portrait in A. K. Ramanujan and death of self in Jayanta Mahapatra. Thus, the vitality of the Post-Independence Indian English Poetry is remarkable.

This three-phase analysis viz. Imitation, Indianization and Individualization, can be applied to every poet as he/she has gone through the process of language acquisition through imitation, the awareness of 'national identity' in the second phase and the realization of the 'individual self' in the end.

### **1.2.3. Major Themes in Indian English Poetry**

The major themes in the pre-Independence and post-Independence Indian poetry in English are:

- 1. Glorification of the Nation/ Vibrant Patriotism:** In the very beginning, the Indian poets such as Toru Dutt, Aru Dutt, M. M. Mahaswami Dutt and others imitated the British Romantic and Victorian poetry in their writings. Later, during the period of the Indian struggle for independence, it was necessary to

raise the consciousness about our own nation among the inmates. During the long period of Muslim reign and then British Raj, the Indian masses had lost their self-esteem as independent identity. It was necessary to create the pride for the nation in them. So, the poets like Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and many others wrote about the rural traditions, village life in the poems like *Bangle Seller*, *In Praise of Henna*, *To India*, *Krishnakali*, *Where the Mind is Without Fear*, etc. The literature constructed the identity of a nation. Tagore's Geetanjali received Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. It also provided international highest title of merit to Indian poet. These works enabled the Indians to feel their deep patriotism for the great nation which helped the Independence Movement flourish.

2. **Indian Mythology:** India has rich ancient culture and history. The poets in regional languages have written about the great myths like The Ramayana, *The Mahabharata*, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and many more. They are full of wonderful mythological stories which are still relevant to present time. Since the beginning of the Indian poetry in English, poets are fascinated by them. They have devoted the significant chore to Indian Mythology. Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* in 24000 lines also was in process since 1916 which was finally published in 1950. It also can be considered in the post-Independence Poetry. Rabindranath Tagore and Sarojini Naidu wrote many poems about Krishna, and other mythological figures. Toru Dutta's *Lakshman*, Kasiprasad Ghose's poems on Indian Festivals, *Meghnad Badh Kavya* by Machael Madhusudan Dutt are also examples of the inclination of the poets towards Indian Mythology.

The similar cult can be observed in the post- Independence Poetry. They seem to reinterpret them. *Jejuri* by Arun Kolatkar about the *mythology*. The poet's visit as a traveller & questioning about Lord Khandoba and other deities, *Hindoo Poems* by Ramanujan especially the relevance of mythologies to the modern times, *Relationship* by Jayanta Mahapatra which is woven around the myth of the Sun Temple of Konarka are prominent examples of the portrayal of Indian Mythology. Kamala Das refers to God Krishna in the poems of her early writings and Islam Allah in her later poetry. Nissim Ezekiel's *Later Day Psalm* presents his religious and philosophical speculations. P. Lal's *Droupadi and Jayadratha and Other Poems and other collections* as well delve into the depths of mythologies in the *Mahabharata*, and other theories.

3. **Nostalgia:** Almost all the Indian poets write about their childhood and other memories. Poets like Toru Dutt, Dutt Family poets, Kashi Prasad Ghose, Manmohan Ghose, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, etc. manifested their nostalgia as a longing for a lost Indian Identity, cultural heritage and Indian ethos along with their personal nostalgia in their childhood.

Post- Independence Indian English poetry also exhibits a kaleidoscopic portrayal of their childhood memories. A. K. Mehrotra writes about his nostalgia of his stay in Indian villages and other countries; A. K Ramanujan goes back to childhood and his first forty-year memories in Indian when he shifted to Chicago, America; Nissim Ezekiel also has his rounds of memories in childhood in his poetry. Jayanta Mahapatra remembers his experiences of struggle for Independence, his long walks for the command of his mother, his childhood fears and insecurities. Dilip Chitre's poetry also peeps into the childhood in Badoda, 'Father Returning home', etc. Kamala Das's poetry revisits her grandparents' house, Malabar noon, etc. R. Parthasarathy's poetry displays the phases like 'Exile', 'Homecoming' and 'Trial' which depict his stay abroad, return to India and his experiences as an individual.

4. **Keen Observation of Pastoral India:** Indian poets are very keen in describing the pastoral pictures of India. Under the Influence of the British Romantic and Victorian poets, the early Indian poetry in English delves into the scenic beauty, Indian villages and the serenity in them. Dutt Family poets, Manmohan Ghose, Tagore, Aurobindo Ghose, Sarojini Naidu and many other poets picturized the Indian pastoral life being beautiful and calm. Ezekiel describes the rainy night in the village, Ramanujan focuses the village houses, the traditions in the villages as in *Small Scale Reflections on a Great House*, Gieve Patel's portrayal of vulnerable, disadvantaged is noteworthy. Here, Kamala Das is also noteworthy for her minute pictures of villages in Kerala and the portrayal of tribal men and women in her poems. Mahapatra portrays the poverty, deprivation, social injustice in the villages. He also writes about the *Oriya Landscapes*, *Orissa Poems*, *Dawn at Puri*, etc.
5. **Indian History:** Indian History is also a prominent theme in Modern Indian Poetry in English. It discusses the Gandhian thought, struggle for Independence, historical places and events. Many pre-Independence poets have written about the past glory of India. The poets from different regions wrote about their historical legends, descriptions of the places, events and their significance in the life of the poet, surrounding and the region to develop their identity. Poetry of Sri Aurobindo on Chhatrapati Shivaji and Jayanta Mahapatra's poem on Panhala Fort describe their visits to different historical places and their significance in History. Ramanujan returns to the *Last Prince* and other characters through his poetry. Modern Indian poets reminisce about the sacrifices of the freedom fighters, contribution of different social reformers, leaders and the great struggle for Independence.
6. **Urban India Portrayed:** In the poems of Kolatkar, in *Kala Ghoda Poems*; Keki N. Daruwalla's poetry in mostly in free verse is about Human conditions, Urban dislocation and urban themes; Mehrotra picturizes the city of Allahabad in his

poetry. Dom Moraes, Adil Jussawalla and Ezekiel also portray the life in Mumbai in their poetry.

7. **Satire on Contemporary Society:** After the Writers' Workshop (1958) which was founded by seven poets led by P. Lal, had high cosmopolitanism. The poets published a manifesto in which they announced that they will publish books of the modern poets through the Workshop as they were frustrated by the lack of publishing houses. They will write about the reality in our country not glorifying the aspects like superstitions, outdated customs. The spirit of independence and non-commercial publishing was put forth by the poets. The key aspects may be
- Prioritizing the young and unpublished writers and those who wrote futuristic literature. These works were rejected by then mainstream presses.
  - They focused the quality of the work rather than its commercial success.
  - P. Lal personally selected the works many times in which he encouraged the emerging writers/ poets.
  - The Workshop played a significant role in translating the Indian Classical literature into English. They displayed their commitment to Indian literary traditions.

Satire was very important tool to expose the evil traditions in Indian society. The poets published through the Workshop tore off the vainglorious veil in order to reform the society. In the *Hindoo* poems from *The Striders* and *Relations* by Ramanujan, he poignantly points out that *the Hindoos* who are calm at all events are escapists. They don't want to interfere in anything around them. They blame the *Karma* of the person responsible for the injustice, ill treatment, etc. In *Relationship* by Mahapatra, we come across the persons in India who die because of hunger. He also writes about the young girls who are raped by the society. Jussawalla's *Sea Breeze Bombay*, Chitre's *Travelling in a Cage*, Ezekiel's *Hymns in Darkness*, Kamala Das's confessional poetry, Mamta Kalia's feminist voice in her poetry express their satirical approach towards the ill practices in Indian social structure. They present the realistic approach towards the situations. Further, A. K. Mehrotra is surrealistic in his poetry. Instead of glorifying Indian socio-economic cultural situations, they looked at them from the skeptic point of view.

8. **Quest for Identity:** The poets in post-Independence period, have a quest for their identity. Ramanujan finds his father's face on his own face and feels alienated from himself. The concept of the 'Missing Person' in Gieve Patel's poetry expresses the search for identity, and displacement. R. Parthasarathy writes about his *Homecoming* and then *Exile* for the quest for self. Mahapatra finds himself an outsider as a Christian in a Hindu Temple. He blames his grandfather for his conversion to Christianity but later forgives him. Dilip Chitre finds himself lost in the Mumbai metropolitan city and searches for his roots in

rural childhood. A. K. Mehrotra, in his surrealistic style, dives into the past. His poem, *Approaching Fifty*, talks about three faces, his own, the grey-haired man's and the mocking youth's who paid the first premium.

### **2.2.3. Contribution of Women Poets:**

Indian poetry in English articulates the complexity of Indian experience. It exhibits its regional consciousness and international affiliations. The charismatic figures like Tagore and Aurobindo employed English with vigour and patriotic zeal. They expressed their subjectivity and total aspiration of India through their poetry. The pioneer women poets, Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu emerged out of new awareness but they were confined to the imitation of British Romantic tradition and dealt with the themes such as love, nature, and aesthetic beauty. However, the next generation of women poets like Roshen Alkazi, Tapati Mookerji, Leela Dharmaraj, Ira De, Sujata Mathai, Mamta Kalia, Suniti Namjoshi, Gauri Deshpande, and others has shown sharp sense or reality about themselves and their surroundings. Kamala Das subverted the tradition as feminine pattern of articulation and introduced a powerful personal voice of the female in Indian English poetry. Instead of depicting the traditional pattern of Indian womanhood, the discontent against the oppressed situation of women, the rebellion against the conventional role of women, the quest for the independent individualistic identity became the prominent themes of Indian women poets. With the advent of the confessional mode of articulation, they began to tackle topics such as guilt, sexuality, ambition, memories of past, rebellions, conflicts, shame, childhood love affairs, personal life, desire, moods, values, and hope. Some of them have frankly written about the sexual aspect of love with the full awareness of its physical aspect.

The contemporary women poets also exhibit their commitment to environment and nature. However, they are reluctant to respond to the beauties of nature and nature comes as the symbol of past, childhood, places, environmental concerns, they give justice to social responsibility. The urban poets like Tara Patel, Eunice D'Souza, Menaka Shivadasani, Mukta Sambrani, Kavita Ezekiel, Charmeyne Desouza depict the din and dust, squalor, poverty, misery, exploitation of labour in industries, dehumanization of new rich, slums, environmental pollution, horror of war, love and sex, anxiety of living alone, and human relationship. A certain degree of awareness of the world situation in the terms of violence, sufferings, and fanaticism is evident in the poems of Meena Alexander, Rukmini Bhaya Nair, and Imtiaz Dharker. The poetry of exile has acquired significant position in the realm of Indian English poetry. Though the diaspora poets have settled abroad, they are firmly rooted in Indian soil. Their poetry is foregrounded by the experience of double marginalization, gender and racial discrimination, nostalgia and biculturalism. The contemporary Indian women poets are classified as- those who strongly claim their South Indian

### 1.2.4 Check Your Progress:

1. The concept of Indian writing in English is applied to the literature created by Indian writers in English language especially during and after \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. the British Raj
  - b. the Mughal period
  - c. Vedic Period
  - d. Pre-Vedic period
2. From ancient days, though different parts of India were ruled by different rulers, it was considered as one *nation*, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Hindu Rashtra
  - b. 'Bharatvarsha'
  - c. Hindusthan
  - d. None of these
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is a major aspect of Hindu philosophy.
  - a. The Yoga sect
  - b. The Karma sect
  - c. The Bhakti sect
  - d. The Soofi sect
4. R. Parthasarathy through his collection of poetry \_\_\_\_\_ which is divided into three parts I) Exile, II) Homecoming and III) Trial.
  - a. The Striders
  - b. Relationship
  - c. Selected Poems
  - d. Rough Passage

5. Regarding new cult in poetry, the first Indian poet of note \_\_\_\_\_ was the son of an Indo-Portuguese father and an English mother.
  - a. Nissim Ezekiel
  - b. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio
  - c. Mamata Kalia
  - d. Dilip Chitre
6. The Dutt family had distinguished itself for its literary activities in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Bengal
  - b. Tamilnadu
  - c. Maharashtra
  - d. Kerala
7. Rabindranath Tagore's 'Gitanjali' (1913), a prose poem, compelled world-wide attention because of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. The Griffin Poetry Award
  - b. Nobel Prize for Literature
  - c. Pulitzer Prize for Poetry
  - d. Jnanpith Award
8. \_\_\_\_\_ 'Savitri' has created a new kind of epic poetry.
  - a. Rabindranath Tagore's
  - b. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya's
  - c. Sri Aurobindo's
  - d. Sarojini Naidu's
9. 'Writers' Workshop' was an organization formed by P. Lal in 1958 in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Madras
  - b. Bombay
  - c. Calcutta
  - d. Rameshwar
10. Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* in \_\_\_\_\_ lines also was in process since 1916 which was finally published in 1950.
  - a. 24000
  - b. 18000
  - c. 21000
  - d. 16000
11. \_\_\_\_\_ by Arun Kolatkar is about the questioning about mythology of Lord Khandoba and other deities.
  - a. *Pali*
  - b. *Nalanda*
  - c. *Jejuri*
  - d. *Varanasi*
12. \_\_\_\_\_ by Jayanta Mahapatra which is woven around the myth of the Sun Temple of Konarka.
  - a. *Close the Sky Ten by Ten*
  - b. *Waiting*
  - c. *Shadow Space*
  - d. *Relationship*
13. Writers' Workshop (1958) which was founded by seven poets led by \_\_\_\_\_, had high cosmopolitanism.
  - a. P. Lal
  - b. Henry Derozio
  - c. Nissim Ezekiel
  - d. Sri Aurobindo



### 1.2.5 Answers to Check Your Progress:

#### I)

1. the British Raj
2. 'Bharatvarsha'
3. The Bhakti sect
4. Rough Passage
5. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio
6. Bengal
7. Nobel Prize for Literature
8. Sri Aurobindo's
9. Calcutta
10. 24000
11. *Jejuri*
12. *Relationship*
13. P. Lal
14. Satirical approach

#### II)

1. Rabindranath Tagore
2. Realism, surrealism and experimentation
3. The Dutt Family Album
4. I) Imitation, II) Indianization and III) Individualization
5. Sublimity
6. of the 'Missing Person'
7. P. Lal, Dom Moraes and Nissim Ezekiel
8. Confessional Poetry
9. in 1870.
10. commitment to environment and nature.

### 1.3 Indian English Drama

India has a long and fertile history of Sanskrit Drama, starting from Sanskrit plays of Vedic Age. *Natyashastra* by Bharatmuni is a treatise on performing arts in 36 chapters which discuss his theory which includes literature, music and dance. Shudraka, Bhasa, Bhavbhuti, Bhatta Narayan and Kalidasa are still influential on the

contemporary readers. Dramatists of **Indian Writing in English** have scaled the length and breadth of the experimentation in dramaturgy of India during and after independence. To fathom the depths of Indian Drama in English certain characteristic features are to be kept in mind. Basically, the Indian Writings in English during Modern Age articulate the budding and the already present writers as well as the influence of Existentialism, Globalisation, Surrealism, Dadaism, Magic Realism and the Post Colonial issues. India had been under the colonial influences for a period of three hundred years and as a matter of fact the colonial language and culture had cast its direct shadow on the Indian literary venues.

### 3.1. Pre-Independence Indian English Drama

The Indian English Drama dates from 1831 with Krishna Mohan Banerji wrote *'The Persecuted or Dramatic Scenes illustrative of the present state of Hindoo Society in Calcutta'*. He wrote about the conflict between orthodoxy and the new ideas ushered in by Western Education. This play remained unattended for a longer time. The real journey of Indian English Drama begins with Michael Madhusudan Dutt's translations of three of his own plays- *Ratnavali* (1858), *Sarmista* (1959) *Is This Called Civilization?* which appeared on the literary horizon in 1871. Ramkinoo Dutt's *Manipura Tragedy* (1893) was another play which was published in the contemporary period. During the time, the appetite for the performances was fed by the established dramatically successful plays in English by foreign writers.

Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo, the two great sage – poets of India, are the first Indian dramatists in English worth considering. Sri Aurobindo wrote five complete plays and six incomplete plays during the period between 1891 and 1916. The two earlier fragments were written in his student days in London, viz. *Ilni: A Dream of the Woodlands* (1891), and *Achab and Esar* (date unknown). The next creative period, 1893 to 1906 had *The Viziers of Bassora- A Dramatic Romance*, *Perseus the Deliverer*, *Rodogune* and three fragments- *The Maid in the Mill: Love Shuffles the Cards*, *The House of Brut* and *The Birth of Sin* (Appeared as a poetic dialogue). *Prince of Mathura* was written in 1907 while *Eric: A Dramatic Romance* and *Vasavadutta* were published later between 1957 and 1960. His earlier plays show his inclination towards Elizabethan drama. It is interesting to note that his plays feature the variety of period and locale. It ranges from ancient Greek times to Medieval India. It covers the diverse lands including Iraq, Syria, India, Spain, Britain and Norway. Sri Aurobindo's drama is also of the same class like his poetry and prose because of his bright wit, humour and poetic beauty.

Rabindranath Tagore wrote primarily in Bengali but almost all his Bengali plays are available in English translations. His prominent plays are *Chitra*, *The Post Office* (translated by Devbrata Mukherjee), *Sacrifice*, *Red Oleanders*, *Chandalika*, *Muktadhara*, *Natir Puja* and *The Mother's Prayer* etc. These plays are firmly rooted

in the Indian ethos and ethics in their themes, characters and treatment. Though Rabindranath Tagore translated his own Bengali plays, he made extensive changes in them. Thematically, the plays fall into two groups: thesis plays and psychological plays. In the first group, there are – *Sanyasi*, *The Cycle of the Spring*, *Chitra*, *Malini*, *Sacrifice*, *Natir Puja* and *Red Oleanders*. And in the second group, there are – *The King and the Queen*, *Kacha and Devayani*, *Karna and Kunti* and *The Mother's Prayer*. In his thesis plays, he presents a variety of the themes combining the period from the *Mahabharata*, Buddhism to his contemporary period. He portrays the tensions between the religious constraints and the contemporary life. His psychological plays portray the insights into the feminine mind. Tagore's drama is firmly rooted in the Indian ethos in its themes and characters and eminently expresses his deepest convictions in creative terms incomparable at its best.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya added a new dimension to Indian English drama. He began his career as a dramatist with *Abu Hassan* (1918), a light fantasy in prose and verse. His *Poems and Plays* (1927) include seven verse plays on the lives of Indian Saints namely- Pundlik, Saku Bai, Jayadeva, Chokha Mela, Eknath, Ravidas and Tukaram. The poetic quality of these plays is superior to their dramatic virtues. His collection of social plays include- *The Window*, *The Parrot*, *The Sentry's Lantern*, *The Coffin* and *The Evening Lamps*. His other plays include *The Sleeper Awakened* (date not known), *The Saint: A Farce* (1946), *Kannoppan or the Hunter of Kalahasti*, a lyrical play and *Siddhartha: A Man of Peace* (1956).

Apart from Bengal, there was a rise of drama in different regions of India though it was brief. Marathi- Gujrathi drama was heralded by Annasaheb Kirloskar's *Shakuntal* in Marathi. C. S. Nazir's *The First Parsi Baronet* (1866), D.M. Wadia's *The Indian Heroine* (1877), and P.P. Meherjee's *Dolly Parson* (1918) are some other mentions.

In Madras region, The Madras Dramatic Society was founded in 1875; The Oriental Drama Club in 1882 and the first Indian amateur dramatic society in South India, The Sarasa Vinodhini Sabha was founded by Krishnamachary in 1890. The most productive dramatists of the period were V.V. Srinivasa Aiyangar, author of *Blessed in a Wife* (1911), *The Point of View* (1915), *Wait for the Stroke* (1915), *The Bricks Between* (1918), etc. The other playwrights were- P.V. R. Raju who wrote *Urjoon Sing or the Princess Regained* (1875) and *Lord Likely* (1876); Krishnamachary with *Dasaratha or the Fatal Promise* (1901); J. Virbhadrarao- *Mani and Ratna* (1911); A. Srinivasacharya with *Harischandra or the Martyr to Truth* (1912); Krishna Ayer, S. Ranga Iyer, A.C. Krishnaswamy, J. R. S. Sarma, T. B. Krishnaswamy and K. S. Ramaswami Sastri with *Harischandra* (1918), and *Droupadi* (1939).

D. M. Borgaonkar's *Image-Breakers* (1938) is a problem play that aims to break the conventions of caste system, horoscope, dowry, etc. S. Fyzee's Rahamin's *Daughter of Ind* (1940) portrays the conflict between love and social barriers, featuring

a low-caste girl loving an Englishman. Balwant Gargi's *The Vulture*, *Mung-Wa*, *The Fugitive* and *The Matriarch* "dealt with themes which are engaging the attention of people everywhere."

Another dramatic voice on the Indian literary scene that demands attention is that of T.P. Kailasam. He wrote both in English and Kannada. Though Kailasam is regarded as the father of modern Kannada drama, his genius finds its full expression in his English plays such as *The Burden* (1933), *Fulfilment* (1933), *The Purpose* (1944), *Karna* (1964) and *Keechaka* (1949). Bharati Sarabhai is the modern woman playwright during the colonial era of Indian English drama. She has written two plays *The Well of the People* (1943) and *Two Women* with some considerable measure of success. J.M. Lobo Prabhu is the last great name in pre-Independence Indian English drama. He has written over a dozen plays but only *Mother of New India: A Play of India Village* in three Acts (1944) and *Death Abdicates* (1945) appear before Independence.

### 1.3.2. Post Independence or Post Modern Indian English Drama

Like poetry and fiction, Indian drama couldn't gain much popularity and so output in the post-Independence period. The emergence of Indian playwrights like Asif Currimbhoy, Partap Sharma and Gurucharan Das were successfully staged in Europe and U.S.A.. The reason behind it was the regional drama received by the theatre in Indian regional languages. The regional drama movement monopolized the theatre in general. During the First Five Year Plan after Independence, the performing arts were supported through foundation of National School of Drama, Sangeet Natak Akademi (1954) and the National Drama Festival was started through it. The Tagore-Aurobindo-Kailasam tradition was continued with certain differences at the hands of Manjeri Isvaran, Lakhan Deb, Pritish Nandy and G. V. Dasani. Their works were observed to be influential in Post-Independence Indian English Drama.

Asif Currimbhoy, a business executive, wrote about thirty plays dealing with recent political events like Partition and its aftermath, India's Freedom struggle, assassination of Gandhiji, and East-West encounter. His plays on partition *The Restaurant* (1960), the Sino-Indian conflict, *The Captives* (1963), liberation of Portuguese Goa, *Goa* (1964), assassination of Gandhiji, *An Experiment with Truth* (1969), Chinese Invasion of Tibet, *Om Mane Padme Hum* (1972), and the East-West encounter in *The Tourist Mecca* (1959), *The Hungry Ones* (1965,77) and *Darjeeling Tea?* (1971).

Partap Sharma's *A Touch of Brightness* (1968) focussed on the Redlight district in Bombay. It also attempted to display the superficialities like slums, brothels, official corruption, etc.

Nissim Ezekiel's three plays- *Nalini-A Comedy*, *Marriage Poem: A Tragi-Comedy* and *The Sleepwalkers: An Indo-American Farce* used ironical fantasy.

Gurucharan Das's *Larins Sahib* (1970) is a historical play dealing with Henry Lawrence in Punjab. His *Mira* (1969) did not appear in print while only Act I of *Karna* was published in 1974.

The playwrights like Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar, and Mahasweta Devi concentrated on the contemporary social issues in the later phase. The plays of P. A. Krishnaswami's *The Flute of Krishna* (1950) M. Krishnamurti's *The Cloth of Gold* (1951) remind us of blank verse in T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*. S. D. Rawoot's *Immortal Song. Karm and The Killers* (1959) Satya Dev Jaggi's *The Point of Light* (1967) Pritish Nandy's *Rites for a Plebian Salute* (1969). P.S. Vasudev's *The Sunflower* (1972) etc. are noteworthy for their presentation of different themes.

Girish Karnad in the capacity of writer, director and actor substantially contributed to enrich the tradition of Indian English theatre. His well-known plays are *Yayati* (1961), *Tughlaq* (1962), *Hayavadana* (1970), *Nagmandala* (1972). He borrowed his plots from history, mythology and old legends.

Vijay Tendulkar symbolizes the new awareness and attempts of Indian dramatists of the century to depict the agonies, suffocations and cries of man, focusing on the middle-class society. In the plays *Silence! The Court Is In Session* (1968) and *Ghasiram Kotwal* (1972), the theme of oppression dominates. *Sakharam Binder* (1972) is a study in human violence amounted to powerful dramatic statement. Like Tendulkar Mohan Rakash is a legendary name in Hindi, English drama. His plays *Adhe Adhure* (1969) (translated as *Half way House*) and *Ashadh Ka Ek Din* (1958) (*One Day in Ashadha*) are remarkable.

Vera Sharma wrote a number of one act plays, including *Life is Like That* (1997) and *Reminiscence* (1997) which deal with the plight of women.

Badal Sircar too is a prestigious name in the realm of contemporary theatre. He represents New Theatrical Movement in India. His earlier plays are *Evan Inderjit* (1962) *That Other History* (1964) and *There Is No End* (1971). All these plays are based on political, social, psychological and existential problems.

Post Independence era witnessed the birth of several one act plays. R. Raja Rao's *The Wisest Fool on Earth and Other Plays* (1996) is on the theme of homosexuality. T.S. Gill's *Asoka* (1983), V.D. Trivedi's *Gandhi: A Play* (1983) and Prema Sastri's *Gandhi, Man of the Millions* (1987), Gieve Patel's *Princess, Savaksha* and *Mr. Behram*, Dina Mehta's *The Myth Maker* (1959) and *Brides Are Not for Burning*, Uma Parameswaram (1938- )'s *Sons Must Die and Other Plays* (1998) are some to quote.

The Postmodern era ushered in new changes in the Indian English drama. Mahesh Dattani (1958- ) a playwright of World stature, has added a new feather to the Indian English drama. His plays deal with serious and sensitive issues like communalism, homosexuality, female infanticide, domestic abuse, child sexual abuse,

condition of eunuchs in Indian society. His plays include *Where There's a Will*, *Tara*, *Bravely Fought the Queen*, *Final Solutions*, *Dance like A Man* and *Thirty Days in September*.

### **3.3 Women's Theatre and Indian Context:**

Women's theatre in the Indian context theatre has yet to receive proper attention. In the 20th century, there are a number of plays written by women where they voice their concerns. Despite the obstacles and lack of recognition, women have continued to voice their issues publicly through various forms of writing such as poetry, novel, drama and other forms of literary expression. The plays written by the women playwrights are categorized as women's theatre, giving rise to a different genre that deals with the problems faced by women in society. Also, this particular genre aims a number of tabooed issues pertaining to women's life to make visible.

According to Tutun Mukherjee, 'India presents an even more intriguing picture when it comes to women's theatre and the same concept of marginalization is applicable here as well. There were many plays written about women and women had been part of the dramatic performances, but their effort remains unrecognised. In the entire history of the development of Sanskrit drama, there was hardly any discussion on a play written and directed by a woman. There had been women performers, dance choreographers but they were not visible till the 19th century. However, a remarkable development in women's participation in theatre as playwright was seen in the last three decades of the 20th century. Before that, from the late 19th century women playwrights in India started contributing to this genre, although not in a significant way. In 1970s, women's theatre in India came into prominence when the women playwrights started representing what they actually experience in reality being a part of the marginalised gender category; the issues involving woman and the "woman question" came to be represented in the arena of Indian theatre in a big way.'

Poile Sengupta- *Mangalam* (1993), *Inner Laws* (1994), *A Pretty Business* (1995), *Keats Was a Tuber* (1996), *Collages* (1998), and *Thus Speaks Shoorpanakha*, *So Said Shakuni* (2001), and *Yavamajakka* (for children in 2000)

Uma Parmeswaran, Indo-Canadian writer is a scholar and critic. Her writing includes fiction, poetry and plays. *Sons Must Die* (1962), *Meera* (1971), *Sita's Promise* (1981), *Rootless but Green* are the *Boulevard Trees* (1987), *Dear Deedi*, *My Sister* (1989). She also wrote fiction, poetry, critical writing and biographies of C.V. Raman and his wife Locosundarai Raman.

#### **1.3.4. - Characteristic features of Indian English Drama**

Indian English Drama is a distinctive literary tradition that synthesizes indigenous performance heritage with the colonial influences and contemporary innovations. Its evolution reflects india's socio-cultural complexities characterised by these key features.

## **1. Historical Context & Evolution -**

Rooted in Sanskrit drama (e.g. Bharata's *Natyashastra*, Kalidas, Bhasa & Shudraka's dramas, emphasizing rasa & structured story telling, Indian English drama represented its own unique style this, the colonial influence has a great impact on Indian drama. In Post independent era, drama gained global influence.

## **2. Thematic Depth -**

History Mythology, Folk tales, legends are the sources of drama. Karnad's *Yayathi*, Dharamveer Bharati's *Andha Yuga* adopted epics, *Tughlaq* is a history play. Through epics, myths & legends themes like identity crisis morality are discussed.

## **3. Social Critique -**

Vijay Tendulkar (*Silence ! the Court is in Session!*) exposed power corruption & gender inequality Badal Sircar highlighted class struggle.

## **4. Existential Urban Issues -**

Modern writer like Mahesh Dattani (*Final Solutions*) tackled LGBTQ+rights, communal violence & urban alienation. Mohan Rakesh discusses man-woman relationship & family issues.

## **5. Experimental Techniques -**

Experiments regarding language and form have been successfully handled by dramatist like Dharamvir Bhavani in *Andha Yug*. The use of chorus & verse is remarkable. Writers like Dattani blended English with Indian languages.

## **6. Feminist & Marginal voices -**

Mahashweta Devi (*Mother of 1084*) & Manjula Padmanabhan centered female agency & subaltern struggles. Tendulkar, Mohan Rakesh wrote women centred plays & raise the questions.

Indian English drama thrives as a dynamic, syncretic form - reimagining tradition to interrogate modernity.

## **1.3.4 Characteristic Features of Indian English Drama**

### **Conclusion**

Indian English Drama began with pre-Independence period with the themes of Indian myths, legends, history and also used a satirical tone in reforming the Indian society. The major contributors in pre-Independence period were Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, T. P. Kailasam and some others.

In the post-Independence era, the contribution is not more in number but the playwrights have contributed to the revisiting myths, history and the contemporary themes like corruption, violence and feminism.

### 1.3.5 Check Your Progress:

#### I) Choose the appropriate alternative and complete the following sentences:

1. The real journey of Indian English Drama begins with \_\_\_\_\_ translations of three of his own plays.  
a. Michael Madhusudan Dutt.                      b. Rabindranath Tagore  
c. Sri Aurobindo                                      d. Sarojini Naidu
2. Rabindranath Tagore and \_\_\_\_\_, the two great sage-poets of India, are the first Indian dramatists in English worth considering.  
a. Harindrnath Chattopadhyaya                      b. Sri Aurobindo.  
c. Machael Madhusudan Dutt                      d. Sarojini Naidu
3. Srri Aurobindo's earlier plays show his inclination towards \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. Restoration drama                                      b. Romantic drama  
c. Modern drama                                      d. Elizabethan drama.
4. Rabindranath Tagore wrote primarily in \_\_\_\_\_ but almost all his Bengali plays are available in English translations.  
a. Marathi                                      b. Hindi  
c. Bengali                                      d. Kannad
5. Thematically, the plays by Rabindranath Tagore fall into two groups: \_\_\_\_\_ and psychological plays.  
a. thesis plays                                      b. social plays  
c. feministic plays                                      d. political plays
6. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya added a new dimension of \_\_\_\_\_ to Indian English drama.  
a. Opera                                      b. Verse drama.  
c. Melodrama                                      d. Farce
7. Chattopadhyaya's \_\_\_\_\_ include seven verse plays on the lives of Indian Saints namely- Pundlik, Saku Bai, Jayadeva, Chokha Mela, Eknath, Ravidas and Tukaram.  
a. *Poems and Plays.*                                      b. Abu Hasan  
c. Siddhartha, Man of Peace                                      d. None of these
8. Marathi- Gujrathi drama was heralded by Annasaheb Kirloskar's \_\_\_\_\_ in Marathi.  
a. *Swapnvasavdutta*                                      b. *Shakuntal*  
c. *Vikramorvashiyam*                                      d. *Karnabhara*



17. \_\_\_\_\_ represents New Theatrical Movement in India.

- |                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| a. Girish Karnad   | b. Rabindranath Tagore |
| c. D.M. Borgaonkar | d. Badal Sircar        |

**II) Answer the following questions in one word/ phrase/ sentence.**

1. With whose name does the real journey of Indian English Drama begins ?
2. Give any two characteristic features of Indian drama?
3. What is the interesting thing about the plays of Sri Aurobindo featuring the variety of period and locale ?
4. What are the names of the prominent plays by Sri Aurobindo?
5. What does Tagore portray in his plays ?
6. What do Tagore's psychological plays portray ?
7. What does D. M. Borgaonkar's play *Image-Breakers*, a problem play, aims at ?
8. Who has written the play *Daughter of Ind* ?
9. Who in the capacity of writer, director and actor substantially contributed to enrich the tradition of Indian English theatre?
10. Which are well-known plays by Girish Karnad ?

**III) Answer the following questions in 300- 350 words each.**

1. Discuss the contribution of Indian Dramatist in English in pre-Independence era.
2. Discuss the contribution of Indian Dramatist in English in post-Independence era.
3. Contribution of Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore to Indian English Drama.
4. Themes in the modern and post-modern plays.
5. Influences on Indian English Drama.

**IV) Write short notes on the following:**

- i. Pre-Independence Drama
- ii. Contribution of Madras Region to Indian English Drama
- iii. Women's theatre in Indian context
- iv. The use of Myths and History in Indian English Drama

### 1.3.6 Answers to Check Your Progress.

I) 1. Michael Madhusudan Dutt.

2. Sri Aurobindo.

3. Elizabethan drama.

4. Bengali

5. thesis plays

6. Verse drama.

7. *Poems and Plays*.

8. *Shakuntal*

9. 1875.

10. Krishnamachary

11. Modern Kannada drama

12. colonial era

13. The U.S.A.

14. the First Five Year Plan

15. Social issues

16. the middle-class society.

17. Badal Sircar

### II) Answer the following questions in one word/ phrase/ sentence.

1. with Michael Madhusudan Dutt's translations of three of his own plays.

2. Thematic Depth, Social Critiques experimental techniques etc.

3. It ranges from ancient Greek times to Medieval India.

4. *Chitra*, *The Post Office* (translated by Devbrata Mukherjee), *Sacrifice*, *Red Oleanders*, *Chandalika*, *Muktadhara*, *Natir Puja* and *The Mother's Prayer* etc.

5. the tensions between the religious constraints and the contemporary life.

6. the insights into the feminine mind.

7. to break the conventions of caste system, horoscope, dowry, etc.

8. S. Fyzee's Rahamin

9. Girish Karnad

10. *Yayati* (1961), *Tughlaq* (1962), *Hayavadana* (1970), *Nagmandala* (1972). He borrowed his plots from history, mythology and old legends.

### **Books for Further Reading**

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## Module - 2

# Indian English Literature: Indian English Poetry

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## **2.0 Introduction**

Dear students, in the earlier module you have studied a short history of Pre- and Post-Independence Indian English drama and poetry, characteristic features of drama and major themes of Indian English poetry. In the present module you are going to study the Indian English poems presenting Indian themes and sensibility. You will study one poem by six eminent Indian English poets like Rabindranath Tagore, Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Nissim Ezekiel, Dilip Chitre and Mamta Kaliya. The first three

poets (Rabindranath Tagore, Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu) belong to pre-Independence era and the remaining three (Nissim Ezekiel, Dilip Chitre and Mamta Kalia) represent the post-Independence Indian English poetry. We find a clear change in their poems at the thematic level. Let us discuss these poems one by one and understand the major themes of Indian English poetry.

### 2.0.0 Objectives

After studying this module students will be able to:

1. know about the life and literary works of well-known poets in Indian English literature.
2. understand the theme of prescribed poems.
3. appreciate and analyse the prescribed poems.
4. study various aspects used in the prescribed poems.
5. comprehend the Indianness in the prescribed poems.

## 2.1 Section A: Where the Mind is without Fear- Rabindranath Tagore

### 2.1.1 Introduction

‘Where the Mind is Without Fear’ is an influential poem written by **Rabindranath Tagore** (7<sup>th</sup> May, 1861 – 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1941), a prolific Bengali writer. He was the great Indian nationalist and a visionary personality. He is regarded as the outstanding creative artist of early 20<sup>th</sup> century India. He was a poet, short-story writer, song composer, playwright, essayist, and painter. He is popular for his poetry and short-stories. He became the first non-European to be honoured with the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 for the collection of poems, ‘Gitanjali’.

The present poem is one of Tagore’s most popular poems from ‘Gitanjali’. It was originally written in Bengali and later translated into English by the poet himself. It was written during Indian freedom struggle. The poem was published in 1910. It shows Tagore’s hopes for an ideal country. The poet prays to God to make India free and liberal country. He implores God to make the people of free India fearless and rational. He prays to the God that after the independence in his country knowledge should have free to all.

### 2.1.2 Text

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;  
Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments  
by narrow domestic walls;  
Where words come out from the depth of truth;  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way

into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;  
Where the mind is led forward by thee  
into ever-widening thought and action  
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

### **2.1.3 Glossary and notes**

to hold the head high: to have self-respect; to be very confident and proud  
fragments (N): small parts separated from something (here country)  
narrow (Aj): limited; restricted; confined  
domestic (Aj): native; of home  
narrow domestic walls: division on the basis of caste, creed and religion in societies  
tireless (Aj): non-stop, continuous  
striving (N): efforts and struggle  
Perfection (N) : faultless state  
stretches its arm : aims at achieving a goal  
stream (N): current; flow  
reason (N): logical thinking  
dreary (Aj): dull; boring  
ever-widening (Aj): endlessly broadening  
Depth of truth : honesty  
Dead habit : Old traditional rituals  
Thee (Archaic pronoun): God  
Heaven of freedom: condition of total freedom made of good thoughts, actions and relations

### **2.1.4 Summary**

‘Where the Mind is without Fear’ is a powerful and hopeful prayer for independent India, when it was under British rule. In fact the poem presents a dream of a perfect world. The poet imagines a truly free and enlightened country, beyond just political independence. He imagines a nation where people are fearless and live with dignity and self-respect. He dreams that all the people in his independent nation have access to the knowledge they want. The poet wishes that there are no barriers dividing people in his free country. People are honest and they always speak the truth. They are not divided by ‘narrow domestic walls’ like prejudices, caste, creed or religion. The poet prays to God that people of independent India work continuously to achieve perfection. They think clearly and logically instead of blindly following old traditions. In the conclusion, the poet prays to God to help his country become this ideal place, a ‘heaven of freedom’ where everyone thinks with broad mind and takes constructive action. In this poem, Tagore presents a utopian society.

### 2.1.5 Check Your Progress

I) Complete the following sentences choosing the correct alternative:

- i. The poem, 'Where the Mind is Without Fear' was published in .....
  - a. Gitanjali
  - b. Pushpanjali
  - c. Kawyanjali
  - d. Freedom poems
- ii. The poem, 'Where the Mind is Without Fear' is addressed to .....
  - a. Father
  - b. Mother.
  - c. god.
  - d. the country.
- iii. The phrase, 'dead habit' means .....
  - a. past habit.
  - b. irrational tradition.
  - c. lifeless habit.
  - d. unused tradition.
- iv. The phrase, 'narrow domestic walls' suggests .....
  - a. small walls.
  - b. family walls.
  - c. house walls.
  - d. walls of caste, creed and religion.

### 2.1.6 Appreciation

Rabindranath Tagore played an important role in the freedom movement of India. He inspired patriotism through his writing and philosophy. He was not an active political leader, but he had great influence over India's freedom struggle. 'Where the Mind is Without fear' presents an image of an ideal nation having freedom, dignity, and unity. The poet imagines a society where all people can have free access to education and they are not divided by the narrow-minded things like caste and religion. The poem is a prayer to God. The poet prays that his country should have the qualities of honesty, truth and reason. All the people in his country should strive for perfection. He prays God that people of his country should be guided by wisdom and open-mindedness. In fact, Tagore creates an image of an ideal nation through this poem. He hopes for a nation where people have a mind without fear. This means that people here can express themselves freely and confidently. The poem hopes that every citizen of the country has self-respect and lives with pride. Finally Tagore prays to God to awaken his country in the 'heaven of freedom'.

The poem has no rhyme scheme. It is written in free verse. The vision of an ideal nation is presented through various poetic devices. The poem, 'Where the Mind is Without Fear' has the following poetic devices:

- Alliteration is found in the lines, 'Where the mind is without fear and head is held high', 'Where the world has not been broken up into fragments', and 'Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit'.

- Personification is used in the line, 'Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection'. Here 'striving' a tendency is personified as a human being. It is tireless and it stretches.
- Metaphor is found in 'Narrow domestic walls' which stand for the narrow minded divisions such as caste and religion.
- Synecdoche is used in the line, 'Where the mind is led forward by thee'. Here 'mind' (part) stands for 'citizen' (full).
- Finally, apostrophe is used to directly address to the Father (God) who is not present there in the line, 'Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.'

### 2.1.7 Answers to check your progress

- i. a,      ii. c,      iii. b,      iv. d

### 2.1.8 Exercises

- I. Write a note on 'Where the Mind is Without Fear' as a freedom poem.
- II. 'Where the Mind is Without Fear' is a utopian poem. Explain.
- III. Write short notes:
  - a. Rabindranath Tagore's vision of a free country
  - b. Role of citizens in Tagore's free country

## 2.2 Section B: The Lotus – Toru Dutt

### 2.2.1 Introduction

TarulattaDutt, famous as Toru Dutt, was an Indo-Anglian writer. She was born in the Bengal province in 1856. Her father, GovinChunderDutt was a poet and linguist who educated her at home. She was a poet, translator, and novelist and was proficient Bengali, English, French and Sanskrit. She had a short life of 21 years during which she created a remarkable literary legacy.

Her works include '*A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields*' (1876). It is a collection of 165 poems translated into English from French. "*Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan*" (1882) contains the poems based on the Ramayana and Mahabharata. "*Le Journal de Mademoiselle d'Arvers*" (1879) is her novel written in French. And "*Bianca, or the Spanish Maiden*" is her novel in English. She is the first Indian woman writer to a novel in French and English. Toru Dutt is known as a pioneer in Indo-Anglian literature. Her poetry is a fine blend of Eastern and Western poetic techniques and cultures.

'The Lotus' is a beautiful sonnet by Toru Dutt. It was first published in her "*Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan*" in 1882 after her death in London. The poem glorifies the lotus.

### 2.2.2 Text

Love came to Flora asking a flower  
That would of flowers be undisputed queen,  
The lily and the rose, long, long had been  
Rivals for that high honour. Bards of power  
Had sung their claims. “The rose can never tower  
Like the pale lily with her Juno mien”—  
“But is the lily lovelier?” Thus between  
Flower-factions rang the strife in Psyche’s bower.  
“Give me a flower delicious as the rose  
And stately as the lily in her pride”—  
“But of what colour?”—“Rose-red,” Love first chose,  
Then prayed,—“No, lily-white,—or, both provide;”  
And Flora gave the lotus, “rose-red” dyed,  
And “lily-white,”—the queenliest flower that blows.

### 2.2.3 Glossary and notes

Flora (N): Greek Goddess of Nature/ flowers; literally, a list of plants of an area;

undisputed (Aj): undoubted; definite; certain

rivals (N): competitors; contenders

bards (N): poets; writers

tower (V): surpass; to be better; to exhibit superior qualities

pale (Aj): light in colour or shade

Juno: wife of Jupiter, Goddess of fertility and protection and lily is sacred flower for her

mien (N): a person’s appearance

Juno mein: stately appearance of lily equated to the Roman Goddess, Juno.

flower-factions: groups of flowers

strife (N): conflict, argument,

Psyche: the Greek Goddess of soul

Bower (N): a pleasant place in a garden

Psyche’s bower: a place of conflict between the rose and the lily

delicious (Aj): highly pleasant

stately (Aj): noble; grand; splendid

queenliest (Aj): noblest; the most dignified

### 2.2.4 Summary

Toru Dutt's 'The Lotus' is a remarkable poem. It is a Petrarchan sonnet. The poem glorifies the lotus as the queenliest flower. The poem presents a symbolic exploration of beauty, conflict and harmony. It celebrates the lotus as a symbol of perfection as it combines the qualities of the rose (love) and the lily (purity). The poem records the creation of the lotus by the goddess, Flora.

Love comes to the goddess Flora and asks her for the definite noblest flower. There are two competitors: the rose and the lily. This divides the flowers in the garden in the flower factions. The supporters of the rose and the lily argue that their favoured flower is superior and deserves to be the undisputed noblest flower. The rose has passionate beauty and the lily has serene purity. Flora is caught in a dilemma. Love looks for the flower with qualities of beauty and purity. Eventually, Flora creates a new flower by combining the best qualities of the rose and the lily. It is the lotus. It unites love and purity. Flora declares the lotus as the queen of flowers and ends the debate of the flower-factions.

### 2.2.5 Check Your Progress

Answer the following question in one word/ phrase/ sentence:

1. Who is the goddess of flowers?
2. Who are the competitors in the competition of the queenliest flower?
3. What does the rose stand for?
4. What does the lily stand for?
5. Who created the lotus?
6. Which flower is symbol of perfection?

### 2.2.6 Appreciation

Toru Dutt's 'The Lotus' is a beautiful Petrarchan sonnet. The poem celebrates the creation of the flower, the lotus. It builds up an event related to creation of the lotus. The poem glorifies the lotus as the supreme flower. The lotus is depicted as superior to the rose and the lily. The rose is the symbol of passionate love and the lily is the symbol of purity.

Love comes to Flora, the Goddess of nature and demands the queenliest flower. Flora presents Love the rose which has the qualities of beauty and fragrance and represents passionate love. Flora then presents Love the lily which has the stateliness and stands for purity or elegance. The rose and the lily are the competitors in being the queen of flowers. Psyche's bower becomes a place of conflict between the rose and the lily.

But the Love demands Flora a flower that combines the qualities of both the rose and the lily. Flora combines fragrance, beauty and the red colour of the rose and purity, stateliness and the white colour of the lily and creates a flower that is both

beautiful as the rose and stately as the lily. This new flower is called the lotus. It unites love and purity and resolves the conflict between passion and innocence. After that Flora crowns the lotus as the queen of flowers. The lotus symbolizes the balanced and superior beauty.

The poem has the theme of harmony and reconciliation of opposites. The lotus symbolizes the idea that true beauty is found in balance and harmony. Moreover, the poem shows Indian culture. The lotus is a sacred flower in Indian culture. It symbolizes purity, divinity, and enlightenment. In this way, Toru Dutt contrasts Indian culture to Western culture and celebrates Indian culture. The poem is an assertion of Indian national pride and cultural identity which is very meaningful.

The poem is like a mythological allegory. The rose and the lily are personified. The feeling of love is also personified. Flora, the Goddess of Nature passes the judgement of supremacy among the flowers. And the lotus is crowned as the queen of flowers.

‘The Lotus’ is a perfect Petrarchan sonnet. Its rhyme scheme is abbaabbacddc. The octave presents the problem of which is the queenliest flower and the sestet offers the solution that the lotus is the queen of flowers.

To conclude, ‘The Lotus’ is a fantastic poem. It celebrates the lotus as a symbol of perfect beauty, harmony, and cultural pride. It unites love and purity.

### **2.2.7 Answers to check your progress**

1. Flora;
2. The rose and the lily;
3. Passion or passionate beauty;
4. Stateliness or elegance;
5. Flora;
6. The lotus

### **2.2.8 Exercises**

- I. Write the critical appreciation of ‘The Lotus’.
- II. Write a note on the themes of ‘The Lotus’.
- III. Write short notes:
  - a. Title of the poem, ‘The Lotus’
  - b. The conflict between flower-factions.
  - c. The creation of the lotus.
  - d. The symbolic use of flowers in ‘The Lotus’.

### **2.3 Section C: The Bangle Sellers- Sarojini Naidu**

### 2.3.1 Introduction

Sarojini Naidu (13 February 1879- 2 March 1949) was one of the most famous poets of pre-independent India. She was a political activist and played a significant role in the Indian freedom struggle against the British Raj. She was the *first Indian woman to be president of the Indian National Congress*. She had been jailed several times. After India's independence, Sarojini Naidu served as the first Governor of United Provinces.

Sarojini Naidu *was* a remarkable writer, a feminist freedom fighter, activist and orator. She was popularly known *as the 'Nightingale of India'* for her lyrical poetry. This title was given to her by Mahatma Gandhi. Her famous collections of poems are: '*The Golden Threshold*' (1905), *The Bird of Time: Songs of Life, Death and Spring* (1912), and *The Broken Wing* (1917). Her *The Sceptred Flute: Songs of India* (1943) and *The Feather of the Dawn* (1961) were published posthumously. She vividly portrays Indian life and landscapes in her poems which are full of romanticism, vivid imagery and musicality. Love, nature, death, patriotism, and the plight of women are the most frequent themes of her poetry which has influence of Indian folk culture, mythology, and everyday life. Though she wrote in English, her poems express Indian sensibilities.

'The Bangle Sellers' is Sarojini Naidu's one of the most famous poems. It was appeared in her collection of poem entitled, *The Bird of Time: Songs of Life, Death & the Spring* in 1912. It is about *the Indian tradition of bangles which symbolize various stages in the life of woman*.

### 2.3.2 Text

Bangle sellers are we who bear  
Our shining loads to the temple fair...  
Who will buy these delicate, bright  
Rainbow-tinted circles of light?  
Lustrous tokens of radiant lives,  
For happy daughters and happy wives.

Some are meet for a maiden's wrist,  
Silver and blue as the mountain mist,  
Some are flushed like the buds that dream  
On the tranquil brow of a woodland stream,  
Some are aglow with the bloom that cleaves  
To the limpid glory of new born leaves

Some are like fields of sunlit corn,  
Meet for a bride on her bridal morn,  
Some, like the flame of her marriage fire,  
Or, rich with the hue of her heart's desire,  
Tinkling, luminous, tender, and clear,  
Like her bridal laughter and bridal tear.

Some are purple and gold flecked grey  
For she who has journeyed through life midway,  
Whose hands have cherished, whose love has blest,  
And cradled fair sons on her faithful breast,  
And serves her household in fruitful pride,  
And worships the gods at her husband's side.

### **2.3.3 Glossary and notes**

bangle sellers: wandering bangle traders who sell bangles from village to village in fairs.

bear (V): carry

delicate (Aj): tender

rainbow-tinted: colourful like rainbow,

lustrous (Aj): shiny; glowing

tokens (N): symbol; sign

radiant (Aj): glowing; shining

maiden (N): a young unmarried girl; lass

tranquil (Aj): quiet; serene

brow (N): eyebrow; here bank of stream.

aglow (Aj): radiant; shining

cleave (V): split; sever

limpid (Aj): clear; transparent

marriage fire: the sacred fire around which Hindu marriage rites are performed

hue (N): colour; shade

tinkling (Aj): ringing

luminous (Aj): glowing; radiant; bright

tender (Aj): delicate

flecked (V):dotted; spotted

cherish (V): love; protect; care

blest (V): past tense form of ‘bless’

cradle (V):Symbol of motherhood and child-rearing

#### **2.3.4 Summary**

‘The Bangle Sellers’ is a beautiful poem by Sarojini Naidu. The poem highlights the relationship between Indian women and bangles. It celebrates Indian womanhood. Indian women especially Hindu women traditionally wear bangles of different colours at different stages of their lives.

The action of the poem takes place in an Indian market. The bangle sellers carry their shining goods to the beautiful temple. They invite the buyers to buy the elegant, rainbow-colored, luminous bangles. These bangles are shining markers of well-lived and beautiful lives. They are meant for happy daughters and wives.

The silvery-blue bangles which are like mist on a mountain are suitable for young unmarried ladies. Similarly, there are blush pink bangles which are like the buds that nod over the mouth of a stream in the woods are for maidens. These bangles gleam a bright clear green, like the colour of fresh new leaves. These bangles symbolize the freshness and freedom of unmarried women.

There are some bangles which are golden as fields of corn in the sun. They are suitable for a bride on the morning of her marriage. Some bangles burn the colours of ritualistic fire of a bride. Some bangles shine the same deep colour as her love for her future husband. These bangles gleam and tinkle like the sounds of the bride’s laughter and tears on her wedding day.

Some bangles are purple or grey spotted with gold. These are suitable for middle-aged married women who have tenderly cared for many beautiful baby boys. These women take pride in homemaking. They faithfully practice their religion with their husbands.

#### **2.3.5 Check Your Progress**

Answer the following questions choosing the correct alternative:

1. Where is the poem ‘The Bangle Sellers’ set in?
  - a. in a temple fair
  - b. in a weekly market
  - c. in a bangle shop
  - d. in a city
2. Whom are the bangles meant for?
  - a. all women
  - b. happy daughters and wives
  - c. married women
  - d. old widows

3. What emotions do the bangles symbolize for young girls in the poem?
  - a. Sadness & despair
  - b. Anger & frustration
  - c. Joy & hope
  - d. Patience & endurance
4. Which bangles are suitable for young unmarried ladies?
  - a. Red bangles
  - b. Purple bangles
  - c. Black bangles
  - d. Silvery blue bangles
5. What do the pink & green bangles symbolize?
  - a. Freshness & freedom
  - b. Love & loss
  - c. Trust and care
  - d. Faith and loyalty
6. What do the bangle sellers do in the poem?
  - a. They sing.
  - b. They sell colorful bangles
  - c. They dance.
  - d. They beg for alms.
7. Which bangles are suitable for a bride on the morning of her marriage?
  - a. blue
  - b. red
  - c. golden
  - d. green
8. Which bangles are suitable for the middle-aged married women?
  - a. red bangles
  - b. green bangles
  - c. blue bangles
  - d. purple or grey bangles spotted with gold
9. What does the poet associate with the color blue in the poem?
  - a. The beauty of the sky
  - b. The calmness of old age
  - c. The vibrancy of youth
  - d. The sorrow of the heart
10. To the poet what is the relationship between bangles and the different stages of life?
  - a. Bangles symbolize love at all stages of life.
  - b. They represent only youth and marriage.
  - c. Bangles symbolic of the different phases of womanhood, from childhood to motherhood.
  - d. Bangles show sorrow in old age.
11. What do the red bangles represent in the poem, 'The Bangle Sellers'?
  - a. Childhood of women
  - b. Marriage of women
  - c. Old age of women
  - d. Widowhood of women
12. What is the main theme of the poem 'Bangle Sellers'?
  - a. The women's beauty
  - b. The various stages of womanhood
  - c. The women's poverty
  - d. The hardships of women's life

### 2.3.6 Appreciation

Sarojini Naidu's poetry shows Indian sensibility. It presents Indian culture. 'The Bangle Sellers' depicts a temple fair where the bangle sellers sell their bangles. The poem is about the bangles worn by Indian women and the role of bangles in each stage of a woman's life. The bangle sellers are the speakers of the poem.

In the beginning, the poet refers to the bangle sellers who go to the temple fair with 'shining loads' of bangles which represent the heaviness of life upon them. At a temple fair the bangle sellers can meet women of every age. Their bangles are '*delicate, bright, Rainbow-tinted circles of light.*' They are '*lustrous tokens of radiant lives,*'. In the Indian culture bangles are associated with happiness and prosperity. The bangle sellers call out to the people to buy the bangles.

The poem tells about the bangles of different colours. These colours are associated different stages of a woman's life. For young maidens there are 'Silver and Blue' bangles like 'the mountain mist', 'flushed', like the flower buds growing beside 'a woodland stream' and 'green' like 'new born leaves.' All these images show the happy and free life of young unmarried women. The poet uses 'flushed like the buds that dream' and 'pale or rosy red' indicate 'shyness' of young girls dreaming of marriage.

Then the poet tells about the bangles worn by brides on the day of their marriage. The colours of bridal bangles are 'yellow' and 'red'. These colours are compared to the 'fields of sunlit corn', 'flame of her marriage fire', and the 'hue of her heart's desire.' These bangles are 'tinkling, luminous, tender and clear' like her 'bridal laughter'. This shows her happiness at starting the new life and 'bridal tear' shows the sadness of leaving her parents behind. The poem points out that a marriage is the bittersweet change in the life Indian women. They leave their parents family to their husband's home after marriage.

In the end the poet describes the bangles that the bangle sellers have for a middle-aged married woman. The colours of the bangles for middle-aged married women 'purple' and 'gold-flecked grey' represent a quiet contented life. The poem presents the image of a complete woman in the Indian Hindu society. The ideal Hindu wife gives birth to sons and serves her household in a fruitful way. She has to worship 'gods at her husband's side'. The expression 'cradled fair sons' suggests the deep-rooted orthodox tradition of producing male-child.

Sarojini Naidu employs adjective effectively to depict the jubilant mood of the bangle sellers who are attempting persuade the buyers to buy bangles. There 26 adjectives which can be grouped as per the qualities they signify. There are colour adjective like 'rainbow-tinted', 'silver', 'blue', 'purple' 'sunlit', 'gold-flecked grey', and others. The poem is abundant in the adjectives signifying brightness. They show the happy mood. 'Shining', 'bright', 'lustrous', 'radiant', 'aglow', 'sunlit', 'luminous',

‘limpid’, ‘tinkling’, ‘clear’, ‘fair’ and others. The adjectives like ‘delicate’, ‘happy’, ‘flushed’, ‘tranquil’, ‘rich’, ‘tender’, ‘fair’, ‘bridal’, ‘faithful’, and ‘fruitful’ show varying moods and state of womanhood.

‘*The Bangle Sellers*’ has 24 lines, divided into 4 stanzas of six lines. Each stanza has the rhyme scheme AABBCC made of three rhyming couplets. The first stanza is an introduction and the remaining three stanzas deal with three important stages of a woman: maiden, at time of marriage and a middle-aged married woman.

The poem is rich in poetic and literary devices. As it is about the colours of bangles and the stages of women’s life, the similes are used to show the association of the colours and the stage of life of women. There are five instances of simile: ‘Silver and blue as the mountain mist’, ‘Some are flushed like the buds that dream’, ‘Some are like fields of sunlit corn’, ‘Some, like the flame of her marriage fire’, and ‘Like her bridal laughter and bridal tear’.

As far as metaphors are concerned, the bangles are compared with ‘Rainbow-tinted circles of light’ and ‘shining loads’. Similarly, maidens are described ‘buds that bloom’.

Alliterations are also used. For example the sound ‘h’ is repeated in two lines: ‘Or, rich with the hue of her heart’s desire’ and ‘Whose hands have cherished, whose love has blest’. Besides, there are other poetic devices that enable the poem to carry its message effectively.

To conclude, ‘The Bangle Sellers’ is a remarkable poem. It is not a lot about the bangle sellers but about the bangles and the women who wear them.

### **2.3.7 Answers to check your progress**

- 1.- a;    2.- b;    3. - c;    4. - d;  
5.- a;    6.- b;    7. - c;    8. -d;  
9.- b;    10.- c;    11. – b;    12. – b.

### **2.3.8 Exercises**

- I. Write a note on the theme of ‘The Bangle Sellers’.
- II . ‘The Bangle Sellers’ reflects the stages in the life of Hindu women.
- III. Write short notes:
  - a. Bangles for the maiden
  - b. Bangles for the woman at the time of marriage
  - c. Bangles for the middle-aged married women.

## 2.4 Section D: Night of Scorpion - Nissim Ezekiel

### 2.4.1 Introduction

**Nissim Ezekiel** (16 December, 1924 – 9 January, 2004) was a major writer in post-independence India. He was an Indian Jew who wrote in English. He was poet, playwright, editor, art critic. He is popularly known as the father of modern Indian poetry in English. As he portrayed the urban middle-class Indian life in Bombay (presently Mumbai), Ezekiel is fondly known as the *Poet of Bombay*. His poetic works include: *A Time to Change* (1952), *Sixty Poems* (1953), *The Third* (1959), *The Unfinished Man* (1960), *The Exact Name* (1965), *Hymns in Darkness* (1976), *Latter-Day Psalms* (1982), and *Collected Poems* (1952–1988). Some of his plays are 'Nalini' (1969), *Marriage Poem* (1972), and *Don't Call It Suicide* (1972). He also edited several books which include: *An Emerson Reader*, *A Martin Luther King Reader*. Moreover, Ezekiel was the founding editor of the journals, *Quest and Poetry India*, editor of Imprint magazine, *Poetry of the Commonwealth*, *The Indian P.E.N*, *World poets in English*, and others. Ezekiel was honoured with the prestigious awards such as the Sahitya Akademi award (1983) and the Padma Shri Award (1988).

Ezekiel's poetry has directness and conversational tone. He exposes the hypocrisies and contradictions of modern life by employing irony and satire. Through the keen observation of the everyday life, Ezekiel's poetry explores themes of identity, alienation, and the search for in the fast changing world.

'Night of the Scorpion' is one of the most famous poems by Nissim Ezekiel. It was published in *The Exact Name*. The speaker of the poem tells a story from his childhood in which his mother was bitten by a scorpion. The poem vividly presents the Indian village people, their culture and superstitions with a message of motherly love.

### 2.4.2 Text

I remember the night my mother  
was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours  
of steady rain had driven him  
to crawl beneath a sack of rice.

Parting with his poison - flash  
of diabolic tail in the dark room -  
he risked the rain again.

The peasants came like swarms of flies

and buzzed the name of God a hundred times  
to paralyse the Evil One.

With candles and with lanterns  
throwing giant scorpion shadows  
on the mud-baked walls  
they searched for him: he was not found.  
They clicked their tongues.  
With every movement that the scorpion made his poison moved in Mother's blood,  
they said.

May he sit still, they said  
May the sins of your previous birth  
be burned away tonight, they said.  
May your suffering decrease  
the misfortunes of your next birth, they said.  
May the sum of all evil  
balanced in this unreal world

against the sum of good  
become diminished by your pain.  
May the poison purify your flesh

of desire, and your spirit of ambition,  
they said, and they sat around  
on the floor with my mother in the centre,  
the peace of understanding on each face.  
More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours,  
more insects, and the endless rain.  
My mother twisted through and through,  
groaning on a mat.  
My father, sceptic, rationalist,  
trying every curse and blessing,  
powder, mixture, herb and hybrid.

He even poured a little paraffin  
upon the bitten toe and put a match to it.  
I watched the flame feeding on my mother.  
I watched the holy man perform his rites to tame the poison with an incantation.  
After twenty hours  
it lost its sting.

My mother only said  
Thank God the scorpion picked on me  
And spared my children.

### 2.4.3 Glossary and notes

- stung (V) : past tense form of ‘Sting’: to pierce or wound with a poisonous process
- scorpion (N) : a small creature similar to an insect that lives in hot, dry areas of the world and has a long body and a curved tail with a poisonous sting
- crawl (V) : *to move slowly with the body close to the ground*
- sack (N) : *a large bag made of jute or plastic material*
- parting (V) : leaving or emitting the poison
- diabolic (Aj) : *of, relating to, or proceeding from the devil*
- risked (V) : did something although there is a chance of a bad result
- swarms (N) : large groups
- buzz (V) : a low, continuous humming or murmuring sound, made by flies
- paralyse (V) : *to cause a person, animal, or part of the body to lose the ability to move or feel*
- Evil One : someone very bad; here the Scorpion
- lantern (N) : *a lamp in a metal case with glass sides a handle can be carried outside*
- giant (Aj) : very large; enormous
- misfortune (N): trouble; hardship
- diminished(Aj): made less
- groan (V) : moan
- sceptic (Aj) : disbeliever
- rationalist (Aj) : *a person whose actions and decisions are based on reason rather than emotions or beliefs*

|                 |                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| herb (N)        | : a plant having medicinal qualities.                                                                                                              |
| hybrid(N)       | : a mixture of two things or an advanced form of something.                                                                                        |
| paraffin(N)     | : <i>a clear liquid with a strong smell that is made from coal or petroleum,</i><br>and used as a fuel, especially in heaters and lights; kerosene |
| holy man        | : a pious, religious man                                                                                                                           |
| rites (N)       | : a religious act, social custom, practice, or conventional act.                                                                                   |
| tame (V)        | : to bring under control                                                                                                                           |
| incantation (N) | : chant; a series of words said as a magic spell or charm                                                                                          |
| pick on (V)     | : punish; harm                                                                                                                                     |

#### 2.4.4 Summary

'Night of the Scorpion' is a remarkable poem. It shows typical Indian motherhood; sacrifice and devotion of a mother. It also shows the superstitions prevailing in Indian villages. The speaker tells how a scorpion bit his mother on a rainy night. The peasants from the village hurriedly came like swarms of insects to express their sympathies. They were superstitious. They believed that the scorpion's poison would move in mother's blood with its every movement. So they tried to find out the scorpion with lit candles and lanterns. But they could not get the scorpion. The speaker's mother twisted and groaned in pain. The speaker's father was sceptic and rationalist. He tried every curse and blessing; powder, herb, and hybrid to lessen the effect of the scorpion's poison. Finally, he poured a little paraffin on the bitten toe and put a match to it. Then the holy man came there. He performed his rites and used an incantation to control the poison. At last after twenty hours the effect of the sting of the poison went off and the mother was happy that the scorpion bit her and spared her children.

#### 2.4.5 Check Your Progress

**Fill in the blanks by choosing the correct alternative:**

- .....had driven the scorpion to the speaker's home.
  - Rain
  - Storm
  - Heat
  - Children
- The scorpion returned to the rain outside as.....
  - He could see in the lightening
  - He was chased away
  - He liked the rain
  - He parted poison and went away
- When the peasants in the village heard of the scorpion sting.....
  - they were stayed in homes.

- b) theywent to the temple priest.
  - c) theycame in a large number to the poet's house.
  - d) theyran to the fields.
4. The figure of speech in 'The peasants came like swarms of flies.' is .....
    - a) Metaphor
    - b) Simile
    - c) Personification
    - d) Alliteration
  5. According to the peasants, the sting of the scorpion was .....
    - a) painful and can cause death
    - b) a blessing of God
    - c) a sin of previous birth
    - d) momentary and requires no medication
  6. The speaker's father was .....
    - a) detached and cruel
    - b) harsh but effective
    - c) sceptic and rationalist
    - d) a holy man and very pious
  7. .... poured a little paraffin on the mother's scorpion bitten toe.
    - a) The father
    - b) The speaker
    - c) The holy man
    - d) The peasants
  8. The effect of the sting of the poison went off after.....
    - a) two days.
    - b) twenty hours.
    - c) twenty four hours.
    - d) soon after incantations.
  9. In the end of the poem, the mother thanked God because the scorpion
    - a) spared her children
    - b) stung her
    - c) went away
    - d) did not poison her

#### 2.4.6 Appreciation

Nissim Ezekiel's 'Night of the Scorpion' is a simple but influential poem. It presents the themes of family, superstitious but cooperative Indian village folks, and mother's selfless and enduring love. The poem celebrates Indianness, with its village life full of superstitious simplicity. It presents the conflicts between good and evil; between darkness and light; between rationalism and superstition. It is all chaotic, but at the end the selfless love of a mother wins the strife.

In the beginning of the poem the speaker in the poem remembers a childhood experience. One night his mother was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours of steady rain had driven the scorpion to hiding beneath a sack of rice. After inflicting unbearable pain upon the mother with a flash of its diabolic tail, the scorpion risked the rain again.

This news reached the peasants of the village. They came to the speaker's house like swarms of flies and expressed their sympathy. They believed that with every movement the scorpion made, the poison would move in mother's blood. So, with lighted candles and lanterns they began to find the scorpion, but they could not. This

highlights the superstition that the effect the poison of the scorpion subsides, if the scorpion is killed.

The peasants were superstitious. They consoled the mother with their superstitions. They told mother that the suffering and pain will burn away the sins of her previous birth. "May the suffering decrease the misfortunes of your next birth too", they said.

Mother was undergoing unbearable pains. She twisted and groaned in mortifying pain. Her husband was sceptic and rationalist. He tried every curse and blessing; powder, herb and hybrid. Finally, he even poured a little paraffin on the bitten part and put a match to it. It was the long painful night.

Then the holy man came and played his part. He performed his rites and tried to tame the poison with an incantation. After twenty hours the poison lost its sting. There is the ironic twist in the end of the poem. The mother who suffered in silence opened her mouth and thanked God for the scorpion stung her and spared her children. This is the selfless love of a mother.

'Night of the Scorpion' has multiple themes. It presents the superstition and blind faith of the Indian villages. However, it also highlights the fellow-feeling, sympathy and cooperation shown by the peasant villagers. The poem also presents the clash between irrationality and rationalism. Irrationality is represented by the superstitious villagers and rationalism is represented by the father. Even the holy man also tries his incantation. But everything goes in vain and the mother is relieved of the pain naturally after twenty hours. Still fellow feeling of the peasants and love of mother remains at the centre.

The poem is rich with visual imagery. The imagery such as 'flash of diabolic tail in the dark room'; 'throwing giant scorpion shadows on the mud-baked walls'; 'My mother twisted through and through, groaning on a mat.'; and others. There is a series of imagery representing evil. The night and the scorpion are images of evil. And to overcome the evil there are factors like superstition, religion and rationalism which prove ineffective. And what finally wins is the selfless love of mother when she says 'Thank God the scorpion picked on me /And spared my children.'

'Night of the Scorpion' has apt and abundant figurative use of language. Simile is used in describing the arrival of the peasants: 'The peasants came like swarms of flies'. The scorpion is described as the 'Evil One'. It is an instance of a metaphor. Then the flame is personified in 'The flame is feeding on my mother'. The line, 'Parting with his poison' is an example of alliteration.

#### **2.4.7 Answers to check your progress**

- 1.- a;    2.-d;    3.-c;
- 4.- b;    5.- a;    6.- c;
- 7.- a;    8.-b;    9.-a.

### 2.4.8 Exercises

1. Write a note on the theme of selflessness and superstition in 'Night of the Scorpion'.
2. Discuss the element of Indianness in 'Night of the Scorpion'.
3. Write short notes;
  - a. The title of 'Night of the Scorpion'.
  - b. The father of the speaker in 'Night of the Scorpion'
  - c. The self-sacrificing mother in 'Night of the Scorpion'.
  - d. The end of the poem, 'Night of the Scorpion'.
  - e. Superstitions in 'Night of the Scorpion'.

## 2.5 Section E: The Image of Vithoba-I –DilipChitre

### 2.5.1 Introduction

DilipChitre(b. 1938- d. 2009) was a rare cross-disciplinary artist. He was a poet, translator, critic, painter, filmmaker and many more. He was a bilingual writer who wrote in Marathi and English. His Marathi notable works are *Kavita* (1960), *KavitenantarchyaKavita* (1978), and three volumes of *EkoonKavita* (in the 1990s). His *EkoonKavita* brought him the SahityaAkademi Award in 1994. His English poetry includes *Travelling in a Cage* (1980) and *As Is, Where Is* (2007).

He was a highly praised translator. He translated SantTukaram's *Abhangas* in his *SaysTuka*. He also translated *Anubhavamrut* by Dnyaneshwar, *An Anthology of Marathi Poetry* (1945 1965). *Says Tuka* won the SahityaAkademi Award for translation in 1994. Thus he was the only poet to win both awards simultaneously in the same year.

As a filmmaker, Dilip Chitre he has the film, 'Godan' (1984) to his credit. The film won the special jury prize at the Festival des Trois Continents, Nantes in 1984. He also made many documentaries and short and video films. Besides he was prominent figure in literary and cultural institutions. He was the co-founder of the magazine, 'Shabda' as a part of Marathi little magazine movement. He made a key contribution in directing Indian poetry Library and Translation Centre at Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal. He also organized Valmiki World Poetry Festival in Delhi and the International Symposium of Poets.

DilipChitre was a major writer in post-independent Indian modernist literature. His poetry presented the themes like exile, alienation, cosmopolitan sensibility and ironic reflections on urban life.

'The Image of Vithoba-I' is the translation of SantTukaram'sAbhanga, 'Sundartedhyan..'. TukaramBolhobaAmbile, famous as SantTukaramwas an influential 17<sup>th</sup> Century Marathi Sant-poet. He is also known as 'Tuka', 'Tukoba', 'SantTukobaraj'

‘JagadguruTukaramMaharaj’. He was a prominent figure in the ‘WarkariSampradaya’. He composed the devotional poetry dedicated to Lord Vitthala, popularly known as ‘Vithoba’, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The verses composed by santTukaram are known as ‘Abhanga’. They are not just the songs of devotion to Vitthoba. They also highlight societal wrongdoings and promote honest hard work, justice and equality. In the present Abhanga, SantTukaramMaharaj presents splendid appearance of Lord Vitthala’s idol and the bliss in seeing the face of the Lord.

### 2.5.2 Text

In an exquisite trance  
He stands on the Brick  
Arms akimbo  
Hands on hips

Sweet basil beads  
Garland His neck  
A yellow silk garment  
Girdled around His loins  
I love His trance  
His forever stance

Crocodile-shaped rings  
Gleam at His ears  
The kaustubha stone  
Glow at His throat

Says Tuka, for me  
This is absolute bliss  
The loving eyes are mine  
The loved face His

### 2.5.3 Glossary and notes

exquisite (Aj) : beautiful

trance (N):dream ; contemplation; meditation

arms akimbo : *having the hand on the hip and the elbow turned outward*

basil beads : a small round piece of basil with a hole through it. Beads of Tulsi wood

girdled (V) : put around

loins (N) : the part of the body on both sides of the spine between the lowest (false) ribs and the hip bones.

stance (N) : position

gleam (V) : shine

thekaustubha stone: Kaustubha, in Hindu mythology, is a divine gem or jewel. It is specifically associated with Lord Vishnu. It is described as one of the most precious and valuable jewels in the universe.

absolute bliss : complete happiness

### 2.5.4 Summary

‘The Image of Vithoba-I’ by Dilip Chitre is a translation of Sant Tukaram’s Abhanga, ‘Sundartedhyan...’. This abhanga describes Lord Vitthala beautifully.

Lord Vittala’s poses splendidly standing on the brick with his hands akimbo. I always like the appearance of Lord Vitthalawith Tulsi (basil) garland around the neck and wearing the yellow golden silk garment around the waist. The beautiful, great pleasure to behold, i.e. the Lord Vithoba, is standing on the brick with his hands resting on the waist. To Sant Tukaram, Lord Vitthala looks elegant with glistening fish-shaped ear tops and the Kaustubha gem stone at his throat. Tuka says watching the sacred face of the Lord is his absolute bliss.

Sant Tukaram worships Lord Vitthoba with all his heart and soul. He finds the appearance of the lord blissful to watch. With this abhanga the Warkaris begin their sermon i.e. bhajan or kirtan.

### 2.5.5 Check Your Progress

Fill in blanks and complete the following sentences:

1. ‘The Image of Vithoba-I’ is the translation of Sant Tukaram’s Abhanga, .....
2. Lord Vitthala is standing on .....
3. There is the .....around the neck of Lord Vitthala.
4. Lord Vitthalais wearing .....around his waist.
5. To sant Tukaram watching the pious face of the Lord Withoba is .....

### 2.5.6 Appreciation

‘The Image of Vithoba-I’ is the translation of SantTukaram’sAbhanga, ‘Sundar te dhyan... It offers the vivid description of the idol of Lord Vithoba or Vitthala standing on a brick in the temple in holy place, Pandharpur.

There are many symbolic references in the Abhanga. There is a myth (purankatha) behind Lord Vitthala standing on a brick. Pundalika, a devotee of Lord Vitthalalived in the city of Pandharpur. He used to worship the Lord by serving his parents. Once Lord Vitthala went to visit him. At that time, Pundalika was massaging his father’s feet. The Lord called from doorstepsseeking permission to enter the house. Pundalika threw a brick towards the Lord and asked Him to wait till he finishes his duty. The Lord promised to wait. Pundalika never stopped his duties towards the society, towards the elders and lord had to keep his promise. Till this date, the lord stands on the brick, waiting for all his devotees, to come to him. It is believed that Vithoba stands on the brick for 28 Yugas.

Tukobarai further describes that the hands of the lord are placed by his waist. And this is an assurance to the devotees. This shows that the ocean of worldly miseries is only waist deep for his devotees, if the devotees serve their elders. This comes from the teachings of the Geeta. If the work is your worship, the ‘karma yoga’ or fulfilling the duties diligently, excellently, that life ,destiny bestows upon you, without any desire for fruits, is the central theme for Geeta, Lord Krishna’s eternal message.

The abhanga describes that Lord Vithoba is wearing a garland of ‘Tulasi’ leaves. It symbolizes that he is totally detached towards the riches of royalty. Around his waist there is a silken cloth, a royal garment, but the colour is yellow, again a symbolic renouncement of power.SantTukaramMaharaj is whole-heartedly devoted to Lord Vitthala’s image, which symbolizes riches coupled with compassion, power coupled with spirit of renunciation.

SantTukaram describes that Lord Vittalais wearingMakaraKundala( earrings of fish) it is said that a poor fisherman came to worship Vittalaprabhu with 2 fish which he caught. He was not allowed to enter in Temple with fish in hand. To this the poor fisherman replied “I have come here to meet Vittal& fishing is my occupation”. He didn’t have money to buy anything to offer Prabhu, all he had was 2 fishes that he caught and wished a darshan. Hearing this Lord Vitthal himself came out, accepted the fish and wore it as a earrings and told that he will accept anything from anybody who comes to me with love and devotion in his heart.

The pearl called as ‘kausthubha’ is a mythological pearl, which secretes ‘gold’ perpetually. It means ‘true gold secreting pearl’. And it is around the neck of the lord. The word used by TukaramMaharaj is ‘Kanth’, meaning the voice box, again a symbolic reference to words spoken by Lord Shri Krishna, famously known

as Geeta, His eternal message to humanity. In the concluding line of the abhanga, Tukaram Maharaj emphatically states that, this practice of meditation is the only happiness he knows and he will continue to see, meditate on this vision, which will enlighten him.

The abhanga ends with Sant Tukaram Maharaj's assertion that his only absolute happiness is devotion to Lord Vitthala. His complete bliss is in watching the face of Lord Vitthala with interest and devotedly.

The abhanga is a vivid description of Lord Vitthala's idol. The abhanga pictorial quality and readers can have experience of actual darshan of Lord Vitthala.

### **2.5.7 Answers to check your progress**

1. 'Sundartedhyan..';
2. a brick;
3. Garland of basil leaves;
4. the yellow golden silk garment;
5. absolute bliss

### **2.5.8 Exercises**

1. Write a note on the theme of 'The Image of Vithoba-I'.
2. Describe Lord Vitthala as presented in 'The Image of Vithoba-I'.
3. Write short notes:
  - a. Happiness of Sant Tukaram Maharaj
  - b. Myth in 'The Image of Vithoba-I'

## **2.6 Section F: After Eight Years of Marriage –Mamta Kaliya**

### **2.6.1 Introduction**

Mamta Kalia (b. 1940) is an eminent Indian bilingual writer. She writes in Hindi and English. She is born in Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh. She is famous for her contributions to Hindi literature. During her long career as teacher, she worked as a lecturer of English literature in Delhi and Mumbai. She taught at institutions such as SNDT Women's University, Mumbai and Mahila Seva Sadan Degree College, Allahabad. She also served as the principal of Mahila Seva Sadan Degree College. After her retirement in 2001, Kalia headed the Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad, a literary organization based in Kolkata.

As far as her literary contribution is considered she has authored eight novels in Hindi; Four collections of poetry out of which two are English: *Tribute to Papa and other poems* and *Poems 78*; two plays; one memoir and a translation of Somerset Maugham's work of *Human Bondage* and D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

into Hindi. Recently she has authored *JeeteJee Allahabad* (2021), a literary memoir on Allahabad and *Ravi Katha* (2023), a biography of her husband.

She has been honoured with several awards such as the Yashpal Samman (1985), the Mahadevi Verma Memorial Award (1998), the Sahitya Bhushan Samman (2004), Janvani Samman (2009) and Sita Smriti Award (2012). In 2017 she also won the Vyas Samman, one of India's richest literary awards for her novel *Dukkham Sukkham*.

Kalia uses the routine everyday language in her poetry to the problems of the common people and that makes her poem truthful and famous. Gender inequality, monotonous domestic life and social taboos are the themes of her poetry. She uses poetry as an effective tool to talk about love, marriage, social and family relationships and degeneration of human values in modern society.

'After Eight Years of Marriage' is a thought-provoking poem. It presents the dilemma of the married Indian woman. It depicts the suffocation of a woman bound to the domestic duties.

### 2.6.2 Text

After eight years of marriage  
The first time I visited my parents,  
They asked, "Are you happy, tell us".  
It was an absurd question  
And I should have laughed at it  
Instead, I cried,  
And in between sobs, nodded yes.  
I wanted to tell them  
That I was happy on Tuesday  
I was unhappy on Wednesday.  
I was happy one day at 8 O'clock  
I was most unhappy by 8.15.  
I wanted to tell them how one day  
We all ate a watermelon and laughed.  
I wanted to tell them how I wept in bed all night once  
And struggled hard from hurting myself.  
That it wasn't easy to be happy in a family of twelve,  
But they were looking at my two sons,  
Hopping around like young goats.

Their wrinkled hands, beaten faces and grey eyelashes  
Were all too much too real.  
So I swallowed everything,  
And I smiled a smile of great content.

### 2.6.3 Glossary and notes

absurd (Aj) : ridiculous; silly  
sobs (N) : noisy weeping  
struggled hard : tried very hard  
hurting (V) : injuring; wounding  
beaten (Aj) : defeated  
swallowed (V): accepted without question or disagreement  
content (N) : satisfaction

### 2.6.4 Summary

‘After Eight Years of Marriage’ is a feminist poem. It vividly depicts an event in the life of a married Indian woman, which shows her state of mind. A married woman comes to her parental house after eight years of her marriage. She is a modern woman. She is married into a joint family having twelve members. During eight years of married life she has been the mother of two sons. And when she visits to her parental home, her parents ask her if she is happy in her husband’s house. She finds the question absurd. However she cannot even respond to such an absurd question with laughter. Instead she cries. And in between her sobs she nods to tell her parents that she is happy with her marriage. But the fact is that she experiences intermittent bouts of happiness and unhappiness. The activity like sharing watermelon in the joint family had made her happy but she had wept in bed all night due to the emotional estrangement even in the joint family. She had to try hard to stop her from injuring herself due to depression. But she cannot share her miseries with her old parents who are happy to see her two sons hopping around like young goats. In order to keep her old parents happy, she accepts the miseries of her married life without any disagreement and shows outwardly that she is satisfied and happy.

### 2.6.5 Check Your Progress

**Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence:**

1. Who is the speaker of the poem, ‘After Eight Years of Marriage’?
2. What question did the speaker’s parents ask her when she visited them after eight years?

3. How was the question according to the speaker?
4. What was the speaker's response to her parents question?
5. Which happy moment did the speaker remember?
6. What sad moment did the speaker remember from her marital life?
7. What is the nature of the speaker's marital family?
8. How many members are there in the speaker's marital family?
9. How many sons does the speaker have?
10. Why does not the speaker tell the truth about her marital life to her parents?

### 2.6.6 Appreciation

MamtaKalia is a modern bilingual Indian woman writer. She is a feminist writer. Through her literature she protests against the conventional womanhood in simple but effective language. Her writing expresses the dilemma of sensitive Indian woman in relation to her marital family, parents, and domestic and social life. Kalia deals with frustrations of a married Indian woman. Her literature speaks about boredom of woman's married life.

'After Eight Years of Marriage' is a confessional poem by MamtaKalia. It vividly presents the state of mind of a married Indian woman. The poem deals with the emotional conflicts of a woman after many years of marriage in a joint family. It presents that a woman has neither personal or domestic independence in a conventional joint family. She has to suppress her own miseries and pains and make appearances.

The speaker of the poem is a married Indian woman. She is married into a joint family with twelve members. When she returns to her parental home after eight years, her parents ask her if she is happy. The question itself suggests that the marital routines are instable. In response she cries and gives nodding 'yes' between sobs. This shows that the speaker is not constantly happy with her marital life. She wants to tell them that happiness is not stable. Her emotions change from time to time. She feels happy on one day and unhappy the next day. She has the burden of expectations.

She wants to tell her parents that she has unpredictable emotions. She has a moment of laughter with family which is followed by a moment of personal suffering in which she becomes restless and wishes to injure herself. But she does not share her personal suffering with her parents as they are old. It means a woman has to think of happiness of others and sacrifice her own joy for the sake of others. She wants to tell her parents that it is not possible to be happy in a big joint family. She sees her parents look at her two sons playing like 'young goats'. She swallows everything and expresses a peaceful smile. She presents satisfaction to keep her loved ones happy. That is why she is unable to share her real emotions with them. The poem shows that women have to internalize pain. The poem suggests that in an Indian family a

woman is not an individual who can think of her own personal joy. Instead she has to live for others.

The poem is written in free verse. It presents the theme very effectively. The language used is very simple and it serves the purpose very well. The poem vividly presents state of typical middle class Indian women. Their personal wishes, needs, and dreams are drowned in the broader familial roles. They suffer a lot in their marital house but show their parents that they are happy.

To conclude, 'After Eight Years of Marriage' shows how orthodox traditions confine women to boring life. The speaker has inner turmoil of the Indian married women. The poem shows the challenges of a wife in a joint family where personal happiness is sacrificed while playing collective roles. She has to make compromise between her duties and personal expectations. All in all, the poem portrays a true emotional portrait of a Indian woman married into a large joint family.

#### **2.6.7 Answers to check your progress**

1. a married Indian woman;
2. Are you happy?;
3. absurd;
4. She cried and nodded yes.;
5. Eating watermelon and laughing with her marital family members;
6. Crying alone in bed at one night and trying hard not to hurt herself;
7. It's a joint family.;
8. twelve;
9. Two;
10. because her parents are very old and she does not wish them to be sad.

#### **2.6.8 Exercises**

1. Write a note on the central theme of 'After Eight Years of Marriage'.
2. Discuss the status and state of mind of a married Indian woman with reference to 'After Eight Years of Marriage'
3. Write short notes:
  - a. Ending of 'After Eight Years of Marriage'
  - b. Miseries married women as presented in 'After Eight Years of Marriage'



**Module - 3**  
**Indian English Drama:**  
***Andha Yug* by Dharamvir Bharati**

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- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 The Evolution and Essence of Indian English Drama
- 3.3 Dharamvir Bharati: Life and Works
  - 3.3.1 Check Your Progress
  - 3.3.2 Terms to Remember
- 3.4 About the *Mahabharata*
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  - 3.5.1 Check Your Progress
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  - 3.6.1 Check Your Progress
  - 3.6.2 Terms to Remember
- 3.7 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 3.8 Exercises
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**3.0 Objectives**

After completing the study of this module, you will be able to

- ◆ know about the rise and development of Indian English Drama.
- ◆ know about the life and works of Dharamvir Bharati.
- ◆ know about the different perspectives of the *Mahabharata*.
- ◆ understand and differentiate the terms retelling and reinterpretation.
- ◆ analyse Dharamvir Bharati's *Andha Yug* as a reinterpretation of the *Mahabharata*.
- ◆ know the detailed summary of *Andha Yug*.

**3.1 Introduction**

*Andha Yug* is a landmark work in Indian literature in Translation that reimagines the aftermath of the war of Kurukshetra in the *Mahabharata*. It is translated by Alok Bhalla as *Age of Blindness* or *Blind Age* Dharamvir Bharati, the

prominent Hindi writer, poet and journalist wrote this play. *Andha Yug* is recognized as the play that heralded a new era in Indian theatre. It was first performed under the direction of Ebrahim Alkazi. The play refers to the disastrous effects of world wars and violence after the Partition of India. The play interrogates the meaning of war. The play is still relevant as the fear of the war and its destruction is a constant global concern. It is a verse play divided in five acts along with a prologue, an interlude and an epilogue and it also uses chorus to link and comment the episodes of the play.

### **3.2 The Evolution and Essence of Indian English Drama**

India has the longest and richest tradition in Drama. From Vedic period, drama was performed. Indian drama is influenced by ancient Sanskrit drama, folk tradition in India and Western drama. Bharata Muni's *Natyashastra* regarded as the fifth *Veda* is a guiding work on Indian Drama. Bhasa, Shudraka, Kalidasa, Vishakhadatta and Bhavabhuti are eminent dramatists of the ancient period. Later on, the theatrical activity shifted from Sanskrit to different regional languages. With the arrival of the British Indian drama had gone through changes on many levels like form, direction, theme, etc. Indian English drama is divided into two categories: 1) Indian English Drama and 2) Regional Drama in English Translation. Indian English drama represents a dynamic synthesis of ancient performance traditions and contemporary global influences navigating complex cultural identities while addressing urgent social realities.

Krishna Mohan Banerjee and Michael Madhusudan Dutt's plays started a new era in Indian English Drama. Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Haridranath Chattopadhyay are exponents of poetic plays. Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar, Dharamvir Bharati, Girish Karnad, Mohan Rakesh and others have contributed to the modernization in Indian theatre in terms of themes and technical virtuositities. These writers used folktales, legends, myths and history in dramas. Mohan Rakesh presents anxieties of middle class and absence of communication, Badal Sircar depicts existential attitude of modern man in the present times and Vijay Tendulkar's plays focus on love, sex, moral values in a satirical way. Girish Karnad has experimented with the fusion of the traditional and the modern dramatic forms and content. Manjula Padmanabhan is the first Indian to earn international frame with her *Harvest*, a futuristic play that deals with the exploitation of human body in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dattani is taken to be the true successor of Girish Karnad and is responsible for the revolutionary progression of the English Drama. Alienation, social issues, contemporary presentation of folk tales, myths, history and legends and the present-day problems of society are certain themes depicted by the post-modern Indian English Dramatists.

Theatre, being a living art, changes continuously. The origin and development of drama in India divided into three phases.

### **The First Phase**

The theatrical activity began with primitive, magical religious or social rites, ritualistic dances, festivals, etc. In *yadnyas*, ritualistic activities were performed in theatrical manner Bharata Muni's *Natyashastra* acquired the status of the fifth *Veda*. Every element of drama and theatre has been discussed extensively here. The Sanskrit dramatic works depict different mental states, emotions and ideas, desires and aspirations strengths and weaknesses, basic moral and social questions as well as individual predicaments. They also present a many layered, fascinating picture of the social, political, economic and cultural life of those times. The Sanskrit plays like *Swapnavasavadatta* (Bhasa) *Abhigyan Shankuntalam* (Kalidasa), *Mrichchakatika* (Shudraka), *Uttarramcharita* (Bhavabhuti) are notable for their keen insight, delicate aesthetic sense, structural skill and variety, dramatic and theatrical quality of language and excellent use of verse.

These Sanskrit plays reflect propound philosophical attitude. They are based on highly developed aesthetic *Rasa* theory. Sanskrit dramatists made ample use of music and dance.

The Sanskrit theatre had disintegrated gradually by 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Foreign invasion, internal conflicts, Sanskrit language being confined to small elite class and fall in dramatic writing are some reasons.

### **The Second Phase**

This phase of the Indian theatre is spread over a period of about one thousand years and many of its strands and forms have continued up to the present day. This kind of play flourished in the country side and is called folk theatre. The miming and acting in the *Kuttiyattam* or *Kuchipudi*, dancing in *Yakshagana*, drumming in *Swang* or *Nautanki* can be acquired easily. During the fifteen to seventeenth centuries the Bhakti Movement inspired a number of new theatrical modes. The *Ankianat* of Aassam, *Bhagatmela* of Tamilnadu, *Krishnanattam* of Kerala, *Kuchi-pudi* of Andhra Pradesh, *Dashavatar* and *Tamasha* of Maharashtra, *Rasleela* and *Ramleela* of Uttar Pradesh are examples of stories of Gods presented by performers. Indian English Drama represents a dynamic synthesis of ancient complex cultural identities while addressing urgent social realities.

### **The Third Phase**

Indian encounter with the West during nineteenth century had wide-ranging political, economic, social and cultural consequences. According to Indian view of life, the purpose of drama was to create a feeling of pleasure (*rasa*) and the purpose of the western drama was to reveal the struggles of life in their various forms.

At the initial stage of the new theatre there was imitation of English plays and translations. Later Indian dramatists represented their own culture, views, philosophy and they reflected their own identity. Calcutta was the centre of theatrical activities.

Marathi, Gujarathi, Parsi, Bengali and Hindi theatres were developing. During 1943-44 the rise of Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) was established. Prithvi Theatre started by noted film actor Prithviraj Kapoor in 1944.

In the modern times, directors like Sombu Mitra, Habib Tanvir, Ebrahim Alkazi, Utpal Dutt, Satyadev Dubey and later Arvind Deshpande, Vijaya Mehta, Jabbar Patel, B.K. Karanth, Rajinder Nath changed the Indian theatre.

#### Thematic shifts in Indian English Drama.

| Sr. No. | Period            | Dominant themes                   | Key Playwrights                    | Stylistic Approaches         |
|---------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1.      | Ancient/Sanskrit  | Mythology, Spiritual              | Kalidasa, Bhasa, etc.              | Rasa Theory, Poetic verse    |
| 2.      | Colonial          | Cultural Conflict reform          | M.M. Dutta, R.M. Ray, etc.         | Imitation of Western Theatre |
| 3.      | Pre independence  | Universal humanism mysticism      | R. Tagore, Aurobindo, etc.         | Poetic Symbolism             |
| 4.      | Post independence | National identity, social justice | Karnad, Bharati Badal Sircar, etc. | Realism experimentalism      |
| 5.      | Contemporary      | Identity Political issues         | Dattani Padmanabhan, etc.          | Hyper realism                |

### 3.3 Dharamvir Bharati: Life and Works

Dharamvir Bharati was born on 25 December, 1926 in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh to Chranji Lal and Chanchla Devi. Unfortunately, due to the untimely death of his father at an early age, he faced financial and familial difficulties. His father's death created a vacuum in his life. While facing all these problems he completed his masters in Hindi securing highest marks from Allahabad University in 1946. He started his career as sub-editors to the magazines *Abhyudaya* and *Sangam*. He completed his doctoral degree in 1954 and joined as a lecturer in Allahabad University. In 1960, he resigned the post of lecturer and joined as a chief Editor to the Hindi weekly magazine *Dharma Yug*, which was run by Times Indian Group in Bombay. Under his able editorship, the magazine received wide acclamation and the writer was associated the it till 1987. As a reporter he personally covered the Indo-Pak war that resulted in liberation of Bangladesh.

While working with the magazine, he also started writing. He wrote plays, novels, essays, poems, nearly all the genres of literature. He was honoured with *Padma Shree* in 1972 for his versatile contribution to Hindi literature. Along with

this he received Maharana Mewar Foundation Award, Sangeet Natak Academy Award, Maharashtra Gaurav, Kaudilya Nyas and Vyas Sanman. Dharamvir Bharati died in 1997 due to heart disease.

### **Literary works of Dharamvir Bharati**

**Novels:**        *Gunahon Ke Devata* (1949)  
                      *Suraj ka Satwan Ghoda* (1952)  
                      *Gyrah Sapno ka Desh*  
                      *Prarambha Va Samapan*

*Gunahon Ke Devata* and *Suraj ka Satwan Ghoda* are transformed into films. *Suraj ka Satwan Ghoda* was translated into Bengali by renowned poet Malay Ry Choudhary, for which he received the Sahitya Academy Award for Translation. Shyam Bengal directed the film of the same name and the film won National Film Award for the best actor.

**Poetry:**        *Kanupriya*  
                      *Thanda Loha*  
                      *Saat Geet Varsh*  
                      *Sapana Abhi Bhi*  
                      *Toota Pahiya*

**Plays:**         *Andha Yug* (1953)

Along with this, his contribution to essays and short stories is noteworthy.

Dharamvir Bharati represents contemporary social and political issues. He experiments by using chorus and verse in his play. He is regarded as the pioneer of the experimental movement in poetry called *Prayogavada* which is known as *Navi Kavita* movement.

Dharamvir Bharati is a pivotal figure in Hindi and Indian literature. Bharati was a modernist writer, known for his intellectual depth, humanist vision and innovative storytelling. The important characteristic features of his literary style can be discussed as follows-

#### **1] Modernist Experimentation: -**

Dharamvir Bharati blended traditional story telling with modernist techniques like stream of consciousness, non-linear narratives, symbolism and psychological introspection. His novel *Suraj ka Satwan Ghoda* (1952) (*The Seventh Horse of the Sun*) uses cyclical fragmented structure to explore subjective truths.

#### **2] Lyrical and Intellectual Prose: -**

His writing is a combination of poetical grace with philosophical rigor. He writes in a sharp way and describes vividly. Complex ideas too are elucidated with rich metaphors.

### **3] Psychological Realism: -**

Bharati focusses on characters' inner conflicts, moral dilemmas and emotional turmoil. His characters are not simple but complex and ambiguous.

### **4] Symbolism and Allegory: -**

His characters represent certain symbols. Blindfolded Gandhari in *Andha Yug* Symbolizes moral blindness. In *Suraj ka Satwan Ghoda* horse is a symbol of modern desire. *Andha Yug* is an allegory on modern times too.

### **5] Intertextuality: -**

Dharamvir Bharati very aptly uses Indian Epics (The *Mahabharata* in *Andha Yug*), folklore, legends and even Western Literature in some of his texts and reinterprets them for contemporary relevance.

### **Major Themes in Dharamvir Bharati's Literature**

Bharati masters different themes with excellence.

#### **1) Humanism and moral integrity**

In the modern or ultra-modern world human beings struggle constantly. To achieve their desired goals, they have to face and conquer hurdles. While doing so, they have to choose between moral and immoral, ideal and practical. This is shown very well in *Gunaho Ka Devata*.

#### **2) Tradition Vs Modernity**

Indian tradition and western modernity, clash between values, lifestyle, united life vs individualism, faith vs rationalism, all these aspects are well reflected in Bharati's Literature.

#### **3) Existential Anguish**

Meaninglessness of life, search less and purposeless living, isolation, fragmented world is so aptly painted by Bharati. An excellent example of it is *Andha Yug*'s post war despair.

#### **4) Social Justice**

Dharamvir Bharati writes about caste oppression, gender inequality, corruption and other social issues. *Kanupriya* highlights the exploitation of marginalized women.

#### **5) War and Violence**

*Andha Yug* dissected the psychological and moral decay. The aftermath of the Mahabharata war makes to think about the righteousness of war.

He also writes about love and sacrifice. He is an experimenter. He reinvented and revitalized Hindi novel and drama. His legacy lies in his fearless exploration of truth and commitment to human dignity.

**Alok Bhalla [Translator of *Andha Yug*]**

Alok Bhalla is a highly respected Indian scholar, critic, poet and translator. Bhalla holds a Ph.D. in English Literature and teaches at various universities in India. He is a prolific writer and critic. He translated *Andha Yug* and it was first published by Oxford University Press (OUP) in 2005. His translation is widely regarded as the most authoritative and critically acclaimed English version of *Andha Yug*. *Andha Yug* was first translated by Paul Jacob as *The Blind Age* (1972). But Bhalla's is regarded as authentic one.

### 3.3.1 Check Your Progress

**A) Choose the correct alternatives.**

- 1) *Natyashatra* is written by \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Bhasa  
b) Kalidasa  
c) Bharata Muni  
d) Shudraka
- 2) *Harvest*, the futuristic play is written by \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Manjula Padmanabhan  
b) Girish Karnad  
c) Vijay Tendulkar  
d) Mohan Rakesh
- 3) *Mrichchakatika* is written by \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Kalidasa  
b) Bhavabhuti  
c) Shudraka  
d) Bharata
- 4) Dharamvir Bharati was the chief editor of the Hindi magazine \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Dharma Yug  
b) Abhyudaya  
c) Sangam  
d) none of above
- 5) Dharamvir Bharati was awarded with *Padmashree* in the Year \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) 1962  
b) 1972  
c) 1982  
d) 1992.

**B) Answer in one word/phrase/sentence.**

- 1) Which ancient book is regarded as the fifth Veda?
- 2) What are the major influences on Modern Indian English drama?
- 3) Give any two characteristic features of Dharamvir Bharati's literary style.
- 4) Who is the translator of *Andha Yug*?
- 5) Who is the originator of *Rasa* Theory?

### 3.3.2 Terms to Remember

- ◆ *Natyashastra*: The *Natyashastra* is a Sanskrit treatise on the performing arts. The text is attributed to sage Bharata.
- ◆ Bhasa: One of the earliest Indian playwrights in Sanskrit. He wrote 13 plays. *Swapnavasadatta* is notable.
- ◆ Shudraka: An Indian Sanskrit playwright. He wrote 03 plays. *Mirchchakatika* is one of them.
- ◆ Kalidasa: Ancient India's greatest poet and dramatist. *Abhijnanashakuntalam*, *Meghduta* are his notable plays.
- ◆ Vishakhadatta: An Indian Sanskrit poet and playwright, his play *Mudrarakshasa* is well known one.
- ◆ Bhavabhuti: Sanskrit scholar, poet and playwright his play. His best-known work is *Uttararamchritra*.
- ◆ Rasa Theory: Originated from Bharata Muni's *Natyashastra*. Rasa theory explores the relationship between art, emotion and audience experience.
- ◆ Kuttiam: A traditional form of Sanskrit theatre from Kerala.
- ◆ Kuchipudi: A classical Indian dance form originating from Andhra Pradesh.
- ◆ Yakshgana: A traditional folk dance and drama form popular in the coastal districts of Karnataka and Kerala.
- ◆ Swang: Swang, also known as Saang or Svang is a popular folk dance – theatre form from Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and the Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh.
- ◆ Nautanki: A musical folk performance in northern India.
- ◆ Dashavatar: A traditional folk theatre form popular in Konkan region of Maharashtra and Goa.
- ◆ Tamasha: A traditional form of Marathi folk theatre originated in Maharashtra. It is a vibrant and energetic performance that combines elements of music, dance, drama and social commentary. Tamasha means fun, show and entertainment.
- ◆ Rasleela and Ramleela: Both involve dramatic reenactments related to Hindu deities Ram and Krishna.
- ◆ Prayogvad: It refers to a literary movement in Hindi literature, particularly in poetry.
- ◆ Stream of Consciousness: It is a narrative technique that attempts to represent the continuous and often random flow of thoughts, feelings and sensations experienced by a character's mind.
- ◆ Allegory: Allegory is a narrative or visual representation in which a character,

place or event can be interpreted to represent a meaning with moral or political significance.

- ◆ Intertextuality: It refers to the way that texts (Literature, film, music, etc) are connected to and influenced by other texts.
- ◆ Existential: It is related to a Philosophy according to which the world has no meaning and each person is alone and completely responsible for his or her actions.

### 3.4 About the *Mahabharata*

The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are the two great Sanskrit epics form the ancient India. The *Mahabharata* is the foundational text of Hindu Philosophy and culture. It is about the conflict between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. It is the longest epic poem ever written, approximately 1.8 million words – roughly ten times the combined length of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the Greek epics. It contains over 100,000 shloksas (couplets). It is attributed to Vyasa (Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa) who is the son of Parashar Rishi/sage and Satyawati (later Satyawati became the second wife of Shantanu). If we locate its title – The *Mahabharata*, it is the story of the great Bharata Dynasty or the great India.

It is about the war between the two branches of the capital Kuru dynasty. Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva are five righteous sons of Pandu. The Kauravas are the hundred sons of the blind king Dhritarashtra. They are led by the eldest Duryodhana. After the death of Pandu there is dispute about the rightful heir of Hastinapur. From childhood Kauravas and Pandavas have rivalry. The rivalry culminates in the Kurukshetra war, in which the Pandavas become victorious.

The story of the *Mahabharata* begins with Shantanu, the king of Hastinapur. His marriage with goddess Ganga is short lived. They had a son Devavrata. (later known as Bhishma) After some years Shantanu falls in love with Satyawati, the daughter of a fisherman. For father's marriage, Shantanu not only relinquishes his right to throne but also takes a vow of life long celibacy.

From Shantanu, Satyawati has two sons. Chitrangada and Vichitravirya. Chitrangada dies young. Vichitravirya becomes the king of Hastinapur. For the marriage of Vichitravirya, Bhishma abducts the three daughters, Amba, Ambika and Ambalika of the king of Kashi. Ambika and Ambalika marry Vichitravirya but Amba loves Shalva King. But Shalva rejects her now, she pleads Bhishma to marry but Bhishma rejects because of his vow. Amba wants to take revenge of Bhishma due to humiliation, later is reborn to king Drupada as Shikhandi and causes Bhishma's death.

Vichitravirya dies young without any heirs, Satyawati asks Vyasa (her son from Parashar) to give heirs to Hastinapur through *Niyoga*. Vyasa agrees but Ambika

shuts her eyes when she sees Vyasa and so her son Dhritarashtra is born blind. Ambalika turns pale and her son Pandu is born pale. Satyawati asks Vyasa to try again, but this time Ambika and Ambalika send their maid, and the third son to a maid is born, that is Vidura. Vidura becomes the wisest Prime Minister of Kuru dynasty.

Even though Dhritarashtra is the eldest, he is blind and so, the throne is given to Pandu. Pandu has two wives Kunti and Madri. Dhritarashtra marries Gandhari. Gandhari blind folds herself to share the pain of her husband. Shakuni is Gandhari's brother. Once when Pandu has gone in the forest, he shoots an arrow in the direction of the sound of a deer. Actually, it was Sage Kindama and his wife engaged in sexual act in the guise of deer. He curses Pandu, that if engages in sexual act, he will die. Pandu becomes nervous, retires to forest and Dhritarashtra becomes the king of Hastinapur.

Kunti, Pandu's wife has been blessed by Durvasa Sage that she can invoke any of the Gods using mantra for child. With this boon Kunti invokes *Dharma*, *Yama*, *Indra* and bears Yudhishtira, Bhima and Arjuna respectively. She shares the mantra to Madri who bears twins Nakula and Sahadeva from Ashwinikumar, Kunti, when was virgin, due to curiosity has invoked Surya and had a son Karna, whom she had forsaken. Later Karna becomes soulmate of Duryodhana. After the death of Pandu and Madri, Kunti returns to Hastinapur with her five sons, the Pandavas.

Dhritarashtra also becomes the father of hundred sons and a daughter, Dushala. They all are called as Kauravas. There is always rivalry between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Duryodhana, Dushasana and Shakuni try to kill Pandavas in *Lakshagraha*. But Pandavas are saved and they hide themselves for some period in the guise of Brahmins. In the *swayanvara* of Panchal's daughter Draupadi, Arjuna wins her. Kunti asks Arjuna to share whatever Arjuna has won and Draupadi, in this way, becomes the wife of all five brothers.

After the marriage, the Pandavas arrive to Hastinapur and ask for justice. They obtain a wild forest which is inhabited by *Takshaka*, the king of snakes. The Pandavas build a new glorious city *Indraprasth*. Arjuna marries Subhadra, Krishna's sister. In Indraprastha, there is an illusionary palace *Maysabha*. Pandavas invite Kauravas. At *Maysabha*, Duryodhana walks on water, assuming it is rangoli of flowers and falls in pond. Draupadi laughs at him. This insult of Duryodhana has the seeds of Draupadi *Vastraharan*.

Duryodhana, being jealous of the Pandavas, invites them to play the game of dice. In the game, Yudhishtira loses everything, his wealth, kingdom brother and finally wife Draupadi. The Kauravas, especially Dushasana and Duryodhana try to disrobe Draupadi but Krishna miraculously provides her dress endless and saves her. As per the dice, now the Pandavas are required to go into the exile for 12 years and in the 13<sup>th</sup> year they have to remain in *Agyata Vaasa*, hiding themselves.

The Pandavas spend 13 years of exile. At the end, Krishna becomes the ambassador of Pandavas and ask Kauravas to give them at least five villages. The Kauravas do not agree. The battle at Kurukshetra takes place. Krishna becomes the charioteer of Arjuna.

Before the war starts, Arjuna observes that the opposing army includes his own people – Bhishma, Drona and his brothers. He is frustrated and refuses to fight. At this time Krishna advises him that this war is being played for righteous reason (*Dharma Yudha*). *Bhagavat Gita* is the advice given by Krishna.

The battle is played for 18 days. Only the Pandavas, Satyaki, Kripa, Ashwatthama, Kritavarma, Yuyutsu and Krishna survive. According to Gandhari Krishna is responsible for war and she curses annihilation of his Yadav family.

### **Aftermath of War and Ashwathama**

Duryodhana is all alone, frustrated sat in a lake hiding himself from Bhima, still having the burning desire of revenge. Ashwatthama, the son of Dronacharya wishes to take revenge of the Pandavas for his father's unjust death.

He enters the Pandavas' tent, intending to murder sleeping Pandavas. But Shrikrishna has guided the Pandavas to sleep in a different tent. In their tent, Draupadi's sons are sleeping and Ashwathama in the darkness kills them and brings their heads to Duryodhana. But both find that these heads are not the heads of the Pandavas but the heads of their sons. When Draupadi and the Pandavas find the bodies of their sons, agitated Arjuna sets off with Krishna to kill Ashwatthama. Ashwatthama releases Brahmastra. Two weapons collide and withdrawn. Arjuna seizes Ashwatthama and takes him to Draupadi. Draupadi asks Arjuna not to kill Ashwathama but to punish him. Arjuna removes the jewel from his head and shaves off Ashwathama's sacred tuft of hair – the *shikha* as an act of dishonour. In this way he takes off his prestige.

Ashwatthama releases the Brahmastra once again, this time targeting Uttara's unborn child (Abhimanyu's son). Shrikrishna protects Uttara's womb and the child. The child later becomes Parikshit.

Kunti, Dhritarashtra, Gandhari, Vidura and Sanjaya left for the forest. They died in the forest fire. Lord Krishna too gets killed as per the curse of Gandhari, by an arrow accidentally shot in the thumb of his foot.

### **3.5 Retelling and Reinterpretation**

Retelling is about restating the original content without changing the meaning. Here the key is accuracy and preserving the original content. Reinterpretation is going beyond just retelling. It involves adding a new perspective. Reinterpretation can be analytical and creative. Retelling keeps the core message intact, while reinterpretation offers a new lens. Retelling is a faithful re-count of the original content. It can be summarizing, paraphrasing or narrating without adding new meaning or perspective. It can be simpler. In reinterpretation, hidden meaning is explored for

example, analysing the *Ramayana* from the perspective of Ravana. In reinterpretation a classic text can be critically analysed from the lens of feminism, marxism or psychoanalytical point of view. It is a creative transformation. It analyses the material, subtext, symbolism and other things. It can change the meaning context or elements in interpretation. It requires analytical thinking and high creative insight.

The *Mahabharata* has been reinterpreted server times by regional writers in India. *The Mahabharata* is a living, cultural organism. It is not of a particular age but of all ages. It is constantly and continuously reinterpreted across time, regions, languages and perspectives. The reinterpretations reflect individual perspective of looking at this great epic. Every generation finds a new meaning in it. The *Mahabharata* is vast in themes, rich in characterization and ambiguous regarding moral application and hence is regarded as a fertile ground for reinterpretations. In the modern and post-modern periods, it is reimagined from completely different lenses – feminist, political, subaltern, psychological and many more. These reinterpretations have challenged traditional narratives and provided a completely different yet fresh perspective. Let us explore the major approaches.

### **1. Character – Centric Reinterpretation [Giving voices to Marginalized]**

Certain characters in the *Mahabharata* are ignored and wrongly represented. The character of Karna is portrayed as tragic antic hero, wronged by fate and caste. *Mritunjay* by Shivaji Sawant or *Radheya* by Ranjit Desai are examples. *Randamoozham* (Malayalam) by M.T. Vasudevan Nair is a profound psychological exploration of Bhima, portraying him not as a brute but as a deeply emotional, loyal and overlooked middle brother who loves Draupadi more than other Pandavas and completes her revenge by killing Duryodhana and Dushasana. *Karna's wife: The Outcast's Queen* by Kavita Kane focuses on Urvi, Karna's second wife. The novel explores Karna's loyalty to Duryodhana and his inner conflict and nobility.

From feminist lens, the novel *The Palace of Illusions* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni challenges patriarchal structures. It highlights her rage against commodification (*Swayamvara, dicegame, polyandry*) *Yajnaseni* (Hindi) by Pratibha Ray focus on Draupadi's struggle, her strength and resilience. A short story *Draupadi* by Mahashweta Devi is a radical contemporary allegory comparing Draupadi to Dopdi, a santhal tribal woman. The *Sari Shop* by Rupa Bajwa features Gandhari's perspective, her blindfolded world, her complex relationship with Dhritarashtra and her grief as a mother. Kavita Kane's novel *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty* (on Satyawati) and *Menaka's Choice* (on Menaka) give voice to women characters.

There are non-fictional analytical reinterpretations also.

### **2. Thematic Reinterpretations**

The *Mahabharata* has been analysed by using various angles. It is critically interpreted on political, philosophical social issues. *The Great Indian Novel* by Shashi Tharoor is a satirical masterpiece transposing onto the Indian Independence Movement. *Jaya: An Illustrated Retelling of Mahabharata* by Devdutt Pattanaik, *Until the Lions* by Karthika Nair, *Yayati* by Girish Karnad are other examples. Plays by Habib Tanvir (e.g. *Agra Bazar*) use the *Mahabharata* themes to comment on social hierarchies. Certain texts focus on epics core philosophical and existential explorations *Yuganta* by Irawati Karve, *Parva* (Kannada) by S.L. Bhairappa are examples. *Eklavya Stories* comment on caste and social injustice. B.R. Ambedkar's writings critically analysed the *Mahabharata's* treatment of Shudras and women from Dalit and women perspective. Modern plays and films also reinterpret the *Mahabharata*. Graphic novels and comics are also reinterpretations. *Amar Chitra Katha* introduced simple stories.

There are countless retellings and folk interpretations across India and southeast Asia. For example, *Jambul Aakhyani* in Marathi.

These reinterpretations challenge the traditional interpretations. They give voice to marginalized people. They state Universality of the epic. They are the artistic experimentation. They demonstrate the *Mahabharata's* incredible elasticity and enduring power. They reveal the new layers of this vast text.

### 3.5.1. Check Your Progress

#### A] Choose the correct alternatives.

- 1) The \_\_\_\_\_ is about the conflict between the Pandavas and the Kauravas.
 

|                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| a) <i>Ramayana</i> | b) <i>Mahabharata</i> |
| c) <i>Purana</i>   | d) <i>Vedas</i>       |
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ is the son of Shantanu and Ganga.
 

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| a) Devvrata      | b) Chitransen    |
| c) Vichitravirya | d) Dhritarashtra |
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ is the son born to the maid and Vyasa.
 

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| a) Dhritarashtra | b) Pandu         |
| c) Vidura        | d) none of above |
- 4) Nakul and Sahadev are the sons of \_\_\_\_\_.
 

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| a) Kunti    | b) Madri    |
| c) Gandhari | d) Draupadi |
- 5) The battle of Kurukshetra was played for \_\_\_\_\_ days.

- |       |       |
|-------|-------|
| a) 20 | b) 24 |
| c) 18 | d) 27 |

**B] Answer in one/word/phrase/sentence.**

- 1) Who has written the epic the *Mahabharata*?
- 2) What is the name of the new city built by the Pandavas?
- 3) What is the difference between Retelling and Reinterpretation?
- 4) Who is the writer of the novel '*The Palace of Illusions*'?
- 5) Who is Ashwatthama?

**3.5.2. Terms to Remember**

- ◆ Vyasa: Sage Vyasa authored the epic the *Mahabharata*.
- ◆ Satyawati: Queen of Kuru Kingdom, wife of King Shantanu of Hastinapur.
- ◆ Shantanu: King of Kuru Kingdom, Father of Bhishma and the great grandfather of the Pandavas and Kauravas.
- ◆ Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva: Five Pandavas.
- ◆ Dhritarashtra: Son of Vyasa and Ambika, He is the blind king of Kuru dynasty. Father of the Kauravas.
- ◆ Pandu: Son of Vyasa and Ambalika, Husband of Kunti and Madri and Father of the Pandavas.
- ◆ Gandhari: Wife of Dhritarashtra, blindfolds herself.
- ◆ Devvrat/Bhishma: Son of Ganga and Shantanu. He relinquishes his all rights and takes a vow of lifelong celibacy.
- ◆ Duryodhana: The eldest son of Dhritarashtra and Gandhari.
- ◆ Agyata Vasa: The Pandavas have to hide their identity for a year.
- ◆ Bhagavad Gita: A Hindu scripture, in a form of a dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna.
- ◆ Satyaki: A powerful Yadava chieftain of Narayani Sena of Krishna.
- ◆ Kripacharya: A teacher of the Pandavas and the Kauravas. He fought on the Kauravas' side and was among the three survivors on Kauravas' side. He is supposed to be Chiranjivi (immortal)
- ◆ Ashwatthama: Son of Dronacharya.
- ◆ Kritavarma: A warrior from Yaduv-vansha, fought from Kauravas' side.
- ◆ Yuyutsu: Son of Dhritarashtra and a maid.
- ◆ Dronacharya: The royal preceptor of the Kauravas and the Pandavas, Father of Ashwatthama.
- ◆ Uttara: Abhimanyu's wife, she was widowed at the young age during Kurukshetra

war.

- ◆ Brahmastra: A powerful celestial weapon created by Lord Brahma, capable of immense destruction.

### 3.6 Act wise Summary of *Andha Yug*

*Andha Yug* is originally written in Hindi about the aftermath of the *Mahabharata*, translated into English by Alok Bhalla as *Age of Blindness* questions moral, philosophical and psychological impact of the great war. The play relates about the consequences of the disastrous war where families and friends fought together. The play also deals with the grief and the ethical dilemmas faced by the survivors.

#### Prologue

Prologue is the very beginning of a drama before the main story. It provides background information crucial for understanding the main story. It establishes tone of the play. It starts with invocation to Narayan, Lord Vishnu. Then it is followed by proclamation – that the play is concerned with the age of darkness (which is described in *Vishnu Purana*). After this age there will be a decline in prosperity and dharma. The one who has wealth shall rule, the one who wears a false mask shall be honoured, the one who is greedy shall be King. The miserable people will wait helplessly, hiding in dark caves for the end of their misery. After this terrifying war men's thoughts and deeds will become corrupt. Good and evil mix together and only Lord Krishna will separate them. Krishna alone is dispassionate and detached. He alone is saviour of future. People who are blind, (morally) self-absorbed, depressed, confused and lost will be enlightened by and through Krishna alone.

Prologue ends with these line –

“This is the story of the blind –  
or of enlightenment  
through the life of the blind.”

#### Act – I – The Kaurava Kingdom

Act I sets up the moral decay of the Kauravas clan. It is the final night of the 18<sup>th</sup> day of the Kurukshetra war. The setting of Act-I is a ruined, deserted and dejected palace of Hastinapur which is the capital city of the Kuru kingdom. Darkness has pervaded all over the city. There is utter despair and sadness inside out. As the title *Andha Yug* suggests, there is moral darkness.

The scene opens and the narrator introduces

“Both sides in the war  
violated

the code of honour  
smashed it  
ripped it into shreds  
and scattered it –  
the Kauravas perhaps more than the Pandavas.”  
The narrator further illustrates the theme of the Play.  
“Blindness rules this age  
not reason and blindness shall prevail  
in the end.”

Two guards pace up and down in the desolate palace of the Kauravas. The guards are tired and they repeatedly say “We are tired, very tired,” they are guarding the desolate corridors of the palace. All the Kauravas queens have become widows. They say:

“This is the kingdom  
of an old and blind ruler  
whose children in their blindness  
declared a bitter war.”

Suddenly they listen a terrifying sound like a thunder storm. But it is the sound of thousands and thousands of vultures. Vultures symbolize death.

Vidura, the half-brother of Dhritarashtra and the Prime Minister of Hastinapur arrives. He is anxious about the news that Sanjaya will bring. Sanjaya is Dhritarashtra’s charioteer and narrates the incidents on Kurukshetra as he is blessed with *Divya Drishti* (Visionary power).

Gandhari, the Queen and Dhritarashtra the King of Hastinapur arrive. Chorus illustrates the condition of both who have still blind hope of victory. Vidura is conversing with them. Dhritarashtra says –

“Vidura  
for the first time  
in my life  
I am afraid.”

Vidura answers that all Bhishma, Drona, Krishna have advised to be just to Pandavas. Krishna has warned not to violate the code of honour. To this, Dhritarashtra answers that his law was his love for his sons. It was the code of honour for him. Vidura answers that due to the blind love both Gandhari and Dhritarashtra have lost their sons one by one. Dhritarashtra accepts that he has realized this truth only today. Vidura advises both Gandhari and Dhritarashtra to surrender their hearts and

minds to Krishna. Gandhari becomes furious and she blames Krishna for orchestrating the war and further adds destruction of Kauravas clan. She says, “He is fraud.” And further adds:

“Morality, honour, selflessness  
and surrender to Krishna  
are mere disguises.”

According to her there was no dharma on either side.

Gandhari is completely collapsed due to her grief. When Vidura calls her “Mother.” She says that the word ‘mother’ pierces her soul like a red-hot iron.

While they are talking a mendicant comes who has professed the inevitability of war and declared that Kauravas will certainly win. He confesses that his prophesy has proved false but still in her blind faith Gandhari thinks that Duryodhana shall be victorious. Dhritarashtra eagerly wants to know “who won, who lost?” Sanjaya still has not arrived. The chorus sums up Act I in these words –

“There are still two fading embers left in the  
ruined city.  
A blind and self-deceiving king  
shuffling in the void of his own  
circle of darkness  
and bewildered  
heart-broken Gandhari  
still clinging to hope with blind desperation.”

Act I introduces the theme of the play. It introduces the characters Gandhari, Dhritarashtra and Vidura. The characters of guards and mendicant are also used symbolically. The chorus and the narrator build a relation to audience by telling the events. The play uses verse.

## **Act II – The Making of a Beast**

In Act II the setting is shifted to the forest. It opens with chorus. We are introduced to the character of Sanjaya. Sanjaya is described as sculptor of words. He is full of doubt and confusion. He has to narrate the incidents to blind listeners. But by this night of delusions, Sanjaya is also distracted, and in the forest, he has lost his way. He has a big question how to tell Dhritarashtra and Gandhari about the shameful defeat of Kauravas. He, in the way, meets Kritavarma, the great commander of Yadavas. Kritavarma tells Sanjaya about the dreadful slaughtering of the Kauravas army by Arjuna. Though Sanjaya is immortal, the very idea of being immortal at this age horrifies him. He dares not to tell Duryodhana’s defeat to Dhritarashtra. He says:

“What shall I tell them?  
That the bravest of the warriors  
stood next to his shattered chariot  
barefoot  
disarmed  
bloodstained  
defeated?  
Then  
When he saw me  
he lowered his head  
and cried?  
What shall I tell them?”

Only Kritavarma, Kripacharya and Ashwatthama are alive. Kripacharya is Dronacharya's brother-in-law. Ashwatthama is Dronacharya's son and Kritavarma is the commander of Yadava army.

Ashwatthama is full of rage as he wants to take revenge of his father's death. In the war of Kurukshetra, Dronacharya, the guru of the Pandavas and the Kauravas fought too bravely. It was quite necessary to stop him to save the Pandavas. An elephant named Ashwatthama was killed in the war and Dronacharya received the news that “Ashwatthama is dead” Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas was known for his truthfulness. To check the authenticity of the news, Drona asked him whether in reality Ashwatthama is dead. To that Yudhishtira answered “Yes, Ashwatthama is dead.... *Naro va Kunjoro wa*” The next words he just whispered. (I don't know whether it is an elephant or a human)

With the news of the death of his beloved son, Drona threw his weapons, sat in his chariot helplessly. Dhrishtadyumna (Draupadi's brother) at the same time cut him to pieces with sword. Ashwatthama knew that his father was invincible but Yudhishtira's half-truth killed him. And all that was good and gentle in Ashwatthama's heart was killed too. He thought Yudhishtira who was honoured as Dharmaraj changed him to a beast. He declares –

From now on  
My only Dharma is:  
Kill, kill, kill  
and kill again.”

Sanjaya who is lost in the forest comes and angry, avengeful Ashwatthama attacks him thinking him to be Pandavas' soldier Kripacharya and Kritavarma clams him.

The trio, Sanjaya, Kripacharya and Kritavarma know that Duryodhana is still alive, hiding himself in a lake. They all leave in his search. Old mendicant enters. He states that the inevitability of war began when Krishna advised Arjuna to lift his bow and fight without fear. Krishna said:

“The meaning of a man’s existence  
lies in the actions he performs  
not in his refusal to act.”

When Ashwatthama tells the old mendicant about Duryodhana, he repeats his words, “Duryodhana shall be victorious.” Ashwatthama is quite angry on the mendicant and drags him forcefully and kills him. Kripacharya gives Duryodhana’s message to Ashwatthama to wait until tomorrow.

According to Kripacharya, the war was played violating all the rules of war. Abhimanyu, Dronacharya and others were killed in an unheroic manner. Act II underlines futility of war. It also unfolds the truth that the *Mahabharata* is a tale of revenge.

### **Act III – The Half-truth of Ashwatthama**

Act III starts with the narrator describing how Sanjaya’s story of the defeat of Kauravas turned Gandhari into stone. It is a story of defeat and disgrace while Dhritarashtra is expressing his grief to Vidura, a soldier whose tongue has been cut out, who has lost his hearing, crawls and begs for water. This is symbolic of the state of Kauravas army.

Dhritarashtra is anxious about the last battle between Bhima and Duryodhana. The city is overshadowed by terror and panic. An enemy soldier, full armed has entered into the city, hence the people are terrified. But he is no none but Yuyutsu. Yuyutsu is the son of King Dhritarashtra, born to a Vaishya class concubine who serves as a maid to Gandhari. He is half-brother of Duryodhana and other ninety-nine Kauravas. But he chooses the path of righteousness. He said:

“I will not fight  
on the side of untruth  
I may be a Kaurava  
but truth is higher  
than my clan.”

Yuyutsu thinks that Gandhari will not ever want to see his face. The people of Hastinapur called him ‘a sorcerer.’ When Yuyutsu touches Gandhari’s feet, Gandhari asks –

“Son  
I hope

those strong arms of yours  
are not tired  
from slaughtering  
your relatives  
are they?"

Because of Gandhari's words Yuyutsu is quite hurt. He asks Vidura "what did I gain? When Vidura asks Yuyutsu to give water to wounded soldier, the soldier crawls away in terror as Yuyutsu's arrows have burnt his knees. While they are speaking, there is a news that in the final combat Duryodhana has been defeated by Bhima.

The scene changes from palace to forest. Here we meet Kritavarma, Kripacharya and Ashwatthama. Ashwatthama tells them that Duryodhana was killed by treachery. Balarama, the elder brother of Krishna and guru of Duryodhana and Bhima, also thinks that Bhima violated dharma by smashing Duryodhana's thighs. He criticizes Krishna, calls him "an unprincipled rogue."

Ashwatthama decides to kill all the Pandavas. He thinks:  
"Dhrishtadyumna violated dharma  
when he killed you (Drona)  
Bhima violated dharma  
when he killed Duryodhana."

Half dead Duryodhana still hoped that Ashwatthama will take revenge of Pandavas. He appoints Ashwatthama as commander. Ashwatthama decides to attack unarmed, sleeping Pandavas. He decides to kill Dhrishtadyumna, the Pandavas and even Uttara who is carrying Abhimanyu's son. Kripacharya tries to stop him but he doesn't stop. Ashwatthama symbolizes lingering pride and thirst for revenge. Moral and ethical blindness is increasing Act III ends with profound dread.

### **Interlude**

The purpose of the interlude is to provide a pause or transition. In the interlude the old mendicant murdered by Ashwatthama enters. He admits that he was a false prophet and now he has become a sad spectre. He says that this is the blind age. Life in this age is like a blind and turbulent ocean. He with his visionary powers, raise the characters of Yuyutsu, Vidura and Sanjay. They appear as spectres.

Yuyutsu's spectre thinks "though like a firm wheel, I was fixed to a chariot throughout the war, I feel as if I had spun on the wrong axle and have lost my bearings.' Yuyutsu, though was a son of Dhritarashtra, fought from the Pandavas's side. But he doubts whether he had taken the wrong decision.

Sanjaya's spectre says that he was exiled from war. He expresses his regret that he was unable stop war.

Vidura's spectre says that he is a "devout and righteous follower of Krishna." But now his simple and unassuming faith is transforming into doubt. But he has determined not to doubt as it is a sin to doubt.

While these characters are speaking, a peacock feather floats. It is indicative that it is Krishna's. Krishna is perhaps returning from Hastinapur, after consoling Gandhari. He listens the bells of the chariot of Krishna. There is another chariot of Ashwatthama. It is a blood-soaked feather of a black crow that represents Ashwatthama. The mendicant is anxious about "will Krishna be able to squash the black serpent of hate (of Ashwatthama)?" He observes that Ashwatthama's chariot has reached the Pandavas camp. But someone huge like a giant is standing before Ashwatthama.

Interlude is a small pause.

#### **Act IV: Gandhari's Curse**

The chorus introduces this act. Someone huge like a giant standing before Ashwatthama was Shankara, thousands of venomous snakes encircling his arms like amulets. Full of rage, standing in front of the Pandavas camp he waits threatening annihilation. Ashwatthama attacks him. Shankara only can face Ashwatthama. His body endures each blow and accepts defeat Ashwatthama prays Shankara and asks him to bless him. And

"Easy to please  
Easy to appease  
Shiva raised his hand  
and blessed him  
Ashwatthama you will be victorious."

The scene shifts to palace. Gandhari inquisitively asks Sanjaya what happened next. Blessed by Shankara, Ashwatthama reaches Dhrishtadyumna's tent, drags him out of bed, kneels on his chest and wrings his neck till his eyeballs popped out. He blinds him first and then he kicks him again and again till he is dead. While Sanjaya is narrating the incidents, Gandhari is excited. The soldiers, Sanjaya narrated further, who come out of their tents are slaughtered by Ashwatthama's poison tipped arrows.

Draupadi has five sons from five Pandavas. Prathivindya was Yudhishtira's son, Sutasoma was Bhima's son, Shrutakarma was Arjuna's, Shatanik was Nakula's son and Shrutasena was Sahadeva's son. They are known as Uppandavas. Shatanik, unable to find a weapon picks a chariot wheel and tries to attack. Ashwatthama cuts off his legs. Shikhandi is sleeping at a distance and Ashwatthama's arrows split his head into two.

Gandhari is listening all the episode quite curiously and asking the question again and again, "what happened next?" Vidura thinks that Gandhari's heart is made of stone and he tries to convince her that such vengeance is useless. Vidura explains

further the terribly frightened people in the Pandavas camp, how even the children, old people and servants are mercilessly cut down by Kritavarma's arrow and then the Pandavas camp is set on fire. Like a possessed warrior Ashwatthama has killed everyone.

Gandhari stops Sanjaya and requests him to grant her a glimpse of Ashwatthama with Sanjaya's visionary powers. Though Ashwatthama is cruel and dreadful, Gandhari thinks that he is heroic as he achieved what hundred Kauravas and all the *Maharathis* like Bhishma and Drona – could not achieve.

Sanjaya answers that this boon has been granted to him by Vyasa for limited duration. Gandhari urges again to grant her visionary powers to see Ashwatthama.

Sanjaya prays that with his visionary powers, Gandhari can observe Ashwatthama. The scene shifts to the forest where Kritavarma and Kripacharya are telling wounded Duryodhana how Ashwatthama killed five upandavas (Pandavas's sons) and set the Pandavas camp on fire. He also conveys the news that Ashwatthama has gone to fetch Brahmastra. Sanjaya asks Gandhari to remove the blindfold but she cannot see Duryodhana die.

While they are talking Ashwatthama comes and he explains his plan to kill pregnant Uttara, wounded Duryodhana dies and Gandhari removes blind fold but she cannot see Duryadhara as she faints due to grief. Ashwatthama promises her to take revenge. He says:

“Gandhari  
I promise  
that just as Krishna destroyed  
all the sons  
born of your womb  
I will destroy  
the child  
in Uttara's womb.  
I will not let that child  
be born.”

Gandhari takes off her blind fold to grant Ashwatthama strength but she is unable to see Ashwatthama as Sanjaya has lost his visionary power. He is unable to see forest or Duryodhana. He has become an ordinary person.

Vidura requests Gandhari to leave Hastinapur to perform holy rites for the dead Kauravas. He also asks Yuyutsu to join then. Yuyutsu, who has faught from the Pandavas's side is ashamed to offer rituals to his brothers. Dhritarashtra and Gandhari advise Yuyutsu to hide himself from Ashwatthama. On the way, they observe the chariots of Kripacharya, Kritavarma and Ashwatthama.

Sanjaya tells that the brave soldier (Ashwatthama) has become incarnation of fear. While they are talking, there are sounds of explosion, the sky is lit with Arjuna's fiery arrows. As the place is not safe, all go away.

Ashwatthama whose neck has been pierced with arrow comes on the stage and he challenges and releases Brahmastra:

“Krishna's  
insatiable hunger for war  
will not be satisfied  
till all the Pandavas  
have been killed  
so be it.  
Here is Brahmastra  
Not even a hundred million Krishna  
can counter Brahmastra.  
There  
I have released the Brahmastra”

Ashwatthama has become blind of revenge and ego and is ready to destroy the world. Vyasa warns him and tells whether he knows the consequences of Brahmastra. There won't be life on earth, even the newborn child shall become deformed. Blind with revenge Ashwatthama says – “Let the world be reduced to ash.” Arjuna has also released the Brahmastra and the two weapons shall collide and earth will become a wasteland of ash and stones. Vyasa asks Ashwatthama to recall Brahmastra but Ashwatthama doesn't know how to recall it. He says:

“The weapon  
aimed at Uttara's womb  
shall find its target.  
It cannot be recalled.”

Vyasa thinks Ashwatthama is a 'beast' but Ashwatthama answers “Yudhisthira made me one.” But Krishna saves Uttara's child. He takes talismanic gem of Ashwatthama. Krishna defeats Ashwatthama.

While Vidura, Sanjaya, Yuyutsu, Gandhari and Dhritarashtra are moving forward, they come to the place where Duryodhana fell. Gandhari removes her blindfold and touches his armour and begins to mourn. Vidura says:

“Only virtuous actions  
which man performs  
by his own free will  
can be his protection  
his safety.”

Suddenly Gandhari sees a hideous man in the bush. Vidura tells her that this man whose body is covered with boils and scares who is cursed by Krishna with immortality, is Ashwatthama. With wounds forever, lacerated, and filthy he shall wander through forests forever for the sin of infanticide. He will become an abomination but shall live forever.

Gandhari holds Krishna responsible for war, for the death of her hundred sons. So Gandhari curses Krishna:

“You may be a god  
you may be omnipotent  
whatever you are  
whoever you are  
I curse you  
and I curse  
all your friends and Kinsmen.  
They shall attack and kill each other.  
They shall eat each other  
like rabid dogs.  
And many years later  
after you have witnessed  
their destruction  
you will return to this forest  
only to be killed  
like a wild animal  
by an ordinary hunter.”

Krishna accepts the curse saying “I may be a god but I am your son and you are my mother.” With Krishna’s submissive acceptance Gandhari experiences repentance.

The act is about how Mahabharata is voyage of revenge. It underlines how revenge kills consciousness and makes you blind.

#### **Act V: Victory and Series of Suicides**

Chorus introduces the action. Days, weeks, months and even years pass but the old city Hastinapur does not regain its glory again. Though the Pandavas were victorious, their self-confidence shatters. Krishna their guardian and counselor is under a curse. Bhima has become proud and dumb, Arjuna has become old and weary, Nakula ignorant and Sahadeva, retards from birth. Yudhishthira has been lost in his own dumb thought and is usually sad.

When the curtain rises, Yudhishthira asks himself a question “What is the cause of my sorrow?” He thinks that he is alone and defeated. His brothers are ignorant or foolish and insolent or weary. Bhima’s arrogant behaviour usually hurt people. While he is busy in his own thoughts Vidura and Kripacharya enter. Bhima, they complain has humiliated Yuyutsu. Yuyutsu has lost his power of speech. Gandhari and Dhritarashtra along with Kunti have retired to forest. Again, Yudhishthira hears roaring laughter of Bhima and along with Kripacharya and Vidura he goes to console Yuyutsu.

The stage is vacant. The two old guards walk up to the front of the stage. They are conversing about the people and their condition. They say:

“The ruler changed ....

.... but the conditions remained the same.”

Yuyutsu who has fought the war from the Pandavas side is hated, taunted and abused by people. They throw stones at him. Due to unbearable insults Yuyutsu commits suicide. Yuyutsu’s suicide is a question raised on Dharma. Yuyutsu will never get salvation. But Yudhishthira comes and tells Vidura that Yuyutsu is still alive and hence Vidura takes him to his hut to hide. Kripacharya is quite depressed and he decides to leave Hastinapur.

In the forest, Sanjaya, Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti are surrounded by flames. Sanjaya tries to save them but he is helpless. Only Sanjaya is saved. Kunti, Gandhari and Dhritarashtra are burnt to ashes in the fire.

There is also the news of war among the Yadavas. Vidura and Yudhishthira are not able to save Yuyutsu. Yudhishthira decides to leave for Himalayas. Vidura tries to stop him saying “to seek a slow death on some Himalayan peak would be still be suicide.”

The guards are talking about the destruction and dejection war has brought. The dark age will come; the lord Krishna will soon abandon the earth and *Kaliyug* will start.

### **Epilogue: Death of the Lord**

It is the very end. It is after the final act. It provides closure. It may reveal how the world or characters have changed years later. Epilogue starts with invocation. It is the praise of Lord. The Lord is the meaning of meaning. People take refuge in him, share all their grief. They trust him from generation to generation, praise him and his mysteries of creation.

While the chorus is singing the praise of Krishna, Ashwatthama criticizes. Krishna harshly. He thinks Krishna is responsible for the slaughtering of Yadavas.

Lord Krishna is sitting under the shade of a peepul tree, clam, silent, still and at peace. He knows what will happen the next moment. A hunter is hiding behind a bush. He mistakes Krishna’s foot for a deer and takes aim. The hunter releases his

arrow and three sharp notes of a flute are heard. Ashwatthama laughs wildly and Sanjaya faints. The Chorus sings-

“The moment Krishna was killed  
Dwapar yug came to an end  
and on this god-forsaken earth  
kaliyug took its first step.”

Ashwatthama observes all the incident hiding behind the palm trees. He asks Krishna whether he had forgiven him for his sins. He is feeling an experience of relief and it is beginning of faith. Yuyutsu’s spirit appears. Unlike Ashwatthama, Yuyutsu, the sons of Dhritarashtra had believed in Krishna’s illustration of Dharma and in the war, he stood from the Pandavas’s side. But he was abused and was reduced to embrace death. Yuyutsu felt that Krishna was a coward, an imposter and also impotent as he could not save him. He even could not save Parikshit (Son of Uttara and Abhimanyu) from the snake bite. Yuyutsu had lost his faith Ashwatthama had become a beast. So, what would be the future of mankind is Yuyutsu’s question.

The old mendicant appears on the stage. Now he has become an old hunter named Jara. It was the arrow from his bow that killed Krishna. Earlier he was an old astrologer and Ashwatthama had killed him. To free his soul from spectral world, Krishna asked him to complete Gandhari’s curse. He said,

“Ashwatthama committed a sin  
by killing you  
I shall atone for it  
through my suffering  
My death shall free you  
from this spectral world.”

Ashwatthama killed the mendicant. He became a wanderer spirit. Krishna took the suffering upon himself hence Ashwatthama was out of pain. The mendicant who became Jara and became the reason of Krishna’s death was free from the spectral world. Krishna’s face, when took his last breath, glowed with peaceful radiance. He said,

“Death does not exist  
death is only a transition  
from one state to another.”

After the end of the blind age, a new age will start and those who have faith on Krishna will find their way.

The drama ends with the declaration of Chorus.

“Where ever there is darkness and blind doubt

This seed is faith on Lord Krishna who always with all, whether you hold him or leave him, he is a radiant presence in your life.

With the ray of hope the drama ends.

### 3.6.2. Terms to Remember

- ◆ Hastinapur: The capital of Kuru Kingdom.
- ◆ Survivors: In the Kurukshetra war only Ashwatthama, Vidura, Sanjaya, Kripacharya and Kritavarma are the survivors.
- ◆ Half-truth: Truth about the death of Ashwatthama. The elephant named Ashwatthama was killed.

### 3.7 Answers to check your progress

#### 3.3.1

A) 1) c 2) a 3) c 4) a 5) b

**B)**

- 1) *Natyashastra*
- 2) Ancient Sanskrit Drama, Folk Traditional Drama and Western Drama.
- 3) Experimentation, Lyricism, Intellectual, Psychological Realism, Allegory and Symbolism, etc.
- 4) Alok Bhalla
- 5) Bharata Muni (Natyashastra)

#### 3.5.1

A) 1) b 2) c 3) c 4) b 5) c

**B)**

- 1) Sage Vyasa
- 2) Indraprastha
- 3) Retelling is restating the original meaning without any change and reinterpretation is adding a new perspective.
- 4) Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.
- 5) Ashwatthama is the son of Dronacharya.

#### 3.6.1

A) 1) a 2) b 3) c 4) b 5) a

**B)**

- 1) Consequences of disastrous war of *Mahabharata*.
- 2) Kritavarma is the Commander of the Yadavas.
- 3) Kritavarma, Kripacharya and Ashwatthama.
- 4) Prathivindya (Yudhishtira), Sutasona (Bhima), Shrutkarna (Arjuna), Shatanika (Nakula) and Shrutasena (Sahadev)
- 5) Krishna

### 3.8 Exercises.

#### A] Long Answer Question

- 1) Consider *Andha Yug* as a reinterpretation of the *Mahabharata*.
- 2) Explain the role of prologue, Interlude and Epilogue in the play *Andha Yug*.
- 3) Discuss Dharamvir Bharati's literary style in the light of *Andha Yug*.

#### B] Write short notes.

- 1) The role of two guards.
- 2) The opening of the play *Andha Yug*.
- 3) Characteristic features of Modern Indian English Drama.
- 4) The Story of the death of Drona.
- 5) Gandhari's curse.
- 6) Brahmastra episode.

### 3.9 References for further study

Bhalla Alok. "Defending the Sacred in an Age of Atrocities: On Translating *Andha Yug*". *Andha Yug*. By Dharamvir Bharati, New Delhi: OUP. 2016.

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**Module - 4**  
**Indian English Drama:**  
***Andha Yug* by Dharamvir Bharati**

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- 4.0 Objectives
  - 4.1 Introduction
  - 4.2 Structure and Plot Construction of *Andha Yug*
    - 4.2.1 Check Your Progress
    - 4.2.2 Terms to Remember
  - 4.3 Major and Minor Characters in *Andha Yug*.
    - 4.3.1 Check Your Progress
    - 4.3.2 Terms to Remember
  - 4.4 Critical Aspects of the Play
    - 4.4.1 Check Your Progress
    - 4.4.2 Terms to Remember
  - 4.5 Answers to Check Your Progress
  - 4.6 Exercises
  - 4.7 References for further study
- 

**4.0 Objectives**

After studying this module, students will be able to

- ◆ understand the structure and plot construction of the play *Andha Yug*.
- ◆ analyse major and minor characters and their roles in the play.
- ◆ understand critical aspects of the play, like themes, title, use of verse, etc.

**4.1 Introduction**

The play *Andha Yug*, written by Dharamvir Bharati and translated by Alok Bhalla is completely unique in theme and style. The play has five acts along with a prologue, interlude and epilogue. It's a blend of Indian folk and classical tradition. The play represents different characters and their psychological traits. It relates with physical, moral and spiritual decay and impacts of disastrous war. The play has universal value and it raises the question *What is Dharma?* The present module illustrates all the aspects of the play.

**4.2 Structure and Plot Construction of *Andha Yug***

Dharamvir Bharati's *Andha Yug* (1963) translated as *The Age of Blindness* or *The Blind Age* is a landmark verse play in Indian Literature that reimagines the final

day of the Mahabharata war. Set against the backdrop of a devastated Hastinapur, the play serves as a powerful anti-war allegory, reflecting the moral chaos and trauma of India's partition in 1947.

The play unfolds in five acts, framed by a prologue, interlude and an epilogue. It is a blend of western dramatic technique with Indian folk and Sanskrit tradition like the use of chorus.

#### **Play at a glance**

| <b>Section</b> | <b>Setting</b>                      | <b>Key Events</b>                                                                         |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) Prologue    | Stage (Before the main play starts) | Invocation- introduction of theme<br>main play starts)                                    |
| 2) Act I       | Kauravas' palace at Hastinapur      | Dhritarashtra's despair, Gandhari's grief, disillusioned condition of common people, etc. |
| 3) Act II      | Palace and Forest                   | Ashwatthama's rage and plans for revenge                                                  |
| 4) Act III     | Battle Field outskirts              | Ashwatthama releases Brahmastra                                                           |
| 5) Interlude   | Transcendent spacepresence          | Wheels and Feathers symbolize Krishna's existence.                                        |
| 6) Act IV      | Forest                              | Gandhari's curse, Ashwatthama is also cursed by Krishna                                   |
| 7) Act V       | Spiritual wasteland                 | Pandavas' accepting death one by one Krishna's acceptance of death                        |
| 8) Epilogue    | Forest                              | Prediction about Future. Krishna's forgiveness.                                           |

#### **Prologue**

The play opens on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of the Kurukshetra war. The prologue introduces the play in these words. "This play is concerned with the age of darkness and about the decline in prosperity and dharma. The coming age will be the age of people who will be greedy, wealthy and hypocrite and these will rule the world." The prologue illustrates that this is the story of the blind, self-absorbed, depressed and confused who have lost in the dark caverns of their souls. The prologue sums up the theme of the play. "This is the story of the blind or the enlightenment through the life of the blind."

#### **Act I: The Kauravas Kingdom**

Blind King Dhritarashtra and his queen Gandhari grapple with agony. Dhritarashtra's blindness is symbolic. His blind love for his sons invites war. Gandhari, who blindfolded herself in solidarity with her husband, now embodies maternal rage and disillusionment whereas Vidura's wisdom is also confused.

## **Act II: The Making of a Beast**

Ashwatthama, the son of slain guru Dronacharya emerges as the tragic anti-hero. Consumed by fury over his father's dishonourable killing he shatters his bow which is a symbol of abandoning warrior ethics. Dying Duryodhana appoints him commander. This act explores war's dehumanizing effects.

## **Act III: The Half Truth of Ashwatthama**

Driven nihilistic rage, Ashwatthama unleashes the Brahmastra – a divine weapon capable of cosmic annihilation. The sage Vyasa intervenes warning of its cataclysmic power. Ashwatthama's refusal to recall weapon symbolizes humanity's descent into irreversible. Self-destruction a clear parallel to nuclear war.

## **Interlude: Feathers, Wheels and Bandages**

A surreal sequence featuring Krishna's symbols (peacock feathers, chariot, wheels Flute etc.). The chorus reflects on the fragility of peace and accessibility of wisdom, even in darkness. Krishna remains unseen.

## **Act-IV: Gandhari's Curse**

Gandhari accuses Krishna of orchestrating the war through divine manipulation. In her agony, she curses him "Your clan will perish in fratricide and you will die like an animal shot by a hunter." Krishna accepts the curse calmly, revealing it as a cosmic destiny. Ashwatthama is cursed immortality with his bleeding sores.

## **Act-V: Victory and Series of Suicides**

The triumphant Pandavas experience victory meaningless. Suicides and desolation follow. Yuyutsu, humiliated and abused commits suicide. From the conversation of the guards, we understand that the ruler changed but the conditions of common people remained the same. Kunti, Dhritarashtra and Gandhari die due to forest fire.

## **Epilogue: Death of the Lord**

The Epilogue shows Krishna meditating in a forest. A hunter named Jara, mistakes his foot for a deer and fires the fatal arrow. Krishna's death heralds the dawn of Kali Yug. Krishna took the suffering of Ashwatthama, Sanjaya, Yuyutsu and the mendicant (Jara) and freed them of their pains.

Even though there is darkness that grows deeper and deeper, there is a small seed of courage and freedom that grows in the lives of human beings as duty, honour and virtuous conduct and will always save the future of mankind from blind doubt, slavery and defeat.

The play ends with a ray of hope. The plot is an excellent example of fusion of Sanskrit drama and modern verse. It is an allegory of its destruction of human lives and ethical values.



### 4.3 Major and Minor Characters in *Andha Yug*

- 1) Gandhari
- 2) Ashwatthama
- 3) Dhritarashtra
- 4) Sanjaya
- 5) Vidura
- 6) Yuyutsu
- 7) Kripacharya
- 8) Kritavarma
- 9) Old Mendicant
- 10) Vyasa
- 11) Yudhishthira
- 12) Balarama
- 13) Dumb Soldier
- 14) Two Guards
- 15) KRISHNA

#### 1. GANDHARI

Gandhari is the central figure in the play. She emerges as a tragic embodiment of maternal grief, moral blindness and the cyclical nature of violence. Her character serves as both a critique of war's futility and a symbol of the ethical day defining the 'Age of Blindness.' She is the princess of the Gandhara kingdom, daughter of king Subala and later becomes the queen of Dhritarashtra, the blind king of Kuru. In a symbolic gesture of solidarity, she voluntarily blindfolds herself for life. She is blessed by God Shiva and sage Vyasa, she gives birth to one hundred sons, Kauravas. Her eldest son is Duryodhana. Even though, she is a woman of great virtue and moral strength, she is unable to stop her sons from their behaviour. In a way, her passiveness is responsible for the long-lasting rivalry between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, that ultimately leads to catastrophic Kurukshetra war where all her sons perish. She represents all women who suffer due to the devastation caused by the conflict. While she refrains from cursing the Pandavas, her overwhelming grief drives her to curse Krishna, who she holds accountable for war's devastation despite his divine ability to prevent it. Gandhari, later, retires to the forest with Dhritarashtra and Kunti where she perishes in a forest fire.

##### 1) Her Maternal Grief and Psychological Turmoil

Gandhari, the mother of hundred sons had lost all her sons. When Vidura says that grief over the death of her sons has made her bitter mother. She says:

“Do not call me mother!  
a word that pierces  
my soul like a red-hot iron.”

Dushasana is brutally killed by Bhima and wounded Duryodhana is hiding in a pond from Bhima and still she hopes that Duryodhana will win. Hysterically she says,

“He has won!  
My son, Duryodhana has won!  
Didn't I tell you  
He would certainly be  
victorious today?”

Still, she hopes that Kauravas will be victorious. But when she knows about Duryodhana's death she becomes numb like a stone.

She questions the very foundations of dharma, she feels dharma, duty and honour are illusions. On Kurukshetra there was no dhrama on either side. Yuyutsu, her half son, fought in the war from the Pandavas side, hence she is unable to forgive him.

## **2) Her Moral Blindness**

Gandhari's voluntary blindfold mirroring her husband Dhritarashtra's physical blindness represents wilful ignorance towards her sons' sinful actions. Her silence is taken as her permission. Instead of plucking and removing unworthy ambition and brutality from the minds of Duryodhana and Dushasana; by remaining dumb she waters and feeds their brutal actions. Her blindness is moral one. Her blindness extends to her inability to acknowledge Krishna's attempt to prevent war. Instead, she holds him responsible, ignoring her own role in enabling the Kauravas' hubris.

## **3) He Confrontation with Krishna: The curse**

Gandhari blames Krishna for exploiting half-truths (misleading Drona for Ashwatthama's death) and sanctioning unethical war tactics. She views him not as a divine guide. She thinks Krishna as a 'fraud', 'unjust', and unrighteous.' She curses Krishna

“I curse you  
and I curse  
all your friends and Kinsmen.  
They shall attack and kill each other.  
They shall eat each other  
like rabid dogs.

And many years later  
after you have witnessed  
their destruction  
you will return to this forest  
only to be killed  
like a wild animal  
by an ordinary hunter.”

But when Lord Krishna accepts the curse, she begins to weep and repent. Krishna’s accepting his fate through Gandhari’s curse shows the inability of actions.

#### **4 Allegory for Post-Partition Trauma**

Dharamvir Bharati uses Gandhari’s grief to channel collective trauma after India’s partition. Her laments over “uprooted law”, ‘butchered bodies’ and “shattered modesty” mirrors self-world atrocities, framing war as universally dehumanizing.

#### **5) Dramatic function and Thematic Resonance**

Gandhari represents voice of conscience. Her dialogues with Vidura and Sanjaya expose futility of war and moral contradictions. She represents anti-war symbol. She represents material grief which turns into rage.

Gandhari transcends her mythological roots to become a timeless critique of war’s dehumanize effects. Her role represents uselessness of war and her blindness implies ethical failure. The writer uses her to argue that in the war, there are no victors – only survivors condemned to an ‘age of darkness.’

#### **2. Ashwatthama**

Ashwatthama was the son of Dronacharya, the royal preceptor to the Pandavas and Kauravas. He was a close companion of Duryodhana. He took the knowledge of several celestial weapons, including Brahmastra, the most destructive weapons or Astra. During the Kurukshetra war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, he fought on the side of the Kauravas and emerges as one of the three surviving warriors from their faction by the end of war. He was born with a gem on his head that protected him from various dangers. He was highly skilled warrior and he fought valiantly on the Kauravas side.

Ashwatthama in Dharamvir Bharati’s *Andha Yug*, is a haunting embodiment of blind vengeance, moral decay and cyclical nature of violence. Reimagined from the *Mahabharata*, his character becomes a potent allegory for the trauma of the Partition and the futility of war.

#### **His Transformation**

Ashwatthama a noble warrior, becomes a brutal beast due to unjust killing of his father Drona. Drona was considered invincible by the Pandavas as long as he

wielded his weapons. Krishna devised a plan and asked Bhima to kill an elephant named Ashwatthama and then announced his death. Yudhisthira was asked regarding this and he confirmed Ashwatthama's death. Drona was overcome with grief and shock, put down his weapons. Dhrishtadyumna seized the opportunity and killed Drona while he was meditating. His father's unjust and unrighteous death transforms him into a beast. The betrayal by Pandavas ignites Ashwatthama's wrath and desire for revenge. He declares:

“From now on  
my only dharma is  
kill, kill, kill  
and kill again.”

He rejects to follow *dharma*. He says:

“Dhrishtadyumna violated dharma  
when he killed Drona  
Bhima violated dharma  
when he killed Duryodhana  
Yet I  
Poor, orphaned Ashwatthama  
must alone carry  
the burden of honour and dharma!”

Once a warrior, he now embodies *adharma*. He now launches a night raid on the Pandavas camp. He slaughters all the five sons of Draupadi, in their sleep crushes Dhrishtadyumna, his father's killer and even attacks Uttara's womb (by releasing Brahmastra) to end the Pandavas lineage. When Vyasa asks him to recall Brahmastra, he refuses. This cements his role as “a symbol of vengeance.”

The play's title *Andha Yug* frames Ashwatthama as the personification of an era defined by moral decay. His actions accelerate the transition to this dark age, where humanity loses its ethical compass. His desire for revenge against the Pandavas symbolizes the futility of war and the cycle of hatred. His night raid – depicted as a descent into bestiality is not glorified warfare but a slaughter of sleeping warriors, making his transition from Kshatriya to butcher. This mirrors Bharati's critique of Partition-era barbarity.

### **Krishna's Curse and his Suffering**

Ashwatthama who releases the Brahmastra aiming Uttara and her child in her womb, is unable to recall it even though Sage Vyasa orders. Krishna who becomes very angry curses Ashwatthama immortality. There are sores on his body and he has to suffer physical pain. He is spiritually isolated. His immortality reflects existential

entrapment in a cycle of violence, forced to witness humanity's self-destruction. It is just like 'Life-in-Death' punishment. Even though Ashwatthama hated Krishna, at the end his heart is filled with faith on Krishna. Krishna has forgiven him and he takes his suffering upon himself.

Ashwatthama represents tit for tat savagery of Partition. His story can be even linked to nuclear annihilation and contemporary terrorism. He, in the drama is the embodiment of a civilization's moral blindness. He is a figure of immense potential but his actions lead to his downfall, showcasing the destructive power of negative emotions.

### 3. Dhritarashtra

Dhritarashtra was the ruler of ancient Kuru Kingdom. He is the central character in the epic the *Mahabharata*. His birth was the result of ancient practice of *Niyoga*. Vichitravirya dies childless so Vyasa his half-brother fathers children. Dhritarashtra is the son of Vyasa and Ambika. Despite being the eldest, his blindness disqualified him from inheriting the throne which passed to his younger half-brother Pandu. However, after Pandu renounced the throne and retired to the forest, Dhritarashtra assumed the kingship. Dhritarashtra married Gandhari a devoted wife, who in a gesture of solidarity blindfolded herself for life to share in her husband's blindness. His fond but blind love for Duryodhana, often clouded his judgements. He neglected his sons' misdeeds and was always unjust to the Pandavas. He also fathered a son Yuyutsu through a maid who later sided with the Pandavas during the war.

The entire details of the war of Kurukshetra are narrated to Dhritarashtra by Sanjaya, his charioteer. Dharamvir Bharati's *Andha Yug* reimagines Dhritarashtra from the *Mahabharata* as a multifaceted symbol of moral decay, existential despair and societal blindness in Post-Partition India. The play uses Dhritarashtra to critique human folly and ethical collapse during times of collective trauma.

Dhritarashtra's blindness is not only physical but also moral, ethical and spiritual. He embodies the 'age of blindness' where individuals prioritize personal attachments over ethical duty. He is passive during the dice game and Draupadi's humiliation. For him his world was his sons. He says –

“My sons were the flesh of my flesh  
they were the final arbiters of truth for me  
My love for them was my law  
my code of honour”

Haunted by annihilation of the Kauravas dynasty, Dhritarashtra grapples with overwhelming guilt. In Act I, he admits his error. He laments –

“Who truly won this war? ..... we are all  
drowned in the same ocean of blood.”

His conversation with Vidura, exposes his bias nature. He is a complete contrast to Vidura. At the end, in Act V he admits his error. He says –

“All my life  
I have wandered  
in darkness. ....  
All my life  
I refused to see  
the truth.”

He is a failure as a leader. Krishna stands for ethical ideals and Dhritarashtra stands for human frailty. He is a timeless symbol of ethical failure. His blindness, guilt and inaction serve as a searing indictment of leadership devoid of moral courage. His passivity and unjust behaviour have perpetuated violence.

#### **4. Vidura**

Vidura means skilled and wise. His name suits him well. He plays a key role in the epic the *Mahabharata*. He is the Prime Minister of Kuru Kingdom and paternal uncle of both the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Vidura was born through *Niyoga* between the Sage Vyasa and Parishrami, a maid to the queens Ambika and Ambalika.

In the play Vidura represents ethical clarity in a world consumed by moral blindness. He is a stark contrast to Kauravas’ unethical behaviour. On the 18<sup>th</sup> day of War, when the Kauravas have lost the war and Dhritarashtra is full of pain, Vidura says –

“Knowledge acquires through suffering and defeat will give you courage to endure suffering.”

Vidura has deep faith in Lord Krishna when Gandhari criticizes Krishna harshly, Vidura says –

“He is the beginning  
and the end of all history  
He determines the course  
of all celestial stars.”

Unlike his active political role in the *Mahabharata*, Vidura in *Andha Yug* is marked by passiveness. At the time of war or violence, ethical wisdom is usually crushed by violence. Vidura is very sympathetic. He shares the grief of Dhritarashtra and Gandhari. But at the same time, he is unable to stop Ashwatthama from releasing the Brahmastra. His morality and spiritual thinking are really noteworthy. He explains the principle of life in these words.

“Only virtuous actions  
which man performs  
by his own free will  
can be his protection,  
his safety.”

His words reflect Krishna’s philosophy of Karma as Action. His character crystalizes the play’s central question: “can ethics survive when humanity chooses ruin?” Vidura is a moral commentator of the play the insists that a moral life demands perpetual attention.

## 5. Krishna

In Dharamvir Bharati’s *Andha Yug*, Krishna represents a counterpart of both human and divine power. The *Mahabharata*’s war is played for *dharma*, a battle of the good over the evil. The play represents Krishna as a God and also as an opportunist and a politician who helped the Pandavas from time to time to win the battle. Though not physically present in the play, all the characters are talking about Krishna. For some, he is divine and omnipotent and for some he is a diplomat. Some deeply believe in him and ready to surrender themselves where as some have no faith in him. For the Kauravas, Krishna is responsible for all the destruction. From the perspective of the Kauravas, Bharati initially represents Krishna as treacherous. But after words, we can see different roles of Krishna. Actually, the writer leaves the evaluation of the character of Krishna to the audience.

The power of truth, justice, dharma and right action is represented by Krishna. The Pandavas are very brave and the Kauravas even braver. But Krishna alone knows how to play the opponent. Even though, all criticize Krishna and holds him responsible for the disastrous war, it is Krishna, who being the ambassador of the Pandavas tries to stop the war. Vidura reminds Dhritarashtra that not only did Bhishma and Drona warn him about the disastrous consequences of the battle, Krishna also did the same. Krishna asked them not to violate the code of honour. He has warned the indecisive Dhritarashtra and egoist Duryodhana. But Gandhari who has become bitter blames Krishna. As Krishna has advised frustrated Arjuna on the Kurukshetra to fight without fear and that the existence of a man is in the actions that he performs and not the refusal of it. We can observe Krishna as a perfectly practical leader giving practical advice. Vyasa has stated “where there is Krishna there is victory.” Duryodhana selected Narayani Sena of Yadavas but Arjuna selected only Krishna who has taken oath not to take part in war. Krishna being the charioteer of Arjuna, showed him the right and just path.

Yuyutsu, a believer in Krishna and Dharma takes part in the battle from the Pandavas’ side. But he begins to regret and is criticized by the people for betraying his own clan. Through his character, Bharati questions the very concept of Dharma.

Vidura, a devout follower of Krishna and had immense faith in him, starts questioning his power. The deep darkness has prevailed even after the victory of truth (the Pandavas) and winners too are depressed. He has started to doubt the faith on Krishna. At the same time, he does not want to do that as it will be a sin if he doubts Lord Krishna. In the play, the two contrastive roles of Krishna are evident. He is not only shown as a God who leads us to the path of Dharma, but also as a human being who is capable of committing mistakes and taking wrong decisions.

In Act IV, Gandhari curses Krishna. Krishna, the divine power meets his death in such a trivial way by the arrow of Jara, a common hunter. But Krishna's accepting the curse and addressing Gandhari "Mother" proves him divine. He says "Mother, I may be a God. I may be omnipotent. But I am your son and you are my mother... In this terrible war of eighteen days, I am the only one who has died a million times" (*Andha Yug*.81)

The death of Krishna marks the end of Dwapar Yug and Kali Yug starts and darkness pervades. The characters are in dilemma; revenge becomes dharma but again he is Krishna only who helps them.

According to Alok Bhalla, "Bharati's Krishna though equally firm and ruthless in his moral judgements, is a more humanly-cherished figure, with whom the self can always conduct a dialogue. Because Krishna's presence does not produce fear and trembling, he can be chastised and cursed, loved and worshipped, abandoned and killed."

There are different views of different characters about Krishna in the play. Balarama, the elder brother of Krishna calls him 'unprincipled rogue', For Gandhari 'He is a fraud', Vidura is his 'a devout and righteous follower' and Ashwatthama thinks that war of Kurukshetra was played to satisfy Krishna's 'insatiable hunger for war.' But at the end all these characters surrender at his feet. We are like the Kauravas, Gandhari and Ashwatthama who refuse to hear the voice of God and blame him whenever our ambitions are not fulfilled.

Throughout the play, Krishna's presence is felt through small, gentle and loving things, like the feather of a peacock or the sound of a flute or the music of bells. At the end all we can say that in Bharati's play, Krishna is the man of justice and truth we can all become. He is the advocate of all created things and their finest embodiment.

## **6. Other Characters**

### **Yudhishtira**

The eldest of the Pandavas. After the war he becomes the king of Kuru Kingdom. He is known for truth and righteousness.

**Balarama**

Krishna's elder brother.

**Kritavarma**

Yadva's warrior.

**Old Mendicant**

He is a multifaceted character who appears as an astrologer and also as the hunter **Jara** who ultimately kills Krishna.

**Vyasa**

Sage Vyasa, He is the writer of *Mahabharata*. Biological father of Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Vidura.

**Kripacharya**

Guru of the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Council member of Kuru Kingdom. He fought on the Kauravas' side in the war.

**Yuyutsu**

Son of Dhritarashtra born to a Vaishya class concubine. (serves as a maid to Gandhari) He fought on the Pandavas' side in the war though he is half-brother of the Kauravas. He committed suicide at the end.

**4.3.1 Check Your Progress****A] Choose the correct alternatives.**

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ has hundred sons.
  - a) Draupadi
  - b) Kunti
  - c) Gandhari
  - d) Madri
- 2) Gandhari represents \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) maternal grief
  - b) anti-war symbol
  - c) moral blindness
  - d) all of above
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ was born with a gem on head.
  - a) Ashwatthama
  - b) Vidura
  - c) Karna
  - d) Drona
- 4) The birth of \_\_\_\_\_ is the result of Ancient Practice of *Niyoga*.
  - a) Dhritarashtra
  - b) Vidura
  - c) Pandu
  - d) all of above
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_ is the moral commentator of the Play *Andha Yug*.
  - a) Sanjaya
  - b) Vidura
  - c) Krishna
  - d) Yudhishtira

**B] Answer in one/word/phrase/sentence**

- 1) What is the reason of Ashwatthama's transformation?
- 2) Who are Uppandavas?
- 3) Who is the Prime Minister of Kuru Kingdom?
- 4) When did Dwapar Yug come to an end?
- 5) Who is Jara?

**4.3.2 Terms to Remember**

- ◆ *Niyoga* : An ancient Indian practice where a woman (typically a widow or whose husband was unable to father a child) could have sexual relations with a designated male to produce an heir to Kingdom.
- ◆ Vichitravirya: The youngest son of Queen Satyawati and King Shantanu.
- ◆ Chitrangad : He dies young half brother elder son of Satyawati and King Shantanu. of Bhishma.
- ◆ The game of Dice: It is orchestrated by Duryodhana and played by Shakuni against Yudhishtira. Yudhishtira loses everything, his wealth, kingdom, his brothers and even his wife. The game of dice gave birth to Draupadi's humiliation. This humiliation ignites the desire for revenge leading to Kurukshetra war.

**4.4 Critical Aspects of the Play****Various Themes of Andha Yug**

The play of *Andha Yug* is based on Ancient Sanskrit epic the *Mahabharata* written by Ved Vyasa. The play is a reinterpretation or rethinking on the very concept *Dharma*. It is an immensely popular play among both the readers and critics. It first created sensation as a radio play at Allahabad All India Radio. It was first staged in 1964 by theatre doyen Ebrahim Alkazi against the backdrop of historical monuments in Delhi. The 1963 production was watched by the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. It was subsequently staged by numerous directors and in many Indian languages. *Andha Yug* is recognized as “the play that heralded a new era in Indian theatre “The following are key themes of drama.

**1] Metaphysical and Spiritual Themes:**

*Andha Yug* translated as *Age of Blindness* symbolizes Kali Yug (Dark Age) in Hindu cosmology – on era of moral and spiritual decay. The war's aftermath reveals a world where divine order collapses, and characters grapple with a universe devoid of cosmic justice. Everywhere there is chaos. Physical blindness (Dhritarashtra) and voluntary blindness (Gandhari's blindfold) mirror characters' ethical myopia. Dhritarashtra's inability to comfort his son's atrocities and Gandhari's refusal to acknowledge Duryodhana's hubris epitomize societal complicity in destruction. Even Krishna's divine vision fails to prevent human folly. The play questions faith.

## **2] Moral and Ethical Themes:**

The *Mahabharata* war fought for *dharma* degenerates into nihilism. Ashwatthama abandons ethics for revenge, deploying the Brahmastra to annihilate the innocents. For Gandhari, Krishna's concept of *dharma* is quite deceiving. The Kauravas embody vengeful pride, while the Pandavas win through deceit (Killing of Drona). The play argues that war corrupts all participants, rendering victory meaningless. "What war is this where no one wins and all lose both foe and friend?" is the key line of drama.

Survivors like Vidura and Sanjaya symbolize conscience, yet their wisdom is ignored. Dhritarashtra's lament – "Who truly won?" highlights war's hollow triumphs, where guilt eclipses glory.

## **3] Socio-Political Themes: Allegory of Partition:**

The play mirrors India-Pakistan trauma. Burning Hastinapur is symbolic of riots, deaths, butchery and extreme cruelty in the times of Partition. Bharati critiques nationalism that sacrifices humanity for power. Dhritarashtra's passivity and Duryodhana's toxic ambition exemplify failed leadership. This leads to self-destruction. The play is metaphoric meditation on politics of violence and aggressive self-hood and that war dehumanized individuals and society.

## **4] Existential and Psychological Themes:**

Ashwatthama's quest for vengeance leaves him cursed and isolated. Where there is hatred, there is no peace. Gandhari's grief and hope that Ashwatthama will win, he will kill all the Pandavas give birth to negative hope. Brahmastra's use symbolizes war's apocalyptic pointlessness. Brahmastra is symbolic of nuclear weapon. The Pandavas who win are left with guilt and loss.

The play doesn't glorify the war but shows its devastating consequences. Through poetic language it emphasizes the bleakness of situation. The addition of two guards in the play has great significance, as they appear from time to time, to state the futility of war from the perspective of common people.

By framing the Mahabharata not as myth but as a cautionary tale, Bharati forces audiences to confront humanity's cyclical blindness.

## **Other Critical Aspects of Drama**

*Andha Yug* stands as a landmark work in modern Indian theatre, offering a searing reimagining of the 18<sup>th</sup> day of *Mahabharata* as a profound commentary on post-colonial trauma, ethical decay and the cyclical nature of violence. Below is a discussion of critical aspects of the play.

### **1) Allegory and Historical context**

The Mahabharata's disastrous war represents India-Pakistan Partitions effects. The play is a powerful allegory for communal violence and collapse of values. The burning city of Hastinapur represents devastation of Partition.

## 2) Blindness as a Metaphor

As the title suggests, it is not only physical blindness but also moral blindness. Dhritarashtra's blind love for his sons creates unworthy ambition and self-centredness among Duryodhana, Dushasana and Kauravas. Gandhari blindfolds and negates to see the truth. Out of her love for her sons and grief of their deaths, she curses Krishna. Ashwatthama is blind with revenge. War corrupts even the true people like Yudhishtira.

## 3) Symbols in the Play

- a) Blindness – The title *Andha Yug* represents not just physical blindness but moral and spiritual blindness. Dhritarashtra's blind love for Duryodhana makes an end of all Kauravas. Gandhari blindfolds herself and Ashwatthama embodies wilful and ignorant /blind about future consequences.
- b) Ruins of Hastinapur – The devastated city and the battlefield strewn with corpses and vultures symbolize the aftermath of war – both the *Mahabharata* and modern conflicts. It represents destruction of civilization, human values and ethics.
- c) Krishna's Invisibility – Krishna never appears on the stage. Peacock feather, flute symbolize Krishna signifying Krishna is omnipotent.
- d) Brahmastra – Brahmastra is released by Ashwatthama. It is an act of revenge. The weapon symbolizes hatred and the escalation of violence. It allegorizes nuclear warfare (e.g. Hiroshima) and the cyclical destruction wrought by human vengeance. Ashwatthama's inability to recall it underline the disastrous effect of nuclear weapons.
- e) The Two Guards – These minor characters represent the common people. Their dialogues highlight societal numbness and the tragic fate of commoners.
- f) Chorus – Borrowed from Indian folk tradition the chorus comments on the action, representing collective conscience.
- g) Ashwatthama's Curse – His eternal suffering wandering with wounds – symbolizes the inescapable cycle of revenge and the psychological scars of violence.

Bharati uses these symbols to universalize the *Mahabharata's* tragedy, connecting it to Partition era atrocities and modern conflicts. These symbols are used to introspect negative impacts of war.

## Poetic Diction / Use of Verse in *Andha Yug*

The play uses free verse. It has rhythmic flexibility and lyrical intensity. The language is rich and visual. Bharati adopts Greek chorus and Indian folk tradition. Elite characters (Gandhari, Ashwatthama, etc) speak Sanskritized language whereas two guards use colloquial dialects. There is use of repetition. Phrases like 'burning city', 'blind age' recur. The play's closing choric lines – "Darkness, only darkness" use anaphora to evoke despair. The lines are smaller. The play is a profound poetic

meditation on war, morality and human suffering. Bharati's verse structure serves multiple thematic, aesthetic and performative functions. The structure of the play includes a prologue, five acts, an interlude and an epilogue. Initially for radio, the verse thrives in auditory mediums.

### **Title of the Play**

The play was written in 1953, post India's Partition and uses the *Mahabharata* war as an allegory for contemporary issues. *Andha Yug* is commonly rendered to English as *The Age of Blindness* or *The Blind Age*. The title critiques the characters' inability to perceive ethical truths. Key figures like Dhritarashtra (physically blind) and Gandhari (self-blinded) symbolize societal refusal to confront moral decay, ambition and hatred during the Mahabharata war. The blindness extends to leaders and communities ignoring Krishna's calls for peace. The title also refers 'Kali Yug' (Age of Darkness) marked by moral decline. As the title suggests both victors (Pandavas) and losers (Kauravas) are blinded by pride and grief, rendering their conflict meaningless. Sanjaya represents wilful blindness. Its title encapsulates the peril of ethical blindness – whether in ancient epics, post Partition Indian or contemporary societies facing violence and injustice.

### **4.4.1 Check Your Progress**

#### **A] Choose the correct alternatives.**

- 1) The play *Andha Yug* was first directed by \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) Vijaya Mehta
  - b) Jabbar Patel
  - c) Satyadev Dubey
  - d) Ebrahim Alkazi
- 2) The theme of revenge is represented by \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) Ashwatthama
  - b) Vidura
  - c) Bhishma
  - d) Krishna
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ mirror the futility of war from the perspective of common people.
  - a) Mendicants
  - b) Soldiers
  - c) two guards
  - d) chorus
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_ commits suicide at the end.
  - a) Yuyutsu
  - b) Sanjaya
  - c) Kritavarma
  - d) Kripacharya
- 5) *Andha Yug* is originally written in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) Marathi
  - b) Hindi
  - c) English
  - d) Kannada

**B] Answer in one/word/phrase/sentence.**

- 1) How many acts does *Andha Yug* consist of?
- 2) What is the central issue in *Andha Yug*?
- 3) What does the symbol of blindness represent in the play?
- 4) Who is the devout and righteous follower of Krishna?
- 5) What is the role of chorus in *Andha Yug*?

**4.4.2 Terms to Remember**

- ◆ Dharma: a Sanskrit term, generally translates to “duty, right, justice, morality or religion”. It is a practical guide for living a virtuous, moral and meaningful life.
- ◆ Ebrahim Alkazi: Director of Dharamvir Bharati’s *Andha Yug*.
- ◆ Kali Yuga: In Hinduism, the concept of yugas represent cyclical ages within a larger cosmic cycle. There are four yugas – Satya yuga, Treta Yuga, Dwapara Yuga, Kali Yuga. Kali Yuga is the most degenerate age in this cycle.

**4.5 Answers to check your progress**

4.2.1 A)

- 1) d    2) a    3) b    4) c    5) a

B) 1) Palace in Hastinapur.

2) Prologue is the preface or introduction before the first act.

3) Gandhari blindfolded herself as a symbolic act of solidarity with her blind husband Dhritarashtra.

4) Gandhari curses Krishna that Yadav dynasty will be destructed in fratricide and Krishna will die like an animal shot by a hunter.

5) He wanted to take revenge of his father’s unrighteous killing.

4.3.1 A) 1) c    2) d    3) a    4) d    5) b

B) 1) Dronacharya’s unjust and unrighteous death.

2) Uppandavas are Draupadi’s sons.

3) Vidura.

4) The moment Krishna took his last breath.

5) Jara was the hunter whose arrow aims Krishna’s foot. He is responsible for Krishna’s death.

4.4.1 A) 1) d    2) a    3) c    4) a    5) b

- B) 1) Five.  
 2) Deep darkness and moral decay due to war.  
 3) Moral corruption and spiritual darkness.  
 4) Vidura.  
 5) To give information about the events and to underline poignancy of the action.

#### 4.6 Exercises

##### A) Broad Questions

- 1) Illustrate the key themes of *Andha Yug*.
- 2) *Andha Yug* depicts the loss of moral values in present times through a symbolic treatment of characters and situations from the *Mahabharata*. Discuss.
- 3) Discuss the anti-war sentiments in *Andha Yug*.
- 4) Illustrate the character of Gandhari.
- 5) Discuss Ashwatthama as the anti-hero of the play *Andha Yug*.

##### B) Write short notes.

- 1) Role of chorus in *Andha Yug*.
- 2) *Andha Yug* as anti-war Allegory.
- 3) *Andha Yug*: An Allegory on Partition.
- 4) Character of Vidura.

#### 4.7 References for further study

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**B.A.-II (English) Sem-IV**

**Essay and Novel**

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## Module - 1

# Introduction to Indian English Essays

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### 1.0 Learning Objectives

#### 1.1 Introduction

#### 1.2 Subject Matter:

#### Section 1

Check Your Progress

#### Session 2

Check Your Progress

#### Session 3

Check Your Progress

### 1.3 Summary

### 1.4 Terms to Remember

### 1.5 Answer to Check Your Progress

### 1.6 Exercise

### 1.7 References for Further Study

### 1.0 OBJECTIVES:

After studying this Unit you will be able to –

1. Understand the concept of Essay.
2. Explore the Emergence of Indian English Essay.
3. Examine the Characteristics of the Essay.
4. Classify and Understand the Types of Essays.
5. Encourage independent thinking and interpretation of essay texts.

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### 1.1 INTRODUCTION:

The essay is often considered as a minor form of literature, not because it lacks depth or artistic value, but due to its typically shorter length and more personal or informal nature compared to major literary forms like the novel, epic, or drama. Despite this categorization, essays have played a significant role in the development of literature and thought, offering profound insights, social critiques, and artistic expression.

Indian English essays represent a rich and evolving literary tradition that blends Western forms of expression with uniquely Indian sensibilities. Emerging

from the backdrop of colonialism and evolving through post-independence reflections, these essays offer deep insight into the Indian psyche, society, and culture. Written in English but rooted in Indian contexts, they reflect a diverse range of themes from personal identity and spiritual introspection to social reform and political commentary. An essay is “**a short formal piece of writing, dealing with a single subject**”. In general, an academic essay has three parts:

- 1) An Introduction that gives the reader an idea of what they are about to learn and presents an argument in the form of a thesis statement.
- 2) A body, or middle section, that provides evidence used to prove and persuade the reader to accept the writer’s particular point of view.
- 3) A conclusion that summarizes the content and findings of the essay.

### **Definition of Essay**

An essay is a short literary composition on a particular theme or subject, usually presenting the personal view of the author. It is marked by its flexibility, informality, and exploratory nature. The word “essay” comes from the French word *essayer*, meaning “to try” or “to attempt”, which reflects the essayist’s attempt to explore ideas rather than provide definitive answers.

No elaborate and complete definition of the essay has been given so far. It is considered as a composition comparatively short, incomplete and unsystematic. **Dr. Johnson** defined the essay as, “*a loose sally of the mind, an irregular, indigested piece, not a regular and orderly composition.*”

The Oxford English Dictionary, giving it a more uniform shape, defined it as, “*a composition of moderate length on any particular subject, or branch of a subject; originally implying want of finish – (‘an irregular indigested piece’ – Johnson), but now said of a composition more or less elaborate in style, though limited in range.*”

Hudson, giving a definition of the essay says: “*The essay, then may be regarded, roughly, as a composition on any topic, the chief negative features of which are comparative brevity and comparative want of exhaustiveness.*”

“*A good essay*”, says É.V. Lucas, “*more than a novel, a poem, a play, or a treatise, is personality translated into print : between the lines must gleam attractive features or we remain cold.*”

### **Origin and Development of Indian English Essays**

The origins of Indian English essays trace back to the British colonial period, when English was introduced as a medium of education and administration. Early Indian thinkers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Vivekananda used the English essay as a tool for reform and national awakening. Over time, English became more than a colonial language—it transformed into a medium for self-expression, intellectual debate, and literary creativity. By the 20th century, Indian essayists were using

English to articulate their experiences, critique society, and engage with the world. Post-independence, Indian English essays became even more dynamic, exploring themes of identity, tradition, and modernity.

The origin of Indian English can be traced back to the early 17th century, when the British East India Company began its operations in India. As trade relations expanded, so did the need for communication between the British and Indians. English was initially introduced for administrative and commercial purposes, but its significance grew with the establishment of British colonial rule.

A major turning point came in 1835 with Lord Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education, which advocated for English as the medium of instruction in Indian schools. This policy laid the foundation for the widespread teaching and use of English across the country. Over time, English evolved from a colonial imposition into a tool for empowerment, education, and social mobility.

By the 20th century, Indian English had developed its own characteristics, influenced by local languages, cultures, and speech patterns. After India gained independence in 1947, English continued to serve as a link language among people of different linguistic backgrounds. Today, Indian English is not only a medium of instruction and administration but also a vibrant medium for literature, media, business, and global communication.

**Major Themes:** Indian English essays cover a wide range of themes that reflect the country's diversity and complexity. Some of the major themes include:

**Social and Political Issues:** Caste, poverty, gender inequality, nationalism, and secularism are frequently discussed.

**Cultural Identity and Heritage:** Essays often delve into India's religious traditions, languages, festivals, and the impact of globalization on Indian values.

**Personal and Philosophical Reflections:** Writers explore inner life, spirituality, and the meaning of existence, often drawing from Indian philosophical traditions.

**Diaspora and Globalization:** Many modern essays reflect on the Indian experience abroad and issues of migration, hybridity, and cultural adaptation.

## MAJOR WRITERS

Several influential Indian writers have made significant contributions to the genre of the English essay:

**Raja Ram Mohan Roy** – one of the earliest essayists, writing on social reform and education.

**Rabindranath Tagore** – wrote essays on nationalism, humanity, and spiritual philosophy.

**Nirad C. Chaudhuri** – was known for his autobiographical and cultural essays, especially *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*.

**A. K. Ramanujan** – blended cultural analysis with poetic and reflective prose.

**Amartya Sen** – his essays in *The Argumentative Indian* explore history, identity, and democracy.

**Arundhati Roy** – known for powerful essays on environmental issues, political dissent, and human rights.

### **Task - 1**

#### **Check Your Progress**

1. What is the origin of the word “essay”?
  - A. Latin word *exagium* meaning “examine”
  - B. French word *essayer* meaning “to attempt”
  - C. Greek word *essios* meaning “thought”
  - D. Sanskrit word *esha* meaning “desire”
2. Why is the essay considered a minor literary form?
  - A. It is not used in literature
  - B. It lacks intellectual value
  - C. It is short, personal, and lacks a fixed structure
  - D. It is only written by students
3. Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of an essay?
  - A. Subjectivity
  - B. Long narrative plots
  - C. Flexibility of form
  - D. Personal expression
4. One distinct characteristic of Indian English writing is:
  - A) Use of only British spelling and punctuation
  - B) Absence of personal voice
  - C) Blend of Indian thought with English language
  - D) Strict scientific tone
5. Indian English essays often reflect which of the following themes?
  - A) European classical mythology
  - B) Indian culture, traditions, and social issues
  - C) Western political systems only
  - D) Technological innovation in the West

## Characteristics of Indian English Essays

Key Literary Characteristics of Indian English Essays are as follow :

1. **Narrative Style:** Indian English essays often blend Western essay structures with traditional Indian storytelling. Authors frequently open with personal anecdotes or vivid everyday scenes, echoing folk or oral narrative modes. This conversational, anecdotal approach makes the essays relatable while tackling complex ideas. As one study notes, Indian English prose marries “Western literary techniques” with “Indian storytelling traditions,” producing narratives that range from simple life-portraits to deep social and philosophical exploration.
2. **Indianized Language and Idioms:** Indian English essays are marked by distinctive idioms and locally flavored expressions. Writers commonly use literal translations of vernacular phrases (e.g. “doing my graduation,” “cousin-brother,” “holy cow”) and include untranslated regional words that add color. Such usage is so prominent that Indian English is described as “like no other variety on earth,” full of “colourful Hindi-to-English translations” and archaic terms. In fact, scholars observe that Indian authors’ native languages shape their English syntax and vocabulary, with local words and phrases giving the prose a unique Indian flavour.
3. **Cultural and Thematic Focus:** The content of Indian English essays often centers on Indian social and cultural realities. Common themes include nationalism and postcolonial history, religion and mythology, caste and communal life, family and societal norms, as well as contemporary issues like gender roles, environment, and globalization. Authors draw analogies from Hindu or regional myths, discuss rural and urban life, and reflect on India’s diverse heritage. For example, essays might paint a portrait of a Delhi market or a Himalayan village retreat as a way to discuss broader social insights.
4. **Tone and Voice:** The tone of Indian English essays can range from formal to warmly intimate. Many writers adopt an engaging, even humorous, voice to make scholarly ideas accessible. Reviews of Indian essay anthologies note that these pieces often combine “academic intellect” with humour and personal reflection, bridging the gap between learned critique and everyday storytelling. Even when addressing serious topics, authors frequently infuse wit, irony or affectionate commentary, creating a balance between erudition and a friendly, conversational style.
5. **Multilingual Influence and Code-Switching:** India’s multilingual milieu deeply influences English essays. Authors often code-switch, weaving native-language words or idioms into their English prose. English acts as a “bridge” language across India’s many tongues, and mixing languages can signal cultural identity or education. This results in a hybrid linguistic texture: English grammar framed

by native rhythm and images. The interplay of languages – for instance, using Hindi syntax or Bengali proverbs in an English sentence – gives Indian essays a unique, polyglot voice.

- 6. Adaptation of the Essay Form:** Over a period of time, Indian authors have indigenized the English essay to express local perspectives. Instead of merely imitating Western models, they use the form to explore Indian issues and identity. Early essayists like Raja Ram Mohan Roy wrote clear English arguments on social reform, while modern writers (e.g. Pankaj Mishra, Nissim Ezekiel, Arundhati Roy) blend memoir, travelogue and critique about India's culture and politics. For instance, Mishra's essay on Mashobra or Ezekiel's reflections on Naipaul mix personal experience with broader commentary. This fusion of local detail, personal voice and intellectual argument makes the Indian English essay a distinct vehicle for uniquely Indian viewpoints.

Notable essayists illustrating these characteristics include Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, Nissim Ezekiel, Pankaj Mishra, Arundhati Roy, and many others. Each has adapted English to convey India's languages, stories and sensibilities.

## **Task - 2**

### **Check Your Progress**

1. Which of the following is a common feature of Indian English essays?
  - A) Use of regional idioms and expressions
  - B) Strict adherence to American slang
  - C) Frequent use of Latin and Greek phrases
  - D) Complete avoidance of native influence
2. Indian English essays often reflect which of the following themes?
  - A) European classical mythology
  - B) Indian culture, traditions, and social issues
  - C) Western political systems only
  - D) Technological innovation in the West
3. One distinct characteristic of Indian English writing is:
  - A) Use of only British spelling and punctuation
  - B) Absence of personal voice
  - C) Blend of Indian thought with English language
  - D) Strict scientific tone

4. Which of these writers is known for shaping Indian English essays?
- A) William Wordsworth
  - B) Francis Bacon
  - C) R.K. Narayan
  - D) Ernest Hemingway
5. Indian English essayists are known for using English as a tool to express:
- A) Only colonial ideologies
  - B) Indian identity and perspectives
  - C) Western philosophy
  - D) Foreign travel experiences

### **TYPES OF ESSAYS:**

The four major types of essays are :

1. **Descriptive Essays:** Painting a Picture: A descriptive essay paints a picture with words. A writer might describe a person, place, object, or even memory of special significance. The descriptive essay strives to communicate a deeper meaning through the description. In a descriptive essay, the writer should show, not tell, through the use of colourful words and sensory details. Descriptive essay focuses on describing a person, place, event, or object in detail. Sight, sound, touch, smell and taste these senses are used. George Orwell's essay *A Hanging* is the best example for this type. Descriptive essays are very common in school exams and class assignments. Students are often asked to describe personal experiences or national landmarks. Examples: "A Visit to the Taj Mahal" – describing its architecture, beauty, and emotional impact. "My Village" – painting a picture of rural life, landscape, and culture. "Diwali – A Festival of Lights" – describing how the festival of lights is celebrated across India.
2. **Narrative Essay:** Telling a story: In a narrative essay, the writer tells a story about a real-life experience. The narrative essay challenges students to think and write about themselves. The fact that narrative essays are usually written in the first person helps engage the reader. "I" sentences give readers a feeling of being part of the story. A well-crafted narrative essay will also build towards drawing a conclusion or making a personal statement. To tell a story or recount a real or fictional event. Focus is on what happened and how it happened. First-person point of view is common.

Examples:

“A Memorable Train Journey” – recounting travel experiences, people met, and lessons learned.

“The Day I Got Lost in a Fair” – telling a dramatic or emotional story.

“An Unexpected Guest” – a personal or imaginative incident.

3. **Expository Essays: Just the Facts :** the expository essay is an informative piece of writing that presents a balance analysis of a topic. In an, expository essay, the writer explains or defines a topic, using facts, statistics, and examples. Expository essays are based on facts and not personal feelings; writers don’t reveal their emotions or write in the first person. Francis Bacon’s essay are of this type. A genre of essay that requires the student to investigate an idea, evaluate evidence, explain the idea, set forth an argument concerning that idea in a clear and concise manner. This can be accomplished through comparison and contract, definition, example, the analysis of cause and effect etc.

Examples:

“Causes and Effects of Unemployment in India” – with data and government initiatives.

“Role of Technology in Education” – explaining the benefits and limitations.

“Swachh Bharat Abhiyan – Impact and Future” – describing a government campaign.

4. **Persuasive Essays or Argumentative Essays: Convince Me :** while like an expository essay in its presentation of facts, the goal of the persuasive essay is to convince the reader to accept the writer’s point of view or recommendation. The writer must build a case using facts and logic, as well as examples, expert opinion, and sound reasoning. The writer should present all sides of the argument, but must be able to communicate clearly and without ambiguity why a certain position is correct. This type of essays present arguments supported by evidence and logical reasoning. The major aim of persuasive essay is to convince the reader to adopt a certain viewpoint. World famous essay *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx, is the best example of this type in which he makes use of logic and reasoning. This type of essays are generally asked in UPSC, SSC, and state-level competitive exams. Topics are usually related to current affairs, politics, social issues, and ethics.

Examples:

“Should Capital Punishment Be Abolished in India?” – presenting arguments for and against.

“Is Online Education Better Than Traditional Education?”

“Reservation in India: Boon or Bane?”

In Indian English essay writing, mastering these types is essential for academic success, competitive exams, and personal expression. Each type demands a different approach, tone, and structure. Practicing all these forms helps students become well known thinkers and effective communicators.

### Task - 3

## Check Your Progress

1. Which of the following essay is primarily written to inform or explain a topic?  
A) Narrative Essay  
B) Descriptive Essay  
C) Expository Essay  
D) Persuasive Essay
2. Which type of essay focuses on telling a story from the writer's point of view?  
A) Argumentative Essay  
B) Narrative Essay  
C) Expository Essay  
D) Descriptive Essay
3. What is the main purpose of a persuasive essay?  
A) To entertain the reader  
B) To describe an event in detail  
C) To inform about a topic  
D) To convince the reader of a certain viewpoint
4. In which type of essay would you most likely find vivid imagery and sensory details?  
A) Descriptive Essay  
B) Argumentative Essay  
C) Expository Essay  
D) Narrative Essay
5. Which essay type presents arguments for and against an issue before concluding?  
A) Narrative Essay  
B) Persuasive Essay  
C) Descriptive Essay  
D) Argumentative Essay

### 1.3 Summary

Indian English essays are an important part of Indian English literature, which has evolved significantly since the colonial period. These essays are written in English by Indian authors and reflect the cultural, social, political, and philosophical concerns of India. They blend Western literary forms with Indian themes, offering insights into Indian life, values, and ideologies through the medium of the English language.

An essay is a short piece of writing that presents the author's argument, observation, or reflection on a particular subject. Indian English essays, specifically, refer to essays written by Indian authors in English, encompassing a variety of styles and topics. They often reflect the dual influence of Indian traditions and Western literary practices.

The origins of Indian English essays can be traced back to the 19th century during British colonial rule. The introduction of English education by the British led to the emergence of Indian writers proficient in English. Early essayists such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee used English to express social reformist ideas. The development of Indian nationalism further boosted essay writing, as many leaders used essays to promote independence and social change.

In the 20th century, essay writing matured with the works of renowned figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, and Jawaharlal Nehru. Gandhi's essays reflected his views on truth, non-violence, and rural life. Tagore wrote philosophical and aesthetic essays, while Nehru's writings were political and historical. Post-independence, the genre saw further growth with writers such as Nirad C. Chaudhuri, R. K. Narayan, and later, contemporary authors like Arundhati Roy, Salman Rushdie, and Amitav Ghosh.

Indian English essays can be classified into various types:

**Personal Essays:** These essays reflect personal thoughts, experiences, and emotions. Writers like R. K. Narayan excelled in this form with a simple and engaging style.

**Political Essays:** Leaders like Nehru and Gandhi wrote extensively on political issues, independence, and governance.

**Philosophical and Spiritual Essays:** Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghosh wrote essays exploring Indian spirituality and philosophy.

**Literary and Critical Essays:** These essays focus on literary criticism and the evaluation of texts, seen in the works of authors like Meenakshi Mukherjee.

**Social and Cultural Essays:** These essays address Indian society, traditions, and cultural practices, often critiquing or analyzing them.

Indian English essays possess several distinctive features:

**Cultural Fusion:** They blend Indian themes with English expression, creating a unique literary voice.

**Bilingual Influence:** Often influenced by native Indian languages, giving rise to a hybrid style of English.

**Moral and Philosophical Tone:** Many essays have a reflective or didactic tone, exploring ethical or philosophical issues.

**Simplicity and Clarity:** Early essayists emphasized clarity and simplicity to reach a wider audience.

**Nationalistic and Reformist Spirit:** Especially during the pre-independence era, essays were vehicles of reforms and national identity.

Indian English, a unique and vibrant variant of the English language, has evolved over centuries through the influence of colonial history, regional languages, and contemporary global trends. It is not merely a borrowed tongue but a rich

expression of India's multilingual and multicultural identity. From formal education and media to literature and everyday communication, Indian English has carved out its own distinctive space, blending British roots with indigenous flavour. As we explore Indian English, we gain insights into how language adapts, survives, and thrives in a diverse and dynamic society like India.

In conclusion, Indian English essays have played a crucial role in shaping India's literary and intellectual tradition. They continue to evolve, reflecting the changing dynamics of Indian society and its engagement with the world.

#### **1.4 Terms to Remember**

##### **Essay:**

A short piece of writing on a particular subject, usually written in prose. It reflects the author's viewpoint, analysis, or argument and is often structured with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

##### **Colonialism:**

A system where one country takes control over another country or territory, often by force, and exploits it economically, politically, and culturally. Colonial powers impose their own systems, suppress native traditions, and dominate local populations.

##### **Post-independence:**

The period after a country has gained freedom from colonial rule. In the context of India, it refers to the time after 1947, when India became an independent nation and began shaping its own political, cultural, and economic systems.

##### **Indianized Language:**

Refers to a language that has been influenced by Indian culture, expressions, or vocabulary. For example, English spoken in India often includes Indian words, phrases, and sentence structures—this is known as Indian English or Indianized English.

##### **Idioms:**

Phrases or expressions whose meanings are not directly deducible from the individual words. For example, "kick the bucket" means "to die." Idioms often reflect the cultural and linguistic uniqueness of a community.

##### **Multilingual Influence:**

The effect of multiple languages interacting within a single region or community. In India, for example, people often speak more than one language, and words or grammar from one language can influence how another is spoken—this leads to blended speech patterns and vocabulary.

##### **Code-switching:**

This is the practice of alternating between two or more languages or language varieties in a conversation. It often occurs in multilingual communities. For example,

a person might switch between English and Spanish depending on the situation or audience. It can also refer to switching between formal and informal language depending on context.

**Descriptive Essay:**

A descriptive essay focuses on detailing a person, place, object, or event so vividly that the reader can visualize it. The goal is to create a strong impression using sensory details (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell).

**Narrative Essay:**

A narrative essay tells a story, often from the author's personal experience. It includes characters, a setting, a plot, and a clear sequence of events. The purpose is to entertain, inform, or share a lesson through storytelling.

**Expository Essay:**

This type of essay explains or informs the reader about a topic. It presents facts, statistics, or examples in a clear, logical way without the author's opinions. Examples include how-to articles, research papers, or reports.

**Persuasive or Argumentative Essay:**

This essay aims to convince the reader to accept a specific point of view or take a certain action. It uses logical arguments, evidence, and emotional appeals. While persuasive essays may rely more on emotions, argumentative essays focus on logic and evidence to support a claim.

**1.5 Answer to Check Your Progress:**

**Task - 1**

1. B) French word essayer meaning "to attempt".
2. C) It is short, personal, and lacks a fixed structure.
3. B) Long narrative plots.
4. C) Blend of Indian thought with English language.
5. B) Indian culture, traditions, and social issues

**Task - 2**

1. A) Use of regional idioms and expressions.
2. B) Indian culture, traditions, and social issues.
3. C) Blend of Indian thought with English language.
4. C) R. K. Narayan
5. B) Indian identity and perspectives

### **Task - 3**

1. C) Expository Essay
2. B) Narrative Essay
3. D) To convince the reader of a certain viewpoint
4. A) Descriptive Essay
5. D) Argumentative Essay

### **1.6 Exercise**

#### **A. Short Answer Questions**

1. When did Indian English essays begin to develop as a literary form?
2. Name any two early Indian English essayists.
3. Mention two characteristics of Indian English essays.
4. Define reflective essay with an example.

#### **B. Long Answer Questions**

1. Trace the origin and development of Indian English essays.
2. Discuss the main characteristics of Indian English essays with examples.
3. Explain different types of essays in Indian English literature.
4. How have Indian English essayists blended Western form with Indian content?

#### **C. Essay Topics for Practice**

1. Contribution of M. K. Gandhi to Indian English Essays
2. Influence of Colonial Education on Indian English Essay Writing
3. A comparison between British and Indian English Essays
4. The Role of personal experience in Indian English Essays

### **1.7 References for Further Study**

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## Module 2

### A. PROLOGUE Ikigai: A mysterious word

Héctor García and Francesc Miralles

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#### Text:

This book first came into being on a rainy night in Tokyo, when its authors sat down together for the first time in one of the city's tiny bars. We had read each other's work but had never met, thanks to the thousands of miles that separate Barcelona from the capital of Japan. Then a mutual acquaintance put us in touch, launching a friendship that led to this project and seems destined to last a lifetime. The next time we got together, a year later, we strolled through a park in downtown Tokyo and ended up talking about trends in Western psychology, specifically logotherapy, which helps people find their purpose in life.

We remarked that Viktor Frankl's logo therapy had gone out of fashion among practicing therapists, who favored other schools of psychology, though people still search for meaning in what they do and how they live. We ask ourselves things like:

What is the meaning of my life? Is the point just to live longer, or should I seek a higher purpose? Why do some people know what they want and have a passion for life, while others languish in confusion?

At some point in our conversation, the mysterious word ikigai came up. This Japanese concept, which translates roughly as "the happiness of always being busy," is like logo therapy, but it goes a step beyond. It also seems to be one way of explaining the extraordinary longevity of the Japanese, especially on the island of Okinawa, where there are 24.55 people over the age of 100 for every 100,000 inhabitants-far more than the global average.

Those who study why the inhabitants of this island in the south of Japan live longer than people anywhere else in the world believe that one of the keys-in addition to a healthful diet, a simple life in the outdoors, green tea, and the subtropical climate (its average temperature is like that of Hawaii)is the ikigai that shapes their lives.

While researching this concept, we discovered that not a single book in the fields of psychology or personal development is dedicated to bringing this philosophy to the West. Is ikigai the reason there are more centenarians in Okinawa than anywhere else? How does it inspire people to stay active until the very end? What is the secret to a long and happy life?

As we explored the matter further, we discovered that one place in particular, Ogimi, a rural town on the north end of the island with a population of three thousand, boasts the highest life expectancy in the world—a fact that has earned it the nickname the Village of Longevity.

Okinawa is where most of Japan's shikuwasa—a lime like fruit that packs an extraordinary antioxidant punch—comes from. Could that be Ogimi's secret to long life? Or is it the purity of the water used to brew its Moringa tea?

We decided to go study the secrets of the Japanese centenarians in person. After a year of preliminary research we arrived in the village—where residents speak an ancient dialect and practice an animist religion that features long-haired forest sprites called bunagaya—with our cameras and recording devices in hand. As soon as we arrived we could sense the incredible friendliness of its residents, who laughed and joked incessantly amid lush green hills fed by crystalline waters.

#### 4 Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life

As we conducted our interviews with the eldest residents of the town, we realized that something far more powerful than just these natural resources was at work: an uncommon joy flows from its inhabitants and guides them through the long and pleasurable journey of their lives.

Again, the mysterious ikigai. But what is it, exactly? How do you get it?

It never ceased to surprise us that this haven of nearly eternal life was located precisely in Okinawa, where two hundred thousand innocent lives were lost at the end of World War II. Rather than harbor animosity toward outsiders, however, Okinawans live by the principle of *icharibachode*, a local expression that means “treat everyone like a brother, even if you’ve never met them before.”

It turns out that one of the secrets to happiness of Ogimi's residents is feeling like part of a community. From an early age they practice *yuimaaru*, or teamwork, and so are used to helping one another. Nurturing friendships, eating light, getting enough rest, and doing regular, moderate exercise are all part of the equation of good health, but at the heart of the *joie de vivre* that inspires these centenarians to keep celebrating birthdays and cherishing each new day is their ikigai. The purpose of this book is to bring the secrets of Japan's centenarians to you and give you the tools to find your own ikigai. Because those who discover their ikigai have everything they need for a long and joyful journey through life. Happy travels!

#### Index

##### 1.0 Objectives

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## 1.0 Objectives

The main aim of studying this prologue is to understand the background and intention behind writing the book *Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life*. It helps us get familiar with the concept of **ikigai**, a traditional Japanese idea that suggests finding happiness in being purposefully engaged in life. Through this reading, we also try to connect how cultural practices, especially those followed in the Japanese island of Okinawa, contribute to the long and joyful lives of its people. Another important objective is to see how Western psychological theories, like logotherapy, are compared and linked with ikigai. Finally, these notes aim to help readers analyze how lifestyle, community, and purpose play a role in improving one's well-being.

### 1.1 Introduction

This book begins with a heartfelt introduction that takes us into the journey of two authors, Héctor García and Francesc Miralles, who come from different parts of the world but are united by a common interest in psychology and the meaning of life. Their friendship and shared curiosity about happiness and purpose laid the foundation for writing this book. The introduction offers a glimpse into what the book promises: a deep dive into how Japanese people, especially in Okinawa, manage to live longer, healthier, and more fulfilled lives, and how the rest of the world can learn from it.

#### 1.1.1 Héctor García and Francesc Miralles

Héctor García is originally from Spain and has been living in Japan for several years. He is an author and also has a background in technology. He has written about Japanese culture and traditions before and has a unique perspective on life in Japan. Francesc Miralles, also from Spain, is a well-known writer and journalist who has focused his work on spirituality, motivation, and personal growth. Even though they lived far apart—one in Tokyo and the other in Barcelona—they came to know each other through a mutual friend. Their meeting in Tokyo turned into a friendship that eventually gave birth to the idea of writing *Ikigai*. Their interest in exploring the deeper meaning of life and their shared passion for understanding how people stay happy and healthy brought them together for this project.

### **1.1.2 Introduction to *PROLOGUE: Ikigai – A mysterious word***

The prologue of the book sets the tone for the rest of the journey. It doesn't just serve as an introduction to the topic, but also tells the story of how the book came to be. It begins with a rainy night in Tokyo, where the two authors met for the first time in a small bar. Although they had read each other's works before, this was their first meeting in person. During their next meeting, they walked through a park in Tokyo, discussing ideas from psychology—especially Viktor Frankl's logotherapy, a form of therapy that helps people find meaning in their lives. This conversation led them to the mysterious and beautiful concept of *ikigai*, a word they realized had not been explored in-depth in Western literature. From there, their journey began to understand what *ikigai* truly means and why it seems to help people live longer, happier lives—especially in Okinawa.

### **1.2 Prologue: *Ikigai – A mysterious word***

In this part of the book, the authors tell the story of how the concept of *ikigai* came into their lives and how it sparked their curiosity. During a casual walk and talk in a Tokyo park, the authors discussed how Viktor Frankl's theory of logotherapy—once very popular—was no longer widely practiced, even though many people still search for meaning in their lives. They reflected on how people often wonder why they are here, what gives life meaning, and how to feel truly alive. This led to the idea of *ikigai*, a Japanese word that roughly means “the happiness of always being busy.” This idea fascinated them because it seemed to go even further than logotherapy. It wasn't just about finding purpose—it was about living it in daily life.

The authors then turned their attention to Okinawa, an island in Japan that is home to many people who live to be over 100 years old. These people don't just live long—they live well, with energy, joy, and purpose. Scientists and researchers have often tried to explain this by pointing to factors like healthy food, clean water, fresh air, and a peaceful lifestyle. But the authors felt that something deeper was at work—something that couldn't be explained by physical health alone. They believed *ikigai* was the missing piece.

To explore this further, they focused on a small town in Okinawa called Ogimi, known as the “Village of Longevity” because it has the highest life expectancy in the world. The authors decided to travel there and spend time with the local people. What they found was truly inspiring: a community of elderly people who were full of life, laughter, and kindness. They noticed that everyone in the town seemed to live with a strong sense of purpose and community spirit. Even though many of them had lived through terrible events, including the loss and destruction of the World War II, they held no bitterness. Instead, they followed local values like *icharibachode*, which means “treat everyone like a brother,” and *yuimaaru*, which is all about teamwork and helping one another.

## 1.2.1 PROLOGUE: Ikigai – Summary

The prologue offers much more than just a starting point to the book. It gives a deep insight into what makes people truly happy and how meaningful living is directly connected to longevity. The authors use their own friendship and shared interest in psychology as the gateway to explore the larger question of why some people seem to live such long and joyful lives. By bringing in logotherapy, they introduce the reader to a familiar Western idea of seeking meaning, then gently lead them toward a more holistic and cultural idea—ikigai. Unlike therapy that is often used to treat a problem, ikigai is a way of living that naturally keeps a person engaged, enthusiastic, and connected to others.

The authors' trip to Ogimi turns out to be a turning point. They don't just study the habits of long-living people—they experience their joy firsthand. The villagers are not rich or highly educated, but they are deeply satisfied with life. They enjoy simple pleasures, spend time with friends and family, and stay physically and mentally active. They eat light, sleep well, and take part in community work. But more importantly, they all seem to have a clear sense of ikigai—the reason they wake up each morning with a smile.

The prologue ends by showing that ikigai is not a luxury—it's a daily practice. It is not about chasing success, but about staying connected with life in a meaningful way. The authors promise to share what they've learned from Okinawa so that readers everywhere can find their own ikigai and live happier, healthier lives. The warm closing words, "Happy travels!" suggest that the book is not just something to read, but a journey the reader is about to begin.

## 1.3 Terms to Remember

|                        |                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Ikigai</b> –        | A Japanese concept meaning “a reason for being” or “the happiness of always being busy.” It is what gives life purpose and joy. |
| <b>Centenarians</b> –  | People who are 100 years old or older                                                                                           |
| <b>Logotherapy</b> –   | Therapy that helps people find meaning and purpose in life                                                                      |
| <b>Animist</b> –       | A belief that objects, places, and creatures all have a spiritual essence.                                                      |
| <b>Antioxidant</b> –   | A substance that helps the body from damage caused by harmful molecules.                                                        |
| <b>Joie de vivre</b> – | A French phrase meaning “joy of living”; enjoyment of life                                                                      |
| <b>Yuimaaru</b> –      | A term from Okinawa meaning teamwork or helping each other                                                                      |
| <b>Icharibachode</b> – | An Okinawan saying that means “treat everyone like a brother, even if you’ve never met them before”                             |
| <b>Prologue-</b>       | introduction to a book or essay that sets the stage for the main content                                                        |



### 1.5 Exercises:

#### A. Answer the following questions in about 250-300 words each:

1. How did the authors come together to explore *Ikigai*?
2. How is 'Ikigai' similar to and different from Viktor Frankl's logotherapy?
3. How does the lifestyle of Okinawa's centenarians contribute to their longevity?
4. Analyze the cultural and social practices of Ogimi village

#### B. Write Short notes on the following in about 100-150 words:

1. The significance of the island of Okinawa in the study of longevity.
2. Role of community and friendship in Ogimi's way of life
3. Yuimaaru and icharibachode – cultural values and their importance
4. Natural resources of Ogimi
5. The central idea of the *Ikigai*

### 1.6 Answers to Check Your Progress :

#### I. 1. Ikigai

2. Ogimi

3. Icharibachode

4.b) Shikuwasa

5. Joie de vivre

#### II. Answer the following questions in one word/phrases/sentence each:

1. Yuimaaru

2. Logotherapy

3. Subtropical

4. Okinawan dialect

5. Ikigai

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## **Module - 2**

### **B. Convocation Address at University of Calicut by**

**Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Calicut 25. 09.2003**

#### **Purposeful University Education**

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##### **Text:**

I am indeed delighted to participate in the annual Convocation of the University of Calicut, which is the largest affiliating University in Kerala. I take this opportunity to congratulate the University students for their academic performance. I greet the Vice Chancellor, professors, teachers and staff for their contribution in shaping young minds to contribute to the nation in multiple fields. The University of Calicut has made significant contribution in enhancing the higher education level of the people in the region. I am happy to note that the University is paying special attention to Distance Education, Adult Education and Extension Services for improving the educational standard and vocational skill levels for continuous up-gradation of knowledge and growth of employees in various sectors.

##### **Teaching and Research**

Recently I met the Vice Chancellors of all the Central Universities. I thought of sharing with you two important results of the meeting. As you all know, research in the universities brings about quality teaching. Students and quality teaching in turn reinforce university teaching and research. The second aspect that came up was related to the standing and excellence of the university which comes out of quality teachers. “Teachers should be the best minds in the country”. Quality teachers by virtue of their intellectual and moral leadership attract students for research and also they attract development programmes.

##### **Capacities for nation building**

The most important mission for the nation for which universities can contribute is creation of capacities for nation building. In the education environment, it is important to dwell upon what kind of human beings we want to make of ourselves. There is a need for every individual to analyze what capacities can be cultivated in him/her for contributing to nation building. India transforming itself into a developed nation by 2020, is the vision of the nation for which the road map is emerging. There are five areas for simultaneous development: Agriculture and Food processing, Education and healthcare, Information and Communication Technology, Infrastructure development - including river network and self reliance in critical technologies. For achieving the above mission, the capacities required in educational institutions are: The capacity for research or inquiry, the capacity for Creativity and Innovation,

particularly the creative transfer of knowledge, the capacity to use high technology, the capacity for Entrepreneurial Leadership and the capacity for Moral Leadership.

**a. Research and enquiry**

The 20th century was for the generation of knowledge. The 21st century will be about the management of all the knowledge and information we have generated and give value to it. We must give our students, the skills with which they find a way through the sea of knowledge that we have created. Today, we have the ability, through technology, to really and truly teach ourselves and to become the life-long learners that any sustained economic and political development requires.

**b. Creativity and innovation**

Creativity comes from beautiful minds. It can be anywhere and from any part of the country. It has got multi dimensions like inventions, discoveries and innovations. Creativity has an attitude to accept change and newness, a willingness to play with ideas and possibilities, a flexibility of outlook, the habit of enjoying the good, while looking for ways to improve it. Creativity involves a process to work hard continually to improve ideas and solutions by making gradual alterations and refinements to their works. The important aspect of creativity is: seeing the same thing as everybody else, but thinking of something different. These characteristics are required to be nurtured and promoted amongst the students.

**c. Capacity to use high technology**

Every student in our university should graduate to know how to use the latest technologies for aiding their learning process. Universities should equip themselves with the tools like computer hardware, software, working laboratory equipment, and internet facilities and provide an environment for the students to enhance their learning ability through digital library.

**d. Entrepreneurial leadership**

Entrepreneurial leadership first involves identifying the problem and then finding its solution in the context of development. Entrepreneurship starts with understanding our needs and realizing that as human beings we all have similar needs. It begins with wanting to help others as we help ourselves. Secondly, there should be willingness to undertake new challenges. Entrepreneurship requires doing things differently, being bold in our thinking and this is always risky. We must teach our children how to take calculated risks for the sake of larger gain. The third part involves the disposition to do things right.

**e. Moral leadership**

Moral leadership involves two things. First it requires the ability to have compelling and powerful dreams or visions of human betterment, a state of things in which human beings could be better off in the future than they are now. Secondly, where entrepreneurial leadership requires people to acquire the habit of doing things

right, moral leadership requires a disposition to do the right thing and influence others also to do the right thing.

### **Indomitable spirit**

For success in any mission what we need is leaders with indomitable spirit. That should be the mission of any university. Let us study the characteristics of indomitable spirit. It has two components. The first component is that there must be a Vision leading to higher goals of achievement. I would like to recall a couplet from Thirukkural by the Poet Saint Thiruvalluvar written 2500 years ago. He says that whatever may be the depth of the river or lake or pond, whatever may be the condition of the water, the lily flower always comes out and blossoms. Similarly, if there is a definite determination to achieve a goal even if it is apparently impossible to achieve, the man succeeds.

Many of us have gone through large programmes, projects, technologies and scientific teachings. We would have experienced that success is not in sight and that there are many hurdles. The same poet reminds us at this point of time through another couplet that successful leaders can never be defeated by problems. They become master of the situation and defeat the problems. I consider, these two Thirukkural characterizes the indomitable spirit.

### **Core competence for Knowledge Society**

A knowledge society can be one of the foundations for a vision for the nation: Developed India. Knowledge has always been the prime mover of prosperity and power. The acquisition of knowledge has therefore been the thrust area throughout the world and sharing the experience of knowledge is a unique culture of our country. India is a nation endowed with natural and competitive advantages as also certain distinctive competencies. But these are scattered in isolated pockets and the awareness on these is inadequate. During the last century the world has undergone a change from agriculture society, where labor force was the critical factor, to industrial society where the management of technology, capital and labor provided the competitive advantage. In the 21st century, a new society is emerging where knowledge is the primary production resource instead of capital and labor. Efficient utilization of this existing knowledge can create comprehensive wealth of the nation in the form of better health, education, infrastructure and other social indicators. Ability to create and maintain the knowledge infrastructure, develop knowledge workers and enhance their productivity through creation, growth and exploitation of new knowledge will be the key factors in deciding the prosperity of this Knowledge Society. Whether a nation attained a stage of knowledge society is judged by the way the country effectively deals with knowledge creation and knowledge deployment.

## **Knowledge Society Components**

Knowledge Society has two very important components driven by societal transformation and wealth generation. The societal transformation is on education, healthcare, agriculture and governance. These will lead to employment generation, high productivity and rural prosperity.

Wealth generation is a very important task for the nation, which has to be woven around national competencies. The task team has identified core areas that will spearhead our march towards knowledge society. The areas are: Information Technology, biotechnology, space technology, weather forecasting, disaster management, tele-medicine and tele-education, technologies to produce native knowledge products, service sector and Infotainment which is the emerging area resulting from convergence of Information and entertainment. These core technologies, fortunately, can be interwoven by IT. IT took off only due to enterprising spirit of the young. Thus there are multiple technologies and management structure that have to work together to generate knowledge society. It has to be recognized that the difference between an IT-driven society and a knowledge-driven society is the role of multiple technology growth engines. With India carving a niche for itself in Information Technology, the country is uniquely placed to fully capitalize the opportunity to quickly transform itself into a knowledge society.

## **Kerala and knowledge society**

The core competence of Kerala is well-known. It is the home of country's Space ventures, with most literate state with private initiatives; Kerala is endowed with indomitable dedicated and educated women force. Keralites are global, as most of them are spread over all parts of the world. Kerala is also known for the revolution it has done in the profession of Nursing. Keralites when they give hard work and value system to other countries, they have to contribute to rural development based on the best, what they have learned. As e-education is the most important content of knowledge power, Kerala should enter in a business mission mode. We need to utilize the potential of Kerala for continuous progress. For a knowledge society, the most important IT related service is e-Education. In Kerala, e-education, with the core competence of e-nursing, has great growth potential. Another area of importance is tele-medicine, and the whole Kerala can be networked with other States in India.

## **The importance of connectivity**

The Universities of one State should be connected to other universities of excellence in the country through tele-education. The students of these universities should have a collaborative tele-education network for interacting with renowned scholars in various specializations. Tele-education will provide knowledge connectivity and will facilitate the creation of a knowledge society, leading to enhanced wealth generation for national development. In order to bring about a vibrant educational

and research atmosphere, we need to initiate research programmes in collaboration with various scientific and research institutions in the country in the core competence area of the university. This networking will provide larger exposure to the students and the faculty of the university and enable enhanced employment and research opportunities.

Our core competence in ICT sector should enable creation of infrastructural software such as open standard based Operating System, database and web server leading to development of knowledge products such as e-commerce, e-banking, e-governance and e-security through a consortium of research scientists, academia, and industry and evaluation agencies. Such an approach will lead to creation of competitive Indian multi-national units in the ICT sector. The University of Calicut could open the windows for generation of human resource and expertise for propelling this concept.

### **Knowledge Technology and e-Learning**

1. Information and communication technology has to be used to connect the faculty, who will be teaching from this university, to multiple class rooms within the state and in various states. Probably fiber optic leased line cables or a combination of Satellite line (V-SAT) can be used.
2. Today, technology is advanced to such an extent that we can even think of storing all the human knowledge in digital form. One initiative in this direction is of having a Universal Digital Library, irrespective of languages. In India there is a program to digitize 250 million pages, say about one million books in two years' time. Modern technologies and machineries are available with us to carry-out this digitizing.
3. I would like to emphasize that the priority for women education as in Kerala should continue to be given highest priority. When the women are empowered, society with stability will emerge. We have to ensure the continuity of secondary education and university education for girls. It is essential to establish connectivity between the university and secondary schools.

### **Conclusion**

The universities generate graduates in various disciplines - some time it specializes and conducts research at Post Graduate and Doctorate levels. India has more than 250 universities and millions of graduates come out every year. The university syndicates and senates have to discuss how these graduates can be equipped when they go out of the university. Apart from their degrees, a diploma or certificate in certain professional areas such as digital library, nursing science, information mining, skills in traditional areas (biodiversity), electronics and mechanical system maintenance, the value addition techniques and technologies in the field of national natural wealth and human resource etc., should be available to the graduates.

Government jobs will be necessarily limited whereas the entrepreneurial tasks will be on the increase. It is essential that when the graduates go out of the universities, their minds should be shaped to take up the entrepreneurial work for which risk taking and innovation are very important. With the vast experience of the Calicut University, I am sure you will become a partner to the national development in creating enlightened citizens. Wishing you all the best in your missions

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### **2.0 Objectives**

This convocation address by Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam aims to inspire students, teachers, and educational institutions to align their efforts toward national development through quality education. It discusses how universities should become engines of

societal progress, nurturing minds capable of inquiry, innovation, leadership, and moral integrity. The address outlines the key capacities needed to build a developed India and emphasizes the importance of connectivity, technology, and education in transforming the nation into a knowledge society.

## **2.1 Introduction**

### **2.1.1 Introduction to Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam**

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, India's 11<sup>th</sup> President, was a visionary scientist and educator, renowned for his role in India's missile and space programs. A firm believer in youth empowerment through education, his speeches and writings consistently blend technological foresight with humanistic values. This address reflects his lifelong dedication to national development through scientific knowledge and moral leadership.

#### **2.1.2 Overview of the Address:**

Delivered at the University of Calicut on September 25, 2003, this convocation address explores how higher education can be made purposeful by equipping students with essential capacities. Dr. Kalam lays down a comprehensive roadmap for transforming Indian universities into knowledge centers that contribute meaningfully to national growth and self-reliance.

## **2.2 Key Themes in the Convocation Address:**

### **2.2.1 Purposeful University Education**

Dr. Kalam praises the University of Calicut for its academic achievements and initiatives like adult and distance education. He emphasizes the role of universities in empowering individuals with lifelong learning skills, particularly in the context of rapid technological advancement.

#### **2.2.2 Teaching and Research**

Dr. Kalam asserts that quality research enhances quality teaching, and in turn, fosters strong university systems. He stresses that universities must attract the best minds as teachers because intellectual and moral leadership from teachers inspires excellence in students and drives national progress.

#### **2.2.3 Capacities for Nation Building**

Dr. Kalam identifies five key areas essential for transforming India into a developed nation by 2020:

1. Agriculture and Food Processing
2. Education and Healthcare
3. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
4. Infrastructure (e.g., river networking)
5. Self-reliance in Critical Technologies

To contribute to these areas, students must develop five core capacities:

**a. Research and Enquiry**

In the 21st century, the focus must shift from knowledge generation to knowledge management. Students must become lifelong learners, able to filter and apply the vast amounts of information available through modern technology.

**b. Creativity and Innovation**

Innovation, according to Dr. Kalam, is “seeing the same thing as everyone else, but thinking differently.” Creativity requires openness to change, flexible thinking, and continuous improvement—qualities that universities must actively nurture.

**c. Capacity to Use High Technology**

Students should be trained in using modern tools like digital libraries, laboratory instruments, and internet resources. Universities must provide infrastructure to enhance students’ technological competence.

**d. Entrepreneurial Leadership**

Entrepreneurship, driven by the urge to solve societal problems, requires risk-taking and a willingness to challenge norms. Dr. Kalam stresses teaching students to take calculated risks for societal and personal growth.

**e. Moral Leadership**

While entrepreneurial leadership is about doing things right, moral leadership is about doing the right things. Moral leaders envision human betterment and inspire others to follow ethical paths.

**2.2.4 Indomitable Spirit:**

Dr. Kalam explains that success demands vision and unwavering determination. He stresses that real leaders are never defeated by problems—they master the situation and persist through challenges.

**2.2.5 Core Competence for Knowledge Society:**

In a knowledge society, prosperity is driven by the creation and application of knowledge, not just labor or capital. Dr. Kalam urges institutions to develop knowledge infrastructure, train knowledge workers, and support innovation to fuel national growth.

**2.2.6 Knowledge Society Components:**

There are two main components:

- **Societal Transformation** (education, healthcare, governance, agriculture)
- **Wealth Generation** (IT, biotechnology, disaster management, infotainment, etc.)

These must be powered by integrated technologies and collaborative efforts across sectors.

### **2.2.7 Kerala and Knowledge Society:**

Kerala, with its high literacy rate and global presence, has great potential. Dr. Kalam encourages the state to leverage its strengths in nursing, women's empowerment, and education to promote e-learning, tele-medicine, and rural development.

### **2.2.8 The Importance of Connectivity:**

Dr. Kalam envisions universities connected via tele-education networks, allowing students to interact with national and international scholars. This collaboration would expand research and job opportunities and strengthen the academic environment.

### **2.2.9 Knowledge Technology and E-Learning:**

Dr. Kalam suggests practical steps for knowledge dissemination:

1. Use ICT to broadcast lectures across multiple classrooms and states.
2. Support digital libraries, with goals like digitizing 250 million pages.
3. Prioritize women's education and ensure seamless connectivity from secondary school to university level.

## **2.3 Conclusion**

Dr. Kalam closes by urging universities to go beyond issuing degrees. Graduates must leave with skills in digital tools, entrepreneurship, biodiversity management, healthcare, and information analysis. As government jobs shrink, entrepreneurship and innovation must grow. Calicut University, with its strong foundation, is called upon to produce not just degree holders, but enlightened citizens ready to lead the nation into a bright, knowledge-driven future.

### **2.4 Terms to Remember:**

- **Convocation** – A formal ceremony where students receive their degrees.
- **Affiliating** – Officially connecting or linking an institution with a university.
- **Enhancing** – Improving or increasing the quality or value of something.
- **Extension Services** – Educational support activities offered beyond the main campus, often to communities.
- **Upgradation** – The process of improving something to a higher standard or level.
- **Entrepreneurial** – Related to starting new businesses or taking risks to create something new.
- **Disposition** – A person's usual mood or attitude.
- **Carving a niche** – Creating a special position or reputation in a specific area.
- **Digitize** – To convert information into a digital (computer-friendly) format

- **Tele-medicine** – Providing medical care and advice using communication technologies (like video calls)
- **Consortium** – A group formed by several organizations working together for a shared goal
- **Infotainment** – Information combined with entertainment
- **Enlightened** – Having knowledge, understanding, and wisdom; open-minded

## 2.5 Check Your Progress:

### I. Rewrite the sentences choosing the correct alternative:

1. According to Dr.Kalam, the most important mission for universities is \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a) organizing convocation ceremonies  
 b) creating employment opportunities  
 c) building infrastructure  
 d) creating capacities for nation building
2. Dr.Kalam emphasizes that teachers should be \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a) strict  
 b) creative  
 c) best minds in the country  
 d) multilingual
3. Among the following, \_\_\_\_\_ is not mentioned as a core area for building a knowledge society.  
 a) weather forecasting  
 b) biotechnology  
 c) political science  
 d) disaster management
4. According to Dr.Kalam, entrepreneurial leadership means \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a) starting a new business  
 b) leading through sports activities  
 c) solving problems for development with bold thinking and risk-taking  
 d) memorizing economic theories
5. To explain the indomitable spirit, Dr.Kalam uses the metaphor of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a) the rising sun  
 b) a growing tree  
 c) a lily flower blooming in any water  
 d) a mountain standing tall

### II. Answer the following questions in one word /phrases / sentence each:

1. Which century does Dr. Kalam refer to as the era of managing knowledge?
2. Which Indian state is appreciated by Dr.Kalam for its literacy rate and nursing contribution?
3. What mode of education does Dr.Kalam suggest to improve rural professional skills?
4. What is the key factor that differentiates a knowledge society from an IT-driven society?
5. Name a crucial facility that universities should develop to support e-learning.

## **2.6 Exercises:**

### **Q.1 A. Answer the following questions in about 200-250 words each:**

1. Discuss Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam's vision of a purposeful university education in national development.
2. Explain the concept of 'Knowledge Society' as presented by Dr. Kalam.
3. What is the significance of entrepreneurial leadership in the development of a nation, according to Dr. Kalam?
4. Describe the essential qualities of a teacher as emphasized by Dr. Kalam.
5. Discuss the key areas essential for transforming India into a developed nation by 2020

### **C. Write Short notes in about 100-150 words:**

1. Distance Education
2. Indomitable Spirit
3. Digital Library
4. Kerala as a Model State
5. Core Areas of Knowledge Society

## **2.7 Answers to Check Your Progress:**

### **I. Choose the correct alternative from the options given below:**

1. Creating capacities for nation building
2. Best minds in the country
3. Political Science
4. Solving problems for development with bold thinking and risk-taking
5. A lily flower blooming in any water

### **II. Answer the following questions in one word /phrases / sentence each:**

1. 21<sup>st</sup> Century
2. Kerala
3. Distance education
4. Multiple technology growth engines
5. Digital library

## **2.8 Further Readings:**

- Kalam, A. P. J., and Rajan, Y. S. (1998). *India 2020: A vision for the new millennium*. Penguin Books.
- Kalam, A. P. J. (2002). *Ignited minds: Unleashing the power within India*. Viking.
- Krishnamurti, J. (1953). *Education and the significance of life*. Harper and Row.



## Module 2

### C. The Radio Licence

R. K. Narayan

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#### 3.0. Text:

I suddenly realised with a shudder that I was actually passing through the last moments of the grace period allowed for renewing a radio licence. I hurried to the nearest post-office counter and asked for a form. The man at the counter hesitated just for a second-perhaps he had a feeling that I might be making a collection of forms or using them (in office language) as ‘one-side- paper. I discovered later that this was not feasible, the form choking with inscriptions and dotted lines on every side. The man at the counter looked at me steadily and asked if I had taken out my licence at the same post-office previously, if not, where? This was a piece of cross-examination I could not face. Last year probably I had not burdened myself with a radio set, or perhaps I had authorised someone else to obtain a licence. I had a feeling that perhaps I was about to be charged with perjury. I gave some reply. The man at the counter gave me a form immediately. At the first glance I wanted to ask, ‘Why do they call it a Wireless Receiving Station? Is it in order to give the whole business a high-sounding name or shall I really have to say hereafter I am going back to my Wireless Receiving Station when I mean I am going home?’ But I suppressed my question, not being sure that it was safe: there might be grave penalties attached to Contempt of Wireless Licence Form or Frivolous Conduct at Post-Office Counters. I swallowed my question and started writing on the form. First I had to write down my name ‘In block letters’ as ordained. In trying to write in block letters I misspelt my own name (it always happens when one has to write slowly in block letters, the simplest spelling is likely to elude one), I spoilt the form and had to ask for another with considerable apology; and taking it home, I wrote down my name with great care, and then Residence, Road, Locality and Town left me thinking. The trouble was the road I live in has remained nameless for centuries: our municipality evidently has no faith in street names. My street is one of the five roads running north to south, and it is known the world over as the road to the right of the Concrete Water Tank on Vani Vilas Road, but obviously this would be too homely on a form: and so on the inspiration of the moment I wrote down ‘First Cross Road’. I felt that I was christening our street now without much fuss, and this was going to stay, unless someone on the Fifth Cross Road also decided to call his the First Cross; in which case I had no doubt that mine would be known as the First Cross Road and his the second First Cross Road. Following this, there was a boxed space which confounded me, which required of me details as to Occupation (would they feel pleased if I said that my main occupation was hopefully waiting on my radio for good music?). Mother

tongue (why did they still stick to this old word, the current fashion being regional language'?) and the number of members in the household (what have they to do with it?). In this last item should I include my cousin's son who happened to be staying with us at the moment, and were we to exclude the three juniormost members of the house, whose total years did not exceed nine? I felt as if I were facing a census enumerator. Why did they ask so many questions? I suddenly told myself, I am, after all, an insignificant operator of a wireless receiving set. Who am I to say what is important and what is not in a wireless licence form? I bowed my head in humility and filled up the form. Soon came another portion which halted \$1- my progress: For working a wireless station at..... (Location of the station)'. I wondered whether I should just be saying that the station would be located in the front passage of our house or did they expect me to say something else? The columns following it were by no means easy to tackle: Serial No. of broadcast receiver, manufacturer's name, type of model, Number of the Set, person from whom purchased, etc., caused me acute anxiety. It was pleasing to reflect on the undying nature of a radio transaction, but mine was a mongrel set assembled by a homeless crank, no two bits in it having the same origin. How should I describe it?

Finally I managed to deal with the form to my entire satisfaction for down at the bottom of the page I discovered the wholesome advice 'Strike out the words not wanted' and acted on it promptly; as a result of which only my name and door number remained on the form. I took it to the post-office, paid down fifteen rupees and went home with the licence in my pocket, feeling satisfied that I had paid the piper and could henceforth call the tune.

### **Index:**

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3.2 Introduction

### **Subject Matter:**

3.3. Biographical details of R.K. Narayan

3.4. Summary

3.5. Thematic analysis of "The Radio Licence":

3.6. Humour in "The Radio Licence"

3.7 "The Radio Licence" as a personal essay

3.8. Glossary and Notes

3.9 Exercises

3.10 References

3.11 Answers to check your progress

### 3.1. Objectives:

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- 1) know about the writer R. K. Narayan
- 2) learn the summary, themes and humour in relation with the essay
- 3) acquaint with the genre of personal essay
- 4) understand the contribution of R.K. Narayan as an essayist

### 3.2. Introduction:

“The Radio Licence” is a satirical and humorous essay written by R. K. Narayan. In this essay, R. K. Narayan recounts his frustrating and absurd experience of renewing his radio licence. The essay underlines the absurdity of bureaucracy and the everyday struggles of dealing with official procedures. It has light-hearted, witty, and critical tone. Realizing that the grace period was about to end, the narrator rushes to the post office, where he faces suspicious questioning and a confusing, overly detailed form. From struggling to write his name in block letters to inventing a name for his unnamed street, and answering irrelevant questions about his occupation and household members, Narayan highlights the red tape and inefficiency of bureaucracy. He humorously describes his difficulty in detailing his radio, which is a homemade jumble of parts. Eventually, by striking out unnecessary parts of the form (as advised), he manages to submit it with only his name and door number intact. After paying the fee, he walks away relieved, feeling empowered to “call the tune” now that he has his licence.

### Subject Matter:

### 3.3. Biographical details of R. K. Narayan:

R.K. Narayan was born on October 10, 1906, in Chennai. He is best known for his novels, short stories, and essays that capture the essence of life in colonial and post-colonial India, often with a subtle humour and deep understanding of human nature. In 1934, Narayan married Rajam, who was a great influence on his life and work. Tragically, she passed away in 1939, which left him deeply affected. This event is often seen as one of the emotional turning points in his life. Narayan lived much of his life in Mysore, a city that frequently appears in his writing as the fictional town of Malgudi, the setting for most of his stories.

The fictional town of Malgudi became the setting for many of his works, including *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The English Teacher* (1945), *Mr. Sampath* (1949), and *The Guide* (1958), winner of the prestigious Jnanpith Award in 1960, *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* (1961), *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967), his autobiography *My Days* (1974) and *The World of Nagaraj* (1990). In addition to novels, Narayan wrote a large number of short stories, many of which were set in Malgudi.

R K Narayan's writing is known for its simplicity, clarity, and subtle humor. He captured the essence of small-town Indian life, presenting characters that are often caught between tradition and modernity. R.K. Narayan is regarded as one of the pioneers of Indian English literature. His works have been translated into several languages and have inspired countless writers. His portrayal of Malgudi and its inhabitants, along with his keen insight into human nature and Indian society, made him a distinctive voice in literature.

R K Narayan was awarded the Padma Bhushan, one of India's highest civilian honors, for his contribution to literature. He received India's highest literary honor, the Jnanpith Award, for his novel *The Guide*. Narayan was posthumously awarded the Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian award in India, for his immense contributions to literature. R. K. Narayan passed away on May 13, 2001, at the age of 94, leaving behind a rich legacy in Indian literature.

### 3.4. Summary:

In "The Radio Licence", R. K. Narayan humorously narrates his struggle to renew a simple radio licence, exposing the red tape and inefficiencies in the bureaucratic system. The essay begins with the author realizing, with panic, that he is nearing the end of the grace period to renew his radio licence. He rushes to the nearby post office to obtain the necessary form, but he is met with suspicion by the clerk, who seems unsure whether to give him the form, perhaps suspecting him of collecting them for other purposes.

When Narayan finally gets the form, he is immediately confused and amused by its complicated and official-sounding language. He jokes internally about the "Wireless Receiving Station", wondering if he should now refer to his home that way. Suppressing his urge to make a sarcastic comment—fearing legal consequences like "contempt of form"—he starts filling out the document. The process quickly becomes overwhelming. He is required to write his name in block letters but ends up misspelling it due to the pressure of writing slowly and carefully. Embarrassed, he apologizes and takes a fresh form home to complete it properly.

The next challenge he faces is providing his address. The street he lives on doesn't have an official name—it's commonly known only as "the road to the right of the Concrete Water Tank on Vani Vilas Road." Feeling stuck, he spontaneously names it "First Cross Road" humorously reflecting that he might have just unofficially christened the street, unless someone else claims the same name and causes confusion.

As he progresses, the questions in the form seem increasingly intrusive and irrelevant—details like **occupation**, **mother tongue**, and **number of household members** seem unrelated to owning a radio. He jokingly contemplates whether he should list all family members, including guests and children, and feels like he is filling out a census rather than a licence application.

He encounters even more trouble when the form asks for technical details about his radio: **serial number, manufacturer, model type, and purchase details.** He confesses that his radio is a **homemade, mismatched device assembled by a “homeless crank,”** making it nearly impossible to provide accurate information.

In the end, Narayan finds relief at the bottom of the form where it says **“Strike out the words not wanted.”** Interpreting this quite liberally, he crosses out most of the form, leaving only his name and door number. He returns to the post office, pays the fifteen-rupee fee, and is finally issued the licence. With the document in hand, he feels a sense of victory, proudly declaring that he has “paid the piper” and may now “call the tune.”

The Radio Licence is a light-hearted yet pointed critique of bureaucracy. Through the lens of a mundane task, R. K. Narayan captures the universal experience of dealing with overcomplicated official systems, using humour and irony to highlight the inefficiency and absurdity of red tape.

### 3.5. Themes in “The Radio Licence”:

R. K. Narayan uses humour and irony in *The Radio Licence* to subtly explore several deeper themes relevant to individual experience, social systems, and human psychology. Though the essay appears light-hearted on the surface, it contains meaningful commentary on **bureaucracy, identity, language, authority, and everyday absurdity.** The essay reflects the following themes:

#### 3.5.1 Bureaucracy and Red Tape:

The most dominant theme in the essay is **the absurdity and complexity of bureaucracy.** Narayan depicts the process of renewing a radio licence as unnecessarily complicated and intrusive. The detailed form, with questions ranging from the model of the radio to the number of people in the household, reflects a bloated and inefficient administrative system. The narrator wonders why such a trivial task demands such complex formalities. Narayan uses satire to mock this system — the way he describes the form as an object to be approached with caution shows how intimidating and confusing bureaucracy can be for the common person. The post office worker’s suspicious behavior and the form’s excessive demands reveal the disconnection between institutions and the people they serve.

#### 3.5.2. Identity and Officialdom:

The essay shows how bureaucratic systems **strip away individuality and reduce people to data points.** The narrator struggles to write his name in block letters, an act that causes him to misspell it—symbolizing how formal systems can distort personal identity. The street he lives on has no official name, which forces him to invent one. This highlights how **identity can be shaped, or even fabricated,** to fit into institutional formats. Narayan humorously portrays the idea that **identity becomes valid only when it fits within the bureaucratic framework**—not when it reflects personal truth or local custom.

### 3.5.3. The Absurdity of Everyday Life:

Another major theme is the **humour in the mundane**. Narayan finds comedy in the ordinary- going to the post office, filling out a form, describing a radio- and brings out the absurdity that often lies just below the surface of daily life. He overthinks simple instructions, like filling in a boxed space or striking out unwanted words, and turns them into comic situations. His radio set, a “mongrel” made from different parts, becomes symbolic of how **real life rarely fits into neat official categories**. This theme emphasizes that behind the most basic actions lie a range of emotions, confusions, and overthinking showing Narayan’s gift for turning the everyday into the entertaining.

### 3.5.4. Language and Communication:

Narayan subtly critiques **the role of official language** in alienating the common man. The form refers to a radio as a “Wireless Receiving Station,” a term that sounds exaggerated and needlessly formal. The narrator questions if calling a home a “wireless receiving station” is meant to elevate the act of listening to the radio or just confuse the applicant. The outdated term “mother tongue” is mocked for being old-fashioned compared to the newer “regional language.” This theme suggests that **language used in official documents is often unnecessarily complicated**, distancing people from understanding their own responsibilities and rights

### 3.5.5. Authority and Power:

Narayan also touches on the theme of **fear of authority**. The narrator constantly feels judged or watched — he worries about how he answers questions, hesitates to ask questions of his own, and fears that joking might be seen as “contempt of form.” This shows how institutional power can cause even routine procedures to become intimidating.

There’s a sense that the individual feels **powerless** before the **system**, and is forced to comply, even if the process makes little sense. The author humorously reflects the **disproportionate control that minor officials and petty procedures hold** over common people’s lives.

### 3.6. Humour in “The Radio Licence”:

R. K. Narayan is a master of subtle, observational humour, and in ‘The Radio Licence’, he uses this talent to great effect. The essay is a humorous take on an otherwise mundane and frustrating experience — renewing a radio licence — and through it, he brings out the absurdities of bureaucracy and human behaviour. The essay shows following traits of humour:

#### 1. Situational Humour:

Narayan finds comedy in ordinary situations that escalate into confusing or absurd experiences. The narrator tries to write his name in block letters and ends up misspelling it. This small mishap becomes a major event, requiring him to ask for a

new form and apologize. The struggle to name a nameless street leads him to christen it “First Cross Road”, with the funny thought that if someone else does the same, his road may become the “first First Cross Road.”

## **2. Self-deprecating Humour:**

Narayan often makes fun of himself (or the narrator) in an exaggerated, light-hearted way. He jokes about misspelling his own name, about being unable to answer basic questions, and about his confused thoughts while filling out the form. His reaction to the official language of the form is comic: he wonders if he has to say, “I’m going back to my Wireless Receiving Station” instead of just going home! This type of humour makes the narrator relatable and adds charm to the essay.

## **3. Irony and Sarcasm:**

Much of Narayan’s humour is ironic, meaning there’s a contrast between what is expected and what actually happens. The task of renewing a simple radio licence feels more like facing a criminal investigation or filling out a census form. His homemade radio is called a “mongrel set assembled by a homeless crank,” which humorously highlights how the bureaucratic form expects precise information for something so informal and personal. Narayan uses irony to mock the seriousness with which trivial matters are handled by officials.

## **4. Mockery of Bureaucratic Language and Procedures:**

Narayan pokes fun at the formal, inflated language used in government forms and the irrelevant details they ask for. The term “Wireless Receiving Station” sounds overly technical for something as simple as a home radio. The question about the “number of household members” baffles him. He jokes about whether to count the children, the cousin’s son, or leave them all out. His humour exposes how disconnected official procedures are from real life.

## **5. Comic Ending:**

The ending of the essay ties the humour together perfectly: “...as a result of which only my name and door number remained on the form.” After all the confusion, the narrator ends up submitting a nearly blank form and still gets the licence. He then jokes: “...feeling satisfied that I had paid the piper and could henceforth call the tune.” This final pun — playing on the idea of controlling the radio (“calling the tune”) — adds a clever and satisfying comic touch.

While summing up, R. K. Narayan’s humour in “The Radio Licence” is gentle, clever, and rooted in everyday reality. He doesn’t rely on loud or slapstick comedy. Instead, he uses: subtle irony, self-mockery, exaggerated imagination and satirical observations. Through these, he transforms a dry bureaucratic task into an entertaining, memorable story. His humour not only makes the essay enjoyable but also serves as a quiet critique of official systems and the common man’s experience with them.

### **3.7. “The Radio Licence”- as a Personal Essay:**

“The Radio Licence” is a perfect example of a personal essay because it showcases all the essential elements that define the genre. A personal essay blends factual narration with personal reflection, emotion, humour, and individual voice—and Narayan does this masterfully in this piece. It exhibits the following characteristics of personal essay.

#### **1. Use of First-Person Narrative and Personal Voice:**

The essay is written in first-person point of view, allowing readers to see the world through Narayan’s eyes. His personal voice is warm, witty, and reflective. He shares his thoughts, confusion, embarrassment, and even small victory, which makes the essay feel authentic and intimate. Readers experience his internal dialogue — for example, when he debates whether to ask a question at the post office or when he worries about crossing out the wrong thing on the form.

#### **2. Reflection on Everyday Experience:**

The essay is based on a simple, mundane event: renewing a radio licence. But through this small act, Narayan draws attention to larger issues — bureaucracy, identity, and the absurdities of modern life. He takes a small slice of life and reflects on it deeply and humorously, which is the essence of a personal essay. This shows how a personal incident can offer insights into universal human experiences. Turning the ordinary into something meaningful is a core trait of the personal essay.

#### **3. Blend of Fact and Imagination:**

A personal essay often blurs the lines between fact and creative reflection — as Narayan does here. While the story is based on a real-life situation, Narayan adds imagination and exaggeration to make it engaging. He imagines being charged with “Contempt of Wireless Licence Form” or facing grave penalties for joking at the post office. He invents names for streets and imagines official chaos if someone else uses the same name.

#### **4. Subjective and Honest Perspective:**

A personal essay is not objective reporting, but it’s about how the writer feels, which this essay captures beautifully. The essay is filled with personal opinions, confusions, and honest emotions. His frustration with the form, his embarrassment at spelling his own name wrong, and his sarcastic thoughts about the radio’s “manufacturer” all reflect genuine feelings. He doesn’t hide his irritation or anxiety, and that vulnerability makes the piece relatable.

#### **5. Informal Structure — Just a Natural Flow:**

Unlike academic essays, personal essays often don’t follow a rigid structure. Narayan’s story flows naturally from one thought to the next. It begins with panic, moves through confusion and humour, and ends in quiet triumph. There’s no formal

argument — but there's a clear narrative that leaves the reader both entertained and thoughtful. This natural, flexible structure is a defining quality of a personal essay.

Thus, "The Radio Licence" is a perfect personal essay as it uses a personal incident to explore wider truths. It employs conversational style, first-person tone. Moreover it blends humour, reflection, and storytelling to share authentic emotions and thoughts. Through his witty and thoughtful narration, R. K. Narayan invites readers not just to laugh at his situation, but to relate to it — and that's exactly what the personal essay is meant to do.

### 3.8. Glossary and Notes:

**grace period:** time allowed for payment of dues, insurance premiums, etc., after the date on which the payment falls due.

**feasible:** practicable; possible.

**perjury:** willful utterance of false evidence while on oath. elude: escape.

**christening:** giving a name to.

**confounded:** confused; threw into perplexity

**census:** counting of the people in a country

**insignificant:** unimportant.

**mongrel set:** The radio set was not manufactured by any one firm. Its different parts were manufactured by different firms.

**crank:** an eccentric person.

**wholesome:** good, sound

**I had paid....the tune:** I had obtained the radio license on the payment of fifteen rupees, and was now free to use my radio set without any fear of penalty. The expression to pay the piper and call the tune' means cost and have control of a proceeding, etc.' to bear the

### 3.9. Exercises:

#### 3.9.1 A) Fill in the blanks choosing the correct alternative:

1. The narrator rushed to the post office to.....
  - a) post a letter
  - b) renew his passport
  - c) renew his radio licence
  - d) collect a parcel
2. The thing that confused the narrator while filling out the form.....
  - a) his name
  - b) his street name
  - c) the form's language
  - d) all of the above

3. .... is the term in the form that amused the narrator.
  - a) regional dialect
  - b) house of residence
  - c) wireless thing, thing receiving station
  - d) frequency bandwidth
4. The unusual about the narrator's radio set is it .....
  - a) was stolen
  - b) was brand new
  - c) was homemade and mismatched
  - d) had no power supply
5. After seeing the instruction "Strike out the words not wanted" the narrator ....
  - a) ignored it
  - b) strike out almost everything
  - c) left it blank
  - d) asked the postman for help

**3.9.2. B. Say whether the following sentences are True or False:**

- 1). The narrator was confident while filling out the form.
- 2) The narrator thought "Mother tongue" was a modern and accurate term.
- 3) The narrator believed that naming his street on the form was like christening it.
- 4) The post office clerk was friendly and helpful from the beginning.
- 5) The essay uses humour to highlight the absurdity of bureaucracy.

**3.9.3. Fill in the blanks using the correct word/expression:**

- 1) The narrator had a feeling he might be charged with \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) The road the narrator lived on had no official name, so he called it \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3) The narrator feared committing "Contempt of \_\_\_\_\_ Licence Form."
- 4) The narrator's radio set was described as a \_\_\_\_\_ set.
- 5) The narrator paid \_\_\_\_\_ rupees to get the licence.

**3.10. A. Answer the following Questions:**

1. What difficulty did the narrator face while filling out his name?
2. Why was the narrator confused about writing his address?
3. How did the narrator describe his radio set?
4. What is the narrator's tone throughout the essay?
5. What does the essay suggest about bureaucratic systems?.

**B. Answer the following questions in about 250-300 words:**

1. Describe the narrator's experience of renewing the radio licence.
2. How does R. K. Narayan use humour in the "The Radio Licence"?
3. Discuss "The Radio Licence" as a personal essay.

### 3.11 Answers to check your progress:

3.9.1 1. To renew his radio licence

2. All of the above

3. Wireless Receiving Station

4. It was homemade and mismatched

5. Strike out almost everything

3.9.2 1. False 2. False 3. True 4. False 5. True

3.9.3 1. perjury

2. first cross road

3. wireless

4. mongrel

5. fifteen

### 3.12 References:

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## Module 2

# D. Climate Change and Human Health

Dr. M Lakshami Narasaiah

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### The Text:

Changes in the India's climate, stemming from the greenhouse effect, are highly likely to damage human health. Food and fresh water supplies will be disrupted, millions of people displaced, and disease patterns altered dangerously and unpredictably. Human health could be affected by even quite small changes in average mean temperature, and there is the prospect of some major diseases flourishing in warmer conditions and of more resistant strains of infection emerging.

The population in India most vulnerable to the negative impacts of global warming is in the lower-income groups, residents of coastal lowlands and islands, those living in semi- arid lands, and the urban poor in the squatter settlements, slums and shanty-towns of large cities. Present strategies for immunization, coping with disease vectors or carriers, providing safe drinking water, and improving nutrition are all based on existing climate regimes, ecosystems, and sea and solar radiation levels. These are all expected to change, but exactly how much cannot be predicted. It is, therefore, virtually impossible to adjust health and nutritional strategies to take account of possible climate changes.

Humans can adapt to moderate changes in temperature and to occasional extremes. But this adaptive capacity is relatively low in infants and the elderly; it rises through childhood and adolescence to reach a maximum which can be maintained up to about 30 years of age. A changing climate would alter the ecosystems of the vectors or agents which carry or cause many diseases, whether these be viruses, bacteria, parasites, plants, insects or other animals such as mosquitoes and snails. As the weather warms, the boundaries of the tropics may extend into the present subtropics, and parts of temperate areas may become subtropical. As air temperatures increase, some diseases will become common in regions which once rarely knew them and where there is little natural resistance to them. As a result, death rates may also climb significantly.

It is possible that warmer weather around the world will cause increases in summer diseases and decreases in those associated with winter. Diseases contracted from both water and air will also spread more readily as ambient temperatures rise. In a warmer climate, mosquitoes and other vectors also may migrate vertically, up into highlands which were once too cold for them. This may be particularly hazardous in tropical highland areas where there is no natural resistance to malaria.

Changes in temperature, rainfall, humidity and storm patterns may affect diseases borne by vectors in two ways. First, they will directly affect the vector's reproduction rate, biting rate, and the duration and frequency of human exposure. Second, they may modify agricultural systems or plant species, thus changing the relationship between host and vector. Development rates of malarial mosquitoes, for example, increase with warmer temperatures, but these pests need wet areas in which to breed.

Sea-level rise could also spread infectious disease by flooding sewerage and sanitation systems in coastal cities, and increase the incidence of diarrhoea in children. The flooding of hazardous waste dumps and sanitation systems could lead to long-term contamination of crop lands.

Rising sea may also disrupt marine habitats and aquatic food chains. Since fish constitute 40 per cent of all animal protein consumed by the people of India such a disruption of the marine ecosystem would affect the food supplies of many millions of people and dramatically increase protein deficiency and malnutrition. Changes in the availability of food and water, as well as radical shifts in disease patterns, could initiate large migrations of people, exacerbating food shortages, overcrowding, social stress and instability.

Some of the factors contributing significantly to global warming, such as the burning of fossil fuels and the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons, threaten human health in other ways too. A typical petrol-driven motor car, for example, emits carbon monoxide, sulphur and nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons, low-level ozone and lead—all of which are hazardous to health.

The ozone-depleting CFCs and halons pose a particular threat to humans through an increased risk of skin cancer, cataracts and lower immunity to other illnesses as a result of increased exposure to ultraviolet B radiation from the sun. Skin cancer risks are expected to rise most among fair-skinned.

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### 4.0 Objectives

The objective of this essay is to explore the dangerous and far-reaching effects of climate change on human health, particularly in a country like India. It seeks to highlight how even small changes in climate patterns—especially temperature and rainfall—can trigger major health crises by influencing food security, water supply, disease patterns, and the environment. The essay focuses on how vulnerable populations, such as the poor and those living in coastal and urban slum areas, are most at risk. It also aims to create awareness about how current public health strategies may not be enough to face the uncertain and unpredictable nature of climate change. Lastly, the essay underlines the importance of changing both policy and lifestyle choices to prevent long-term health disasters.

### 4.1 Introduction

Climate change, primarily caused by the greenhouse effect, is becoming a major threat to human health around the globe. In India, the effects are expected to be severe due to its dense population, geographical diversity, and socio-economic conditions. The rise in temperatures, shifts in rainfall patterns and the possibility of natural disasters can harm the environment in ways that directly and indirectly affect people's health. Issues like food and water shortages, the spread of infectious diseases, and environmental damage are all interconnected with the climate. This essay presents a well-informed discussion on how climate change is more than just an environmental issue—it is a pressing health crisis.

#### 4.1.1 Introduction to Dr. M. Lakshami Narasaiah

Dr. M. Lakshami Narasaiah is a noted academist and known for writing extensively on environmental and social issues. His writings often address the human side of global challenges, linking ecological disturbances to public health, poverty, and sustainable development. In this essay, he combines scientific observation with human concern to present a powerful warning: that climate change, if not addressed properly, will lead to human suffering on a large scale. His clear, fact-based approach helps readers understand how complex environmental problems like global warming have everyday consequences—especially for the most vulnerable people.

#### 4.1.2 Introduction to *Climate Change and Human Health*

In *Climate Change and Human Health*, Dr. Narasaiah paints a worrying picture of how global warming could reshape the way we live, with a special focus on health and survival. He explains that the changes caused by the greenhouse effect—rising temperatures, melting glaciers, erratic rain, rising sea levels—will have deep impacts not just on nature, but also on the health of human beings. People living in poor or exposed conditions are the first to face these dangers. The essay is not just a scientific analysis—it is also a warning and a call for preparedness.

## 4.2 Climate Change and Human Health

The essay starts by pointing out that even small increases in temperature can cause major shifts in human health patterns. Diseases that were once rare may become common, while others may become more dangerous and harder to treat. For instance, warmer climates allow certain bacteria, viruses, and parasites to survive and spread more easily. In places like India, where a large portion of the population already struggles with limited access to healthcare, this change can be catastrophic.

Particularly vulnerable groups include the poor, especially those living in low-lying coastal areas, semi-arid regions, and crowded urban slums. These populations may not have the resources or support systems to deal with the changing climate. Today's health strategies—like vaccinations, sanitation efforts, and nutritional programs—are all designed based on current climate and environmental conditions. But as these conditions shift, these strategies may no longer be effective. The real challenge is that we don't know how exactly the climate will change, making future planning extremely difficult.

Another serious concern is how climate change will affect disease-carrying vectors such as mosquitoes and snails. These vectors spread illnesses like malaria, dengue, and other infections. Warmer temperatures and increased rainfall help them thrive and spread to new regions—including areas that have never dealt with these diseases before. As weather patterns change, highland areas that were previously too cold may now become suitable for mosquito breeding. This means that people who have no immunity to these diseases are suddenly at risk, potentially increasing death rates.

Moreover, the essay highlights that diseases related to water and air are likely to become more widespread. Warmer weather creates the perfect condition for bacteria to grow, especially in unclean or stagnant water. In coastal cities, rising sea levels may flood sewage systems, spreading diseases like diarrhea, especially among children. Hazardous waste sites may also get flooded, polluting nearby agricultural land and posing long-term health risks.

The ripple effects of climate change go even further. For example, sea-level rise and marine pollution can disrupt marine ecosystems, reducing the availability of fish. Since fish is a major source of protein for many Indians, this disruption could lead to malnutrition and food insecurity. And when people begin to lose access to food and clean water, they may be forced to migrate in large numbers, creating overcrowding in cities, social stress, and even violence or conflict over resources.

### 4.2.1 Summary:

Dr. Narasaiah's essay clearly shows that climate change is a health emergency. It doesn't just affect glaciers and forests—it affects the food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe. What's most alarming is that many of the current

strategies to deal with diseases are not designed for the unpredictable and dangerous changes we are beginning to see.

The essay also explains that our ability to adapt to temperature changes is limited. While adults may adjust to some extent, infants and the elderly are highly vulnerable. The warming of the climate can give rise to new diseases or bring back old ones in stronger forms. This creates a challenge not only for public health systems but also for communities and families who may not have the means to protect them.

Additionally, climate change is closely tied to pollution and harmful chemicals. Vehicles and industries release toxic substances into the air—such as carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides—that can cause respiratory problems and other illnesses. The use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons, which damage the ozone layer, allows more ultraviolet (UV-B) rays from the sun to reach the Earth's surface. This can lead to more cases of skin cancer, cataracts, and weakened immune systems, especially among those with lighter skin.

The essay concludes with a strong message: that the causes of climate change are also harming our health right now and not just in the future. If we do not act now—by reducing pollution, improving public health systems, and preparing for climate-related risks—we may find ourselves facing not just an environmental crisis, but a humanitarian disaster.

#### **4.3 Terms to Remember:**

- **Greenhouse effect** – certain gases that trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere
- **Disease patterns** – The ways diseases appear and spread among people
- **Resistant strains** – Types of germs or viruses that are harder to kill or control.
- **Coastal lowlands** – Flat land areas near the sea.
- **Immunization** – Protecting people from diseases by giving vaccines.
- **Climate regimes** – Usual weather conditions in an area over time.
- **Ecosystems** – Communities of plants, animals, and their environment working together.
- **Vectors** – Animals or insects that carry and spread diseases, like mosquitoes.
- **Subtropics** – Areas of the Earth near the tropics with warm weather but less hot than the tropics.
- **Sanitation** – Systems that keep places clean and healthy, like toilets and sewage
- **Ozone-depleting** – Substances that damage the ozone layer, which protects the earth from harmful sun rays

**I. Rewrite the sentences choosing the correct alternative:**

- Changes in India's climate, stemming from the ..... ..
  - ozone layer
  - greenhouse effect
  - deforestation
  - pollution
- The population most vulnerable to global warming in India includes residents of coastal lowlands and ..... ..
  - mountains
  - deserts
  - islands
  - forests
- As temperatures rise, disease-carrying vectors like mosquitoes may migrate ..... into higher regions.
  - horizontally
  - vertically
  - diagonally
  - randomly
- Rising sea levels may spread infectious diseases by flooding .....
  - hospitals
  - sewerage
  - schools
  - markets
- The burning of fossil fuels releases hazardous substance .....
  - oxygen
  - nitrogen oxides
  - water vapour
  - helium

1. What term is used for organisms that transmit diseases like mosquitoes?
2. Which age groups have the lowest adaptive capacity to temperature changes?
3. Name one environmental factor that influences the reproduction rate of disease vectors.
4. What is a likely effect of marine habitat disruption on human nutrition?
5. What harmful gases are emitted by petrol-driven motor cars?

**Q.1 A. Answer the following questions in about 200- 250 words each:**

- 
- 155

**B. Write Short notes in about 100-150 words:**

1. Greenhouse effect and its impact on health
2. Adaptive capacity of humans to temperature changes
3. Role of mosquitoes and other vectors in spreading diseases
4. Impact of sea-level rise on sanitation and disease
5. Effects of disrupted marine habitats on nutrition

**4.6 Answers to Check Your Progress**

**I. Rewrite the sentences choosing the correct alternative:**

1. greenhouse effect
2. islands
3. vertically
4. sewerage
5. nitrogen oxides

**II. Answer the following questions in one word /phrases / sentence each:**

1. Vectors
2. Infants and the elderly
3. Temperature
4. Protein deficiency and malnutrition
5. Carbon monoxide, sulphur oxides, nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons, low-level ozone, lead

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Module - 3  
**Dollar Bahu**  
- Sudha Murthy

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**3.0 Objectives**

After studying this module, the students will be acquainted with:

1. Life and works of Sudha Murthy
3. The plot and its development
4. The characters and their interrelation
4. Major events in the life of protagonist
5. Central theme, social and cultural issues reflected in the novel.

**3.1 Introduction to the Novelist:**

Sudha Murthy is a well-known Indian author, philanthropist, and educator. She was born on August 19, 1950, in Shiggaon, Karnataka, India. She grew up in a traditional middle class family. Her father was a medical doctor and her mother was a school teacher. In 1972, she completed her Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from B.V.B. College of Engineering and Technology, Hubli and did her Master's degree in Electrical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur, in 1974.

Sudha Murthy began her career as a development engineer with the Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company (TELCO) in Pune and she was one of the first female engineers hired by TELCO. In 1984, she married N. R. Narayana Murthy, the co-founder of Infosys. She has also played a crucial role in the early days of Infosys.

Sudha Murthy's literary career spans over three decades. She has tried her hand in various types of fiction which includes novels, short stories, non-fiction books, and children's books. She often explores themes of family, relationships, social issues, and women's empowerment. Her important notable works are *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read* (2004), *Dollar Bahu* (2007), *Mahashweta* (2013), *The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk* (2012) and a *children's book*.

Sudha Murthy is also a dedicated philanthropist. She has worked extensively in the fields of education, healthcare, and women's empowerment. She runs charitable trusts. "The Infosys Foundation" focuses on education, healthcare, arts, and culture and "The Murthy Classical Library of India" aims to publish classical Indian texts in English translation.

For her literary and philanthropic work, Sudha Murthy has received numerous awards and honours including: Padma Shri (2006), R.K. Narayan Award for Literature (2013) and Lifetime Achievement Award by IIT, Kanpur (2014).

### **3.2 Presentation of Subject Matter:**

The novel, *Dollar Bahu* was originally written in Kannada and later on translated into English. It explores themes of family dynamics, cultural values, and the impact of materialism on relationships. It revolves around Vinuta, a simple and family devoted woman who adheres to traditional values, but she often feels that she has been overshadowed by her wealthy sister-in-law, Jamuna. The family, particularly Vinuta's mother-in-law, idolises Jamuna. She often compares her to Vinuta, which creates tension and insecurity for Vinuta. As the narrative unfolds, the novel explores the complexities of familial relationships, the clash between traditional and modern values, and the consequences of prioritizing material wealth over emotional bonds. Through Vinuta's character, Sudha Murthy highlights the importance of self-worth, inner strength, and the enduring value of simplicity and humility.

#### **3.2.1. Characters:**

**Shamanna:** A Sanskrit teacher and father of Chandru and Girish in the story

**Gouramma:** A housewife and wife of Shamanna

**Chandra Shekar (Chandru):** The eldest son of Shamanna and Gouramma, A Civil Engineer by profession but later acquires his computer skills to become the green card holder in the United States of America

**Girish:** Second son of Shamanna and Gouramma, works as a clerk in Canara Bank

**Vinuta (Vinu):** A school teacher and wife of Girish, The protagonist of the novel, a simple, traditional, and selfless woman who lives with her husband and in-laws, and often compared to her sister-in-law, Jamuna.

**Jamuna:** The Dollar bahu and the wife of Chandru

**Surabhi:** The youngest child and daughter of Shamanna and Gouramma

**Bheemanna:** Uncle of Vinuta

**Krishnappa:** father of Jamnua

### 3.2.2 Section-I

#### Chapter wise Summary of the Novel (Chapter 1 to 9)

##### One

Chandra Shekhar stood impatiently on the train platform. He was waiting for the Rani Kittur Chennamma Express to Kolhapur. His younger brother Girish had gone to get magazines for him but hadn't returned yet. Chandru was alone and anxious. Unlike Girish, who was easily distracted, Chandru was punctual and organized. He was leaving Bangalore, as he had been selected for a civil engineering project in Dharwad, a place he had never visited.

When the train arrived, Girish reappeared to help him with the luggage and bid farewell. Chandru settled in. He had mixed feeling of excitement and nervousness about traveling to an unknown place. He noticed the different accent of the local Kannada spoken by his co-passengers. They were discussing topics like music and weather, especially the place, Dharwad is known for Hindustani classical music.

An old man had a conversation with Chandru, and while he tried to keep his answers brief. But at the same time, he was drawn to a beautiful singing voice from another compartment. The singer was Vinu who captivated everyone with her voice. After a while, she approached Chandru about a seating mix-up. They both had been assigned the same berth and same ticket number. The ticket examiner promised to resolve at the next station. Chandru offered Vinu his seat. He waited for a new one at the next station but he was pleased to have met someone so intriguing.

##### Two

Chandru arrived at Dharwad station. He felt embarrassed for still wearing a lungi. He looked around but couldn't find his attractive co-passenger Vinu. Instead, he was encountered with Kitty, Girish's friend, who humorously greeted him and helped carry his suitcase. They hired a rickshaw over a horse-cart to get home faster. Kitty's mother welcomed Chandru and asked about his family and journey. Chandru appreciated the offer to stay but requested a room soon to avoid imposing on them.

After breakfast, Kitty showed Chandru around Dharwad, highlighting the university, a famous sweet shop, and beautiful parks during the vibrant rainy season. Chandru admired the city's charm but felt drawn to the glamour of Bangalore.

A few days later, Kitty found a potential paying guest room for Chandru. They visited a lovely bungalow surrounded by a lush garden. To his surprise, Vinu opened the door; she was shocked to see him. Bheemanna, a friendly man, showed them an upstairs room. Chandru immediately wanted this room, regardless of the rent. Kitty suggested looking at more places, but Chandru wanted this room which confused Kitty.

### **Three**

One morning, Vinuta stepped out to clean the garden and felt a sense of joy from the beautiful sunrise and the fragrant flowers. She picked up fallen bakula flowers, enjoying their scent while the milkman's bell took her back to her chores. Chandru, observed that Vinuta did most of the housework, raising questions about her role in the large family. He learned that Vinuta had inherited the house after her parents died when she was young, and Bheemanna, her uncle, took care of her. Despite her heavy responsibilities, Vinuta was dedicated to her music studies and at present she was in the second year of the BA degree course in Karnatak College, majoring in Hindustani music. Chandru compared her to his sister Surabhi, who lacked the same passion for music. Vinuta remained cheerful and adjusted to her situation, unlike Surabhi, who often demanded specific things. Chandru admired Vinuta's strength but worried about her hidden struggles.

### **Four**

One day, Chandru received instructions from his head office to report to Bangalore since, he would be sent to America for a job within a month. This made him very happy. He had always dreamed of going to America for higher studies but could not due to financial issues. He originally wanted to study computer science but ended up in civil engineering because of his exam scores. His civil engineering qualifications and work performance had now opened the door for his American dream. He shared this news with Bheemanna, who was happy for him. Chandru also invited Bheemanna to Bangalore. Before leaving, he bought some sweets and a poetry book for Vinuta. He expressed regret for not hearing her on the radio and sensed her sadness at his departure, realising that this might be their last meeting.

### **Five**

Shamanna was a calm and respected Sanskrit teacher. He had a modest lifestyle which prioritizes his children's education over material desires. His wife, Gouramma, was ambitious and dreamed of luxury items like jewelry, cars, and a big house. Despite Shamanna's limited salary, he has managed to buy a small house in Jayanagar. Gouramma feels frustrated that her husband's priorities do not match with hers, leading her to fulfil them through her children. She envied other women at family functions who showcased their wealth, especially those whose children live abroad, which made her feel inferior. Their children embodied different traits. Chandru

was Gouramma's favourite who shared her dream of going abroad, while Girish, who resembled Shamanna, who is happy with his life as a bank clerk and enjoyed helping others in the community. Gouramma disapproves of his involvement in such cultural activities, fearing it would hinder his success. Shamanna reassured her, suggesting that Girish will find happiness like him, while Chandru will ultimately fulfill her aspirations for success. Despite her frustrations, Gouramma eventually softens whenever Shamanna pacified her.

### **Six**

Chandru received many marriage proposals when his posting to the US was announced, but neither he nor his mother wanted him to marry yet. They planned for him to go to America, work hard, and save money to build an upper storey on their house and fund his sister Surabhi's marriage, especially since their father Shamanna would retire soon. They did not expect much help from Girish, who had a low-paying clerical job. As Chandru prepared to leave for Florida on a one-year deputation, Surabhi gave him a list of items she wanted, and his mother, Gouramma, expressed her wish to join him if possible. Girish and Shamanna did not make any demands.

### **Seven**

Chandru's dream of moving to America came true and he was thrilled to be in a land filled with opportunities and wealth. He appreciated the differences between India and America. He found that the U. S. was vibrant, free from power cuts and water shortages, with easy access to housing. On the other hand, he realised that India was burdened by issues like scarcity and superstition. Chandru quickly grew adapted to American lifestyle, finding satisfaction in his work and taking evening computer classes funded by his company. He lived modestly to save money, quickly advancing in his career.

Despite his excitement, Chandru missed his family, especially during evenings. He would call his mother, sharing stories of his new life. His mother often found herself distracted and dreaming of the money Chandru was sending home, which made life easier for her in India. This dollar symbolized wealth and prosperity for her.

After a year and a half, the thought of returning to India distressed Chandru. He came to know about his colleagues who took jobs in America without notifying their original employers. This practice known as "skipping." These people disregarded their signed agreements in India, believing they could avoid penalties. It made Chandru consider skipping too, as he now had new software skills that would enable him find another job easily.

Chandru decided to stay in America till he gets green card. He discussed his plan with his mother. She was supportive, eager to be able to tell others her son was an NRI. Soon, he found a job opportunity in Nashville, Tennessee. The employer

promised him to help in obtaining a green card. Nashville had a harsh winter and very few applied for jobs there. Then, Chandru sold his car, packed his belongings, and vanished, leaving his previous life behind. When his boss from India inquired about his whereabouts, he found that Chandru had disappeared without a trace.

### **Eight**

When a crowded bus to Jayanagar arrived, Vinuta felt anxious as she was late for her school job, which would mean losing pay. She asked the conductor for a ticket, only to realize she had no change except for a hundred-rupee note. The conductor was irritated and suggested to ask her 'husband' for change. It surprised her, as she wasn't married. A tall man named Girish offered to help by giving change for the ticket, and she promised to pay him back later. After getting off the bus, she gave hundred rupee note to Girish for change. As he disappeared, Vinuta regretted trusting a stranger with her money. She hoped he will return her money after his work.

At the end of the day, Girish was waiting for her outside the bank, ready to return the money without any deductions. This made Vinuta relieved and appreciated his honesty. About a week later, her aunt informed her of a marriage proposal from a family looking for a match for Girish, who was a bank clerk. Vinuta stated she had no specific expectation from future husband but she wanted to continue her work.

Girish, who had shown interest in Vinuta after the bus encounter, learned more about her from his father, Shamanna who thought they would make a good match. Despite his mother's hesitation, Shamanna secretly arranged a meeting with Vinuta's family. During the visit, both families felt positively about each other. However, when discussions about selling Vinuta's childhood home for marriage expenses arose, she felt distressed. Girish noticed her discomfort and assured her.

### **Nine**

Chandru shifted to Nashville for work and his company helped him apply for a green card. However, it was made clear that it could take anywhere from a month to several years to obtain it. After two and a half years, he still hadn't received it. He now missed his family in India. Some of his friends returned to India as they got their green cards to marry quickly. Slowly, Chandru's excitement about American life faded. He felt lonely and started thinking about marriage, especially about Vinuta, whom he liked in the past. He wrote her a letter expressing his feelings and hopes.

After weeks without a reply, he worried about the possible outcomes. Eventually, he received a response but it was stamped 'Addressee not found.' It disappointed him. Here in India, his family began planning his brother Girish's wedding. Gouramma wanted a grand wedding to maintain family status, suggesting selling their house in Dharwad for the occasion. Shamanna opposed this idea and allowed Girish and Vinuta to make their own choices regarding the wedding. Girish

A few days later, Gouramma informed Chandru about Girish's engagement to a teacher from his school. She wished he could attend the wedding. Chandru chose not to travel back for the ceremony and instead he sent a \$500 gift, believing his family would appreciate the money more than his presence. He realized he had adjusted to American life and thought of returning to India was less appealing due to the conditions he associated with it.

**A) Rewrite following sentences by choosing the most correct alternative:**

- B) Answer the following questions in one word/ phrase/ sentence.**

1. Who is the “Dollar Bahu” in the novel?
2. Who bought a book of poems for Vinuta?
3. What was the ticket same ticket number of Vinuta and Chandru?
4. Who was a Sanskrit teacher?
5. What was Chandru’s marriage gift to Girish?

### **3.2.4 Section II**

#### **Chapter wise Summary of the Novel (Chapter 10 to 18)**

##### **Ten**

After marriage, Vinuta felt happy in her new home. Shamanna and Girish, reminded her uncle Bheemanna. She noticed her mother-in-law was controlling woman. On the other hand, Surabhi, her sister-in-law, was carefree and more self-centered. Surabhi looked at Vinuta as a competitor for affection, as she was used to being the only girl in the family. Surabhi had likings for shopping and social outings over education or household responsibilities. She used to spend her days gossiping and watching TV.

In contrast, Vinuta took her household responsibilities seriously. She managed household chores and her job at a government school. Sometimes, she felt sad that Girish did not appreciate music, unlike Shamanna, who encouraged her to pursue a career in it. She developed a close friendship with Shashikala, a fellow teacher, who shared her wedding news with excitement. Shashikala's fiancé, Shankar, was an MA in English and works as a part-time lecturer in a college in Mysore. They had planned to open tutorials after their marriage in three months.

After some days, Vinuta came to know from her headmistress that Shashikala's marriage had been canceled. She visited Shashikala, who was devastated and had halted all wedding preparations. Shashikala's mother told Vinuta that her daughter hadn't eaten for days, as her engagement was broken. Shankar's had decided to pursue a more promising opportunity in America. Later, Shashikala revealed that her fiancé, Shankar, had chosen to marry an American woman who promised him a green card and financial support for his studies. Despite the pain, Shashikala felt overshadowed by the prospect of financial success over her feelings. Vinuta felt heartbroken for her friend. She was speechless at the harsh realities of ambition and choice in love, as Shashikala expressed helplessness over the situation, showing how material opportunities sometimes eclipsed personal relationships.

##### **Eleven**

Chandru's dream came true when he received his green card. It made him an official resident of America. He was on top of the world. However, a letter from Girish gave him as shock. There were some photos of his marriage with the letter. Chandru realised that the girl he loved, Vinuta, had married his brother. This realization made him sad and jealous. After some days, he accepted this reality.

##### **Twelve**

Chandru was returning home after six years and his family was full of excitement. Vinuta was also eager to see him. She recalled how she recognized Chandru as her brother-in-law when she visited her husband Girish's house after marriage. She decorated the home. She wondered, if Chandru would remember her

singing from his stay in Dharwad. Gouramma, Girish, and Surabhi prepared to go to the airport to receive Chnadru. Shamanna decided to stay home. Vinuta encouraged Gouramma to go and promised to take care of everything at home.

When Chandru arrived, Gouramma was emotional to see him. He greeted both parents respectfully. He shared the gifts for the family. He was tired but he was also feeling proud of his financial success in America. Gouramma, his mother, was thrilled about the money he brought home. She dreamed about what she could buy. Vinuta managed the household responsibilities and made guests comfortable.

Chandru received so many marriage proposals. Gouramma chose a girl named Jamuna from a wealthy family. Although Jamuna had some shortcomings, Gouramma was impressed by her background. Chandru was clear about his middle-class values and future in America. He valued honesty in the conversation with Jamuna and after discussions, he signalled approval for the match.

After days in India, Chandru felt out of place. He visited an old friend, Ravichandra, who was now a doctor. He revealed him the challenges of adjusting back to Indian food. Chandru's realised contrast between his life in America and India.

### **Thirteen**

Chandru's wedding to Jamuna was scheduled in the next week, and the family's excitement was at the peak. Chandru gave his mother, Gouramma, \$4,000 for wedding expenses. She eagerly planned to use it for luxurious items for Jamuna, who came from a wealthy family. Chandru advised her to buy expensive saris for themselves instead of spending on Jamuna as she'll be in America. While shopping for saris, Chandru selected a special aquamarine sari for Vinuta, which delighted her. Gouramma redesigned her old bangles into new jewellery.

As the wedding day approaches, their home was filled with relatives. Gouramma was busy in showing off their wealth through Jamuna's gifts and attire, as well as the lavish celebrations planned by Jamuna's wealthy father, Krishnappa. After the wedding, Jamuna's mother implored Gouramma to accept Jamuna as her daughter and offered her an expensive gift. Both, then, prompted a warm exchange between them.

After the honeymoon, Jamuna stayed with Gouramma until she gets her visa but quickly she expressed her desire to visit her own family. Gouramma realised that Jamuna won't be as easily controlled as Vinuta. One day, Jamuna informed the family that she's leaving for America. She claimed that due to her busy schedule, she can't spend much time with them. Shamanna was sceptically towards Jamuna's intentions, on the other hand, Gouramma was hopeful and reassured her. She recognized Jamuna's importance to the family and encouraged her to go join her husband. Vinuta, on the other hand, wasn't considered even as a member in the house.

## Fourteen

After Chandru's wedding, Vinuta's life changed in the Shamanna household. Gouramma often praised her daughter-in-law Jamuna, who lived in America. She often compared her to Vinuta which created tension. Before Jamuna's arrival, Gouramma felt relaxed as Vinuta was handling everything. Now, she praised Jamuna's achievements and undermined Vinuta. Vinuta also felt neglected, especially as guests showered praise on Jamuna and her wedding gifts. Jamuna's letters about her American life further intensified Vinuta's emotional sufferings.

On one Saturday and all Vinuta's colleagues decided to go for the noon show of *Veer Zara*. While watching a movie, Vinuta spotted Surabhi with Gopinath, a local boy, which shocked her. She knew well that Gouramma was looking for a suitable husband for Surabhi, with strict conditions. Now Vinuta was torn between whether she inform it to her family or speak to Surabhi directly about her relationship with Gopinath. After the movie, she told Shamanna what she saw and suggested that they should stop searching for a groom if Surabhi liked Gopinath. Gouramma overheard it and was disturbed by the idea of Surabhi not following her plans for a big American future.

The next day, Gouramma enquired her daughter Surabhi about her relationship with Gopi, expressing concern about her future with him. She compared their potential life to other wealthy people. She emphasized her the importance of money in marriage. Gouramma later found a man named Shekhar from the U. S. Shamanna was against this proposal because of Shekhar's demands, including a lavish wedding and a furnished apartment. However, Gouramma insisted on fulfilling those demands for Surabhi's bright and happy future.

When Shekhar came to see Surabhi, he displayed his disdain for their home and ultimately expressed his disappointment in Surabhi. Shekhar also met Girish with rudeness. After the visit, Girish came to know from Madan that Shekhar was living with a white woman which led him to decide against the match. In family discussion the tensions rose where Surabhi accused Vinuta, her sister-in-law, for trying to sabotage her opportunity for a better life. Vinuta, was hurt and saddened by these allegations and realized that she had been seen as an outsider.

## Fifteen

Surabhi later engaged to Suresh, fulfilling requirements set by Gouramma. One of them was the condition of not keeping mother-in-law living with them. Suresh was well-off but he was not living in America which was seen as a flaw. Vinuta was going through tough time. She felt isolated from family and observed the selfishness within her family. She felt trapped in her circumstances so she decided to return to her hometown, Dharwad on the pretext of for her baby's delivery.

Surabhi's engagement was celebrated with much fanfare. Jamuna couldn't adjust her plans for the wedding. Now, the family was caught in a conflict between the importance of money and personal feelings. The wedding was set for August, forcing Vinuta to adjust her plans. Surabhi's wedding went smoothly. Vinuta delivered a baby boy but left she had feeling of being undervalued. Later, Chandru visited Vinuta. He shared his own struggles in America and his realisation that material wealth did not equate to happiness. He also recognized their differing circumstances but bonded with Vinuta over their shared feelings of isolation.

### **Sixteen**

Vinuta returned to Bangalore with her baby son. He became a favourite of Shamanna. When Vinuta was at school, Shamanna cared for the child. Vinuta noticed that Jamuna's parents had not visited them lately.

One day, Gouramma felt pain in her chest. She was diagnosed with a lump in her breast. She ignored it initially but she grew worried after a week. Vinuta took her to the doctor, who advised a biopsy. Girish and Vinuta decided to keep the family uninformed about it to avoid worry to other family members. The biopsy revealed the lump was benign and it relieved Girish. Despite Vinuta's care in her medical issue, Gouramma remained ungrateful. She still valued money more than support from family.

### **Seventeen**

Chandru visited Bangalore for business. Surabhi and Suresh came to see him. Jamuna was pregnant and Gouramma focused more on Jamuna than her own grandchild Harsha from Vinuta. Shamanna took care of Harsha. Vinuta, however, appeared weak and disconnected from Gouramma, as she seemed more excited for Jamuna. Chandru surprised Vinuta by buying toys for Harsha,

Gouramma dreamed of visiting America to help Jamuna but it was met with resistance from Shamanna. Later it was decided that Gouramma would go alone. She prepared gifts and food for Jamuna. Later, Surabhi discussed the idea of going abroad with Suresh. Gouramma believed Jamuna would support them.

### **Eighteen**

Chandru made an arrangement for his mother, Gouramma, to fly with his friend Ashwat and his wife from Bangalore to Nashville. He provided her with a ticket and a letter about travel tips. Gouramma had a tough time during her flight journey. She felt uneasy with the seat belt, struggled with the toilet, and was unhappy with the food. When she saw Chandru waiting for her at Nashville airport, all her previous worries faded. She had overwhelming emotions upon seeing him. At the time of loading their luggage into a car, Gouramma noticed the car as an impressive vehicle.

Chandru informed Gouramma that Jamuna was working and would join them later. It surprised Gouramma. As they drove the car, Gouramma admired the new country and the scenery. After coming to Chandru's home, she was astonished by its size and luxury. After entering there, Gouramma insisted on bathing before eating but the bathroom setup gave her a shock.

Gouramma was adjusting herself to life in a new country but things were quite different from India. She was uncomfortable using the bath facilities and requested a bucket for bathing. Chandru explained her that in their house, bathrooms are combined with toilets, and she should simply use the curtain for privacy. Gouramma was also puzzled by the darkness of the afternoon and learned that it gets dark early during winter. In the kitchen, she noticed how clean and modern it was. Jamuna plans to take time off work after having the baby but had to work to pay bills. Gouramma wanted to celebrate Jamuna's pregnancy with a ceremony, but she was discouraged by Jamuna. When Jamuna was going through labour pains, Chandru took her charge, leaving Gouramma at home. When the baby girl was born, Gouramma was shocked to know that the new-born baby will sleep alone in her room. She was worried about the baby's care and tried to offer help with bathing and massaging. But Jamuna dismissed it all as she preferred to follow modern parenting methods instead of traditional practices.

### 3.2.5 Check your progress

#### A) Rewrite following sentences by choosing the most correct alternative:

1. Gouramma went to America for.....
  - a. Jamuna's delivery
  - b. Surabhi's delivery
  - c. Vinuta's delivery
  - d. enjoyment
2. Jamuna refused to take.....along with her in the hospital.
  - a. Gouramma
  - b. Chandru
  - c. Vinuta
  - d. Surabhi
3. ....was a name of daughter of Chandru and Jamuna .
  - a. Manasi
  - b. Manas
  - c. Manasvi
  - d. Manjiri
4. ....accepted job as a teacher in Bangalore.
  - a. Shekhar
  - b. Surabhi
  - c. Vinuta
  - d. Girish
5. ....was considerate and loving towards Vinuta in the novel "Dollar Bahu".
  - a. Shamanna
  - b. Gouramma
  - c. Surabhi
  - d. Shekhar

**B) Answer the following questions in one word/ phrase/ sentence.**

1. Who was a domineering person in the novel?
2. Which noon show had Vinuta's colleagues decided to go for?
3. Who was referred as a girl with the golden voice by Chandru?
4. How many years after did Chandru come back to India?
5. How many dollars did Chandru gave his mother for wedding expenses?

**3.2.6 Section III**

**Chapter wise Summary of the Novel (Chapter 19 to 27)**

**Nineteen**

Jamuna's maternity leave was ending soon. So, she hosted a naming ceremony for her baby on a Sunday. Gouramma eagerly prepared dinner for the event. The event was attended by people from various backgrounds who communicated in English. Guests brought gifts. Gouramma realised that her gift were overlooked. The party continued late into the evening. After most guests left, Jamuna chatted with her friend Rekha about their experiences with family visits and the stress that could come from hosting relatives. Jamuna preferred to keep her family small due to financial reasons. Gouramma overheard their conversation. She felt hurt when she came to know that Jamuna did not expect her family to visit.

After settlement in America, Chandru became more reserved, while Jamuna grew confident in her independence. They discussed parenting concerns over raising children in America and India. Gouramma became lonely and missed her life in Bangalore. She struggled with the quietness of her new home. When Chandru wanted to invite his friends to visit, Jamuna opposed it due to the cooking load on her. Gouramma offered to handle the kitchen work. She was frustrated with Jamuna's attitude but couldn't confront her directly.

**Twenty**

Gouramma was eagerly waiting for the arrival of Radhakrishna and his family. She had planned many dishes for them, as groceries were affordable in America. She liked that this family spoke Kannada. It was a refreshing conversation for her. However, Jamuna was upset because it disrupted her plans by their visit. Radhakrishna was a senior scientist. His family was warmly welcomed. Savitri, his wife, helped Gouramma in the kitchen. During a walk, Savitri became emotional when Gouramma asked about her daughter Shama. She shared her grief over Shama's troubled marriage. Surendra her son-in-law only married for a chance to live in America. After the divorce, Shama left her family and adopted a different lifestyle. She was pursuing her studies in California and living with a Brazilian boyfriend. Savitri feared they might face similar issues with her younger daughter, Savita. This

incident intensified Gouramma's concerns for her own granddaughter Manasi. Radhakrishna shared his struggles in India and expressed his mixed feelings about living there. He was happy with his work in America but struggled with personal issues. His wife, Savitri, wanted to return to India. He feared going back to the same challenging life there. He appreciated America's opportunities and lifestyle, but feels trapped by them. According to him, many Indian professionals stay in America due to the better conditions compared to India. Chandru realised frustrations about greed among his relatives and the strain of supporting them. He remembered an incident when he felt pressured to give away a valued watch to his brother-in-law, Suresh and how family expectations weigh on him. His wife, Jamuna, also resented his family's attitude towards earning money abroad.

### **Twenty-one**

Ugadi, the Kannada New Year, arrived in America. Gouramma was excited to celebrate it with her son, Chandru, and daughter-in-law, Jamuna. However, Jamuna discouraged Gouramma's by stating they could not take leave from work for a festival. It indicated a change in her priorities after moving to the US. Gouramma realised that Jamuna had also become more serious and money-conscious. She also felt disturbed by the shift in household roles, where Chandru was contributing to chores, contrary to her traditional Indian views.

Chandru and his family attended a lavish Ugadi celebration hosted by Jaya. Gouramma felt out of place compared to the well-dressed guests. There she met Chitra, an old acquaintance. She was Shankaranna's daughter who was a peon in the school. She shared her inspiring journey from a troubled marriage in India to a successful life in the US with her American husband, Joseph. Through their conversation, Gouramma felt pride in her husband's past kindness toward Chitra in her time of need, realizing the positive impact he had made on someone's life. When they were parting, Gouramma blessed Chitra and Joseph.

### **Twenty-two**

After six months of Gouramma arrival in America, spring replaced winter. Chandru planned a trip to New York to show his mother another city. Gouramma was excited, she prepared sweets for their hosts. Jamuna was also eager to shop, as this was her first vacation since having a baby. During their drive, Gouramma noticed the beautiful scenery outside and she also realized Chandru's car was not special as Jamuna complained about it.

Chandru explained that they would stay at his colleague Shrikant's house, who was away on a trip. Their discussion turned to Shrikant's divorce with his wife Roopa and Tara's past marriage. Chandru advised her not to ask personal questions to Tara. When they arrived at Shrikant's house, Malati whose husband works for Shrikant welcomed them and shared how she manages a shop selling Indian goods with Martha, a Colombian immigrant.

The next day Chandru took them to see the Statue of Liberty, the Rockefeller Center, some temples and then they went to Padma's house. Padma invited Gouramma to stay with her for a few days. Jamuna wasn't ready for it but Chandru allowed his mother to stay with her.

### **Twenty-three**

Vatsala one of Padma's friends, visited Padma's house, bringing sweets and checking on her. Padma introduced Gouramma and thanked Vatsala for her concern. Vatsala was a busy executive with a challenging past. She had overcome obstacles and became successful after completing her education in the US. Their conversation revealed and wondered Gouramma that grown children often live separately from their parents in US, promoting independence, while parents stay independent until they need assistance.

Later that night, Padma felt uneasy as her due date of her baby delivery had approached and she prepared to go to the hospital alone, despite Gouramma's offers of help. She assured Gouramma that everything was planned beforehand and that she appreciated her support. Padma delivered a baby boy. Rajiv her husband cut his trip short and returned the very next day. Gouramma stayed with Padma on for another week and looked after her when she came home from the hospital. Padma was touched by the affection with which Gouramma took care of her. As a gesture of gratitude, Padma gifted Gouramma an envelope containing a sari.

### **Twenty-four**

After returning from New York, Gouramma had a strong longing for her home country. She had lost interest in shopping. Chandru suggested her to come with him every Thursday to the Indian grocery store, Bombay Grocery Store. Initially she wasn't ready but she eventually went and discovered that the store had everything she needed from home, which made her question why Jamuna insisted her to send masala powders from India. At the store, Gouramma met Asha Patil from Akkalkot, who spoke Kannada and Marathi. She shared her own story of struggles and triumphs since moving to the US after marrying into a difficult family in Mumbai. She told about her challenging past and how moving to America changed her life for the better. She discussed her happy life now, her businesses, and how she wants a different future for her daughter, Vinaya. Gouramma felt a change in her perspective as she listened to Asha's experiences. She realised the challenges faced by women in India and recognised the opportunities available in America.

### **Twenty-five**

One day, Chandru asked his mother, Gouramma, to sew a button on his shirt. When she couldn't find the sewing kit, she look for it in Jamuna's wardrobe. Inside it, she found many saris and photo albums. While looking through these photos, she discovered pictures of Jamuna wearing same saris she had previously given to

Surabhi. Gouramma felt betrayed. She realised that Jamuna had given away her old saris under the guise of gifts.

On a Saturday, Jamuna held a gathering with her friends. Gouramma heard Jamuna bragging about how she manipulated her mother-in-law and sister-in-law, by giving them used items while pretending they were new. Gouramma felt humiliated and disillusioned. She realised she had blindly praised Jamuna for being a good daughter-in-law. That entire night Gouramma cried and missed Vinuta.

Gouramma, now feeling hurt, decided to return to India. She informed her decision to Chandru about her decision. Jamuna tried to persuade her to stay but Chandru supported Gouramma's choice to return.

Later, Gouramma met Shanta, daughter of her friend, Alamelu. She had faced personal struggles but found happiness in her independence after coming to America. Gouramma visited her house for one day stay. Shanta also showed Gouramma around, offering her a sense of comfort before dropping her back to Chandru's house.

#### **Twenty-six**

Gouramma was nervous about meeting Jamnuna's friend Vinod Shah's parents since she didn't know their language. Jamuna insisted her to go, as it was important for her son. When they arrived at Vinod's house, they learned he was away. Gouramma met his mother, Madhuriben. She shared her feelings of being uprooted in a foreign country and preferred staying in India despite the challenges it posed for her son.

Gouramma prepared to return to India with Vinod. She felt a sense of joy and excitement, realising America wasn't the ideal place as she thought. Upon landing in Bangalore, she appreciated the familiar sights of home and looked forward to reuniting with her family.

#### **Twenty-seven**

Vinuta felt she had never been a good daughter-in-law to Gouramma. She feared that after spending a year in America, Gouramma would judge her even more. She was aware that Girish, her husband, would never back her thinking that nothing would change his mother's views. She also worried about comparisons between her children, Harsha and Manasi. Manasi would be seen as superior or a Dollar granddaughter because of her American connection. Vinuta started to hate the word "dollar," wishing for equal value of rupee and dollar.

Shamanna, her father-in-law, noticed Vinuta's distress and shared a story about two wives of Sage Kashyap. He emphasised the dangers of developing complexes from family pressures. He encouraged her to make her own home and avoid being unhappy in her current situation. She learned that Shamanna had asked Girish to transfer his job to Dharwad where they could live more peacefully. He gave blessings to them to set their house in Dharwad.

When Gouramma came back on Sunday, she realised that Vinuta had gone to Dharwad with Girish. Shamanna blamed her for fulsome praise of Jamuna and pushing Vinu into a depression. She felt distressed about this change. Shamanna comforted her by saying that he can take her there, if she is not going to talk about America in front of Vinuta. Gouramma promised to change her behaviour regarding comparisons to America. While preparing to leave for Dharwad, Gouramma opened her purse for the keys to open her suitcase and a hundred dollar bill fell out symbolising the invincible Dollar had fallen.

### 3.2.7 Check your progress

#### A) Choose the correct alternatives from those given below.

1. At end of the novel, the invincible.....had fallen.
  - a. Rupee
  - b. Dollar
  - c. Cent
  - d. Ruble
2. ....repented her visit to America after the bad treatment given by Jamuna.
  - a. Vinuta
  - b. Gouramma
  - c. Shamanna
  - d. Surabhi
3. Shrikant and Roopa divorce because of.....bossing nature.
  - a. Shrikant's
  - b. Shrikant's mother's
  - c. Roopa's
  - d. their daughter's
4. Jamuna gave.....in decorated boxes for Surabhi's wedding.
  - a. sweets
  - b. ornaments
  - c. new saris
  - d. used saris
5. Girish gets transferred to.....at the end of the novel.
  - a. Chennai
  - b. Mumbai
  - c. Dharwad
  - d. Bangalore

#### B) Answer the following questions in one word/ phrase/ sentence.

1. What is a symbol of power in the novel "Dollar Bahu"?
2. Where did Chandru see Shama?
3. What is Ugadi?
4. Whose was one of the richest Indian families in the US?
5. Who hailed from a village near Akkalkot?

### 3.3 Terms to Remember:

**American dream:** the belief that anyone, regardless of their origin or social class, can achieve success and a better life through hard work and determination.

**Green Card:** officially known as a permanent resident card/ an identity document which shows that a person has permanent residency in the United States.

**Globalization:** trade and investment between nations, leading to the rise of multinational companies and global supply chain

**NRI:** An Indian citizen or a foreign citizen of Indian origin who has stayed abroad for employment, carrying out business or vocation.

**Skipping:** missing work without proper notice or leaving a job without resigning

### 3.4 Answers to check your progress

#### Section I

#### 3.2.3 Check your progress.

**A) Rewrite following sentences by choosing the most correct alternative:**

1. a) Dharwad
2. c) Surabhi
3. a) computer
4. b) Kannada
5. b) Rani Kittur Chennamma Express

**B) Answer the following questions in one word/ phrase/ sentence.**

1. Jamuna
2. Chandru
3. G-28.
4. Shamanna
5. Chandru sent a gift of \$500.

#### Section I

#### 3.2.5 Check your progress

**A) Rewrite following sentences by choosing the most correct alternative:**

1. c. Vinuta's delivery
2. a. Gouramma
3. a. Manasi
4. c. Vinuta
5. a. Shamanna

**B) Answer the following questions in one word/ phrase/ sentence.**

1. Gouramma
2. The noon show of Veer Zara
3. Vinuta
4. six
5. \$ 4000

**Section III**

**3.2.7 Check your progress**

**A) Choose the correct alternatives from those given below.**

1.        b. Dollar
2.        b. Gouramma
3.        c. Roopa's
4.        d. used saris
5.        c. Dharwad

**B) Answer the following questions in one word/ phrase/ sentence.**

1. Dollar
2. at a downtown restaurant in San Francisco.
3. Kannada New Year festival
4. Jaya's family
5. Asha Patil

**3.5 Exercises**

1. Discuss in detail the plot of the novel and its development.
4. List the major characters and comment on their interrelation.
4. Reproduce major events in the life of Chandru in your own words.

**3.6 References for further study:**

Murty, Sudha. *Dollar Bahu*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2007. Print.  
Forster, E. M. *Aspects of the Novel*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1927. Print.



**Module - 4**  
**Characters and Themes in *Dollar Bahu***

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4.0. Objectives

4.1. Introduction

4.2. Characters in Brief

4.2.1. Character sketch

4.3. Themes

4.4. Check Your Progress

4.5. Answers to Check Your Progress

4.6. Exercise

4.7. References

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**4.0. Objectives :**

After studying this Module you will be able to:

- i) Understand the various themes of the modern Indian English Novel.
- ii) Explain the changing scenario of the current Indian society.
- iii) Find relationship between Indian and Western Values.
- iv) Analyze the difference between material life and caring family .
- v) Realize the dehumanizing Effect of Globalization on the Traditional Indian System

**4.1. Introduction -**

*Dollar Bahu*, a novel by Sudha Mruthy, offers a poignant exploration of how wealth and materialism influence family dynamics and reshape perceptions of happiness and success across cultures. Set against the contrasting backdrops of India and the United States, the narrative centers on Gouramma, a traditional Indian matriarch, whose admiration for wealth blinds her to the emotional cost of valuing money above human relationships. Her visit to America becomes a transformative experience, ultimately revealing the emotional void beneath material abundance. Through her journey, the novel delivers a powerful message: while money can offer comfort and convenience, it can never substitute for the love, warmth, and emotional security that family provides.

Told in clear, straightforward prose, the novella resembles a modern-day fable, enriched with moral reflections on the illusions of prosperity. Mruthy deftly critiques the assumption that life abroad is inherently superior, illustrating that the

pursuit of wealth often comes at the cost of familial cohesion and personal fulfillment. The family of Shamanna is emblematic of this disintegration. Though they share a household, each member inhabits a separate emotional universe. Gouramma's world is governed by selfishness and favoritism. Shamanna, the patriarch, bears the silent burden of responsibility. Girish is paralyzed by complacency, while Vinutha, despite her devotion and resilience, is trapped in the repetitive drudgery of domestic life. Chandru, the son living in America, is intelligent and sensitive, yet emotionally distant, having surrendered his personal life to the demands of a career abroad.

In portraying these fractured relationships, Murthy exposes the weakening of the traditional joint family structure under the pressures of modernity and material aspirations. *Dollar Bahu* ultimately serves as a gentle but firm reminder that true happiness lies not in the currency one earns, but in the relationships one nurtures.

#### 4.2. Characters in Brief -

- i) **Shamanna** - A Sanskrit teacher, husband of Gouramma and father of Chandru, Girish and Surabhi
- a) **Gouramma** - A housewife and wife of Shamanna
- b) **Chandru or Chandrasekhar** - Eldest son of Shamanna and Gouramma, a Civil Engineer by profession. The 'Dollar Son' who moved to the United States of America(Florida).
- c) **Girish** - Second son of Shamanna and Gouramma, works as a clerk in Bank.
- d) **Surabhi** - The youngest child and daughter of Shamanna and Gouramma
- e) **Vinutha or Vini** - A School teacher and wife of Girish
- f) **Jamuna** - The 'Dollar Bahu' and Wife of Chandru
- g) **Bhimanna Desai** - Vinu's uncle and only caretaker who lives in Dharwad
- h) **Krishnappa** - Jamuna's father and husband of Parvati
- i) **Parvati** - Jamuna's mother
- j) **Shrikant** - Chandru's senior colleague in America
- k) **Roopa** - wife of Shrikant, a Paediatric doctor, divorced from Shrikant
- l) **Mohan, Rajiv and Tara** - Chandru's friends
- m) **Suresh** - a lawyer from Hyderabad who engaged with Surabhi and owned farmland, a big house and a fancy car.
- n) **Gopinath or Gopi** - a middleclass boy with whom Surabhi had an affair

##### 4.2.1. Charactersketch -

##### 1. Gouramma : A Journey from Materialism to Realization

Sudha Murthy's novella *Dollar Bahu* tells the story of a middle-class Indian family and how their relationships are affected by money, especially the money earned in

foreign countries like the United States. One of the most important characters in the novel is **Gouramma**, the mother of Chandru and Girish. Gouramma's character is central to the story because it shows how the desire for wealth and social status can lead to unfair behavior and emotional damage within a family. Over the course of the novel, Gouramma changes from a mother blinded by materialism to a woman who understands the true meaning of happiness and family.

### **A Traditional Mother with Modern Aspirations**

Gouramma starts out as a traditional Indian mother who believes that money is the key to happiness and respect in society. Like many people around her, she dreams of living a luxurious life like her wealthy friends. However, she is not only thinking about comfort; she also wants to be respected and seen as someone important in social gatherings. For her, the US dollar becomes a symbol of success. She believes that it can change her life and raise her social status. As the novel says, "Gouramma was in India only in body at such times; her spirit would be flying across the length and breadth of America." This shows how deeply she is lost in her dream of a better life through money earned in America.

Her elder son, **Chandru**, gets a job in the United States, and this makes Gouramma extremely happy. She begins to imagine a life full of luxury, comfort, and pride. She believes that because Chandru earns in dollars, he is better than her younger son **Girish**, who works and lives a simple life in India. This thinking shows how much importance she gives to money, especially foreign money.

### **Unfair and Biased Behavior**

Gouramma's love for money makes her behave unfairly with the people around her, especially her daughters-in-law. When Girish marries **Vinuta**, a kind but poor and parentless girl, Gouramma becomes upset because she doesn't bring a dowry or expensive gifts. Gouramma treats Vinuta poorly—making her do all the household work, criticizing her constantly, and never appreciating her efforts. Vinuta becomes a servant in the house and suffers emotionally.

On the other hand, when Chandru marries **Jamuna**, a wealthy girl from a rich family, Gouramma treats her like a queen. She proudly introduces Jamuna to her friends as her "Dollar Bahu" and shows her off in society. She believes that because Jamuna brings money and status, she deserves respect and love. This unfair treatment clearly shows Gouramma's materialistic mindset. She values people based on their wealth, not their character or actions.

### **A Turning Point in America**

The major change in Gouramma's character happens when she visits the United States to stay with Chandru and Jamuna. At first, she is excited. She expects to see the dream life she always wanted—luxurious houses, beautiful clothes, and rich food. But after spending time there, she starts to notice something different. In

America, life is not as perfect as she had imagined. She sees that many elderly parents live alone and don't have the support of their children. People are often too busy to spend time with each other. There is a lack of emotional connection and warmth in family life.

Gouramma begins to feel lonely and realizes that wealth and comfort cannot replace love, care, and togetherness. She understands that while America may offer a higher standard of living, it often lacks the strong family bonds that she took for granted in India. This experience makes her think deeply about her own family and the mistakes she has made, especially how she treated Vinuta.

### **Realization and Regret**

By the end of the novel, Gouramma changes. She starts to see things more clearly. She realizes that her behavior towards Vinuta was wrong and unfair. She also understands that happiness is not something money can buy. It comes from love, respect, and strong relationships. She had called Jamuna the "Dollar Bahu" and Vinuta the "Indian rupee," showing her earlier belief that foreign wealth was more valuable than Indian values. But now she knows that it is not true.

When she returns to India, she tries to correct her mistakes and treats everyone with more kindness. However, the emotional pain she caused Vinuta cannot be easily forgotten. Her change is sincere, but it comes too late to fully repair the damage. Still, her journey is important because it shows how people can learn and grow, even after making serious mistakes.

### **A Symbol of Society's Changing Values**

Gouramma is not just a character in a story—she represents a part of society. In many Indian families, especially in the middle class, people are starting to believe that living abroad and earning foreign money is the highest form of success. Parents dream of having children who live in America or Europe. Gouramma reflects this mindset. Her story warns readers about the dangers of chasing wealth without thinking about the emotional cost.

Through Gouramma, Sudha Murthy teaches an important lesson: **Money is useful, but it should not be the only thing that matters in life.** Respect, kindness, and strong family relationships are far more valuable and lasting. Gouramma's transformation reminds us that it is never too late to change our thinking and to value what really matters.

### **Conclusion**

Gouramma's character in *Dollar Bahu* takes the reader on a journey from desire and favoritism to self-awareness and growth. Her story reflects a real issue in many families where money becomes more important than love and respect. Sudha Murthy, in her simple and clear storytelling style, shows us that wealth can never replace human values. Gouramma's transformation is powerful because it shows that

people can change when they realize their mistakes. In the end, *Dollar Bahu* leaves us with a strong message: **True happiness comes from the heart, not from the wallet.**

## **2. Chandru :**

**A Portrait of Success, Sacrifice, and Emotional Distance** - In Sudha Murty's novella *Dollar Bahu*, Chandrashekhar, also known as Chandru, plays a key role in reflecting the emotional and cultural challenges faced by Indians who leave their homeland in search of better financial opportunities. His character is important not just because of his personal journey, but also because of what he represents—the modern Indian chasing the American Dream, often at the cost of emotional closeness and family life.

**Ambitious and Hardworking** - Chandru is the elder son of Gouramma and Shamanna. From a young age, he is shown to be ambitious and determined to build a successful career. Unlike his younger brother Girish, who is content with a simple life in India, Chandru dreams big. He works hard, studies well, and eventually earns the opportunity to move to the United States. There, he gets a well-paying job and begins to earn in dollars—a sign of great success in the eyes of his family, especially his mother.

Chandru's success story reflects the aspirations of many young Indians who believe that going abroad and earning foreign currency is the best way to achieve a better life. His ambition and dedication are admirable, and he becomes the pride of his family. His mother sees him as an ideal son who brings wealth, honor, and status to the family.

**Dutiful but Emotionally Distant** - Even though Chandru continues to send money back home, he becomes emotionally distant after moving abroad. He is physically away from his family, and this distance also grows on an emotional level. He does not stay closely connected to the day-to-day life of his parents or siblings. While he fulfills his responsibilities by sending money and gifts, he does not provide the emotional support and presence that his family needs.

This shows the emotional price of migration. Chandru becomes an example of how financial success can sometimes come at the cost of personal and emotional relationships. His absence is strongly felt in the family, especially by his father Shamanna, who silently carries the burden of the household, and by his sister-in-law **Vinuta**, who faces unfair treatment in his absence.

**A Symbol of Financial Success and Social Status** - To his mother, Gouramma, Chandru is more than just a successful son—he is a symbol of pride and status. She constantly compares him to Girish and sees him as superior simply because he earns in dollars. This favoritism is not based on love or values but on wealth. Gouramma uses his success to boost her own image in society, often showing off her “Dollar Bahu”(Jamuna) and speaking proudly of her son who lives in America.

However, what many characters—including Gouramma—fail to see is that **Chandru is not truly happy**. Despite his professional success and financial stability, he experiences loneliness and emotional emptiness in a foreign land. He misses the close relationships and cultural warmth that he once had in India. This quiet suffering adds depth to his character and reminds the reader that material wealth does not always bring peace or satisfaction.

**Practical but Passive** - Chandru is shown as a practical and intelligent man who understands the challenges of life in America. He adapts well to his new environment and takes care of his career. However, one of his biggest flaws is that he is not assertive. He does not stand up against his mother's biased behavior, especially when she mistreats Vinuta. He sees that Vinuta is being unfairly treated, but he chooses to remain silent. His passivity allows the injustice to continue, and this silence causes more harm than he realizes.

Chandru's lack of action shows that being successful in one area of life does not guarantee strength in other areas. While he is confident in his work life, he does not show the same strength in handling family matters. His failure to speak up makes him a part of the problem, even if he does not mean to hurt anyone.

**Regret and Realization** - Towards the end of the novel, Chandru begins to reflect on his life. He sees that while he has everything money can buy, something important is missing—love, connection, and emotional support. He regrets not being closer to his family and not playing a more active role in their lives. The emptiness he feels in a foreign country helps him realize that money alone cannot bring happiness.

Chandru's journey is very different from his brother **Girish**, who lives a modest life in India but shares strong emotional bonds with his family. This contrast helps to highlight an important message of the novel: **emotional richness is more valuable than financial wealth**. Chandru's character is used by the author to show that real success is not just about how much you earn, but also about how you treat the people around you.

**A Reflection of Modern Challenges** - Chandru is a realistic and relatable character. Many young Indians today face the same challenges that he does—moving abroad for better opportunities and struggling with loneliness, identity, and emotional loss. He is not a villain or a hero but a complex character who shows both strength and weakness. His story teaches readers that while ambition and success are important, they should not come at the cost of human relationships.

**Conclusion** - In *Dollar Bahu*, Chandru represents the modern Indian who follows the path of financial success but slowly realizes that material wealth cannot replace the warmth of family and the strength of emotional bonds. His character is a reminder of the emotional sacrifices often required in the pursuit of the so-called “American

Dream.” Through Chandru, Sudha Murthy offers a thoughtful message: True happiness comes not from money, but from love, connection, and family values.

### 3. Girish -

The younger son of Gouramma and Shamanna, is one of the most important characters in *‘Dollar Bahu’*. Through him, Sudha Murthy presents the idea that true happiness and success are not found in money or luxury, but in strong relationships, kindness, and values. Girish is written as a contrast to his elder brother Chandru, who moves to America to earn more money and gain social status. While Chandru represents ambition and the pursuit of wealth, Girish represents simplicity, emotional richness, and moral strength.

**A Simple, Humble Man with Strong Values** - Girish is a bank clerk who lives in India with his family. He earns a modest salary and leads a simple life. However, he does not feel unhappy about it. Unlike his brother, Girish does not dream of moving to a foreign country to earn more money. He believes in helping others, staying close to his loved ones, and being satisfied with what he has. These values are inspired by his father, Shamanna, who is a kind and honest man. Girish admires his father deeply and follows his path. He believes that doing good and being kind are more important than chasing wealth.

This is clearly shown in one scene where he says to his mother:”Amma, I don’t agree with you. What Appa says is right. As a human being, it is our duty to help everyone.” This line proves that Girish thinks more about moral responsibility and kindness than money or social position. His character shows that a person can be rich in values even if they are not rich in money.

**Emotionally Rich, Not Materially Wealthy** - Girish is emotionally mature and cares deeply for his family. He may not have a high-paying job or a luxurious lifestyle, but he offers love, care, and respect to the people around him. He does not compare himself to his brother and does not feel jealous. In fact, Girish is happy with his life in India and values the emotional connections he has with his parents and wife.

He serves as a powerful reminder that emotional wealth—such as love, honesty, and relationships—is more meaningful than material wealth. Through Girish, the novel teaches readers that a peaceful and content life is more valuable than a life full of riches but empty of warmth.

**A Loving but Passive Husband** - Girish marries Vinuta, a kind and responsible woman. He treats her with love and respect. However, he is unable to fully protect her from his mother, Gouramma, who treats Vinuta badly. Gouramma favors Jamuna, her other daughter-in-law, only because she brings money into the family. Vinuta, who comes from a modest background, is often insulted and burdened with household duties. Even though Girish sees how unfair his mother is, he does not take strong action. He remains mostly silent and avoids arguments. While his intentions are good,

his quietness allows Vinuta's suffering to continue. This makes the reader question whether being good is enough when you do not take a stand against injustice.

**A Devoted Son, Overshadowed by Wealth** - Girish is also a loyal and respectful son. He stays close to his parents and takes care of them. However, because he does not earn in dollars like Chandru, his mother does not treat him equally. She sees Chandru as more successful because he lives in the U.S. and earns more. Girish's emotional support, moral strength, and helpfulness are overlooked by his mother, who is blinded by her obsession with money. Despite this unfair treatment, Girish never complains. He continues to do his duties quietly. His patience and humility show how deeply he values family, even when he is not appreciated for it.

**A Symbol of Indian Values and Inner Peace** - Girish represents the heart of Indian culture—values like family bonding, care for elders, contentment, and compassion. His character challenges the modern idea that success means having more money or moving abroad. In the story, he teaches the reader that a person does not need to be rich to be good, happy, or respected. Real wealth lies in being honest, kind, and emotionally connected to others.

**A Quiet Hero with a Strong Heart** - In conclusion, Girish is a simple yet strong character who shows that a meaningful life does not come from dollars or foreign lifestyles, but from love, empathy, and staying true to one's values. While others in the novel run after money, Girish stands firm in his beliefs. His story reminds readers that the richest people are not those with the most money, but those who give the most love and support to others.

Murthy uses Girish to deliver an important message: Money can buy comfort, but not happiness. True happiness comes from within and from the people we care about. Girish may be quiet, but he is one of the most powerful characters in the novel because he represents the strength of emotional and moral integrity in a materialistic world.

#### **4. Surabhi -**

Surabhi is a minor but meaningful character in Sudha Murthy's novel *Dollar Bahu*. Although she is not one of the main characters, her story helps us understand the social expectations placed on women in traditional Indian families. Surabhi represents the modern Indian woman who tries to balance her independence with her family's wishes.

**Independent and Modern** - Surabhi is shown as a confident, independent, and career-focused young woman. She is not like Jamuna, who becomes the ideal daughter-in-law because she lives in America and brings wealth into the family. Instead, Surabhi is more concerned about building her own identity. She does not blindly follow traditional roles, and she wants to make her own choices about life and marriage. This makes her an example of a modern woman in Indian society, someone who values education and independence.

However, even though she is independent, she is still influenced by her family's opinions—especially those of her mother, Gouramma, who has materialistic goals and wants her daughter to marry someone settled in the US.

**Caught Between Love and Expectations** - Surabhi has feelings for a man named Gopi, a kind and respectful boy from a good middle-class family. But their relationship is kept private because her mother would not approve. Gouramma dreams of Surabhi marrying someone rich, ideally an NRI (Non-Resident Indian), so she can proudly say that two of her children are settled abroad. When Vinuta accidentally sees Surabhi and Gopi together at a cinema and tells Shamanna, Gouramma overhears the conversation and is shocked.

This becomes an emotional moment in the novel. Gouramma is more upset that her daughter might not marry someone rich than the fact that Surabhi is in love. This shows how materialism and social status are more important to her than her daughter's happiness. Surabhi does not argue with her mother or fight for her love. She quietly accepts her fate and agrees to marry another man named Suresh, who matches her mother's expectations.

**Marriage for Social Status** - Suresh is a wealthy lawyer from Hyderabad. He owns land, a big house, and even a fancy car. Although he does not live in America, he meets most of Gouramma's conditions—especially the unusual demand that he should not have a mother-in-law (which means fewer responsibilities for Surabhi). The engagement is celebrated in a grand manner. Even Jamuna sends money from America as a gift. On the outside, everything looks perfect, but inside, Surabhi has made a personal sacrifice. She gives up her love for Gopi and agrees to marry someone else to please her mother and society.

**Behavior Toward Vinuta** - Surabhi's character also shows how sometimes women in a family hurt each other instead of offering support. She is not very kind to her sister-in-law Vinuta. She behaves in a superior way, especially after Chandru returns from America with gifts. Surabhi is excited about perfumes, handbags, and dollar notes, showing that she also values material things like her mother. This behavior creates tension in the family and adds to Vinuta's struggles. In this way, Surabhi is not only a victim of social pressure but also a contributor to the emotional suffering of others.

**Symbol of Lost Dreams and Identity** - Surabhi's story is one of lost dreams. She sacrifices love for wealth, and her marriage becomes a symbol of compromise. She is modern and ambitious, but she still lives within the boundaries created by her family. Her identity is shaped by what others expect from her, not by what she really wants.

**Her character highlights a major theme in *Dollar Bahu*:** the silent pain of women who are forced to follow society's rules instead of following their hearts. Sudha Murthy uses Surabhi to show that even modern women face pressure to make sacrifices in the name of family honor and social success.

**Conclusion** - In conclusion, Surabhi is a small but powerful character in *Dollar Bahu*. She reflects the real struggles of many women who want freedom but are tied down by family expectations. Her story teaches us how money, status, and tradition can often stand in the way of personal happiness. Even though she appears only in a few parts of the novel, Surabhi's journey makes us think deeply about how society values wealth more than emotions, and how that affects the lives of young women.

## **5. Jamuna –**

*Dollar Bahu* - Jamuna, also known as the “Dollar Bahu”, is a key character in *Dollar Bahu*. Although she is not the emotional heart of the story like Vinuta, her presence is very important because she represents wealth, social status, and the changing values of modern Indian society. Through her character, Sudha Murthy explores the themes of money versus relationships, and appearance versus reality in family life.

**Attractive, Educated, and Rich** - Jamuna comes from a well-off family and is described as beautiful, smart, and fashionable. She marries Chandru, who lives and works in the United States, and this marriage gives her the title of “Dollar Bahu”, or “the daughter-in-law who earns in dollars.” In Indian society, where foreign income is often considered a sign of success and prestige, this makes Jamuna more valued by her mother-in-law, Gouramma, than the other daughter-in-law, Vinuta, who lives a simple life in India. Jamuna's education and modern lifestyle give her an edge. People admire her for the way she dresses, speaks, and behaves. However, her worth is mostly measured by her wealth and not by her character.

**Symbol of Modern Luxury and Social Status** -Jamuna's life in America is full of comfort and luxury. She lives in a good house, has access to foreign goods, and enjoys a modern lifestyle. This makes Gouramma extremely proud. Gouramma, who is deeply impressed by money and foreign culture, believes that Jamuna is a perfect daughter-in-law simply because she is rich and lives in America.

This behavior from Gouramma shows how some traditional Indian families blindly value wealth and foreign status, even if it comes at the cost of emotional connection or moral values. Jamuna becomes a symbol of this mindset—she is treated better than Vinuta not because she is kinder or more caring, but simply because she brings money and status.

**Polite but Emotionally Disconnected** - Despite being wealthy and privileged, Jamuna is not rude or arrogant. She behaves politely and does not openly insult anyone. In this way, she is not a cruel person, but she also does very little to help others or stand up for justice. When her mother-in-law Gouramma treats Vinuta unfairly, Jamuna does not try to stop it or show much concern.

Her silence and distance show that Jamuna is emotionally disconnected from her Indian family members. She does not understand or deeply care about their struggles. She lives in her own world, enjoying her comforts without getting involved in family problems. This makes her a passive character—she does not do harm, but she also does not do good when she has the chance.

**Represents the Cost of Living Abroad** - Living in a foreign country may bring financial comfort, but it also brings loneliness and emotional emptiness. Jamuna's life in America is an example of this. She has money and freedom, but she lacks the strong emotional bonds that exist in traditional Indian families. When Gouramma visits her in America, she sees how distant and cold life can be, even when everything looks perfect from the outside.

This makes the reader question: Is money really enough to make someone happy? Jamuna's life shows that even if you have everything materially, you might still feel lonely or disconnected emotionally.

**Jamuna vs. Vinuta – A Contrast in Values** - Jamuna's character becomes more meaningful when we compare her with Vinuta, the other daughter-in-law. Vinuta is not rich, but she is kind, patient, and emotionally strong. She faces many problems in her married life but never complains or becomes bitter. In contrast, Jamuna enjoys a life of ease and gets all the praise, even though she does not show the same strength of character.

This comparison helps Sudha Murthy to highlight a major problem in many families: people often judge others by money and status rather than by kindness and values. In the end, it is Vinuta who earns the reader's respect, not Jamuna, even though Jamuna is the one who lives in luxury.

**A Complex Character with Shades of Grey** - Jamuna is not a simple character. She is not fully good or fully bad. She has positive qualities like politeness and education, but she also has weaknesses like emotional coldness and passiveness. She does not use her position to hurt others, but she also does not try to correct what is wrong.

This makes her a realistic character. In real life, many people are like Jamuna—they live comfortably, behave well, but avoid taking a stand. They don't speak out against injustice, even when they can. This makes Jamuna a symbol of the modern individual who chooses personal peace over moral action.

**Conclusion** - In *Dollar Bahu*, Jamuna represents the outer beauty and success that money can bring, but also the inner emptiness and emotional distance that can come with it. She is respected and praised because of her foreign lifestyle, but she lacks the emotional strength and depth shown by Vinuta. Through Jamuna, Sudha Murty shows that wealth can buy comfort, but not love, respect, or emotional satisfaction. Jamuna is a reminder that true value lies not in how much money we earn, but in how we treat others and what kind of person we are inside.

## **6. Shamanna –**

**A Gentle and Wise Father Figure** - In Sudha Murthy's novel *Dollar Bahu*, Shamanna is a quiet but very important character. He is the husband of Gouramma and the father of Chandru, Girish, and Surabhi. Shamanna's character is different from most others in the story. He is calm, patient, fair, and deeply rooted in Indian cultural values. Although he does not speak much or interfere in many family matters, his wisdom and emotional maturity makes him one of the most respected figures in the novel.

**A Simple and Honest Man** - Shamanna is a retired Sanskrit teacher who lives a very simple and honest life. He does not chase money, status, or luxury. He believes that a good life is one where people live with honesty, peace, and love. Unlike his wife Gouramma, who is obsessed with wealth and wants her children to settle abroad and earn in dollars, Shamanna is content with the little that he has. He represents the traditional Indian value of "simple living and high thinking".

He never complains about the hardships of life. Instead, he lives with dignity and self-respect. His character teaches us that a person can be truly happy without being rich, as long as they live a good and honest life.

**A True Feminist in His Own Way** - Although the novel does not openly label Shamanna as a feminist, his actions show that he supports the women in his family. He respects his wife, even though he does not always agree with her views. He also supports his daughter Surabhi's independence and does not interfere with her personal choices.

Importantly, he is kind to Vinuta, his daughter-in-law, even when Gouramma treats her unfairly. Shamanna does not believe in controlling others or forcing them to follow strict rules. He shows his support through small, respectful actions. In this way, he quietly promotes **gender equality**, making him a rare and progressive male figure in a traditional setting.

**A Fair and Loving Father** - Shamanna treats both his sons—Chandru, who lives in America, and Girish, who stays in India—equally. He does not prefer one over the other based on how much money they earn or where they live. While his wife favors

Chandru because he sends dollars from the U.S., Shamanna understands that love, honesty, and good character are more important than money.

He respects Chandru's decision to go abroad but never looks down on Girish for staying in India and working as a bank clerk. This shows that Shamanna is a fair and wise father who does not judge his children by material success but by their values and character.

**A Passive Yet Observant Character** - Even though Shamanna sees how Gouramma treats Vinuta with bias and unfairness, he does not openly protest. He is a silent observer, someone who watches and understands but chooses not to interfere. Some readers might think this is a weakness in his character, as he does not stand up for what is right.

However, it also shows the traditional behavior of many Indian fathers and husbands who try to keep peace in the family by avoiding conflict. Even though he is silent, his gentle support of Vinuta and his fair attitude show that he does not agree with his wife's unjust behavior.

**A Symbol of Indian Wisdom and Family Values** - Shamanna's character is full of wisdom. He understands the true meaning of happiness and family life. Unlike his wife, who learns this lesson only after visiting America and seeing her son's lonely life there, Shamanna always knew that money cannot buy love, peace, or respect. He believes in emotional connection over material comfort.

His calm nature, his understanding of others, and his ability to stay balanced even during difficult times makes him a symbol of traditional Indian wisdom. He never forces his views on others but lives by example.

**A Contrast to Gouramma** - Shamanna and Gouramma are complete opposites. While Gouramma is loud, proud, and obsessed with wealth and status, Shamanna is quiet, humble, and deeply rooted in moral values. This contrast between them highlights the main theme of the novel: the difference between materialism and emotional richness.

Gouramma judges her children based on how much they earn and where they live. Shamanna values kindness, honesty, and respect. Their contrasting attitudes help the reader understand the damage caused by greed and the importance of emotional intelligence in family relationships.

**Conclusion** - In *Dollar Bahu*, Shamanna plays the role of a peaceful and wise elder. He is not the most powerful or dominant character, but he is deeply respected for his simplicity, fairness, and kindness. Through his character, Sudha Murthhy shows us that true success is not about earning in dollars, but about living with honesty, compassion, and emotional balance.

Even though Shamanna does not speak much, his quiet strength, moral clarity, and emotional intelligence makes him one of the most important characters

in the novel. He teaches both the readers and the characters around him that a good heart is worth more than a full wallet.

## 7. Vinuta –

**The Silent Strength of *Dollar Bahu*** - In Sudha Murty's *Dollar Bahu*, Vinuta stands as one of the most touching and inspiring characters. She is not loud or rich, nor does she demand attention. Yet, through her quiet strength, patience, and deep emotional intelligence, she becomes the moral centre of the novel. Vinuta represents the traditional, selfless Indian woman who endures, adapts, and ultimately triumphs through resilience and grace.

**A Beautiful and Talented Young Woman** - Vinuta is described as naturally beautiful. She has a fair complexion, striking black eyes, a sharp nose, and long, thick hair. But her true beauty lies in her character. She is not just attractive on the outside—she is intelligent, cultured, and emotionally strong. Vinuta is also deeply passionate about Hindustani music and has a golden singing voice. Her talent wins her many awards during her college years in Karnataka College, Dharwad.

Although she loses her parents at a young age, her uncle **Bheemanna Desai**, a kind and cheerful man, raises her with love and care. Bheemanna believes that education is the only way to empower a woman, and he supports Vinuta's dreams. His house may be busy and full, but for him, Vinuta is the “**koel**” (**sweet songbird**) of the household. He ensures that she is educated and self-reliant, preparing her for a life of dignity.

**Simple, Traditional, and Grounded** - Vinuta is the perfect example of a middle-class Indian woman brought up with traditional values. She is deeply rooted in her culture and customs. She does not run after wealth or luxury. Her idea of happiness lies in simple joys—like family time, emotional connection, and inner peace.

When asked what kind of husband she wants, Vinuta's reply is modest and honest. She says she has **no demands**, and only wants a husband who can make her feel content. This simple answer shows how little she cares about money or social status—her values are emotional and moral, not material.

**Selfless and Responsible** - Vinuta's most striking quality is her selflessness. Once she marries Girish, she takes on the role of the ideal daughter-in-law and wife. She manages the household with care and respect, looks after her in-laws, and supports her husband. She never complains, even when she is overworked or treated unfairly.

Despite facing constant comparisons to her sister-in-law, Jamuna (the “*Dollar Bahu*”), she never loses her kindness. Vinuta's sense of responsibility is clear in the way she silently bears the burdens placed on her, especially by Gouramma, her demanding and judgmental mother-in-law.

**Overlooked but Not Broken** - Vinuta's journey is not easy. She is often overlooked and underappreciated, especially by her husband, Girish. He is so impressed by

Jamuna's wealth and life in America that he often compares Vinuta to her. This makes Vinuta feel invisible and neglected, despite all the sacrifices she makes for the family.

Even her mother-in-law, Gouramma, prefers Jamuna simply because she brings in dollars. This constant lack of appreciation is painful for Vinuta. However, she does not complain or retaliate. Instead, she continues to perform her duties with quiet strength. Her ability to keep going without praise or support shows her **emotional maturity**.

**Emotionally Strong and Resilient** - Vinuta is not weak—she is emotionally strong. She faces many challenges, but never allows herself to become bitter or angry. Instead, she remains calm, loyal, and positive. This quiet endurance makes her character powerful. She doesn't fight with loud words, but with inner strength and dignity.

Her **resilience** becomes clear when she starts to realize that her self-worth does not depend on others' approval. Even though Girish and Gouramma don't always respect her, she learns to respect herself. This emotional growth is one of the most inspiring parts of the novel.

**A Strong Contrast to the "Dollar Bahu"** - Vinuta's character is in sharp contrast to Jamuna, the "Dollar Bahu." Jamuna represents wealth, modernity, and life in America, while Vinuta symbolizes tradition, simplicity, and emotional richness. Where Jamuna has luxury and admiration, Vinuta has inner peace and values. The novel shows how, in the long run, emotional fulfillment is more lasting than material wealth.

Their relationship is complex. While there is no direct hostility, Vinuta often finds herself being compared to Jamuna—and always comes up short in the eyes of others. Yet, **Murthy uses this contrast** to send a powerful message: money can buy comfort, but not love, peace, or family unity.

**Symbol of the Traditional Indian Woman** - Vinuta represents millions of Indian women who put family first, even when they are taken for granted. She is the embodiment of patience, grace, and inner strength. In many Indian households, women are expected to keep the family together through sacrifice and silence. Vinuta does this without asking for anything in return.

Even when she is emotionally hurt, she avoids conflict and chooses dignity over drama. She shows that true strength is not in shouting or fighting but in staying kind, even when the world is unfair.

**Her Emotional Journey and Growth** - Vinuta's character evolves throughout the novel. In the beginning, she is hopeful and eager to be a good wife and daughter-in-law. But soon, she feels disappointed, ignored, and emotionally alone. However, she does not break. As time passes, she becomes stronger. She starts to understand her own worth and learns that she does not need validation from others to be happy.

By the end of the story, Vinuta's quiet endurance earns her the respect she deserves. She doesn't need to live in America or earn dollars to feel proud of herself. Her true victory is her **inner transformation**—from a woman who waited for appreciation to one who finds peace within herself.

**Conclusion** - Vinuta is a deeply emotional, powerful, and relatable character. Through her, Sudha Murthy shows the hidden strength of women who are often ignored in society. Vinuta is not rich or loud, but she is wise, warm, and strong in her own way.

Her journey teaches us that real happiness comes from love, kindness, and self-respect, not from wealth or outward success. Vinuta may not be the "Dollar Bahu," but she is the soul of her family. Her quiet courage makes her unforgettable.

#### 4.3. Themes -

##### **Themes in *Dollar Bahu* by Sudha Murthy**

Sudha Murthy's *Dollar Bahu* is a powerful social novel that delves into the intricacies of familial relationships and the cultural shifts brought by globalization. Set between India and the United States, the novel offers a critical lens through which readers can understand the disintegration of traditional values in the face of material aspirations. The work is thematically rich and offers insights into a variety of pressing social issues that remain relevant in contemporary Indian society. Below is a detailed exploration of the major themes in the novel:

##### **1. The Dehumanizing Effect of Globalization on the Traditional Indian Psyche**

The novel portrays how globalization, especially the IT boom, transformed the ambitions and values of Indian youth. The allure of the West and the dollar becomes a driving force behind many life decisions, leading to a deterioration of personal and familial bonds. Sudha Murthy, with her close ties to the IT industry, insightfully depicts how global migration in pursuit of economic prosperity affects the traditional Indian family structure. Gouramma, the matriarch, embodies the widespread belief that prosperity lies abroad. However, her experiences in America reveal the emotional emptiness behind material wealth, causing her to re-evaluate her values and relationships.

##### **2. Greed for Money**

Greed is a central theme that drives much of the conflict in the novel. Gouramma's obsession with wealth leads her to favor her daughter-in-law Jamuna, who lives in US and is married to her son earning in dollars. In contrast, Vinuta, married to her son who lives in India and earns in rupees, is treated with disdain. The novel portrays how money becomes the primary basis for respect and affection, overshadowing virtues like kindness, simplicity, and care. This theme critiques the rising materialism in society, suggesting that it corrodes moral and emotional values.

### **3. The Crumbling of Domestic Relations**

The novel vividly illustrates how economic disparities can fragment family relations. The joint family system, once a cornerstone of Indian life, is depicted as weakening under the pressures of individualism and financial competition. Jamuna's arrogance and Gouramma's partiality create a rift between family members, leading to resentment and emotional alienation. Sudha Murthy uses the breakdown of relationships to underline how financial success often comes at the cost of familial unity and emotional support.

### **4. East-West Cultural Confrontation**

One of the novel's strongest themes is the cultural confrontation between the East and the West. When Gouramma visits US, she is initially dazzled by its affluence and orderliness. However, she soon realizes the superficiality of the Western lifestyle and its lack of emotional depth. Her disillusionment grows as she observes the loneliness and emotional void in the lives of Indian immigrants. This cultural clash forces her to reassess her earlier admiration for the West and to appreciate the emotional richness of Indian traditions.

### **5. Human Motivation and Fulfillment (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs)**

The characters in *Dollar Bahu* navigate various levels of Maslow's hierarchy. At the base are physiological and safety needs, which motivate many characters to pursue lucrative careers abroad. However, as they attain financial stability, the need for love, belonging, and esteem becomes more pressing. Vinuta's journey is a testament to the importance of these higher-level needs. Despite her modest means, she finds emotional fulfillment and self-worth, contrasting with the superficial success of her sister-in-law.

### **6. Materialism vs. Family Values**

The novel contrasts the superficial allure of material wealth with the enduring strength of traditional family values. Vinuta represents the emotional anchor of the family, offering support and compassion despite being marginalized. Jamuna, on the other hand, symbolizes the new materialistic ethos that equates worth with financial status. The story critiques this shift in values and calls for a return to emotional authenticity and familial solidarity.

### **7. Gender Roles and Patriarchy**

Sudha Murthy highlights the patriarchal mindset prevalent in Indian families. Daughters-in-law are judged not on their personal qualities but on the wealth they bring and the status they confer. Vinuta's suffering exemplifies how women are expected to conform and endure, often without recognition. The novel subtly critiques these gendered expectations and champions the empowerment of women through resilience and self-awareness.

## **8. Cultural Clash Between India and the Diaspora**

The novel draws a clear line between Indians residing in India and those living abroad. NRIs (Non-Resident Indians) are often idealized, while those who remain in India are undervalued. However, Murthy deconstructs this stereotype by showing the challenges and emotional struggles faced by immigrants. The diaspora's confrontation with alien cultural norms and their internal identity crises reveal the hollowness behind the NRI glamour.

## **9. Family Favoritism and Jealousy**

Favoritism based on financial success creates emotional imbalance within the family. Gouramma's open preference for her US-based son and daughter-in-law causes hurt and jealousy among other family members. This theme exposes the toxic impact of unequal treatment and how it can erode familial bonds and create long-lasting rifts.

## **10. Self-Worth and Empowerment**

Vinuta's journey from neglect to self-realization underscores the theme of inner strength and empowerment. Despite the disrespect she endures, she maintains her dignity and continues to contribute meaningfully to the family. Her eventual recognition is not based on material wealth but on her character and resilience. The novel thus advocates for personal integrity and self-worth over societal validation.

## **11. Generational Conflict**

The novel reflects the tension between traditional values held by the older generation and the aspirations of the younger generation. Parents like Gouramma cling to old customs while their children seek independence and new lifestyles. This generational divide is a source of both conflict and growth, as each side learns from the other through evolving circumstances.

## **12. True Happiness vs. Superficial Success**

Murthy makes a poignant distinction between the appearance of success and genuine happiness. Jamuna, the so-called "Dollar Bahu," appears to have everything but lacks warmth and empathy. In contrast, Vinuta finds contentment in simplicity and emotional connection. The novel urges readers to look beyond material success and seek fulfillment in authentic relationships.

## **Conclusion**

*Dollar Bahu* is a layered narrative that critiques the growing materialism and cultural dislocation in modern Indian society. Through relatable characters and compelling storytelling, Sudha Murthy highlights the enduring importance of love, compassion, and human dignity. The novel's themes remain relevant today, offering a mirror to our collective choices and values in an increasingly globalized world.

### Check Your Progress –

#### Q.1 A]

1. Shamanna and Gouramma had ..... children.  
a. two  
b. three  
c. one  
d. five
2. .... is the youngest child of Gouramma.  
a. Chandru  
b. Jamuna  
c. Surabhi  
d. Girish
3. The novel.....is originally written in ..... Kannada language  
a. *Train to Pakistan*  
b. *Dollar Bahu*  
c. *Kanthapura*  
d. *Azadi*
4. The novel '*Dollar Bahu*' is set in.....  
a. Karnataka only  
b. America only  
c. Both Karnataka and America  
d. Tamilnadu
5. The novel '*Dollar Bahu*' emphasises the value of mutual attachment and.....  
a. money  
b. life  
c. love  
d. domestic relations
6. The novel '*Dollar Bahu*' shows that.....  
a. love and affection are more important than money  
b. money is more important than love and affection  
c. love is precious  
d. we should enjoy every in situation
7. The novel '*Dollar Bahu*' is divided into.....parts  
a. twenty-seven  
b. twenty-eight  
c. twenty-nine  
d. thirty
8. Chandru and Vinuta in '*Dollar Bahu*' first meet in.....  
a. Amritsar Express  
b. Rani Kittur Chennamma Express  
c. Rajdhani Express  
d. Nellur Express
9. The title '*Dollar Bahu*' refers to.....  
a. Gouramma  
b. Vinuta  
c. Jamuna  
d. Surabhi
10. Gouramma in '*Dollar Bahu*' is a.....character.  
a. bad  
b. flat  
c. round  
d. good

11. Gouramma in '*Dollar Bahu*' has.....sons.
- a. two
  - b. three
  - c. four
  - d. five
12. ....is elder son of Gouramma in '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- a. Chandru
  - b. Girish
  - c. Bhimanna
  - d. Shamanna
13. ....is younger son of Gouramma in '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- a. Chandru
  - b. Girish
  - c. Bhimanna
  - d. Shamanna
14. ....is a major theme of the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- a. The dehumanizing effect of globalization on the traditional human psyche.
  - b. Love and death
  - c. Man and woman relationship
  - d. Friendship
15. ....is another major theme of the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- a. life in India
  - b. Life in America
  - c. The crumbling domestic relations in India and Indians
  - d. The relationship between India and America
- 16) Jamuna's parents in the novel '*Dollar Bahu*' are.....
- a. rich
  - b. poor
  - c. illiterate
  - d. merciful
- 17) The statement "Gouri, love and affection are more important than food and money" is made by.....in the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- a. Shamanna
  - b. Chandru
  - c. Girish
  - d. Shekhar
- 18) ....is a husband of Vinuta in the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- a. Shamanna
  - b. Chandru
  - c. Girish
  - d. Shekhar
19. ....repented her visit to America after the bad treatment given by Jamuna to her in the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- a. Vinuta
  - b. Gouramma
  - c. Shamanna
  - d. Surabhi

20. Shrikant and Roopa divorce because of.....bossing nature in the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- Shrikant's
  - Shrikant's mother's
  - Roopa's
  - Their daughter's
21. Jamuna sent.....in decorated boxes for Surabhi's wedding in the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- sweets
  - ornaments
  - new saris
  - used saris
22. Gouramma goes to America for..... in the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- Jamuna's delivery
  - Surabhi's delivery
  - Vinuta's delivery
  - enjoyment
23. Jamuna refused to take.....along with her in the hospital in the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- Gauramma
  - Chandru
  - Vinuta
  - Surabhi
24. Chandru in '*Dollar Bahu*' is a/an.....
- software engineer
  - doctor
  - civil engineer
  - clerk in a bank
25. Girish in "Dollar Bahu" is a/an.....
- software engineer
  - teacher
  - clerk in a bank
  - civil engineer
- 26.....was a name of newly born baby of Jamuna in '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- Manasi
  - Manas
  - Manasvi
  - Manjiri
27. ....is one of the major themes of the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- Greed for money and its consequences
  - East-West confrontation
  - Both a and b
  - None of the above
28. \_\_\_\_\_ has greed for money in '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- Vinuta
  - Gouramma
  - Bhimanna
  - Shamanna
29. ....is a Sanskrit teacher in the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- Shamanna
  - Bhimanna
  - Gouramma
  - Chandru

- 30.....accepts job as a teacher in Bangalore in the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| a. Shekhar | b. Surabhi |
| c. Vinuta  | d. Girish  |
31. Girish gets transferred to.....in the end of the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- |            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| a. Chennai | b. Mumbai    |
| c. Dharwad | d. Bangalore |
32. The novel '*Dollar Bahu*' explores the psyche of NRIs settled in.....to some extent.
- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| a. France  | b. America |
| c. England | d. Japan   |
- 33) Vinuta.....the letter sent by Chandru from America in the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.
- |          |                 |
|----------|-----------------|
| a. gets  | b. does not get |
| c. loses | d. tears        |
- 34) Sudha Murthy is a/an.....writer.
- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| a. Indian   | b. American |
| c. Japanese | d. French   |

#### 4.6. Exercise

##### A. Answer the following questions in about 250-300 words each.

1. Draw the Charactersketch of Vinutha.
2. What are the major themes of 'Dollar Bahu'?
3. Write a note on the approach of Gouramma towards Vinutha and Jamuna.
4. Describe the character of Shamanna.
5. Elaborate the feministic aspects reflected in the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.

##### B. Write short notes in about 100-150 words each.

1. Describe the beginning of the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.
2. Comment on the short love story of Chandru and Vinutha.
3. Draw the charactersketch of Surabhi.
4. Narrate the relationship of Gouramma and Jamuna
5. Discuss the relationship between Girish and Vinutha.
6. What are the sub-themes of the novel '*Dollar Bahu*'.

### Answers to Check your Progress –

#### Q.1. A]

- |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. – b  | 2. – c  | 3. – b  |
| 4. – c  | 5. – d  | 6. – a  |
| 7. – a  | 8. – b  | 9. – c  |
| 10. – c | 11. – a | 12. – a |
| 13. – b | 14. – a | 15. – c |
| 16. – a | 17. – a | 18. – c |
| 19. – b | 20. – c | 21. – d |
| 22. – a | 23. – a | 24. – c |
| 25. – c | 26. – a | 27. – c |
| 28. – b | 29. – a | 30. – c |
| 31. – c | 32. – b | 33. – b |
| 34. – a |         |         |

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