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Sahitya Akademi

meet the author

Rajam Krishnan





Receiving Sahitya Akademi Award from Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee.

"To me literature should deeply assess the contemporary issues, trends and their situations in the society: analyse and interpret them to the present day context and suggest creative and practical solutions" - says Smt. Rajam Krishnan in an introduction in one of her novels.

Born in Musiri, a small town in Tamil Nadu in 1925, Rajam Krishnan started writing at the age of twenty. A self-taught person, Rajam Krishnan read extensively the works of English novelists like Charles Dickens and Jane Austen. Early novelists from Tamil Nadu, Madhaviah and Venkataramani also influenced her deeply. She wrote her first story in English and got published in **Indian Civic Corps** in 1944.

Rajam Krishnan has written and published more than 40 full length novels, numerous short stories, a book on Gandhism and several thought-provoking articles relating to the status of

Indian women today. She has also written biographies of great men like Subramania Bharati, Manalur Maniamma and Dr. Rangachari.

From 1946 onwards her short stories were published in many popular Tamil journals. Dealing in a wide variety of subjects - romantic, socio-psychological, political, national and international, Smt. Krishnan's primary agenda is to depict the struggles of women today in India. Her first novel **Penn Kural** (Voice of a Woman) depicting the struggles of a married woman living in a Hindu joint family and how she overcomes her problems, was published in 1953.

Rajam Krishnan always desires to present to her readers new messages in a unique form and style. She has taken up burning contemporary issues in the society. Personal experience is the basis of all real literature. Be it a life of Badaga hill tribes of Nilgris

(Kurinchi then) or a life of the dacoits of Chambal valley (Mullum Malarntatu). Rajam Krishnan visited these areas and studied their lives and situations and portray them in her novels.

Her popular novel **Mullum Malarntatu** (Even a cactus bloom) describes the human side of the dacoits. **Karippu Manikal** (Sour Crystals) pictures the ordeals of the saltpan workers, whilst **Alaivaik Karaiyil** (Along the shores) depicts the sufferings of fisherfolk. **Koottuk Kunchukal** (Nestlings) written in the event of the International Year of the child portrays the cruelty of the child labour.

The political upsurge in other parts of the country invited her attention. Her novels **Valaikkaram** has for its setting Goa's struggle for freedom from the Portuguese. This is 'virtually a legend of brave women who remind us of India's classical

never-say-die heroines like Draupadi, Damayanti and Kannagi'.

Sahitya Akademi award winning novel **Verukku Neer** (Water for the Roots) speaks of the social relevance of Gandhism in the post-Independence era. The novel was hailed for its powerful narrative style, realistic presentation, sensitive characterisation, psychological insight and stylistic treatment.

Her recent novels show her at best in form and content. Rajam Krishnan's variety of experience and her acquaintance with heterogeneous society enables her to treat in her works the linguistic community and cultural themes in a fascinating manner. Rajam Krishnan's enthusiasm for an exploration into the human psyche persists even now in her novels. Her work spans over three decades, unfolding the evolutions of the feminist



During a visit to Russia.



With Smt. Mythili Sivaraman, President, All India Democratic Women's Association (Tamil Nadu).

pre-occupations and following the painful awakening of the female consciousness.

She writes in one of her novels **Vilangugal** (Fetters), the sorry state of women in the society; "Women are tender beings, home is the only secure place in the world for her-this is the invisible fetters under which the society locks up the women." There are three aspects under which Rajam Krishnan handles her women characters - the process of breaking the fetters of convention, freeing out of it and decision making for the future.

Her writings won for her several national and international awards like the New York Herald Tribune's International Short Story Award, Sahitya Akademi Award, Bharatiya Bhasha Award, Thiru Vi. Ka. Award and very recently the Shashwati Award.

Several of her books have been prescribed as text books

for Higher secondary, degree and post-graduate courses in Tamil Nadu and other States.

She is also associated with several literary and social organisations.

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

NOVELS

Penn Kural, Kalaimagal, Madras, 1953.

Malarkal, Dhagam, Madras, 676p., 1958

Kurinchi Then, Dhagam, Madras, 1963, 408 p., 18 cm.

Amudamaki Varuga, Dhagam, Madras, 1966, 455p. 18cm.

Valaikkaram, Dhagam, Madras, 1969, 728p., 18cm.

Verukku Neer, Dhagam, Madras, 1972, 268p., 18cm.

Roja Idazhkal, Dhagam, Madras, 1973.

Mullum Malarndadu, Dhagam, Madras, 1974, 352p. 18cm.

Veedu, Dhagam, Madras, 1977, 272p, 18cm.

BOOKS FOR NEO-LITERATES

Mayilampattu Valli, Dhagam, Madras, 1991, 132p. 18cm.

TRANSLATIONS

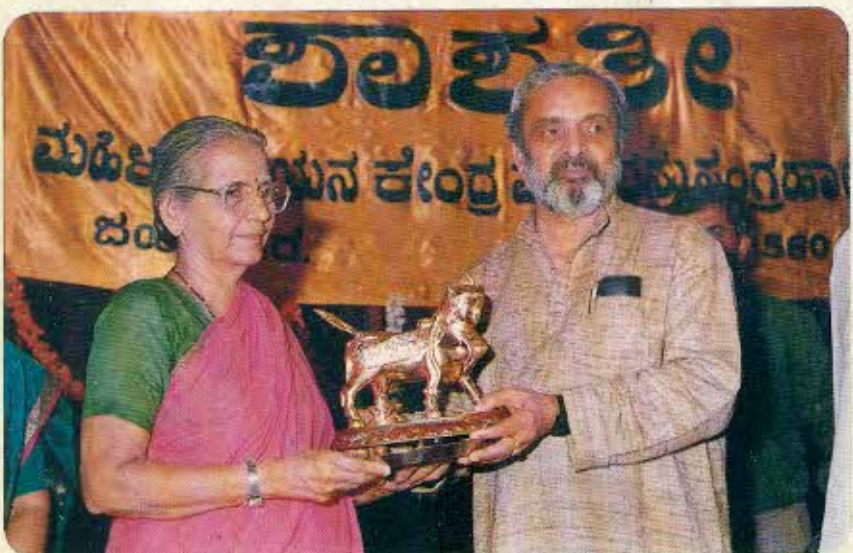
Bihar Manila Nattuk Kathaigal, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1979, 182p., 21 cm.

Kadantha Kalam from Malayalam, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1980.

A CHRONOLOGY

- 1925 Born in Musiri
- 1940 Marriage with Sri Muthu Krishnan
- 1944 First story published in Indian Civil Corps.
- 1950 Won a prize in International Short Story Contest conducted by the New York Herald Tribune
- 1953 Won Kalaimagal Narayanaswamy Iyer Novel Prize
- 1958 Won Ananda Vikatan Novel Prize
- 1973 Sahitya Akademi Award
- 1973 Director, Tamil Writers' Co-op. Publishing Society, Madras.

- 1975 Soviet Land Nehru Award
- 1976 Visited Soviet Union
- 1976-80 President, National Federation of Indian Women, Tamil Nadu
- 1979 Ilakkiya Chintanai Award
- 1979 Member, High Level Women Delegation to Soviet Union
- 1981-84 All India Vice-President, Federation of Indian Women
- 1982 Ilakkiya Chintanai Award
- 1983 Visited Ceylon
- 1983 Visited Prague & Soviet Union
- 1985 Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad Award
- 1987 Tamil Nadu Government Literary Award
- 1991 Thiru Vi. Ka. Award by Tamil Nadu Government
- 1993 Shaswati Nanjangudu Tirumalamba Award
- 1993 Member, Sahitya Akademi, Tamil Advisory Board.



Receiving Shaswati Award from Prof. U.R. Anantha Murthy, President, Sahitya Akademi.