

Uhorisw



Sahitya Akademi

3 May 2014

meet the author

T. Padmanabhan





insignificant. When we read the story A Girl Emanating Light (Prakasam Parathunna Oru Penkutty) which he wrote at the age of twenty two or Gowri, which was written at the age of sixty, we could see the luminosity of his enchanting craftsmanship. 'An Old Story' was written when he was eighty two is a testimony of his inexhaustible exuberance as a writer.

His characters need not be human beings always. His stories are noted for the pulsating presence of the organic world. His attempt is to bequeath the boundless love and care for all the creations. The story The Way of Life (Jeevante Vazhi) is an embodiment of his unutterable love for nature. The story Shekkutty exemplifies his love for animals and touches the hearts of the readers. A Short Story encapsures his love for birds. He is a magical master-craftsman who could fill a universe of love in a nutshell. Only such a writer who regards the world around him as himself can impart the fragrance of the benign love. This transcendental feeling erupts not as conscious effort but as natural and spontaneous.

Children have a remarkable place in the fictional world created by T. Padmanaban. The inexplicable beauty and charm in the fusion of pathos love and dignity he brings out in these stories are unparalleled. The children

T. Padmanabhan is an unparalleled short story writer in Malayalam literature and is often passionately acknowledged as a master-craftsman of storytelling. He abstained from other genres of literature and carved himself a niche as an immense narrator in the field of short fiction. The models of such writers are a few even in world literatures.

T. Padmanabhan considers each story a sacramental offering and one cannot find any character in his story whose life is depicted worthless or even



With Poet Akkitham



T. Padmanabhan speaking during Changampuzha Birth Centenary Function

portrayed in his writings have a global significance. One can see such children at any country at any time. While writing the children's stories he envisages himself as a 'child' with an extraordinary capability and thus his stories are getting a poignant identity.

'T' is the abbreviation of Thinakkal Tharavadu. He was born on 05 February 1931. His house is located in Pallikkunnu a northern part of Kannur town. His early childhood, not so rich, was spent with the poor children of the employees of the Kannur Central Jail. They were almost illiterate. But they had heart full of love. It might be the reason why the tormenting images of desolate and destitute children got such an appeal in his stories. Moreover, his own mother's compassionate mind, her life style and the way she used to interact with the people of the lower strata are the formative influences that shaped his childhood. Padmanabhan lost his father at an early age. In his early childhood, he could see the hazards and turmoil with which his mother looked after her four children. The memories of the sacrificial life of his mother Thinakkal Devaki or otherwise called Ammukutty Amma had kindled the emotional elements of magnanimity in Padmanabhan's heart. Puthiyetathu Krishnan Nair was his father. T. Padmanabhan has been living

in House No.15 with his wife Kallanmaarthodi Bhargavi in Rajendra Nagar Colony hardly a kilo metre away from the Thinakkal Tharavadu. A visitor will get mused by the cats, puppies and birds in the veranda and also by the Alphonso mango tree and the drumstick tree in the courtyard.

In the Thinakkal House there were all the facilities for reading books. At his home all the family members were good readers and Padmanabhan too imbibed and cultivated the habit of reading from the Thinakkal House. He read plenty of novels and poetry and dreamt a lot. He firmly believed that nobody will become a writer unless he/she develops the mental faculty of dreaming. He recorded that stories like Once (Orikkal) blossomed out of sheer dream.

He got his primary education from the renowned Chirakkal Raja's High School. He passed S.S.L.C in 1948 and joined Mangalore Govt. Arts College. After studying Graduation in Economics, he joined Madras Law College in 1952. He moved back to Kannur in 1955 after completing his law studies. Then he practiced as a lawyer for about ten years. In 1966, he joined FACT a public sector firm. He retired from there as Deputy General Manager. He was so busy with his writings and speeches and travelling during his stay at Kannur.

His first story came out when he was studying for S.S.L.C. The story The Culprit (Kuttavali) was published in Navayugam weekly. Then two more stories were published in the same weekly. These stories are not there in his anthologies. The first story collected in an anthology was Husband (Bharthavu) published in Mangalodayam. The same story was also published in Madirasi Pathrika. This story was very much praised by the editor M. Govindan, well known writer and critic in Malayalam and it is after that T. Padmanabhan enthroned himself as the storyteller in Malayalam literature. His first anthology came out including the A Girl Emanating Light (Prakasam Parathunna Oru Penkutty) and other stories. This anthology was included in the syllabus of M.A. Malayalam of Kerala University.

Kesari Balakrishna Pillai, an eminent Malayalam critic and thinker once had acclaimed Padmanabhan's Story of the Forest (Kattile Katha) as a trendsetting model of Malayalam short fiction. This auspicious moment was later commemorated by Padmanabhan in an article entitled 'With Balakrishna Pillai'. Padmanabhan proved beyond doubt that the comment made by Balakrishna Pillai was absolutely prophetic.

Padmanabhan was quite different and lone in his ways of thinking and writing. He tread his own path and writes only when it was inevitable. Sometimes he scribbled letters in a piece of paper in his pocket and later elaborated them into stories. In a long career of sixty five years, he wrote around one eighty stories, almost all are short pieces. A few articles, travelogues and very few about his experiences. Like his stories these writings are also not traditionally framed. All having his personal touch and condensed with beauty unburdened with artificial embellishments.

His stories were translated into most of the Indian languages and some foreign languages too. His stories The Death of Makhan Singh (Makhan Singhinte Maranam) and Kaala Bhairavan have nationalistic flavour. The Other Indian (Mattoru Indiakkaran) has an international appeal. His stories are worthy of national and international appreciation. His stories have found readers in English, French, German and Russian languages. He travelled abroad extensively with his wife. He visited countries like England, France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, America, Canada etc. He became a friendly visitor of many gulf countries. His journey to Nepal paved



With writer T.N. Prakash



T. Padmanabhan felicitated by Purushan Kadalundi

the backdrop for his famous love story Gowri.

Padmanabhan's voyages started from his high school days onwards. As the member of student congress, he travelled widely in Malabar and Cochin. But he never allowed the politics to manifest directly in his stories. By deep examinations of his stories, one can find undercurrents of politics, which kept aloof from party power politics but they ultimately touches the sublime virtues of the human life. Where there is no villains and vandalism, only people with honest feelings will thrive.

He was conferred with innumerable awards. Samastha Kerala Sahitya Parishath Award and Ezhuthachan Award are some of them. But Padmanabhan rejected some of the prestigious awards, while others longing for it. He likes to make words and actions harmonious and not ready

to make any compromise or adjustment. That attitude of him may perhaps be the reason for his stories are bestowed with such an aesthetic charm and strength. The ensuing generation might look anxiously into his stories to learn the craft and art of his composition. The literary criticism of M.P. Sankunni Nair, K. P. Appan and M. Thomas Mathew; a lot of research studies and scattered writings amplifies the relevance and importance of Padmanabhan's stories. His stories were read in past and will be read in future too with all enthusiasm and excitements. His stories will be so relevant till a certain amount of virtue remains in the world. If Chekhov, Maupassant, Mulraj, Basheer and Karoor transcends the time, Padmanabhan will also stand with an unbent head at the shore of turbulences.



T. Padmanabhan releasing special issue of Madhyamam

HIS WORKS

A Select Bibliography

1. Prakasam Parathunna Oru Penkutty (A Girl Emanating Light)
2. Oru Kathakrithu Kurisil (A Storyteller in Cross)
3. Peru Mazha Pole (Like a Downpour)
4. The Stories of Padmanabhan
5. Kaalabhairavan
6. Harison Sayvinte Naya (Mr. Harison's Dog)
7. Sahrudayanaya Oru Cheruppakkarante Jeevithathil Ninnu (From the Life of a Good Hearted Young Man)
8. Makhan Singhinte Maranam (Death of Makhan Singh)
9. Kadal (The Sea)
10. Katha Kruth-Sakshi (The Story Writer-Witness)
11. Veetu Nashtapetta Oru Kutti (A Child Who Lost His Home)
12. Gool Muhammad
13. T. Padmanabhan Complete Stories
14. Ente Priyappetta Kathakal (My Beloved Stories)
15. Gowri
16. Nalina Kanthi (The Lotus Beauty)
17. Puzha Katannu Marangalkkitayilekku (Across the River into the Woods)
18. Padmanabhante Kuttikal (The Children of Padmanabhan)
19. Padmanabhan's Political Stories
20. Padmanabhante Suvarna Kathakal (The Golden Stories of Padmanabhan)
21. Katha Theerumbol Oru Vanambati Parakkunnu (Flies a Skylark When the Story Ends)
22. Ente Adhyathe Kathakal (My Early Stories)
23. Kalavarsham (The Monsoon)
24. Iruttinu Mumbu (Before Darkness)
25. Fifteen Stories (Eng.) (Trans. Prema Jayakumar)

OTHER WORKS

1. Pallikkunnu- Memoirs
2. Among the Stories- Memoirs
3. Budha Philosophy (a column in Malayala Manorama)
4. My Story, My Life
5. The Descendants of Khaleefa Ummar
6. Between the Journey (Travelogue)

MAJOR LITERARY AWARDS

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1973 | Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award for 'Saakshi' |
| 1996 | Sahitya Akademi Award for 'Gowri' |
| 1998 | Lalithambika Andharjanam Award |
| 1995 | Odakkuzhal Award for 'Kadal' |
| 2000 | Vayalar Award |
| 2001 | Vallathol Award |
| 2003 | Ezhuthachan Award |