CHAPTER - 4

THE EARLY PHASE OF K. CHINNAPPA BHARATHI:

Re-articulation:

Freedom is not a commodity to be bought or sold in the market. It is a quality of mind and a way of life in which the soul of a people becomes conscious of its own infinity of freedom. That is any struggle for freedom becomes more an aspiration and expansion than a struggle for expulsion, more an inner awakening than vanquishing an outer foe.

(M.P. Shivagnanam: 1980:xiii)
CHAPTER-4

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K. CHINNAPPA BHARATHI:

The novel tradition in Tamil literature has a long history. First novel in Tamil, *Piratpa Mudaliar Carittiram* published in 1976 was written by Vetanayakam Pillai. He was the first novelist to depict cultural values, mythical characters through his fiction. He was a Gandhian and had shown keen interest in the development of village. His novels reflect the happiness in country life. Rajan Iyer, Matavaiya, K.S. Venkataramanani continued the tradition of writing stories.

The genre of novel became a part and parcel of Tamil readers during ‘Kalki’ era: Kalki is the pen name of R. Krishnamurhty who wrote historical novels-creating interest among the readers. His novels were widely read and appreciated because of the spoken form of the language in the novel. He recreates the past vividly through imagination. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi award for his masterpiece *Alaiosai-The Sound of the Waves*, posthumously.

The Independence movement in Tamilnadu encouraged some of the writers. They used freedom fighting as the major theme in their writings. The prominent writers among them, in this great movement in Tamil literature, are Naranaturaik Kannan, Akilan and Kovi Manicekaran. After this great movement in Tamil literature, the writers started writing ‘social novels’ led by Makatevan. His novels usually portray middle class family and their plight. Another novelist,
Va. Ra., has also depicted the theme of social change in his novels. He severely attacked the blind belief or superstitions of the people and other customs prevalent in society.

M. Varadarajan chose the theme of everyday life. His writings influenced K. Chinnappa Bharathi to write on the similar themes. This tendency of reflecting the heard realities of life in the writing followed the communist ideology, for example, *Pancum paciyum* a novel by Rakunatan, portrays change in the society. There were other forms such as short stories, translated novels, etc. Today in Tamil language novel and short story forms are popular as epics and poetry in the past. The foregoing recapitulation makes an impression that the present trend in Tamil literature has a strong historical background. The change in the perspective of writing style and theme has been profound. There is also a point in saying that the present Tamil literature has departed the from the grand tradition of writing on characters of myths, epics and even the historical characters. This is noticeable in the writings of this century. The are writers such as, Jnanpeet awardee D. Jayakanthan and others. They look at intricacies of social problems, and believe that the writers should have the responsibility.

In previous centuries the subject matter of poetical works would be either God, a patron philanthropist, or the ruler. In modern works there is no place for any of them. The modern writers concern themselves about men: their imagination is centered around the human society'. (Mu. Varadarajan. Tran. by E. Sa.Viaswanathan 1988: p299).

This is the real shift in the mind set of the modern writers. The reasons for this shift are the rapid growth of scientific discoveries and the questioning attitude of the human nature. Test and decide and not imagine and believe is the modern phenomena. This has generated debate between the past and the present. Modern writers believe that literature or any writing would be useful only when it makes poor of the poorest get a chance to live humanly. It should question the evils in the existing society.
Chinnappa Bharathi has been one of the most popular and significant figures of Tamil literature. He is an icon in this direction. All his works carry powerful message to the oppressed and exploited class to make themselves ready to face the ruthless people and win the battle. He deserves balanced critical evaluation. Critical evaluation of each of his works substantiates his work as a great writer.

Chinnappa Bharathi is also a symbol of great 'confluence' of nationalism and Tamil resistance against exploitation. His words are aesthetically poetic but the message is revolutionary. He writes in the regional language, keeping the national outlook. For him, like any other regional writer Tamil language is the symbol of Tamil culture.

Chinnappa Bharathi focuses on the 'working class'. Because it is the working class that has been inhumanly exploited. Most of the writers write about this group under the umbrella of the subaltern section. The culture of the working class is becoming the culture of the people in general. One of the prominent themes of fiction, at least in this century, is showing the wide gap between the ruler and ruled and the rich and the poor. In spite of slogans such as garibi hatao, India shining, feel good, etc., about uplifting the down trodden, the gap is widening day by day. As a result, naxalism is growing day by day. Had the ruler fulfilled the minimum living conditions of the have-nots, the bloodshed, violence and loss could not have occurred.

Culture of the majority, which may be insignificant to the minority exploiting, represents national culture of the nation. Chinnappa Bharathi's works show the ruling class—high officials, forest officials, rich men, etc,—has sold their souls, which is more dangerous than selling bodies (i.e. slave trade). The ruling class has lost the human qualities of care, concern and compassion for the ruled. His writings are full of the confrontation between the haves and the have-nots.
Detailed analysis of the two novels, *The Awakening* and *Sugar is* attempted in this chapter. The two novels reflect similar views found in the case of Ngugi. Ngugi attacks his own people who encouraged the alien exploiters. The following discussion of the novel, *The Awakening*; sketches a picture of the present society, which the author feels to be a new world for the readers.

**THE AWAKENING: (1987)** The foreword to the novel by one of the greatest Marxist leaders of India, E. M. S. Namboodripad, conspicuously describes the centrality and peripherals of the novel:

Thus:

Through the many characters and incidents described in the book, he has exposed the exploitation, oppression etc., to which the tribal men and women are subjected by the profit-hunting money lenders and traders aided by corrupt officials. (Foreword: A:1987)

The novel rightly traces the old values of life along with new-as represented by Thiruman and his son Sadayan. The people of old generation still keep high regards for the established authority. And opposing it is a mark of sin, to them. But they do not know that they are being exploited by the same authority. This is not only a sin but a crime. This novel is the result of the amalgamation of traditional life and the civilized-modern life. But which one is civilized is the million dollar question.

The opening description of natural beauty fascinates the reader instantly. K. Chinnappa Bharathi himself used to write verse before he switched over to fiction. This is called in Kannada *kavi hrudaya.* (poetic heart) The poetic description is very much revealed at the outset. It reads:

The tinkle of cow-bells; the melodious music of chirping birds; the drone of beetles; the humming of little sparrows; the babbling of brooks all around; the cool breeze alongside hot rays of the sun; the slowly descending fog, soft like flowing butter; the bluish peaks of the hills; the rides dark with wild trees; patches of plains in between;
small groves of citrus, jack lemon and guava plants; the cardamom and coffee plantations; the thorny bushes clothing long stretches of fallow land..." (A: 1987:1)

The serenity of beauty is not spared. It has also been exploited. Man exploited nature also. As far as the theme of this novel is concerned, the reader might face a dilemma: If the author is really interested in preserving the purity of nature, why does he seem to suggest the fact that tribal-people, who live in Kolli hills are not civilized, as they don’t have modern facilities. Here the novelist does not make his stand clear. Shifting the stand, he takes, confuses the reader. Does he advocate pure tribal-traditional life which is sacred? or Does he champion the civilized modernity? There is a wavering if not contradiction in the growth of the novel. Because in the beginning of the novel it is clear that the natural beauty of the forest and tribal life is a happy one. But towards the end of the novel, it can be noticed that modern comfort is expected. This is the surface meaning of the text. But the undercurrent theme of the novel reflects the growth of the Union through the new members joining it. Sadayan and Seeranga, a refugee, show that the materialistic attitude is expected. Materialistic life itself is a dreaded enemy of nature. Because, it destroys the foundation of folk-culture of the common man. The real question haunts every reader is, what is meant by awakening? And whose awakening does the author talk about? Awakening of what? Do the Kolli-hill tribals move from darker side of life to brighter side? If yes, then what is the brighter side of life and what is the darker side of life? Does it mean that man living with ultermaterialistic possessions is called ‘Awakened man’? What happens in the novel is, not their awakening. But it might be a kind of awareness about the facilities the government gives to the down trodden, the benefits, and the supportive rules, which the tribals are lacking. They are made to realize the importance of all these things through self consciousness and the effort made by some sincere union leaders.

The primary aim of this thesis is to look at the levels of exploitations that are practised in every society. In case of
Ngugi wa Thiong'o, the Kenyan society faces the brutal exploitation by the white, in the name of superiority of race, colour, culture and language. In India as K. Chinnappa Bharathi describes, our own powerful, ruling people exploit the common people.

The officials are the like angels ‘descending from the heavens’. (p1). Owing to illiteracy, innocence and mental slavery, the protagonist of the novel, Sadayan, son of Thiruman, treats the officials with a great timidity. The arrogance and brutality of the officers is described poetically. The Khaki dress and the jeep make Sadayan’s father scared. Thiruman, hearing the news of the arrival of officials, he introspects himself—whether has committed a crime and violated the psychological boundary made by officials. Thiruman recognized them as the policemen. Thiruman and his son are not able to come to a conclusion regarding their unexpected arrival.

The father and the son were not able to decide on their next move. It is perhaps for the visiting officials to decide. They might demand money or they might ask for a girl, young and beautiful. Poor tribals were born to discharge such duties!’. A: ‘87: 8.

This has been the practice in the tribals to accept to provide what the authority expects—property, cash, or girls for their pleasure. Thiruman and others accepted it without questioning. Thiruman says: ‘We have to fall at their feet. There is no other way’. (A:9p) They are scared of the police because of the ‘tribals had been made spineless by the show of the police lathi, the gun and the handcuffs. They had become cowards’. (A:9p)

Thiruman planted fruit bearing trees, sacrificing his family welfare. He protected them as his own children and dreamt of good price for the fruits this time to fulfill the minimum requirements of the family, but:

The assistant asked him (Thiruman) further whether there were pine-apples and plantains. When Thiruman admitted there were, he ordered, ‘Well, get four jack fruits, two
When Thiruman and Sadayan bring the ordered items, the officer asks his subordinate whether they have been stolen. Thiruman beg them to accept those fruits as they have been grown by him. Thiruman offers the fruits as a devotee offers to his family God. Thiruman is pained to see his bad luck, but this is a permanent phenomena in the Kolli hills. The officers leave the place without saying even empty tongued thanks. One of the officers says:

"The Kolli hills famous for honey, Jack fruit and pineapple. The campers generally would like to taste all these without paying for them." A: '87:11.

By saying the importance of Kolli hills, he reveals important information, for the reason why an officer demands bribes from the farmer tribal like Thiruman. In fact, this shows his helplessness. So he says:

"If we have to pay for all these, even thrice our present salaries would not be enough. We have therefore to make ourselves stone-hearted'. (A:12p)

The novelist shows the poor conditions of Thiruman through a metaphor.

"Thiruman and Sadayan were sitting heads over knees at the entrance to their hut. Thiruman's wife Thirumi was clearing up the pig-sty. The mother of ten piglets lay with her legs spread. She did not have enough milk to feed the ten off-spring. The piglets were banging their mouths against the parched udder'.

A: '87:12:13

Thirumi is an interesting character, who symbolizes motherhood and humanity. She feeds every piglet that thrills her to a great extent. She kisses, and loves them like her own children. She dreams their growth, in spite of her poverty. Not knowing the ramifications she innocently plans, that if these ten piglets grow strong and healthy, Thiruman may clear the loan which was taken on the wet land. The rate of interest of money lenders was 180 per cent. The way they
had to give the fruits to the officers freely, the same fate may happen to these lovely piglets of Thirumi,

Deviation is a weapon for writing creative work. K. Chinnappa Bharathi is no exception to it. When he comments on the living condition of Thiruman and Thirumi:

"Unbroken hard labour made him frustrated and talk like that. He was the head of the family. But, he was not the only one to bear the brunt. Both the men and women had their share of work. They had to share the happiness and misery too". A: '87:15.

The cited extract of the novel also reflects the strong foundation of family system of India, where a husband and wife share pain and pleasure. The co-operation, cordial relationship of husband and wife is the hallmark of the novel. They stand together at every point of difficulties and hardships.

K. Chinnappa Bharathi is a great master in describing the situation where a man becomes helpless and surrenders to God, expecting His blessings.

"Thiruman noticed it, signed and wondered why God failed to enable them to bear the cold and slush like the very insects". A: 17p

A helpless man expects some sort of consolation through the means available. Thiruman also wishes to get some comfort through chewing tobacco. A tribal poorman like Thiruman has been left with no option but to be addicted to tobacco. His mouth waters for tobacco. He believes that the intoxication gives him complete relief. The novel can also be studied from the angle of mute suffering life of tribals and active enjoyment of elite city-market people. Market is the symbol of civilization. Still, in the name of civilization, exploitation is rampant everywhere.

Thiruman’s marketgoing is narrated in detail. The preparation itself reveals important relations. At last, Thiruman, Sadayan and others leave for the market. Thirumi’s reaction shakes up humanity of the kind hearted readers.
She rubbed her eyes and said, 'Am I not aware of your affection for the child? Family worries have made me talk like that. Well, it is getting late. You can go'. She bid him farewell. A: '87:24.

The tribals reach the market with their produce for sale. But the businessmen better know how to exploit these innocent tribal sellers.

' The traders prowl around with money bags hung around their necks. The owners of the produce greeted them and invited them to have a closer look at their wares. Traders took no notice but simply nodded their heads as they went along having a good look at the heaps of fruits'. A:25p.

The traders know how to exploit the tribal people through unethical means. When Thiruman wants to sell his pineapple fruits, the trader asks to Thiruman to fix the price and without knowing the hidden idea of the traders. Thiruman says forty rupees with a smile. For this response the trader wants to know whether it includes the cost of Thiruman also.

'Traders knew how to beat them. They could not carry back their goods as they were perishable. The trader said in an apparently kind tone.' 'Take thirty five rupees, man'. A: '87:26.

Even at the close of the market day, it seems the plan of Thiruman may not materialize. He has come to the stage that he should sell the goods at whatever the price he gets. It becomes inevitable for him to sell the goods. The price of pineapple now comes to fifteen rupees instead of thirty rupees. The Jackfruit priced at 10 rupees, instead of forty rupees earlier in the day. This has resulted in a heavy loss to him.

At the end, the traders confused him and made him sell all goods at twenty five rupees only. This small amount has to be spent on many things. There is a long list, waiting to be fulfilled by Thiruman, such as to 'buy tobacco, rice, edible oil and Kerosene'. He has also assured his daughter a new dress.
'Anyone pleading not guilty but proved guilty in this process should be prepared to face disastrous consequences. They would levy a heavy fine. He should entertain all the people from the nearby villages with pork'. A: 40p.

The tragedy of Thiurman is multiplied by accepting the fine: For unwittingly burning forest wood on the eve of the ritual plough. It was a dishonour to the family'. A:47p.

Thiruman has taken care of keeping his family's dignity: Whenever Thiruman disappointed it is Thirumi who consoles him by saying:

'The pains and pleasures of human beings are ordained by Him. They had erred somewhere along the way'. A: 48p.

Sadayan is not very happy with his father's attitude. He says his father 'lacked courage. He could only cry like a woman'. A:53p.

The people of the hill are unaware of the policies of government. An officer delivers a speech narrating and informing the supporting rules made by the government towards their upliftment. He asks the Kolli-tribals to consider officials as friends and not as traitors . He says:

'They had to look upon the Government officials as friends and not with suspicion. All, it would seem, are Indians. They were all Tamil brothers. The treasures embedded in the hills would be revealed to them'. A:59p.

The tribals don't believe his words. Andi doubts:

Andi's doubt was genuine. The accountant and revenue inspector extorted hundred to two hundred rupees from them on the plea that they would get patta (Right of ownership) for cultivating the public lands. After two or three years, would come a new revenue inspector, who would charge them with trespassing into government land and drive them out. They got money from third parties and allowed them to cultivate these lands. The forest officials destroyed the crops grown by the hill people in the name of planting trees. The same officials aided and abetted the smugglers of timbers who destroyed the forest tress'. A:59p.
The officials know well the art of exploitation. The people went on explaining the speech of the official in their own way. At the heat of the discussion ‘a boy sneezed at this juncture. It was considered as an ill omen. Sneezing by a girl was a good omen’. A:60p.

Hill people are not ready to believe the sugary words of the officials this time: because:

The words and ideas of the officials had cut no ice with the villagers. Their pathetic lives, the atrocities of the forest officers and the profit reaped by the officials by exploiting their ignorance filled their minds with suspicion and fear'. A: 60p.

The novelist depicts love relations between Chkravarthi Karuman, and Pidare. It gives a sort of relief to the tension created by the ongoing exploitation by the forest officials.

Sukarn, an agent, asks the money immediately otherwise Thiruman should send his daughter Pidari with him. It shows how the woman is considered as a commodity for selling, buying and pledging. Thiruman and Sadayan are deeply hurt. Thiruman takes loan from the Trustee by pledging piglets to pay Sukran. The readers are given an idea about how woman is being targeted as moneylender's man drags Karumayai for not paying the debt.

The rebellion comes through the provocative ideas of Seerangan from Sri Lanka who asked a question: 'What if all of us unite and speak with one voice'. A:119p.

Pidari dreams a happy and married life but unfortunately, she has to become the second wife Chakravathi Karuman's. There is a clear difference between her dreams and reality. Pidari compromises her with the changing situation after her marriage.
Vellayan is the first from the tribe to raise the voice of revolt against injustice. He lodged a complaint against Ajeez Sahib, at the suggestion of Seerangan. Seerangan has feelings of concern for the pathetic living condition of the Kolli-hill people. He declares:

'I have no fear of these things. But, there is a difference! There is no unity here. That is the root-cause of all troubles, can one blind man guide another blind man?' A: 126p.

He is instrumental in creating awareness among the Kolli-hill people of their rights. He continues:

'It is all in our hands. Salvation will not come of its own. The haves would never guide the have-nots. The sufferer should first understand the cause of his suffering. We reconcile to what we call our fate. We resign ourselves to our suffering as decreed by God. We are docile and tolerant to a fault. For illiterate people, experience alone is guide'. A: 126p.

Vellayan faces a number of problems for complaining against Ajeez Sahib a moneylender for abducting his wife. He thinks that seeking justice at the police station is becoming injustice. The police officer makes a statement that the Kolli-hill women are never pure. He adds that a woman can marry any number of men. Naturally the first attempt made by Seerangan and Vellayan against injustice fails but Seerangan is an optimist, who meets the union leaders at Salem. The union leaders say that 'You are a resident of Kolli hills? It seems a lot of people have come there as refugees. Why not bring them together and form an association? Then only, it would be easy to solve your problems then and there'. A: 134p.

Seerangan is able to awake the long felt need of the hill people for the justice they have been demanding. He is an outsider joining Kolli. He fights against exploitation and injustice caused by ruthless moneylenders and the officials. He narrates the tragic story of the Kolli hill-people to Veluchami, a union leader. This is the central theme of the novel. Seerangan describes:
I came only to discuss that with you. The refugee problem is very simple. It is very cruel to see the hill people being exploited by the police, forest departments and the money lender. For failure to repay his debt, a man's wife was forcibly taken away by the money-lender's henchman. He can bring her back only on clearing his debts. Until then, she would be his slave. I took the man involved in this incident and gave complaint to the police. The inspector had the moneylender seated in the station and in his presence. "Will such a decent man take away your wife? He also beat up both of us and extracted money from us in the bargain'. He showed the swelling in his cheeks as a result of the beating.

A:87:135.

This tragic narration of Seerangan makes Veluchami to awake them about their freedom and independence through struggle. The authority always misuses and abuses power. The power corrupts the officials. Chinnappa Bharathi adds his ideology through omnipresent narration, as he comments through the character of Veluchami thus:

They must be rallied on the basis of their common problems. They must be brought within the purview of the union. What gold cannot accomplish, unity of the association will accomplish. A man lacking in political knowledge and the support of an organization would always be a coward. The same man would become a hero when he acts as the member of a movement. Every progressive struggle of this society has brought out only the power of the poor and their sacrifices'. A:136p.

The change of society takes place because of the struggle made by the have-nots. To release the cattle, the forest officials demanded a huge money as bribe but:

'Caressing his moustache, the ranger said, "I will not be taking even a paisa of this money. It is all meant for the higher officials. Only if we feed them thus, they would refrain from firing the blame on me when they come and see all the mess you have made. Since I move with you daily, I think at these things. But, the authorities on their occasional visits would try to detect some irregularity or other. All this money is for that only. He spoke like a cat which disliked milk'. A:87:140.
The ranger tries to justify his method of corruption from the poor people, where as the people at large say very differently:

'There was no hint of support from them for the ranger. On the other hand their faces reflected gloomy agony and bitterness. By now they were very much used to the various people who sucked their blood like leeches which had been doing so for generations. They knew that these men had to be catered to......Their only concern was that they should not be imprisoned or tortured by being falsely implicated in crimes which they had never committed.' A: 87:141.

At this point of time, the first voice of real protest comes from SriLankan refugee Seerangan. He argues that he has not violated the rule. His argument is correct but the officials are not ready to accept it. The officials are very furious. The officer orders his henchmen. 'Come on, drag these thieves and their animals to the police station'. A: 142p.

The Trustee wants to say that only those who don't pay should be made responsible and not all. He requests the officer to take them, as they refuse to pay the fine. The Trustee has taken the responsibility to collect 'the fine money'. When officials are about to take Seerangan and Sadayan into custody, Sadyan tells the official, 'I have no money. Take me also'. It is the second voice of protest against the injustice'. A: 143p.

All the three—Seerangan, Periasami and Sadayan—are arrested. Cases registered as they are caught red-handed while felling trees. So false cases have been registered on them. Since Sadayan's arrest his father and mother have been uneasy. Their pain becomes even serious when they lose their lovely cow. They weep like dogs. The loss of a domestic animal cost the poor farmer more than his near and dear ones'. A: 147p.

Excluding Ponnammal everyone accuses Sadayan for the death of the cow. But a bold woman, Ponnammal argues otherwise:

'If you consider it humiliation to speak up in the name of justice and to court imprisonment, how do you justify the moneylenders'}
dragging away our women for failure to repay the debt an
treating them as their own wives? Do you think it
redounds to the credit of the hill people?' A: 148:149.

Veluchami released Vellayan's wife Karumayai from Ajeez Sahib.
This is the first victory for the Kolli-hill people. No hill man had ever
confronted the moneylender. It was a great sin. It seemed one man's
sin would ruin the entire village'. A: 151p. The release of Vellayan's wife
from the moneylender gives a message. 'Man is the boss as long as the
bull does not hit back'. A: 153p.

Sadayan and Seeranga have undergone a year's imprisonment.
By this time Pidari's marriage takes place. It reveals the tribal culture
of joining, supporting and working for the success of the marriage.
They arranged a folk drama Harichandra or Abimanyu.

Prison experience has made Sadayan stronger and concrete in
his struggle. It is a new experience for him and he improves his mental
horizon. He is proud to be the part of the process of change. He says,
'This jail may change a man like me in any manner'. A: 167pp.

The description of prison life in the words of Vengan, a fellow
prisoner is noticeable.

Things which we shy away from outside the prison, have
to be touched by us here. Things which detest must be
eaten. The prison is but a place where you are forced to
take by compulsion what you hate. It is not your mother-

Reformation and transformation are the slogans of the Union
leaders. Communist ideology is based on these basic assumptions of
the society. As Kumar, a communist, transforms the quality the living
condition in prison. Wherever he is jailed he fight against injustice:

whichever jail he is in, he would raise his voice against
the unjust acts of the authorities. It is 'because of him
that the authorities treat us some what like human
This has made Sadayan too, to talk against injustice. As Vengan remarks:

Similar is the struggle which he is putting up for our sake. We are all speechless creatures here, even though we might be rowdes outside the prison, we are lambs held in tether here. He takes up our cause even at his own peril and champions it'. A:169p.

The seed of protest against exploitation and injustice is slowly shown in the minds of Sadayan. 'An eternal flame' is found in Sadayan’s attitude. An ideological debate, made by Kumar, proves the basic question of freedom, life etc. He says:

Man gets a chance to live but once and being prepared to treat even death as an attempt to live a life of self respect would fill one with great ecstasy. A: 173p.

He also gives a call to the have-nots, beaten up, insulted, helpless and down trodden people to come together and to fight united.

Side by side in the subplot, the married life of Pidari is elucidated. She wanted to marry and to live with one husband which is against the tribal tradition. She had to bury her past and change herself to live with new responsibility.

After their release, Sadayan, Seerangan and others start creating confidence in the minds of the people. Their one major demand is to shift the market to hill itself. They plan for a strong protest-march. Sadayan reflects the selfless service of Veluchami.

You know the leader Veluchami. Men like him who toil for the welfare of the people do not worry about bad food, or lack of comfortable beddings. They do not think of their family and their belongings. They would fight for good, and amenities even there, like they do for the welfare of the people outside. Even prison life is a life of heroism for them. For people like us without any ideal the prison will only be life hell'. A: '87:188.

Sadayan argues that until and unless they wake up, whatever the effort made by the outsider such as Veluchami would not change
the life condition of the hill people. Sadayan is proud to be associated with the union leaders in prison and outside the prison. He remembers the contribution made by the union leaders.

You must have seen the way he taught us to read and write, read the newspapers, know about politics and how he took our minds know about politics and how he took our minds off our worries. We felt the period of one year spent in jail was like just one month. Given such a life, we can happily spend even nine years in jail. He stretched his legs which had gone numb and went on, 'He showed self confidence and courage in us who had been scared of even the stones and twings in the forest. He helped us to develop the strength of mind of a hero. A: 189p.

The tribals—Andi Periasami and others—slowly realize the struggle. The release of Karumayai from the clutches of Ajeez Sahiba, a money lender, by Sadayan and others with the help of Veluchami gives a boost to the tribals. For them it is the first victory against the brutal, inhuman money lenders, whose aim is to exploit the people at most.

Veluchami addresses the gathering that nothing happens if they are not united and they have to wake up now from the false dreams. The Tahsildar knows how to manipulate the people through propaganda. He pretends to be innocent by saying:

'What kind of authority do we have in this job? Sir, the ruling party people come. They say 'you must follow our instructions. You must do nothing without consulting us. Only when the people find things are moving at our behest, would they show respect to us. They further threaten us. 'If you do as the opposition party says, you will lose your job'. A: 194p.

The officer creates confusion among the tribals about who is to be trusted upon:

The cow inspection has shown a number of irregularities such as a cow was sanctioned on someone else cow. Kali is troubled, whose loan is sanctioned on his relatives cow. In case of Thiruman, his cow died long ago, even he did not know that a death certificate
by the veterinary doctor should have made it. When Thiruman also
asked to sign the inspection document. Sadayan shouts “We must
put an end to this kind of atrocity”. A: 200p.

The officer never expects this sort of strong voice of protest. He
educates the officer:

I am his son. People coming up from the plains do no realize
that the hill man is also a human being. Whether it is the man
giving us loans or the trader coming to buy goods from us or the
official coming to drive us around, none of them considers us as
human beings. A solution has to be found for this. I am a man

Still the official is not ready to listen to him. He says it is not his
job to hear unwanted information. Sadayan’s pleading for considering
them as human beings really shows pathetic living conditions of the
tribals. For final struggle, the people have come to listen to Veluchami.
He addresses the gathering, educating them. His speech reads:

‘Ours is a free country. The white has left. It is the king whom we
vote for, rules us. We can keep him if we like. Or we may throw him
out. We save the power. But, is the country really so? We abide by
the words of about ten important people of the village. We readily
cast our vote in return for two rupees or a square meal. That is why,
even after independence we do not enjoy the freedom. We are unable
to enjoy our right even though we have it’. A: 209.

Veluchami confirms that they are alert and listening to him. He
continues his speech with a number of prominent questions. Their
questions do no demand answers for they are rhetorical questions.
The speech really touches the heart of the tribals gathered. Veluchami
continue:

people who became ministers with the help of our votes say, that
they had laid roads for hill tribes, built hospitals; that they had
given them fruits bearing trees free; cattle at half the price and so
on. Are they speaking the truth? why should they grab the lands
which the hill people have been cultivating for generations, in the
name of developing the forests? When they try to drive them out
what is the meaning of all this talk of uplifting them? Where is the
sense in catching hold of a man’s throat and saying ‘See how we
have left his body and limbs free? How does this government tolerate the moneylender publicly abducting the grown-up-girls of the defaulter for his failure to pay his dues? Is the hill-man able to live in peace if he does not agree to give any object or girl which the police, forest official and Tahsildar want? Is this the freedom we have won? Is this the new life we have got? All the development schemes are designed to satisfy the hunger for power of the rulers rather than for satisfying the hunger deep inside your stomach."

His words were live fire and brimstone. A:210p.

Veluchami knows it well that if the hungry masses come together no one will stand before them. He attacks their slavish, superstitious life, and lack of confidence. He knows that just shifting the market would not solve their problem. After shifting, the market, the forest officials can be prevented from visiting the place for grabbing their lands. After his long speech and clarification it is agreed that Seerangan is the president of the local unit of the union and Sadayan is it's secretary. The meeting ends at midnight, everyone goes with newfound enthusiasm.

Sadayan has completely involved in the activities of the union which has created a rift between him and his parents. His father becomes very angry and complains.

'We are unable to have a fence even to our house.
But, he says, (Sadayan) he is going to provide a fence to others'. A:215p.

Thiruman is not without reason to be angry with him. His family faces a number of problems. The cow is dead, and the loan has to be repaid, and parents of Sadayan become old and poverty-stricken. Sadayan should look after these things. The expectations of old parents from the grown up son is quite natural at least in the Indian social system. There is a conceptual change in the mindset of Thiruman and Sadayan. Sadayan is neither an idiot nor a useless fellow but his ideology is quite different from his parents.
The generation gap, in every sense of the word is noticed in his argument when he argues:

'Suffering is not for us only. It is there throughout this country. Only if the disease gripping this country vanishes, our pain will also vanish. My idea is to try and find the panacea for our ills rather than continue to suffer everyday'. A:216p.

Sadayan's approach is universal and wants to change the system itself rather than improving his life condition or the development of his family only. When Sadayan is made to surrender himself to the parental sentiments he makes a powerful statement. His statement is logically coherent and reflects humanity and struggle for existence. He argues:

'We throw a stone and drive away a single crow. But, when the crows come in fifties or hundreds, we run away to hide from them. What we are doing today is not directed against anybody. Our fight is directed against those forces which work against our legal rights. If two hillmen per ten come forward to unite, they cannot be cowed down. Somebody had to come forward to initiate such a move'. A: 217p.

The Kolli-hill people have not heard the resolute and resounding speech like the one made by their own man, Sadayan. They are moved by it, but there are some reservations heard from here and there, expecting some more time. But over all, Sadayan's speech touches the hearts of the people. This is yet another turning point to the people of Kolli-hill. Sadayan gets involved completely in the activities of the farmers' association and the union activities. This has created a rift between him and his parents. The reaction of Thiruman is the obvious reference to this, he says:

Let us not entertain hope that the son will feed us hereafter. His wandering at night and his utterances against the moneylender, contractor and the government are going to ruin the family.
Unless we sever our relationship with him, we cannot hope to escape from danger'. A:222p.

Two things are found in the arguments of Thiruman. The first is the sentiment of the poor parents in foreseeing the punishment by government for his offence. The second one is that, as he is an innocent man, he thinks why his son has forgotten the family responsibility, not taking care of his parents at their old age, and bother about social change, helping the village. What is the use? Thiruman fails to understand the ideology and social concern of his son Sadayan. He should have been proud to see his son’s dynamic and selfless service he is rendering to his fellow beings. The novelist depicts the two world views of parents and their son. The mother’s intervention increases the pressure on Sadayan through parental sentiments. Sadayan faces emotional moment. He is caught between his ideology of the struggle for rights and his parental affection and their strong anxiety.

But Sadayan knows the fact that strong and united struggle would make their living condition better. To get rid of injustice and suffering, struggle is the only way. So he opts for struggle rather than motherly love. He considers his commitment to serve the people through the movement is more important. He tells his mother:

One day it would give everyone a life free from fear. Why should you worry? I am not going out to steal; nor to gamble. I am trying to bring some light in the dark lives of suffering people. Do you think the man used to darkness would like it any longer after he saw light?’ A: 224p.

Listening to the heroic words of Sadayan the mother’s eyes become wet and tears start flowing. ‘Were they tears of disenchantment or of pride’. A:224p, The union leaders want the market to be shifted
to Kolli hill with the strong support of the people. Through these struggles they get their voice back. The Kolli-hill people now know the necessity of questioning, clarifying the doubts and voicing the voiceless. They know that they are paying the tax and necessary facilities should be given to them by the authority. The hill people want their patta for their land which they have been cultivating for generations. The Revenue Inspector, who seems to be supporting moneylenders asks, 

'Why the patta is not given to the farmer who tills the land? He continues:

"Lands without patta belongs to the government. The government has various departments. The lands without patta would come under the jurisdiction of the forest and revenue departments. They say that it is illegal for a man without land to till it and claim ownership for it. If we still cultivate the land, we will have to dance to the tune of whichever official comes here". A:232p.

The challenge before the union leaders is how to resolve this land owning problem and shifting the market. Their plan is to open a co-operative society on the date of opining of market at Kolli hill 'on the day from the Wednesday'. The association could help them. There is an opposition from Thambi Vadaman and Mottaiyan and their fellow men. They plan to remove Sadayan. They wish to take revenge on Sadayan: Their plans:

Let us do something. Let us do something to increase the animosity between the father and son. We shall cut off and ruin the fruit trees in Thiruman's orchard. Let us beat up Sadhayan's colleagues severely, stopping short of killing them. That might make them desert him. I (Vadaman) cannot think of any other method.' A: 235p.

The farmers and the union leaders have come to the gathering. Addressing the audience Veluchami, who is a prominent leader of the union, makes it clear that the participation of everyone is of great importance for success. He observes:
This dark hill side is going to be lit up today because of your joint efforts. This light should spread as a flame through all the nooks and corners of this hilly region and burn away ignorance, fear, cowardice and the orphaned feeling. It must spread unity and confidence. You must all work together for it. That is your strength. That alone will strengthen your life.' A: 251p.

This speech of Veluchami gives confidence and reasons for backwardness. He also adds in his speech that 'you are your own enemies. With his speech the collector opens the market at hill. Kolli hill-people welcome this change.

The growth of the association generates views opposing from the older generation. According to them, the association encourages unethical and immoral activities. The Trustee is prominent among them. He predicts:

He had been afraid that the growth of the association would ultimately ruin the traditional discipline. He had feared that hobnobbing with them would instill courage in the minds of the innocent and the timid'. A: 253p.

Since the origin of the Union, and the Association, Thiruman has been pessimistic about the standard of life and the values of life. The Trustee makes him more revengeful towards his won son. As the Trustee says 'whether we lose our lands or not, we are definitely going to lose the discipline and unity that we have been preserving all these years in the hills'. A: 255p.

They want a compromised peaceful life to guard the tradition. The choice of Innocence or experience and traditional or modern life is reflected, expecting to get away from the dilemma. The human history depicts the struggle between the exploiter and the exploited, the inferior and the superior and the rich and the poor.
Sadayan instills confidence the people. The shifting of the market causes transformation of the Kolli-hill people. And getting the ownership of the is yet to be achieved. Even seeing the success, in shifting the market the propaganda and counter propaganda between traditionalist and modernist continued:

The lands which you cultivate belong to the government.
You have been in illegal occupation of it all these days.
You have admitted it and signed it. Here after, you should not enter here. A: 263p.

Thiruman is shocked to know that his land is being taken back by the government officials and the fruit trees are being destroyed. Thiruman seems to understand the capitalist tendency of the government. First time in his life, Thiruman asks questions: ‘This land has been with me since my father’s days, sir! Where can I go from here? A:264p. But the officials order to cut down the fruit trees, grown by him. The order of the officials to cut down the trees creates disgusting and anger in the minds of Thiruman and he has to answer innumerable questions of his heart. Some of the questions may reflect the traditional and natural life of Thiruman.

‘Was this not the same earth that had welcomed him when he came out of his mother’s womb? Had he not crawled, rolled and licked at this earth? When he got down from his mother’s lap after consuming her milk, had he not taken to eating the mud of this earth? etc., A:265p.

He remembers every leaf that he touched everyday. He begs the officials, “Where can I go, master? Should I beg in my last days? What harm have I done to this earth?’ A: 265p. The officials express their helplessness. They do not know the relationship between man and nature. It is ‘Sometimes even greater than the motherly love and it has even made people disregard their fathers’. A:265p.
When the workers are ready to cut down the fruit trees, Thiruman shouts, 'You will cut down that tree over my dead body. One more blow on that tree and your heads would roll'. A: 265p.

Thiruman is so angry and everyone is shocked to see the strength of Thiruman before the officials. He trumpets like an elephant. When the henchmen start cutting down the trees, Thiruman looks at his son Sadayan as if to summon him son for help. Thiruman addresses his son "This grove is your property. Do not let it be destroyed in front of my own eyes". A: 267. Association members have left no option but to demonstrate against the taking over of the land. Seerangan makes a powerful argument that makes officials baffled. He says:

'Not only this land, we would not allow you to carry out your plan of grabbing this entire hill as long as we are alive. You, who do not have the power to create, have no right to destroy either. Nobody should touch even a speech of this'. A: 267p.

A huge crowed gathers to take a final step to remove the poles fixed by the officials. Sensing great danger, the officials threaten to lodge a complaint against the men who enter the government land. But Sadayan and his friends remove the poles fixed by the officials. He says: "pluck out and throw away all the survey poles wherever they have been erected and wipe off the boundaries marked". A: 268p. The official leave the place saying: "let us see the guts of these 'tigers' tomorrow. We were wrong to come here unprepared thus giving scope for maneuver. They would come round only if at least one falls dead". A: 268p. Thiruman is being taken to police station. While going he utters his last words which go on ringing in his sons mind:

'This cultivated land belongs to us. This grove grown, spread over is ours. We would not look on idly if this is grabbed or destroyed'. A: 268p.
It gives a boost to the tribal-people. The total change in the behavior of Thiruman makes everyone astonished. Everyone is prompted to see their legal rights and the necessity of struggle in life. Thiruman adds at last: 'Life is not dear to us and the government is not permanent either. The association will win, and the people would live on'. A: 268p.

The message of Thiruman is a lesson for the tribals.

"For the first time in that hill, the voice of truth, the hot breath of righteous indignation, the musical sound of soulful rage and the firm resolve of the voice for human rights reverberated like thunder. They might awaken the sleepy and the weary man. They could guide him in his path and in his actions. They might educate him and awaken him'. A: 268p.

The novel ends with a great success of winning the lands of their own from the government officials. But, is it a permanent solution to the problem? The novel does not give the answer satisfactorily. And the danger bell of the officials may ring at any time and any day. The hill people need to keep their unity with a lot more care. The hope of future in the Kolli-hill people is certainly positive and optimistic. Questioning of 'bourgeois democracy' by the novelist touches the reader. The author's Marxist ideology has made enormous intellectual enquiry and social emancipation.

The novel portrays the gradual growth of the characters and their mental horizon. The novelist has been able to transform the living conditions of the tribal people by awakening them through his fiction. The novelist has also given them the voice of protest against injustice, ruthless exploitation, and bribing. Apart from this the novelist also adds the necessity of keeping in touch with nature. There is a message in the novel. The relationship between man and nature should go with materialistic growth of life. The
remote aspect of civilized or cultured society and brutal and barbaric society is also one of the themes of the novels. It clearly shows how the officials claim that they represent civilized society but behave otherwise and the tribal people represent uncivilized society but behave otherwise. The culture and humanity is the attitude of the human beings.

**THIRST: 1993**

*Thirst* portrays another angle of exploitation. Caste politics class politics are involved in it. As the novelist describes the awakening of the backward classes due to economic condition. This novel also deals with social reasons which cause the poor to become poorer. The central plot of the novel is of Marappan’s family and it’s growth and downfall through social suffering. It depicts how Marappan, once a farmer, becomes a landless labourer, falling from Independent life to dependent life. The result is that he is forced to accept some of the social events. Till the last part of the novel, only social behavior, culture, hierarchical system and landlordism in the name of upper caste and lower caste are described. This is the reason, this novel is taken up for this chapter why instead of *Sugar*. *Sugar* and *Thirst* are translated novels published in 1993.

‘His wife Marakkal had lost her charm apparently due to too much drudgery and looked older than her age’. T:3p.

It is the same in the case of Marappan also. He too has worked very hard and struggled much to lead a respectable life. Marappan’s wife is an embodiment of hard work:

She was the embodiment of hard toil. However much she bathed and kept her body clean, everyday the smell of the seasoned crops and the earth did issue forth from her body. Her thoughts and talk would always hover about the fields’. T:4p.
In the first part of the novel, the readers encounter the behaviour of the innocent, and growing children of Marappan and the strong rural culture of the masses. The children also share their responsibility.

'Kandan tethered the bullock and buffalo, cleaned the floor and spread out the groundnut'. T: 11p.

Marappan—his complete name is Marappa Gounder—is a farmer. His everyday in his farm. So the novel commentary on the tragic and restless life of a farmer:

A farmer's lot is to toil all the three hundred and sixty five days of the year. Unless he falls ill, he has to be working all the twenty four hours of the day. There will be some work or other like drawing water and tilling the land. If there was only one kind of work, one would not feel too fatigued or worried. How can one be peaceful if there are hundred other kinds?' T: 19p.

With all these difficulties in life Marappan arranges the marriage of Palaniammal to Suppan, the son of Nonji Pathiluga Gounder. The marriage is over. The novel depicts the sour relationship between the mother in-law and the daughter-in-law. On her husband's arrival, a compromise is being tried by the father and her mother. Seeing this, Marappan feels frustrated and curses himself. But his suffering is doubled when his son Kandan loves and decides to marry a harijan girl Papayi. Marappan considers that his son's disobeying his way of life and marrying a out-caste girl is unacceptable. He tells Gounder. It is true that my son has committed an unforgivable offence. But I had no part in it. The very day he went astray, I began to consider him dead. T: 164p.
Gounder objects Marappan son Kandan's marrying Papayi, a girl of Vellala caste and bringing down the name and fame of Gounder family and caste. He questions the morality of Marappan to safeguard himself by saying he is innocent. The ultimate result is that Kandan is a socially boycotted for his marrying out caste girl-Papayi. Marappan's suffering continues to increase everyday in one way or the other. His community people try to punish him. They complain that Kandan creates 'unrest among his workers'. The economic condition of Marappan becomes miserable:

How life tosses human beings about! Hitherto, he had been a farmer who owned a land and was working for wages in his spare time and had been held in some sort of esteem. But, today he was a mere labourer who had lost all his lands. He had to beg for a job. It is precisely this vulnerable position of his that the Gounder was trying to exploit'. T: 173p

Kandan is involved in the activities of the association. As a result he becomes the enemy of landlords. Through the efforts of the association, the slum dwellers and untouchables have come together and got united. The landless laborers also join their hands with them to fight out exploitation by the landlords and the people of upper castes. Kadan has lost the opportunity of becoming a father of a boy with his parents, as the social boycott continues. Marappan is also the product of this class difference. Now he decides to join hands with the fighters. The low-caste people and all workers come together and protest against landlord oppression, slavery, and exploitation. They shout:

'If the hunter were burnt down, the Villa would meet with the same fate. If the slaves were beaten up so would masters be'. T: 228p.
This made Gounder, who used to punish the slaves, run to a safety place. The voice of new awakening is found among the mass. Their unity is so strong that the upper class people could not do anything. The novelist has not only create a necessity of becoming united but also makes it clear that only through struggle knowing the legal rights given by the constitution and the rules of the government they can win against the exploiters. It is worth noticing the tragic life of the majority even after winning constitutional independence from the whites. The concluding lines of the novel give a fitting response, which should awake the fast asleep down trodden class.

They were insisting on independence and their right to work. Nobody would quench their thirst. They had to join together and find the spring that would quench their thirst. No amount of cruelty, torture and inhuman atrocity could hold back the surge of this thirst. Bearing evidence to this was their huge procession holding aloft the red flag that symbolized the sacrifices of scores of people of their ilk. Despite the loss of their dwelling and other small comforts at the hands of the cruel landed gentry here, they were clear in their mind and there was not a trace of confusion. Pessimism, weariness or fear. They were marching forward to golden era free from slavery and based on social justice. There was the glimpse of such prophetic vision in their faces as they marched with are mental fortitude. This was their plank of hope as they sought to realize a social order of their choice, a society that was classless. Their revolutionary thirst was sure to be quenched in the not too distant future’. T: 1993: 228.

Inspite of the welfare measures of the government, the slum dwellers, the exploited class and the labourers come together and fight for their rights. Revolution would be impossible without the resolute self-confidence of the most to fight. No society is harmonious, classless and colorless. Every society is created with plurality of cultures and traditions. It is the common phenomenon of human society but it should generate equality, humanity, liberty and exploitation free society. The negative and inhuman elements should
be eradicated. K. Chinnappa Bharathi and Ngugi wa Thiong'o have been torch bearers in this direction equally. Cursing and considering human birth itself as sinful and surrendering to the Creator is hypocrisy. And self-styled bloodshed revolutionaries, posing themselves as the protectors of poor and killing innocent people are really damaging the hatch—patch human relationship. The panacea for this problem is to follow the golden saying 'live and let live'. It should be everyone's way of life. The human beings are responsible for all the ups and downs of the human society. The class system is the creation of immaturity of human beings. Maturity can cure these dreaded diseases.