THE EMINENT POETS
OF
PUDUCHERRY
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BHARATIDASAN

Introduction to the works of Bharatidasan

The present chapter attempts to analyze the creations of Bharatidasan in sociological perspective. Born in the year 1891, Bharatidasan lived for 72 years and died in 1964. According to the scholars, his first literary creation seems to be a poem entitled ‘pazañkalattilee pazañkalaittaan’ written in 1904 (1). The ‘cuteecamittiran’ daily newspaper dated 26.5.1914 carried his article ‘tamiz paashaikku oru nikaNTu veeNTum’ (A new dictionary is an essential requirement for Tamil language). In the year 1907, a ‘laavanî’ song seemed to have been written by Bharatidasan (2). These available creations happened to be his initial works, which paved way for him to create innumerable works on almost all forms of Tamil literature. His creations can be arranged on the following classification:

- kaTTurai (Essay)
- naaTakam (Drama)
- ciRukatai (Short story)
- kavitai (Poetry)
- urai (Commentary)
- coRpozivu (Lecture)
- tuNukkukaL (Tit-bits)
- kaTitam (Letters)
- tanvaralaaRu (Autobiography)
- moziyiyal (Linguistics)
- itaz (Journal)
- tiraippaTam (Cinema)
It is believed that the entire works of Bharatidasan may be included in the above mentioned tabulation (3). Each one of them, however, can further be distributed into several sub-divisions.

The poetic works of Bharatidasan, for instance, may be divided into ‘tanikkavitai’ (Lyric), ‘kaaviyam’ (Epic), ‘kuRuνkaaviyam’ (Minor epic) and ‘ciRRilakkiyam’ (Minor literature).

The compilation of his essays’maanuTam pooRRu’ (Praise the humanity) includes a number of essays written on various subjects at various times.

His short stories have been collected and compiled with the title of ‘eezaikaL cirikkiRaarkaL’ (The poor laugh). His tit-bits are included in the book ‘cirikkum cintaνaikaL’ (Smiling thoughts). Bharatidasan seems to have written nearly 47 drama works, according to a research work ‘paaratitasan naaTakaνkaL-oor aayvu’ (A research work on the dramas of Bharatidasan). ‘paaratitasan peecukiRaar’ (Bharatidasan speaks) is a collection of lectures delivered by him. Bharatidasan also attempted to write a commentary on ‘tirukkuRal’ which, of course, remains incomplete. His letters in the magazine ‘kuyil’ (Cuckoo) were well received by the readers of his time. He also wrote a number of articles on linguistics with logical and scientific approaches.

Bharatidasan was an able journalist and he was the editor for several magazines like ‘teeca ceevakan’ (National servant), ‘aatma cakti’ (Spiritual power), ‘mullai’ (Jasmine), ‘kuyil’ (Cuckoo) and so on. He wrote screenplays and dialogues for about seven feature films and lyrics for around twenty movies. These include an overall perspective on literary creations of Bharatidasan.

**paaveentar paTaippukaL – kaalamum karuttum** (Bharatidasan’s creations – Time and content)

No literary work can be purely and completely imaginative; some external force happens to be an inducement and a reason for any literary creation. Such a force arises mostly
from the society in which the creations blossom. The forces, which lead the society and cause the changes in it, will ultimately have their impact in the creations of the contemporary men of literature too. No poetic or literary work including those of Bharatidasan can be exception to this rule. A cursory view of his work would soon reveal that his literary creations had been influenced by political, social, economical and religious conditions prevailed during his time.

Indian National Freedom Struggle, Religious Movements, Dravidian Movement, Tamil National Movement, Communist and Socialist Movements, language struggle are some of the important activities which were operative during the period of Bharatidasan. The impact of all these movements, therefore, can be noticed in his literary works. As such, the contents of the works of Bharatidasan may be included in the following major divisions:

1. Indian National Freedom
2. Theism
3. Dravidianism
4. Tamil language, Tamil people and Tamilnadu
5. Adoration of Tamil traditional values
6. Social equality, communism and humanism

The history of Tamilnadu for about half-a-century, its extent and evolution can be learnt from the works of Bharatidasan, if we go through them under the aforesaid heads. A major portion of this chapter is, therefore, made available to concentrate on them.

National Freedom Movement in the Works of Bharatidasan

In the beginning of 20th century, Indian Freedom struggle attained its momentum, thanks to the involvement of Mahatma Gandhi. During this period the friendship of Subramanya Bharati was available to Subburatnam who later became the disciple of Bharati and thereby known as Bharatidasan.
Both Bharati and his disciple Bharatidasan became a powerful source for sowing the seed of freedom movement in the Tamil speaking area. The initial involvement of Bharatidasan in the independent struggle seemed to be in the year 1911. During this period, Bharatidasan gave protection to the freedom fighters like Madasamy and others. His connection with Indian freedom struggle continued to exist till 1938, the year in which Bharatidasan switched over his loyalty to the demand of independent Tamilnadu put forward by Self-respect Movement due to the imposition of Hindi language on Tamils (4).

Bharatidasan proudly declared himself as an Indian, joined in the Indian National Congress party, adore India, prayed to the God for the independence of his motherland, admired the freedom fighters, gave protection to them, involved himself in the movements of non-cooperation, khadi, prohibition of alcohol, etc. worshipped the tri-colour flag, ...............supported the schemes and plans of Mahatma Gandhi in order to fight vigorous for the independence of India (5).

During this period, all the literary works authored by Bharatidasan were inclusive of Indian nationalism and religious catholicity. Some of his poetic works of that period deserve to be mentioned here.

vantee maataram (Hail motherland)
cutantiram uyirin iyaRkai (Freedom is the nature of life)
teecciya upaatyaayar (National teacher)
paaratattaay maaNavarkaLukkuk kuuRutal (Advice by Mother India to the students)
katar iraTTinap paaTTu (Song on khadi spinning wheel)
iraTTinac ciRappu (Excellence of spinning wheel)

pañcu vilaivkkap
paramtooTa veeNTaamoo
miñcu poti potiyaay
-iraTTinacciRappu (Excellence of Spinning Wheel)

[People should rush to grow more and more cotton from which to spin yarn and weave clothes... Hear what mother India tells her children – one can loose her life but not be stripped of her clothe; can the kings and bravemen of this land be silent spectators when their mother’s honour and dignity are at stake? Should they not rush to save her?]

In the above mentioned poem of Bharatidasan, mother India is compared with Panchali of Mahabharatha, epic, British rulers with Dusyasan who strips off Panchali, and Indians under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi with the Lord Kannan who protects and saves the dignity of Panchali. Bharatidasan who had been an utmost Indian nationalist latter turned to be an ardent advocate of Tamil nationalism for which, of course, there were strong social and political reasons.

aattikamum paaveentar paTaippukaLum (Theism and the creations of Bharatidasan)

The following poem of Bharatidasan demonstrates his relentless opposition to the incredible epics and religious absurdity which, in his opinion, cause the cultural destruction and ruin the human values.
The obsolete customs mentioned in the primitive epics are nothing but waste garbage; don’t store them anymore in the house; take broom and brush them out.

The poetic works of the afore mentioned type, however, were written by Bharatidasan only after 1933 before which he had a strong conviction towards religion and intense belief in the God. The following verse would confirm it.

\[
\text{enkenku kaaNigum caatiyaTaa – tampi} \\
\text{eezukaTaL avaL vaNNamaTaa – anikut} \\
\text{taikum veLiyyiR kooTiyaNTam – antat} \\
\text{taay kaip pantena ooTumaTaa}
\]

- Bharatidasan poems – 1

[Wherever you see, you can come across Her energy; Her complexion is that of seven seas; the millions of universe in the space is a ball in the hands of the divine Mother.]

The above-mentioned poem that was sung on the request of Bharati is supposed to be the first poetic work of Bharatidasan. Another couple of works ‘mayilam ciri cuppiramaNiyar tutiyamutu’ and `ciri caNmukak kaTavuL pancaratam’ written by him are still considered to be his outstanding reverential works on the God Murugan. Bharatidasan however wrote these theistic works before his meeting with Periyar E.V.Ramasamy. On 31 March 1933, Bharatidasan declared and took an oath in the atheist conference held at Chennai that he would be a permanent atheist henceforth. After this declaration he continued to live so till the end of his life and all his literary creations condemned the religious and superstitious activities in unequivocal terms.

In the study of theology and Bharatidasan, the following two aspects must be taken into account:
1. Religious touch to National Freedom Movement
2. Acceptance of Religious literature

Indian Freedom struggle remained inseparable from religious impact. The principles of Indian freedom movement were inclusive of considering India as a divine mother and praising her with reverential hymns. As already pointed out, India was seen as Panchali of Mahabharata and Mahatma Gandhi as the God Kannan. The following poetic works with the titles of

teivyIka naaTu (Divine country)
cutantira teevi (Goddess of Freedom)
toottiram (Hymns of praise)
паaaratateevi vaazttu (Felicitations to Goddess India)
caktippaaTTu (Songs of Energy Goddess), etc.,
clearly indicate that religion persisted as indivisible component of independence struggle. Moreover a major portion of Tamil literature belongs to devotional and religious type. That was the reason why Bharatidasan, though later identified himself with atheistic movement, continued to concentrate and show interest in Tamil literature including the religious literature. This was true in the case of almost all the zealots of Dravidian movement. Those who vehemently opposed Rama did not do with Kamban. What was the reason for it?

The Dravidian movement in its struggle against foreign rule, alien language and unconnected culture projected Tamil language and culture as an impetus to oppose them. Tamil language and its literature inclusive of religious works became a powerful weapon in their fight. The following poem of Bharatidasan, which cites Tamil religious hymns ‘teevaram’, and ‘tiruvaaymozi’ will substantiate it.

```
TeRk ootum teevaaram tiruvaay nammoziyaana
   teeqirukac
cekkaaTum iraiccalena veeta paaraayaNam
   een tirukkooil paal
```
[When there are sweet, melodious, honey like 'teevaaram' and 'tiruvaaymozi', why should there be the noise and bustle of oil-press machine like Vedic shouting in our temples?]

Besides the above-mentioned works, Bharatidasan’s involvement includes other religious works such as ‘kampa raamaayaNam’ and ‘tiruviLaiyaaTal puraaNam’.

Dravidianism, Tamil language, Tamils and Tamilnadu in the creations of Bharatidasan

Madras Province Dravidian Association instituted in the year 1912 gave the concept of Dravidianism. To protect the welfare of non-Brahmins, another organisation known as ‘tennintiya nala urimaic cankam’ (South Indian Welfare Association) was established in 1916. Periyar E.V.Ramasamy left congress party expressing his dissatisfaction with the caste-based treatment that prevailed in it in the year 1925 and subsequently found Self-Respect Movement in 1926. All the above mentioned organisations are different facets of Dravidianism. The major policies of Periyar’s Self-Respect Movement included the ardent opposition to Brahmin domination in congress party, eradication of caste and religious differences in the society and evolving economic socialism.

The then Madras province included Kerala, Karnatak, and Andhra besides the present Tamilnadu. Further all the languages spoken in these regions belong to Dravidian family. The initial period of Dravidian movement, therefore, was inclusive of all the four states of South India.

After Bharati’s demise, Periyar E.V.Ramasamy became the leader of social renaissance and a beacon in the view of Bharatidasan. The policies and principles of Dravidian movement therefore, attracted him. During this period, Bharatidasan’s outlook turned towards the oppressed and depressed class people. In the year 1930, the poet wrote a poem entitled ‘taazttappaTToor camattuvap paaTTu’ (The song of equality by downtrodden people). In the same period, the following works consisting of cultural revival and atheistic principles were also written by Bharatidasan.
The opposition to Aryan supremacy did not leave the literary and ethic fields also untouched. The villainous characters Ravan, Duryodana, and Hirany of Aryan epics were portrayed as Dravidian ancestors. In this connection Bharatidasan wrote a drama named 'iraNiyiyan allatu iNaiyRa viiran' (Hiranyan alias unparalleled hero).

The language struggle happened to be a turning point in the Dravidian movement. In the year 1937, an unprecedented agitation took place against the imposition of Hindi on Tamils. A number of mass rallies, processions, general strikes and other such public programmes were conducted in support of the agitation. In the procession, the songs written by Tamil scholars were sung emotionally and one such poem of Bharatidasan was 'centamizaik kaappatRkee ceeni onRu veeNTum' (An army is an immediate need to protect the Tamil language).

The pure Tamil movement led by Maraimalai Adigal and Thiru.vi.ka. also joined hands with the Dravidian movement in opposing Hindi imposition. The protection of Tamil language, Tamil people and Tamil country was projected to gain the mass support. Tamil language became an irresistible and mighty weapon in the hands of language fighters.
It is a universal fact that in redeeming the past glory and the revival of a race, the contribution made by language and its scholars is unique and matchless. Those who projected language and literature and use them as a powerful weapon to attain their goal and achieve their aims and objectives include Hugo, Waltair, and Rousseau of French Revolution, Leo Tolstoy and Maxim Gorki of Russian Revolution, the communist hero Mao-Tse-Tung of China, Julius Newrare, the founder of African Socialism and so on. In this series Bharatidasan occupies the first place in using Tamil language for the revival of Tamil race.

Only after 1943, Bharatidasan evinced keen interest in the purity of Tamil language. In the following poem he says that Tamil can survive without the help of other languages.

tamizanee itu keeLacay
	tanittiyankum tamnmai tamizanukkuNTu

tamizanee naalattil taaymozi paNTu

[O! Tamil, listen, Tamil can survive without the admixture of foreign vocabulary. Tamil is the oldest and the first language in the world.]

Further Bharatidasan wrote a famous work known as ‘tamiziyakkam’ (Tamil movement). His other works on Tamil include the following:

tamizin injmai (The sweetness of Tamil)
inpattamiz (Joyous Tamil)
enkaL tamiz (Our Tamil)
tamizkkaatal (Tamil love)
tamizkkanaavu (Tamil dream)
tamizuNavu (Tamil food)
tamizppeeRu (Tamil fortune)
tamizvaLarcci (Tamil development)

Another story of Bharatidasan mentioned below speaks about the emotional feeling attached to Tamil.
My funeral day will be my memorable festival day, if my death is useful at least to the extent of millet to my parents, Tamilnadu and Tamil language.

**Traditional values of Tamils and the works of Bharatidasan**

Tamilnadu, for a very long time, was under the control of foreign rule, alien tongues dominated its language and its culture was polluted and enslaved by others. To save the Tamil from the onslaught of their adversaries, Tamil language, literature and their excellence and antiquity were widely projected. In this connection Sangam literature, Tirukkural and other Tamil works were exposed and their superiority was revealed to the people in the nook and corner of Tamilnadu. The contents of ancient Tamil literatures were presented in the simplified and intelligible forms of essay, drama, prose work and plain verse so as to enable the less educated Tamils to understand that their language, culture and region were second to none.

The poets of Dravidian movement gave importance to the following subject matters, which were the contents of Sangam literature also. They are love, bravery, charity, entertaining guests, nature, virtue, dignity and other such modest qualities. The theme of Bharatidasan’s works too centered on them. Bharatidasan, in short, accepted the traditional values of Tamils and their culture in toto.

**Social equality, communism and humanism in the works of Bharatidasan**

When Periyar launched his Self-Respect Movement, its opposition was not only to congress party but also to Aryan domination. In the early part of 20th century, Tamil society was afflicted by a number of social evils like untouchability, caste slavery, child marriage, widow cruelty, denial of women’s literacy, absurd customs, etc. These brutal habits were defended by vested interests with the support of Aryan epics, philosophy and
Vedas. The Self-Respect Movement expressed its relentless hostility towards them. The literary activities of this movement were successfully utilized in this direction.

The contents of Bharatidasan’s creations, therefore, comprise equal status and rights to women, eradication of caste differences, helping the poor and downtrodden and so on. Women’s rights in Bharatidasan’s literary works include women’s education, widow remarriage, intercaste marriage, banning child marriage, etc. How a woman with equal rights must lead her life is elucidated in his famous work ‘kuTumpa viLakku’ (Light of the family). At the fag end of this century even his views may seem to be supportive of women slavery. The concept of women’s liberation has been revolutionized so much.

Further Bharatidasan’s works gave significant weightage to socialism and humanism. This was, perhaps, the reason why the downtrodden and oppressed people were supportive of Dravidianism. The problems faced by poor labourers had become the theme of his poems since 1930s. Bharatidasan was aware of the communist revolution that took place in 1917 at Soviet Union; further he had close contact with communist leaders of Puducherry region like V.Subbaih, S.R.Subramanian and others. In his work ‘naaL malarkaL’ (Flowers of the Day) he says thus:

\[
\text{potuvuTamait tii engRaŋ paTTu} \\
\text{neyyaal vaLaRntu kozuntuviTTu} \\
\text{erintu tozialaLariTattum uzippaalar} \\
\text{iTattum uNarvil uNarcciyil} \\
\text{malarntu paTaRntatu}
\]

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[The fire of communism was activated by the ghee of my songs and blossomed among the workers and labourers in their feelings and emotions.]

Bharatidasan was equally a humanist. His following passage would prove it in no uncertain terms.

\[
\text{aRivai virivu cey akaNTamakku} \\
\text{vicaaalap paarvaiyaal vizuŋku makkaLai}
\]
Such views of Bharatidasan are certainly due to his contact with communist philosophy as well as his humanistic outlook.

VANIDASAN

Birth

Vanidasan was born on 22 July 1915 in Villiyanur near Puducherry to the couple Tirukkamu and Tulasiyammal. His original name is Rangasamy. He lost his mother at the age of 7 after which his father got married to another lady by name Chellammal. She looked after Rangasamy as if he was her own son. The primary education of Rangasamy started in a pial school; he completed his ESLC examination in 1928; in 1933 he had his private tuition with Bharatidasan and in the next year he passed his Tamil examination. His marriage with Adilakshmi took place in the year 1935.

On 15 January 1937 Vanidasan was appointed as a teacher in Ulavarkarai. In the next year he wrote his first poem with a penname ‘Rami’. His friendship with Bharatidasan became very close and deep when Vanidasan was serving at Reddiyarpalayam in 1942. After a couple of years, he was transferred to Karaikkal. His poetic work ‘vitavaikkoru ceyti’ (A message to the widow) won the appreciation of Anna. Later many of his poetic creations were published in the journals of the Dravidian movement and widely acknowledged. He was transferred to Puducherry College in 1948. In the year 1950, he presented his poetic creations in a Tamil conference held at Coimbatore and won a prize of a silver cup besides the appreciation from the Tamil stalwarts like Somasundara.
Bharati, Anna, Bharatidasan, Karunanidhi, Nedunchezian and other participants of the conference. Further he had close contact with other Tamil scholars like Mayilai Sivamuthu, Azhaguvelan, Arivazhagan, Chengalvarayan and others at Chennai. He wrote a translation work 'periya iTattu ceyti' (The message from a great place) in 1951. In the next year he authored a serial by name 'paTTikaaTTuppeN' (A village girl) in the magazine 'vaazkkai' (Life).

The creations of Vanidasan include the following:
1. tamizacci (A Tamil lady)
2. koTimullai (Jasmine)
3. toTuvaanam (Horizon)
4. ezilooviyam (Beautiful drawing)
5. vaaNitaacan kavitaikaL – I (Vanidasan's poems – I)
6. poñkal paricu (Pongal gift)
7. tiirtta yaattirai (Pilgrimage)
8. inpa ilakkiyam (joyous literature)
9. kuzantai ilakkiyam (Children literature)
10. ciritta nuNaa (Laughing mulberry)
11. iravu varavillai (Night is yet to come)
12. paaTTu piRakkumaTaa (Song will originate)
13. inikkum paaTTu (Sweet song)
14. ezil viruttam (Refined verse)
15. paaTTarañkap paaTalkaL (Poems presented in the poetic fora)
16. vaaNitaacan kavitaikaL –II (Vanidasan's poems – II)

Vanidasan retired from his service in the year 1971. On 18 June 1972, South Arcot District Poet's Association awarded him a title 'kaviñareRu' (Poetic lion) and a gold ring. The Puducherry Tamil cankam honoured him with the title 'paavalar maNi' (A gem among the poets). Vanidasan had his last breath on 7 August 1974. His poems presented in the poetic fora bagged the first prize from the Government of Tamilnadu. In the year 1979, Bharatidasan award worth Rs. 10,000 was also presented to his literary service.
Vanidasan had three brothers namely Soundararajan, Devidasan and Kalladan. He had eight offsprings named, Madari, Ayai, Ezili, Mullai, Ilaveyini, Nakkar, Nedungilli and Nalangilli. The last one is a doctorate and serving in Puducherry University.

Vanidasan had a sound knowledge of Tamil, Telugu, French and English. He was attracted by French literature, especially by poetic works. Bharatidasan, Muthukumarasamy Pillai, Ellappa Vudyar and others encouraged his interest in Tamil. Both Vanidasan and K.P.Ilamvazhuti, secretary, South Arcot Tamil Poets Association worked together for the development of Tamil poetic literature. Puducherry Tamil poets association published a souvenir in praise of him. The Government of Pondicherry named the Government High School, Seliamedu after Vanidasan.

Some of the poetic works of Vanidasan have been translated into French and English. A critical analysis on his literary creations was published in an English journal ‘National Herald’. Many scholars from Malaysia and Ceylon have appreciated his poetic talent and became his fans. Vanidasan chaired a poetic conference held during World Tamil Conference at Chennai. It is not an exaggeration if we say that Vanidasan’s life is a poetic life, Tamil life, literary and cultural life.

At present many poets claim that they belong to the tradition of Bharatidasan. On collation of views, thoughts and concepts only, two poets can be compared and a decision can be taken whether one belongs to the tradition of the other. Based on this principle, only Vanidasan deserve to be declared as the first and foremost in the tradition of Bharatidasan.

The ‘cankam’ poets were not after money and materials alone but interested in the welfare of the country and kingdom. According to the poetical evidence available in ‘cankam’ literature ‘puRanaanguuRu’, the poets of those days did not hesitate to give political as well as personal advice to the kings in order to maintain the prosperity of the nation. The present day relationship between the poets and politicians does not seem to
be commendable; many poets just flatter the political leaders for the sake of personal benefits and favours. We can hardly come across men of literature who can critically analyze the performance of the rulers. Vanidasan wants a change in the plight, which can be understood, from his poem mentioned below:

\[
\text{eeTTiRkum araciyaRkum t0Tarpillai enRaal}
\]
\[
enmaaTum enReenum uruppaTumoo?
\]
\[
ezuttaalee taaynaaTTai, taampiRanta naaTTai
\]
\[
iiTeeRRa munaivataataan paTittavanin ceykai (6)
\]

[No country can prosper if there is a gulf between the rulers and intellectuals; the men of letters must strive hard to improve and develop their motherland through their literary service.]

Periyar, Anna, and their revolutionary thoughts attracted further Vanidasan. Keeping their principles in mind he created a number of poetic works. A good and useful literature must be like a bitter medicine with sugar coating. A successful poet is one who can present even hard and distressing facts in the acceptable form. Vanidasan and Mudiyarasaran are such poets that they have given maximum importance to the well being of the society (7). According to Vanidasan, communism is the gateway for the social reformation; many social evils will automatically disappear if there is no place for monopolization.

The following couplet of Vanidasan condemns the evil of caste fanaticism:

\[
eTTippazamoo paraicci itaz - mana
\]
\[
ippattiRkeetaTi caati matam?
\]

[Are the lips of downtrodden lady nuxvomica? Does the mental pleasure have caste and religion?]

Vanidasan had a strong view that the domination of Aryan epics, their customs and habits, superstitious religious beliefs, harmful and injurious sexual instincts were the root cause for the caste and religious bigotry. Vanidasan, like his predecessors Bharati and
Bharatidasan, wrote modern ‘aatticcuTi’ and ‘konRaiveentan’ in which more emphasis was given to national thinking and sensible reasoning (8).

On the welfare of women and their development, Vanidasan seems to have complete agreement with Bharatidasan and Bharati. In his view, chastity must be kept common to both men and women; so must be the case with their liberation.

\[
\text{viTutalai viRumpukiNriir} \\
aaNkatku maTTumtaanaa? (9)
\]

[Do you want freedom only to men?]

He condemns the inhuman treatment of mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law (10). ‘When the widower gets remarried why not the widow?’ asks Vanidasan (11).

A dialogue between a farmer and his wife, which is given below from Vanidasan’s ‘ponkal paricu’, would reveal the poet’s view that the tillers should get their due share of benefit.

‘Why does the benefit of our hard work go to someone while we remain poor?’ asks the wife of the farmer.

‘What can we do? It is the mie of the God and our fate’. Replies the farmer.

The farmer’s wife immediately retorts as mentioned below:

\[
\text{aaNTavan paTaippalla, tiiNTavan paTaippalla} \\
aakaataar paTaippatu maccaan! munaintaal \\
pookaatirukkumoo maccaan! (12)
\]

[It is neither fate nor the rule of the Lord; it is the cunning work of the crooked fellows. Can we not change if we make an effort?]

Vanidasan thus asserts the rights of the women in all walks of life. Vanidasan’s attachment with Tamil is well known. He wants every Tamilian should identify himself with his mother tongue. Chera king Chenguttuvan considered the animosity of Aryan kings towards Tamils as an insult to Tamil language (13). It is therefore clear that the ancient kings considered both the people and the language of the country as one and the
same. Vanidasan too is of the same opinion (14). The following verses of the poet can be compared with the poem ‘tamizukku amutenRu peer’ (Tamil can otherwise be known as ambrosia) of Bharatidasan.

\[
\text{enRan} \\
\text{uun kalanta uyir kalanta tamizadaR paa (15)}
\]

[The Tamil poem is an admixture of my life and flesh.]

\[
tamizee amutenac caaRRuvoo - antat \\
tamizee uyirenap pooRRuvoo (16)
\]

[Let us call Tamil as ambrosia and consider the same as our life.]

Any poet has the liberty to choose the content of his work so as to enable him to maintain the individuality. Vanidasan’s distinctiveness can be seen mostly in his poems on nature. Nature is one, which attracts any normal human being and makes him to enjoy. Among the poets, hardly any one can be cited as an exception, for not having written about nature. Vanidasan’s poetic works on nature is unique and outstanding; he learns the love and affection from the life of crows and their chicks (17); the rivers and their contribution are compared with the charity made by philanthropists (18). As far as the poetic creations on nature are concerned Vanidasan’s works are comparable to those of Tagore and hence he is known as Tagore of Tamilnadu (19).

Vanidasan’s prose work available in print is only ‘periya iTattuc ceyti’. It is an adaptation of the French work by Quidemo Pasan. The original work exposes the degeneration of the womenfolk by leading a wayward life in the so-called high society of France. Vanidasan in his translation questions whether we can allow such deterioration in our society also. However his prose style is not as fascinating as his poetic style; perhaps this could be the reason why Vanidasan did not venture to write more prose works (20). He has also translated a drama of French author Victor Hugo into Tamil by name ‘kaatal enkee?’ (Where is love?). As he was much interested in French literature, its impact could be felt in his Tamil works too. Vanidasan also translated 6 dramas and one short story compilation of French author Sebastian that, unfortunately, still remains unpublished (21).
As far as the content of his literary works is concerned, Vanidasan followed the footsteps of Bharatidasan to a very great extent. In the case of expression, the former gives more importance to melody and simplicity unlike the latter whose work is full of motion and excitement. Vanidasan used musical compilations even to introduce the ideas of social revolution. His poetical talent is well exposed especially in his poems on nature. Vanidasan undoubtedly is one of the best among the 20th century Tamil poets. His towering literary works are based on the strong foundation of both Bharati and Bharatidasan (22).

Notes:
1. Krishnamurthy,K., paratitaacan vaazkkai varalaaRu p.14
2. Ibid p.23
3. paaventar paTaippukaL – a list
   mayilam cuppiramaNiyar tutiyamutu – katar iraaTTinap paaTTu – ciRuvar
   ciRumiyar teeciiya kiitam – toNTar paTaippaaTTu – taazttappaTToor
   camattuvappaaTTu – cañaivi parvatattáñ caaraal – cuyamariyataic cuTar –
   puraTcikkavi – inti etirppuppaaTalkal – paratitaacan kavitaikaL – iraNiyan allatu
   iNaiyaRRa viiran – icaiyamutu – etirpaaraata muttam – kuTumpa viLakku –
   paaNTiyan paricu – iruNTa viiTu – azakiñ cirippu – nall tiirppu – kaatal nipaiuvaL
   peecukiRaar – mullaikkaaTu – makaaaki paaraatiyaaar – kaatalaa kaTamaiyaa – kaTaL
   meeR kumizikaL – inti etirPPup paaTTu – akattiyan viTTa putukkaraTi – tiraaviTaT
   tiruppaaTalk – paTitta peNkaL – ceera taaNTavam – tamizacciyn katti – tiraaviTaT
   puraTcit tirumaNat tiTTam – aatticcuuTi – eeRRappaaTTu – paratitaacan kavitaikaL
   tamizipam – poñkal vaazttuk kuyil – paratitaacan kataikaL – teenaruvi – taaiññ
   meelaaNai – iLaiffar ilakkiyam – paratitaacan naaTahahaL – kuRjicittiTTu –
   kaNNaki puRaTcikkkaappiyam – maNimeekalai veNpaa – paratitaacan pañmaNittiraL
   – piciraantaiyaaar – kaataRpaTalkaL – kuyil paaTalkaL – tamizukku amutenRu peer-
   – oru taaiññ uLLam makizntatu – naaL malarkaL – pukaz malarkaL – talaimalai

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4. Ilavarasu, R., intiya viTutalai iyakkattil paaratitacan
5. Ibid
6. Vanidasan, ciritta nuNaa,

8. Dhandayudam, R., ‘taRkaalat tamizilakkiyam’ 2nd edition,
9. Vanidasan, ‘toTuvaanam’
10. Vanidasan, ‘vaaNitaacaN kavitaikaL’
11. Vanidasan, ‘toTuvaagam’
12. Bharatiyar, ‘paaratiyaar kavitaikaL’
13. Vanidasan, ‘vaaNitaacaN kavitaikaL’
15. Ibid
16. Vanidasan, ‘poñkal paricu’
17. Ilango Adigal, ‘cilappatikaaram’
18. Vanidasan, ‘paaTTarankap paaTalkaL’
21. Vanidasan, ‘paaTTarañkap paaTalkaL’
22. aaciriyar neñcam, June 1979