



54

THEMATIC CONCERNS IN KAVERI NAMBISAN'S *THE SCENT OF PEPPER***VIVEK DINKAR KHABDE**S. S. Dhamdhere Arts & Comm. College,
Talegaon Dhamdhere, Tal- Shirur, Pune.**ABSTRACT -**

The contemporary novelists of India have made a significant mark in the literary world. Nambisan follows the tradition of women novelists in India as she exposes the women's suppression in Indian societal setting. Women's issues got its voice with the women novelists began expressing fearlessly and tried to express those unheard voices of thousands of women in India who are being exploited. Women and their problems initiated a movement for the cause of expressing themselves and asserting their individuality. Nambisan puts a finger on the issue of uplifting the social status of women which according to her is crucial in Indian society. The novel focuses on culture of Kodagu, British influence on Kodavas and the lives of women.

Key Words - Patriarchy, Individualism, Cultural Preservation And British Imperialism

Kavery Nambisan is a physician by profession and also is a novelist. Peculiarities of her novels is that she has primarily focused on women's empowerment. Her writing also shows strong cultural affiliation. *The Scent of Pepper* (1996) is about the myths and customs Kodagu village. Kodagu or as the British used to call as Coorg which is a small district in Karnataka. The place is known for its beautiful landscape, tropical dense forest, coffee plantation bushes, beautiful valleys with plantation, river and beautiful and scenic waterfall in the surrounding. Kavery river is considered sacred and auspicious by the Kodagu people as the rest of people in India. It reminds us of the sacred Narmada river and the beliefs about the rivers in Geeta Mehta's *River Sutra*. Kodavas are the residents of Kodagu from many centuries from the unknown time.

Kodagu is famous for the coffee plantation and the area surrounded by hills. The people of Kodagu call themselves as nature's men. The novel is amalgamation of different aspects such as beautiful landscape of Kodagu with its cultural significance, various characters in the novel are rooted into the culture and with interesting personality traits.

Kodavas are the martial race and belong to martial tradition and are land owning community. Kavery Nambisan has brought vital information and the indigenous culture of Kodavas made available to the reader and rest of the world through her novel. Kodavas are physically strong and are skilled in artillery. Nambisan proudly talks about her Kodagu background and culture, as Kodavas were skilled at hunting fierce wild animals like Tigers, Bisons.

Vol. 4 Issue 1
Website: www.langlit.org

503

August, 2017
Contact No.: +91-9890290602

Indexed: ICL, Google Scholar, Research Gate, Academia.edu, IBI, IIFC, DRJI

**Principal**S.S. Dhamdhere Arts & Commerce College
Talegaon Dhamdhere, Tal. Shirur
Dist Pune-412 208



The Scent of Pepper Nambisan gives striking and vivid imagery of the indigenous culture exploring and highlighting it to the world through her novel. The plot includes Nambisan's grandmother tales of her own culture which are supposed to be real.

The novel is an unflinching example of Nambisan's affection towards her background of Kodagu. The regional aspect and the glorious past of Kodagu, the impact of British on the Kodava lives and the women's world in Kodagu are the central concerns of the novelist. The plot and characters are blended and are true representative of the Kodagu background. The author is concerned about the capitalist environment encroaching into the Kodagu which is influencing and affecting the Kodava people. The novelist does not hesitate to show the effect of British imperialism on the Kodava lives and the people are compromising their own cultural legacy due to the British influence. They are adopting the foreign British way of life and culture. Due to the changing time no culture remains aloof from being influenced by other culture which is in contact and so Kodavas are no exception to it. The British culture and its impact on Kodavas can be seen in everyday life of the people such as into their altered food habits, clothing and lifestyle etc.

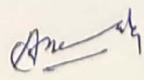
Kodagu is known for coffee cultivation, there is crucial importance for the cultivation of coffee and the Kodavas do their task faithfully as they are the rooted to the soil and consider it as sacred. The Kodagu district has beautiful landscape which is the prime asset of the district, even the British people were attracted to it and find it soothing and calm.

Festivals have prime place in the lives of the Kodavas, which are celebrated according to plantation and harvest season. Kalipodhu is celebrated as the completion of paddy crops. It also signals towards taking care of the crops from wild animals. Weapons are worshipped. Various competitions are arranged during this festival and later delicious Food and drinks are enjoyed during this festival. Kaveri Sankramana is the festival of worshipping the sacred Kaveri river. People take a dip into the fresh water of Kaveri as the water rises during this festival period and the Kodava women worship the Kaveri river. Puttari is the festival to celebrate the harvest season of the year. This festival is to show gratitude towards god for giving them blessings in the form of crops. Various favorite food items are prepared.

Nambisan projects and highlights women's hardships in domestic life. Nambisan presents the affection between man and woman is due to the heterosexual attraction. It is unique thing that strengthens the bond between man and woman.

Nanji is the central woman character who gets married in a rich Kaleyanda clan. The life of Nanji is the representative of thousands of Indian widowed women who suffered the patriarchal attitude at home. Nanji is married twice, once at the age of twelve and later at seventeen. She is the mother of thirteen children, but though there were difficulties in her life, she does not give up and struggles for a better living. She attempts to preserve her individuality. She faithfully performs her duties as a wife and takes care of the household. She promptly completes her household work without waiting for the servants, who, on the contrary messes with it. She bravely faces unpleasant events and moves on in life. Nanji had the experience of hard work from her very early childhood, she had worked in the fields with her grandmother at the very early age of five. Nanji was confined to the kitchen and was




Principal

S.S. Dhamdhare Arts & Commerce College,
Talegaon Dhamdhare, Shirur,
Dist Pune-412 203

blamed for any ill happenings in the house. The grandmother used to blame Nanji for the things which were not concerned to Nanji. She was blamed for withered coffee bush, for the hen not laying egg, for if any snake is found in the well. She is compassionate and struggles to preserve her individuality. She adores her environment at Coorg and has no intention of leaving it.

The novelist talks about the Kodava, a community living in Kodagu, the history of the people is also highlighted. The woman protagonist, Nanji is the victim of the patriarchal attitude of the society. The novelist successfully delineates the authentic picture of Kodagu lifestyle with all its striking realities about the lives of the women living in Kodagu. She does not hide the issues and suffering of women in the name of glorification of Kodagu culture but lays bare the true lives of the women.

REFERENCES

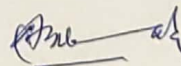
1. Iyengar, S. K. (1985). *Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
2. Kavary, N. (1996). *The Scent of Pepper*. New Delhi : Penguin .
3. Kumari, S. S. (2005). Identity Crisis - A Concept in Indian Women Novelists. In S. Prasannasree, *Indian Women Writing in English: New Perspectives*. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons .
4. Mitra, R. (2005). *Critical Response to Literature in English*. New Delhi : Atlantic Publishers.
5. Nambisan, K. (2002). *On Wings of Butterflies*. New Delhi : Penguin Books.
6. Pathak, R. S. (1999). *Modern Indian Novel in English*. New Delhi : Creative Books .
7. Rao, P. V. (1982). *Marriage, Family and Women in India*. New Delhi: Heritage Publishers .
8. Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York : Vintage Book .

Vol. 4 Issue 1
 Website: www.langlit.org

505

August, 2017
 Contact No.: +91-9890290602

Indexed: ICI, Google Scholar, Research Gate, Academia.edu, IBI, IIFC, DRJI

Principal

S.S.Dhamdhere Arts & Commerce College
 Talegaon Dhamdhere, Tal. Shirur.
 Dist Pune-412 208.