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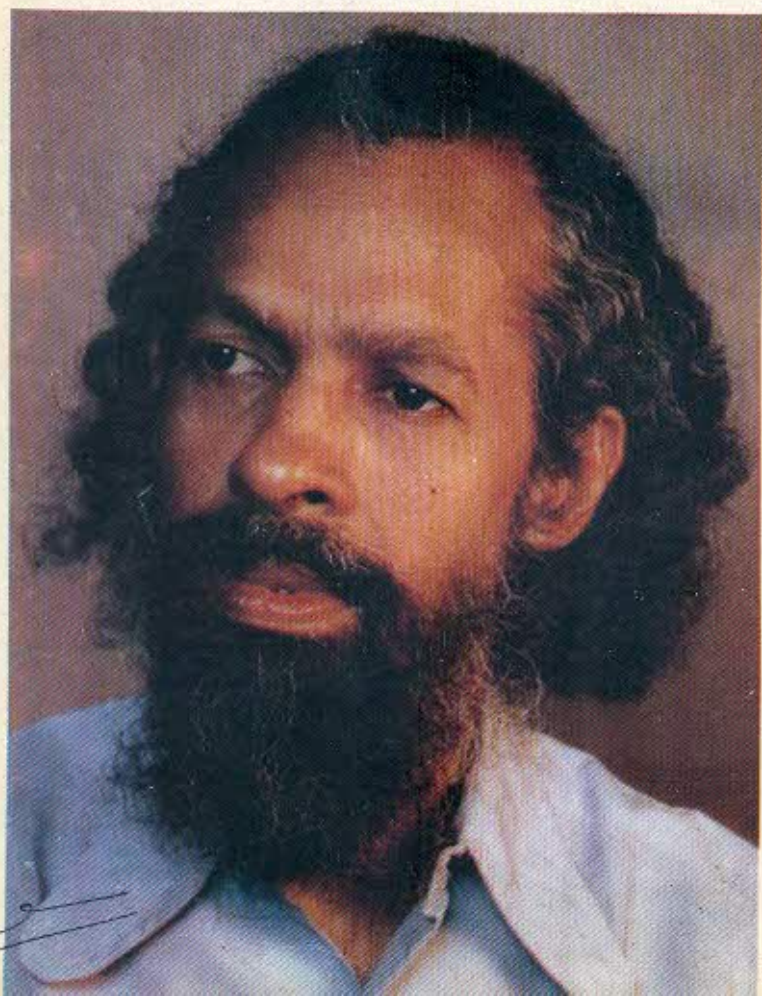


India International Centre

invite you to

meet the author

Neela Padmanabhan





Neela Padmanabhan, one of the most distinguished writers from South India, noted for his identification with the suffering sections of humanity has authored 16 novels, 8 volumes of short stories, 3 volumes of poems and three volumes of essays in Tamil and two volumes of short stories and one novel in Malayalam. Born on 26 April 1938, Padmanabhan had started writing during his school days. He remembers that he was "sensitive like a touch-me-not plant" at that time.

Hailing from a bilingual milieu, Neela Padmanabhan has established his mastery in the art of Tamil fiction by his definitive choice of hitherto uncharted realms of life, a vibrant and realistic language close to the everyday speech of the people and a racy style. His novels and stories are close and realistic documentations of life with a mature vision

and artistic depth. His portrayal of life in Kerala, especially in its capital, has few parallels even in Malayalam fiction.

Neela Padmanabhan's novel *Thalaimuraigal* (1968) has been abridged and retold in English under the title *The Generations* by the renowned Tamil writer and critic Ka Naa. Subramaniam. In the words of Kamil Zvelebil, the Tamil scholar from Czechoslovakia, *The Generations* with its overwhelming wealth of details, its proverbs, sayings, and folksongs is not for easy reading. It is as much "a fruit of painstaking study as of artistic intuition and inspiration" and "an important and highly interesting novel, chiefly in the creation of a number of lively figures, in the development of intricate narrative structure and, above all, in the skilful dealing with the setting."

Thalaimuraigal, articulates the conflict of two cultures, the Tamil and the Malayalam. It is about a Tamil family settled in Kerala after migrating from the Chola country. Neela Padmanabhan has used the exchange of ideas between an aging illiterate grandmother and a growing-up grandson as an effective means of establishing traditional values in the mind of the hero. The rapid change in the life-style of three

generations of people is artistically brought out in this novel.

Pallikondapuram (1970) his second novel, has the uniqueness of being a novel about a city, the city of Trivandrum. According to the eminent Malayalam critic, S. Guptan Nair, "There is no Malayalam novel with the city of its hero. That distinction belongs to Neela Padmanabhan."

Uravugal (Relationship, 1965), which got him the prestigious Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar Award for the best creative writing in Tamil during 1973-76, shows us not only the reality of the life he saw in the hospital where his father was an in-patient for eighteen days but also the life outside it and the manner in which

the whole spectacle was unrolled in the writer's mind all these frightful days. This semi-autobiographical novel has been translated into Malayalam.

His other novels *Min Ulakam* (The World of Electricity, 1976) and *Vattathin Veliye* (1980) (Beyond the Circle), *Yathirai* (1965) and *Anubhavgal* (1972) show the range of his experience as an Engineer. These novels gave him enough opportunities to see, record and interpret the events happening around him. Padmanabhan's controversial novel *Therodum Veedhi* (1987) running into 1215 pages deals with the writing and publishing world. This was adjudged as the best novel in 1987 by the Tamil Development Council, Govt.



Receiving Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar Award from late M.G. Ramachandran, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in 1977.



With his wife Krishnammal

of Tamil Nadu and also received the Tamil Annai Prize of the Tamil University, Thanjavur in 1988.

Padmanabhan's short stories are lucid and effective. "He proves that great art is not technical trickery, novelty of effect, philosophical complexity but absolute clarity; reality with all the obfuscating wrappings peeled away." These stories give us flashes of reality and a sense of the ordinariness and incompleteness of life. Here, he displays his ability to create an atmosphere relevant to the theme. He imparts a sense of solemnity and grandeur to the stories set in temples; scenes involving rituals are presented by him with an almost devotional approach.

Neela Padmanabhan is a poet too. He has to his credit 3 collections of poetry in Tamil and two in English. His poems

reveal his sensitive soul. He says about his poetry: "I am not bothered about rhymes, about metres. I write to convey an idea. And if I feel that the idea can be said in the minimum of words with lilting notes, naturally, I turn to poetry. Poetry is the essence of one's thoughts. It comes naturally, spontaneously."

Padmanabhan's works reveal his full awareness of the political, social and economic upheavals and transformations taking place around him and of their impact on all classes of people. They also express his anxiety about the growing spiritual poverty of modern men.

The translation of Padmanabhan's works into many Indian and foreign languages testifies to the universal acceptance of their literary merit.

A Select Bibliography

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URAVUGAL. Nagercoil: Jayakumari Stores, 1975, 468 pp.

MIN ULAGAM. Sivagangai: Annam, 1976, 126 pp.

YATHIRAI. ANUBHAVANGAL, SAMAR. Madurai : Muthu Pathippakam, 1977, 150 pp.

NETRU VANTHAVAN. Madurai: Visa lam Pathippakam. 1978, 140 pp.

UDHAYA THARAKAI, Indira Pathippakam, 1980, 130 pp.

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ERUMBUKAL (Stories). Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1987, 138 pp.

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Delhi: Intellectual Book Corner,
1982, 60 pp.

THE INCARNATION. Calcutta :
Writers Workshop, 1987,
145 pp.

GERMAN

DIEMITGIFT (Novel). Berlin :
Verlag Volk und Welt, 1978,
226 pp.

RUSSIAN

FROM THE OCEAN TO HIMALAYAS
(Novel). Moscow : Raduga,
1989.

A Chronology

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|------|--|------|---|
| 1938 | Birth | 1977 | Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar Award for <i>Uravugal</i> |
| 1958 | Graduations. Wrote first novel <i>Udaya Tharakai</i> . | 1980 | First short story collection in Malayalam <i>Kathakal Irupathu</i> |
| 1963 | B.Sc. (Engg.). Joined Kerala State Electricity Board as Junior Engineer. Married Krishnammal | 1988 | Awarded Tamil Annai Prize. <i>Therodum Veedhi</i> awarded by Tamil Development Council. |
| 1968 | Publication of <i>Thalai-muraigal</i> (Novel) | 1991 | Fellowship in Engineering, Institution of Engineers. |
| 1969 | First short story collection <i>Moham Muppattu Aandu</i> | 1993 | Retired from Service as Deputy Chief Engineer |
| 1975 | First poetry collection <i>Neela Padmanabhan Kavithaigal</i> | | |



Receiving Tamil Annai Prize from Sri P.C. Alexander,
Governor of Tamil Nadu in 1988.