

# A STUDY ON ECOCRITICISM AND TINAI THEORY

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

‘Where literature and environment cross path in human - Nature.’

The human being is, ultimately, not only a part and parcel of nature, but also a product of nature. In olden days, people created a compassion for nature. They know that in every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks. This is truism to some extent, the natural atmosphere really shapes human beings physically, mentally and emotionally. This is the cause we have different types of human races and cultures in this worldwide. In this present era the condition has been changed due to the excess of population but the scenario in the ancient was completely different.

When the tribes arrived, they used to roam the land following the seasons. They lived in caves, ate raw food, they wore clothing made of leaves and animal skin. They also drew paintings and images on the walls of the caves. Even when the tribe increased they admired and worshipped nature with utmost reverence. Their life was very calm and peaceful. They understood that ‘Nature has created this unique planet for the existence and survival of human beings’. Tribes enjoyed the beauty of their surroundings because their size of population was relatively manageable. They lead a happy life on this bio-planet called ‘The Earth’.

Rise to civilization brought a dramatic change in the life style of human being. All the ancient civilizations appeared in major river valleys. As water is one of the basic needs of every being, most of the civilization occurred and flourished on the river banks, They considered that this place was apt and contained rich soil. The rivers provided irrigation for crops. This progression in agriculture is considered to be the basic amenity that triggered the process of civilization. People started to settle near rivers to practice Agriculture and it was their reliable source of food stuff.

As civilisation made its advancement, people abandoned the caves and started to build small houses. They knew that nature was the most precious gift given by God to enjoy and not to harm. This world is connected with all the human species. Nature has given boundless power in the hands of mankind but people failed to understand that earth is the ‘Mother of all living things’. For thousands of years, man has exploited the earth in the name of growth and modernization. The progress of cities made a huge gap between human beings and nature.

Today man has developed in all spheres. He wants to lead a comfortable and luxurious life so he started to deteriorate the environment. Mother earth was once pure and fresh but we are dealing her with depression now. Science and technology has developed and pollution has reached its peak. This led to the extinction of species and caused unbearable illness and diseases. It is the hour of need to understand the ecology and ecocriticism. Ecocriticism is practically addressing the most pressing and poignant global environmental issues since 1950.

Ecocriticism is the study of literature and environment from an interdisciplinary point of view where scholars analyze texts that talks about environmental concerns and finds a solution for pollution in which had been echoed in every line of literature.

The term 'Ecocriticism' was coined by William Rueckert in 1978 in his article 'Ecological poetics'.

Though ecocriticism was coined in 1978, American and British writers took an interest in nature as a subject matter centuries ago.

Milton description about nature in his epic 'Paradise Lost' is naturalism. Thoreau's 'Walden' perceives nature as a source of wisdom in beauty. Furthermore William Wordsworth a priest of nature worshipped it and adore it in his writings. Each and every writer knows the importance of nature and there are nature centered. Their writings prove that nature and men were inseparable. The description of nature was not only said in English writings but also played a prominent role in Tamil literature as Tinai concept in the ancient grammar work Tolkappiam.

Tolkappiar, who was believed to be a disciple of Mythical Sage Agasthyar, vividly described Tinai (land) in Tolkappiyam, a Sangam text on grammar and poetics dealt with all these major five Tinais viz Kurinji, Mulai, Marutham, Neytal, Paalai.

Sangamam literature has a unique place for Tamil poems with tinai concept which has headways of meaning and identity of its genre.

The theme of tinai is time, space, landscape and emotions. All these elegant qualities are discussed elaborately in Tolkappiam.

Tolkappiam is an ancient classical treatise deals with phonology, morpho-phonemics, morphology and syntax. Its framework focuses and discusses the literary concepts of subjective and objective themes which are known as Akam (akatinai) and Puram (puratinai).

Akattinai concerning with inner life and puratinai deals with outer life. About 78% of the Sangam poems were written in 'Akattinai'. It deals with situations involving not more than two persons who enjoy an intimate relationship with each other. Akam deals with topics on personal or human aspects, such as love and affection. Love is the theme and relationship that bond two people. Ainkurunuru, Natrinai, Kurunthokai are notable Akam works. Puratinai deals with situations involving any number of persons and a typical example, would be combat or battle as found in early Tamil literature. Purnanuru and Pathitruappattu are Puram Books. Paripadal has both Akam and Puram poems.

This 'Tinai' concept is of two types Geographical Tinai and Non-Geographical Tinai. Five tinais are geographical and associated with any specific landscape. It describes the landscape that occurs naturally in the 'Tamil lands'. These are kurinji represents hilly or mountainous region, associated with union (punartal).

Mullai that stands for grassland or forest land correlate with patient waiting. Marutham, which is adhered to crop land associated with quarrelling and neytal which epitomizes the seashore (pinning). The fifth paalai dry land or desert area - separation of lovers.

### **Importance of Tinai :**

In the pre-historic, during Sangam period, the life of the people remained simple and natural. They had selected their occupation according to the natural surroundings. Although they lived in five different regions, there was a close interaction and unity between them. It resulted in the development of a common language and culture in the country.

Poems were composed against the background of one of these tinai and specific attitude stipulated at time and season.

Each tinai explains about a particular course of love like premarital (Kalavu) or post marital love (karpu). Paalai alone talks both kalavu and karpu.

### **Greek's oiko and Tamil's Tinai theory.**

In Greek Ecocriticism is known as 'Oiko criticism' or 'Oikopoetis'. It employs oikological concept to read text. 'Oikos' in Greek term means "household, human and nature". This three aspect used in Greek writings to describe a family and property. It talks about and refers from father to son and generation to generation in the Greek literature. Aristotle used this Oikos in his 'Politics' to describe the family. In the Bible the concept of Oikos is used in the book of Mark 5<sup>th</sup> chapter verses 19 [5:19].

Though the Indian languages possess their own individuality and originality, the influence of other languages on them cannot be overlooked.

Tinai in English is 'Biome'. Which means a major ecological community. The concept of tinai in Tamil language can be compared to what we call 'biome' in English.

The structure of Ecosystem is defined by its soil, climate, flora and fauna. A large geographic region characterized by a certain type of ecosystem is known as biome. Every living thing in this wonderful world has a specific place to live, which is called home. Biome and Tamil Tinai are synchrony large ecological areas. Tamil Tinai Greek oiko's and English Biome are in different languages but deal with identical concept.

All these five tinai are divided into three modes such as Muthal, (Principal or First thing) Karu (Nature Culture) and Uri (Human Action). All the three modes are concerned in these five tinai as follows :

### **KURINJI- MOUNTAINOUS REGION:**

**MUTHAL PORUL:** The mountainous region and the apt season is the winter of the early dew and midnight is the time of rendezvous.

**KARU PORUL :** God Murugan, people kuravan kurathi, animals elephant, tiger, birds peacock, food honey, flowers kanthal, kuruji, tree agil, sandal, musical instruments thondagam, kurunjiyaazh, songs kurinjian and occupation honey collecting.

**URI PORUL :** Union of lovers (punarthal)

The mountain is a scene of lovers' union at midnight. It is cold dewy season. The forest is rich with lakes, waterfalls, teak, bamboo and sandalwood. In this region, millet grows in plenty and wild bees are a source of honey. Love in this setting is exemplified by Murugan and one of his wives, Valli, daughter of mountain dweller. He wears a sparkling red kanthal flower and rides a peacock, bird of the mountains. Kurinji is named after famous kurinji flowers that bloom once in 10 to 12 years. It blankets the slopes with its beauty. This event of jubilation and purity, which symbolizes frenzy of a sudden love shared in concert with unleashed forces of nature; amorous dance of peacocks, splash of waterfalls and the roar of savage beasts. The lovers hold each other tight and forget the dangers of the mountain path. This detail description depicts life of kurinji people and portrays their intimacy with surroundings and nature.

#### **MULLAI - THE FOREST:**

**MUTHAL PORUL:** Forest and pasture during rainy season and evening as an ideal time of the day.

**KARU PORUL :** The God is Mayon or Tirumal, people idayar idaicheeyar animals typical beasts are deer and hare, birds partridge, peacock, food varaku and samai, flower mullai, tree Kondrai and Kaya trees, musical instrument drum erukot parai, occupation weeding, harvesting, grazing and bull taking, forest river is water source. Padi, Cheri is names of towns and villages.

**URI PORUL:** Patiently waits for the return of life partner in post marital phase (karpu).

Mullai is the land of forests. Like kurinji, the forest is also rich with lakes, waterfalls, teak, bamboo and sandalwood. Millet grows in abundance in this region and it has a wealth of honey. With the background of forest and shepherds at play, the image of a lover waiting for loved one to return after doing the given chores is the main theme. This is region of Lord Vishnu and he is known for his Avatars, manifestation of a deity. The love theme represents, symbolises devotee waiting in hope that Vishnu as Krishna will eventually come and fill her soul, thus experiencing the joy of expectation. It gives us a vivid illustration of people and nature that goes hand in hand.

#### **MARUTHAM - THE CROPLAND:**

**MUTHAL PORUL :** Agricultural lands, all six season, last hours of night and early dawn.

**KARU PORUL :** Lord Indiran, who is said to be the head of all Gods. People ulavar and ulathiyar, animal water buffalo, birds pelicans, food Chenal rice, flower lotus, sengazhuneer, tress vanji, kanji, marutham, musical instruments Marutham yaazh, occupation harvesting.

**URI PORUL :** Love quarrels (udal)

This rainy season has implicit links with the return of thalaivan, as the beginning of rains marks cessation of hostilities.

Marutham denotes the plains or farmlands. The plains were scenes of triangular love plots in which hero's visit to the courtesan makes the heroine counters it with a mixed show of coquetry and moodiness. These tactics are described even in Thirukkural. The word marutham is driven from the name of a tree which is abandoned in the region of paddy field. This brief explanation tells that people of marutham stay close to nature and enjoyed everything that nature offered.

### **NEYTAL - THE SEASHORE:**

**MUTHAL PORUL :** The region of sea and oceans, all six seasons.

**KARU PORUL :** Lord Varunan who is a God of rain. people parathavar parathiyar, animals Crocodile Shark, birds kadarkaagam swan, trees punnai, nazhal, musical instrument Meelkotparai sevazhilipan uvarneerkeni, occupation selling salt and fish.

**URI PORUL:** Mood of despair. (Irangal)

The neytal region denotes seashore and affords examples of compelling charm of Sangam poetry and extraordinary freshness of its realism. From the conventional symbolization of waiting, there emerges a picture of the life of fisher folk; nets and boats drawn up on the beach; scuttling crabs and odour of drying fish; birds swooping down for these fish; beautiful village girls peering through hedges and wind blowing through cracks in the roughly constructed straw huts at night. The water lily is a characteristic flower of the region. All these sketches, says that people understand the silence of nature which is real.

### **PAALAI - THE DESERT:**

**MUTHAL PORUL :** Drylands or wastelands are designated palaai and peak summer is the season of the year and high noon time of the day.

**KARU PORUL:** Kotravai an angry Goddess, people ayinar and eyitriyar animals Sennaai, Birds Dove, eagle, trees paalai vulture, their food was robbed from wayfarers, musical instrument omai, thudi paalai yaazh, music paalai pan occupations are whatever is gained by highway robbery.

**URI PORUL :** Pirital or separation is the human theme of paalai tinai. And separation happens before and after marriage (Pirithal)

In the classical Tamil prosody, paalai region is not seen as being a naturally occurring ecology. Ilampuranar in his commentary on Tolkappiyam, explains that wasteland of paalai emerges when other landscapes whither under heat of burning sun. This landscape is associated with the theme of separation, which occurs when love is subject to external pressures that drive lovers apart.

These five Tinai provide us the information of landscapes as it existed was almost 2,000 years ago. It provides as an elaborate portrayal of the emotions and experience of the people is timeless. These poems not only give us the actual description, but say about the significance of everyday likes and minds of the people.

The aesthetic sense of the ancient poetics and the way of people living with nature is real and rhythmic. Now, we are longing to “Go Green” and rethinking about tinai which teaches us prosperity of the land and hospitality of nature.

Studies of ecosystem function have greatly improved the understanding of human beings about global warming which is the need of the hour. This ecosystem provides a powerful framework and ecocriticism examines the ways and means to create awareness about the subject of nature.

Now, we should create love and benevolence of nature and that is the remarkable necessities for our survival. When we realize this, we can lead a sole meaning of life with nature. We have accepted and came to the conclusion to preserve and conserve our noble earth. That is the only legacy, we can leave for the generation to come. When we change our inner attitudes to save the beauty of nature, the people of the next generation will enjoy the outer aspects of their surroundings. Let us enjoy the happiness in sunshine, feel the pleasant in December Eve and learn and relearn all around us. Then we can realise that the earth has the music for those who listen. When we understand that our nature is our best teacher, our life will become complete.

## CHAPTER II

### ANALYSIS OF A.K.RAMANUJAN'S POEMS

Attipat Krishnaswami Ramanujan was a multi-splendored and myriad-minded creative genius. He was a poet, linguist, expatriate academician, short story writer, critic, folklorist, painter, polyglot and social anthropologist. As a poet, he showers a dynamic and sophisticated ultramodern sensibility in his poetic art. Indian myth, history, culture, heritage, folklore and above all, its topography and environment form the myriad threads in the fabric of his poetry. He is regarded as one of the gems of Indian English poets. His poems are immensely popular among all lovers of poetry.

His real-life situation makes him an expatriate and spent most of his time in wilderness. He is born into a well-to-do family in Mysore in 1929. His father was a mathematician and a noted scholar. He was brought up in a surrounding where three languages, English, Tamil and Kannada were spoken.

He had his early education at D. Bhanumaiah's High School and then he graduated from Maharaja's college, Mysore with honours in English Literature and thereafter he did his Master's degree at the same institution. He taught English literature at Quilon, Belgaum and Baroda for eight years. He was a fellow of Deccan College, Poona in 1958-59 and a Fulbright scholar at Indiana University in 1960-62. He obtained his Ph.D degree in Linguistics from Indian University in 1963.

He met a Keralite Syrian Christian woman whose family had settled in Aden for several years. He fell in love with her and then they got married. His marriage did not last and it ended in divorce. Ramanujan, like T.S.Eliot toyed with the idea of becoming a Buddhist. The influence of Buddhism remained all through his life. He joined as an Assistant Professor of Linguistics, Tamil and Dravidian Languages at the University of Chicago and later on became a Professor in the same department. He lived in Chicago for over three decades till his last breath in 1993.

## **RAMANUJAM AND ECOCRITICISM**

Eco criticism gives the readers of literature a better understanding of nature. It is not just a study but helps a human being to have a broad view about nature. A.K.Ramanujan poems not only deal with loneliness, love and human foibles but also portray nature's merits which give ecocritical attention. His poems 'Snake', 'River', 'Looking for a cousin on a swing' deal with nature.

He loves the past. The major themes of A.K Ramanujan's collections are typically Indian. He describes about Indian Myth and her history, her people and custom, her rich culture and spiritual. These form the major dominant themes of his poetry. As he said in an interview "The past never passes" (A.K Ramanujan collected poem page 279) either the individual past or historical past or culture past. It is with readers, it is what gives them richness of understanding and the richness of expression. This is the only main reason to write about eco criticism.

He points the social issues and go green needs to address the global literature which is essential at this hour. Writers like Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das and Parthasarathy have written about eco criticism but A.K. Ramanujan's purpose of writings has a new world view. He had a great zeal to preserve the natural world and therefore decided to write nature as a subject matter. Thinking and rethinking about 'Back to Nature' shows his environment responsibility to protect nature. Nature has always proved to be stronger than man.

The earliest literary modernists in India were the great Tamil poet, Subramania Bharathi. In his poetry, one sees all aspects of Indian modernity, including its aspirations for emancipation, not only of the self but of society as a whole. Likewise, A.K. Ramanujan's poems talk on exploration and testament of human life along with the reminiscence and preservation of Indian culture. Having a great passion for the past culture, his writings remind that nature has always proved to be stronger than man.

## **RAMANUJAN AS A TRANSLATOR.**

As a translator, he is entirely different from others because he is a poet-linguist turned translator. Proverbs and folklores are realms of his special interest. He examines the essence of tamil sangam poetry with modern sensibility and he has also got an excellent grasp of originality with a great felicity of expression.

A.K. Ramanujan is a translator who helped foreign readers to appreciate the beauty of ancient text. His task was more difficult when it came to the translation of ancient Tamil or Kannada poetry into English, because there were differences in culture, language and framework. Translation is not easy task because the translator caught between 'Transmission and Expression'. The reader is also important in this process. But Ramanujan says that translation is an art.

Ramanujan's translatable creativity adds more to the poetic sensibility. His output as a translator is not only measured by its quantity, quality and variety, but also by the body of prefaces, textual and brilliant notes and comment of the scholars. His idea of framing the content on particular materials and cultures as well as the general process of translation reflects his wit and intelligence. He is one of the most gifted poets of this contemporary.

Ramanujan's 'Snakes' points out the touching truth, the truth of sensibility and indifference of modern society. The poor do not hesitate to face the danger. No doubt, the snake-charmers take every risk only to extinguish the starvation of the family by providing entertainment, pastime to the rich. The poem begins on a note of suspense. The incident which the poet narrates in the poem is what he feels whenever he walks through a museum or library. The description is of a snake which induces fear with the mere thought of it. The poet feels that the snakes might take shelter on the museums, book shelves, glass-shelves in between the geometric lines of the shelves. It could appear as a yellow vein or yellow amber.

The poet compares the intermittent hissing of the snakes to the little clouds of dust that arise, as one walks along a dusty road. They have the nature of winding through one's feet exactly the way the snakes do. The hoods, the snakes display, show a kind of design resembling the etched black lorgnettes. It looks ridiculous all the same. It is likened to the terrible aunt who is proud of her titles. The snake's scales mount with the warning of the moon. Then, he explains a real incident. One day a snake man has brought a basket full of cobras to the poet's home. The snakes are moving forcefully and the person watches them more on the floor. Their bodies are wheat - brown in colour with rings all over. The way they move on the floor looks like a strange alphabet written here and there.

The poet brings in the puzzled association of snakes with the family. The snakes are "like some terrible aunt" (18). The poet as a child does not get rest from the fear of snakes, till they are killed. His mother gives it milk; his father cheerily pays the snake-charmer.

"The snake man wreathes their writhing

round his neck

for father's smiling

money". (28 to 31)

The poet has a sister who has long hair touching the ground. He notices her tying her hair in braids. She takes great care in tending them and decorates them with tassels. These braids look very much like the

snakes and the waves themselves resemble the scales on the body. Both have the nature of shining brightly. In other works, the poet is often reminded of snakes when he looks at the braids of his sister. He is so afraid that he waits impatiently to see hair trimmed and tied up neatly. Then, the poet narrates the happening while he walks along the forest path suddenly, he feels as if he is walking on a slippery surface. It is a snake and it writhes in pain. Its body is green - white the bluish nodes resemble a lotus stalk that has been plucked lately. He steps on it until it is dead; He is now confident and is not afraid. He expects the frogs to hop over the sausage rope without fear of being eaten up. The flies can come around the eye part of the snake and he himself has grown at all.

A.K. Ramanujan brings out the market scene in this poem. He feels provoked on seeing the oranges in the city market. They are carried in wicker baskets. The oranges fill the gaps inside these baskets woven with intricate designs. The fruits are of various colours. Some are still green, others are overripe with a pot of fungi-ash in a hollow vipers some others are of saffron colour; others are purple and velvet - sinned. Some of the fruits resemble the inner first of fingers held rather loosely. It is compared to the loosening skin and weakening nerves in the part of a grand old man who is termed by the poet as 'Grandpa's grip'. Noticing the orange tree, the poet looks at the small branch which once served as an extension is found to be intact. The same is described as the human umbilical cord. The tree once nourished the young bud, the power of it coming from the root part of the tree. The fruit has come out at this mature stage and the tree holds it even now. There is now no connection between the fruit and the tree. The fruit itself finds its way into the basket. The fruits in the tree every seed of the tree can produce thousands of oranges in turn. The cycle goes on like this and it is a never-ending process.

'Army of ants' depicts the human ideals of socialism in ants' life. They receive aristocratic tastes from their ancestors and they have separate apartments for queens and colonies for various castes; yet they live for the benefit of the society of ants. Their dead bodies do not go waste as they serve as bricks to build their houses. Their limbs are useful for different purposes, their knees for hinges; their heads for the plinths of their rain-soaked Corinth's and their hands and feet for runway. So far, the poet dealt with constructive aspect of socialism. The Great Wall of China is said to have been built by slaves, enemies and favourites of the king. But the living and the young ants serve as bricks and mortar of the houses. The poet sees a close affinity between the insect life and human life.

"I'm in a plot  
That I never should have known  
In a life of a movie  
unpredicted

Where the heroes are the villains  
And the villains are the banks  
Paid for from the pockets  
Of the people

They tell you to be smart  
To get an education  
To be like your parents  
Or be better

But what they don't understand  
Is that we never had a chance  
When the moneys in the hands  
Of the 'masters'

They sit by their desks  
With empty role calls  
Trying to fix the problems  
Of consumption

And you can't watch the news  
Without a congressional fool  
Telling you to save  
And be prudent.” (26 to 48)

In “Breaded Fish”, he recollects how the sight of a fish, brought back his dreadful memories of a woman's dead body on the beach. The poet was served with a fish, sprinkled with bread crumbs, which was specially made for him by a lady. But the poet was unable to eat it. It was because when he looked at the fish, his memories recoiled like a cobra. He recollects seeing a woman's dead body on beach. Like the breaded fish, the woman's body was covered with sand particles and a piece of cloth. It was a sight of horror and dismay.

“Specially for me, she had some breaded  
fish; even thrust a blunt-headed  
smelt into my mouth

and looked hurt when I could  
neither sit nor eat, as a hood  
of memory-like a coil on a heath

opened in my eyes: a dark half-naked  
length of woman, dead  
on the beach in a yard of cloth,

dry, rolled by the ebb, breaded  
by the grained indifference of sand. I headed  
for the shore, my heart beating in my mouth.” (1 to 12)

The poem ‘Breaded Fish’ carries a rhyme scheme aab, ccb, aab, aab, written in the repeated triplet stanza form. The sonnet form also has attracted Ramanujan. He generally tends to produce a contracted sonnet. Ramanujan’s sonnets do not follow any rigid rhyme scheme, and are generally constructed with stanzaic splitting up of 4+4+3+3. “Routine Day Sonnet” is one such example, written in the rhyme scheme of aabb, ccaa, ddd, eee (4+4+3+3) Ramanujan poems have several layers of meanings, each words he chose with great care for the excellence of poems.

The poem ‘Looking for a cousin on a Swing’ is about an immature sexual encounter of the poet with his cousin and her desire for the same after she becomes adult and mature. During their childhood, they came into contact with each other physically on a swing in the village and the girl felt the poet was sexually aroused. The poet then cites the example of a fig tree to symbolise their immature love like that of Adam and Eve and points out that they were innocent about it. After growing up, his cousin recollects that sexual encounter and desires to achieve it in the city.

The poem is quite symbolic. The poet here is critical of the rites and rituals of his community. Love and marriage between cousins are not allowed in Hinduism and because of this poet and his cousin are probably separated. Whether she is married or not, it is not clear. However, it quite known in the poem that her sexual desires have not been fulfilled. She is longing for that immature touch of the poet and those pleasurable feelings of the swing. This is said in perutina which is the last of all the tinai. People considered this is against our culture and customs value.

In the poem ‘A River’, the poet expresses his concern about the tradition of copying the ideas and the ways of old poets by the new poets and their inability to create something which is about the present rather than the past. The poem is about the river that flows through the city of Madurai, the temple town. He first talks about the beauty of the river and then tells how it killed people. In the summer season, the river is dry and only a very small and thin stream flows. The stream is so thin that the ribs of sand made by the flowing water are clearly visible. The rusty bars under the bridge have patches of repair all over them. Some of the stones on the bed of the river are dry and some of them are wet. When there is flood, in the river, the people of the city talk about the inch-by-inch rising of water and the number of stone steps submerged at the bathing place. They talk about the three village houses being washed away by the flood. They also talk about how a pregnant woman and two cows were carried away by the strong current of the river. They know that the names of the two cows were Gopi and Brinda. But no one knew the home of the woman who was crying and carried off by the water. This means that everyone was indifferent to the suffering of this woman. Even the poets did not mention her name in their poems. They wrote about the flood.

In Madurai, city of temples and poets, who sang of cities and temples, every summer a river dries to a trickle in the sand, baring the sand ribs, straw and women's hair clogging the water gates at the rusty bars under the bridges with patches of repair all over them the wet stones glistening like sleepy crocodiles, the dry ones haven water-buffaloes lounging in the sun. The poets only sang of the floods.

The new poets are equally indifferent to the suffering of the pregnant woman. She was probably carrying twins in her belly, which might have kicked the walls of her womb when she was drowned in the river. They write about the two cows, the three damaged and washed away village houses. But they mention the woman casually. They do not bother to know her name or her whereabouts. In the poem, the poet concludes that both the groups of the poets, past and present are callous and indifferent to human suffering.

The tone of the poem is based on sarcasm and irony. He had made the real sum and substance of the poetry. This poem is very easy to grasp the meaning. It is very simple and the sequence of the poem is presented with aesthetic sense.

The study of all these five poems shows the richness of Ramanujan's poetic texture, style, structural elements of syntax, tone, imagery and lexis. He realises and recognizes the gracefulness of beauty in all these poems. These poems consist of Ramanujan's interaction with nature which assure him of his poetic mission.

## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSIS OF A.K.RAMANUJAN'S POEMS

#### WITH REFERENCE TO TINAI THEORY AND ECO-CRITICISM

Ramanujan's poetry has brought multiple laurels to him. The volumes of his poetry *The Striders* (1966), *Relations* (1971) and *Selected poems* (1976) have been praised by the literary critics, for its Indian expression and originality. Though he had a long stay abroad, his works are free from alien influences. He won the admiration of his contemporary peer writers like Nissim Ezekiel, Parthasarathy, Keki N. Daruwalla and Jayanta Mahapatra. The poem of Ramanujan are like a mirror in which one can see the face of Indian tradition, value and culture.

Ramanujan's poems have a technical perfection which is exemplary. The designer poems of Ramanujan are not only a treat to the eyes of the readers but also has a descriptive meaning in it. 'Ecology' 'Waterfall in a Bank' 'Rivers' and 'A Minor Sacrifice' are the poems, which have Indian in sensibility and content but English in language. The poet knows that every flower has a soul, which bloom in nature whereas one who cannot enjoy it when he loves only human beings.

'Ecology' is a poem which is taken from Ramanujan's third volume of poems, 'Second Sight', published in 1986. The speaker is the poet himself who is loyally devoted to his mother. His mother is a walking miracle for him. She often suffers from severe migraine. This head-ache, which is caused by the blooming of flowers and spread of yellow pollen from Red Champak Tree, makes her vomit. The fragrance of flower and the yellow pollen occupied everywhere enormously, so the poet is angry with mother for not

allowing him to cut the tree. The poet knows that every flower has a soul, which blooms in nature whereas one cannot enjoy it when he loves only human being.

The trees were holding copious beautiful flowers. The aromatic smell of flowers called rain for celebration. The rain came after a long dry spell. It is flowering and exhibiting the beauty all around the house of poet. He is unable to accept the nature as his mother suffering from head-ache due to pollen. Once he adores but now he cannot stay close with nature's beauty and bounty, as his mother falls sick often. The poet observes the seasonal change which leads to misery in his heart. Finally he decides to cut off the tree in order to prevent his mother from the natural calamities.

“Wet as a cold pack on her head

Would not let us cut down

A flowering tree

Almost as old as her, seeded” (22 to 25)

This last stanza reveals that mother is the synonym of true love because she decides to bear the pain of migraine instead of cutting the tree. His mother stops him because she sees the positive side of the tree such as the blooming of flowers which is offered to God and attracting birds to perch on the branches. She recalls that the tree is as old as her age. This is the way in which mother decides to sacrifice for the good things in the environment. The poet personifies mother as the embodiment of sacrifice, silent sufferer, humility, faith and knowledge.

In this lines, the poet honour the age old Hindu tradition, cultural values and customs of India in the poem ‘Ecology’. The poet has tried to show the real generation gap between the older and the new. The old people have emotions, memories and belief with ecology. The pollens of flower pollute the air and the city. It is accepted by the mother. Whereas the poet has no emotions or attachment to ecology as his eyes were filled with love on his mother through which Ramanujan has glorified Tinai and the cultural heritage of India.

Ramanujan's command over English idioms and language and his grasp of Indian wisdom was really immense. ‘Waterfall in the Banks’, another remarkable poem reflects the heart touching of humanity. This poem is also published in his collections of poems *Second Sight* (1986). The poet's on the bank of Hyde Park of Chicago, Illinois while the poem begins. This poem genesis with the first line ‘And the once sees waterfall’. It reflects about the poet's reminiscence days in India.

They are the collections of image and imageries, when he gazes at the waterfall on the river bank. He compares the images with ancient Tamil poems and the Indian culture. The poet lived in two cultural world, namely East and West. It links the past life in India and present life in USA.

Different images follow as the poet continues the glance at the waterfall, by the downward flow of the water; the images that come into his mind now are of 'living and dying children' who 'tumble towards old age'. Then, the waterfall creates an impression in his mind of love ('love songs') and war ('Biafra'). Biafra is a region in southeast Nigeria, in Africa, that was the scene war and famine in the 1960s. In 1967, Biafra declared itself an independent state, and a three-year civil war followed. Millions of people including many children died as a result of famine.

These two words, 'love songs' and 'Biafra', creates in him new image that immediately follows in his mind. It is music and war that is "orchestras in bomb sites" (line 7). It appears in the poet's mind, stimulated by the sight of the waterfall, is now engaged in kind of free of images. The next image is of "hunger's saints in the Glasshouse alley" (line 8), which could suggest both the Sadhu, begging saint in Indian tradition, seeking alms from passers-by, perhaps the Biafran children who starved during the civil war, and perhaps also, the homeless people in Chicago, begging in the "glass house alley" (line 8) of Chicago's massive skyscrapers.

After the image of the children had disappeared, the poet concludes the first part of the poem with more extensive image. The image appears that the poet's native return to his family in India. It is an old woman who is a grandmother of the poet, acting as midwife for her daughter. She is the poet's mother who is in childbirth. The scene appears to be a home village and it is not a hospital in the city. The village clearly pictured where old folk beliefs still linger as evidenced by the four lemons that are placed there to provide "good omens" (line 15), in other words, to produce good luck at a birth.

The last section of the poem moves further in the field setting. Instead of talking about a waterfall in Chicago, the poem tells about Chicago itself. A vivid picture about the past happening is clearly portrayed. There has been 'seven-day snowfall' in Chicago, which has produced confused and chaos. Due to the severe snowfall, occurs clogging traffic and grounding planes other sundry effects. The muffles scream, garbage cans, pianos created a drastic change around them. This is a reference to the blizzard that hit Chicago in January 1979.

This incident also gave him new images in his mind. Reference to recent events in Chicago is followed by two images like 'silent/ white effects' of falling snow: 'tickertape on astronauts' which is a reference to the practice in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s of giving tickertape parades for returning astronauts and 'white flower on black thorn'.

The last line of the poem, 'And my watchers watch, from their nowhere perches,' is enigmatic and perhaps can be explained only with reference to other poems by Ramanujan. All his poems have a double vision and talks about life, death, cycles of birth, pain and love.

'Waterfall in a Bank' takes the poet to various kinds of past memories and incident. The poet comments about this interaction between past and present, which also involves a contrast between the western culture in which he now lives and the Eastern culture in which he grew up.

Ramanujan has been a great craftsman in the western culture in the Indian outlook. Thus, he proved that it is impossible to understand his imagination and creativity in all his poems.

River is the exceptional poem taken from the Anthology '*The Striders*'. This poem talks about the greatness of the city of Madurai and its River Vaigai. The poem begin with the following lines

“In Madurai,  
city of temples and poets  
who sang of cities and temples:  
every summer  
a river dries to a trickle  
in the sand”(1 to 6)

Madurai of Tamilnadu in South India is a holy city, where temples and poets occupied predominant position. A river named Vaigai flows through this city. The poets of Sangam age as well as modern have composed poems about Madurai city and her temples. They have also depicted about river Vaigai and the civilization flourished on it. It is interesting to learn that Madurai is a centre of learning and Tamil culture from time immemorial to present day.

The poet first talks about the beauty and sensibility of the river. Then, he tells how it killed people during the flood. During the summer season, the river is dry and only a very small and thin stream flow.

“the wet stones glistening like sleepy  
crocodile the dry ones  
shaven water-buffaloes.....”(13 to 15)

The stream is so thin that the ribs of sand made by the flowing water are clearly visible. The rusty bars under the bridge have patches of repair all over them. Some of the stones on the bed of the river are dry and some of them are wet. The wet stones looked like crocodiles and dry stones look like shaven lazy buffaloes.

When there is a flood, in the river, the people everywhere talk about the inch-by-inch rising of water and the number of stone steps submerged at the bathing place. They talk about the three village houses being washed away by the flood. They narrate about how a pregnant woman and two cows Gopi and Brinda were carried away by the strong water current. But people do not know the shelter of the women who was crying and carried off. It implies that everyone is indifferent to the suffering of unknown woman. The poets also failed to denote her name in his work.

The new poets are equally indifferent to the suffering of the pregnant woman. They described the beauty of the river and water but not pain and suffering of the woman. Raman's concern over fellow human being was totally different from that of the old poets.

The woman had probably twins in her belly, which might have kicked the walls of her womb when she was drowned in the river. They wrote about the two cows, the three damaged and washed away village houses. But they refer the woman casually and do not bother about her miseries. The poet concludes that both the groups of the poets, past and present are heartless and indifferent to the suffering of human beings.

“Raman's sarcastically writes,

The new poets still quoted

the old poets, but no one spoke

in verse

of the pregnant woman..”(28 to 31)

The last stanza compares and contrasts the writing of the poet himself and other poets of his age. On one hand, all other poets try to praise the beauty of the river on the other hand, the poet himself makes a balance between the river and the losses inflicted on it by the people.

Being tremendously attracted towards the past, Ramanujan even digs his roots in history. He refers to the ancient times, historical periods and mythology in his writings. Ramanujan's creation of the poem and selecting the seed or the theme is really magical. He is a creator of poems and presents it to the readers without changing its originality, shape, life and soul along with its natural beauty.

‘Prayers to Lord Murugan’- is a poem in which he laments the difference between inner culture and outer manifestation. He says that our blood is red and colour is brown both are in contrast to Red God. The poet quotes God Shiva, Lord Murugan and the other Gods of the Hindu Mythology in his poems. In his ‘Prayer to Lord Murugan’, he wants show the corrupted modern man's mind and the degeneration of the society and this poem is full of irony.

Ramanujan seeks the blessings of Lord Murugan, to sharpen his sensibilities and deeper love towards fellow human beings in his poem ‘Prayers to Lord Murugan’. The poet expresses the perception of a tradition as well as in ironic posture in this poem. Ramanujan clearly marks a visible paradox in this line; a typical and radical mode of expression. But as a great child of Indian tradition, Ramanujan makes utterances grounded in counterculture sensibilities and further makes radical subversion of the dominate culture representations. As a resident in western modern culture, Ramanujan was aware of western culture. For him, modernity appeared to be afflicted with Oedipal repressions and violent dismissal of the immediate tradition of operations. Ramanujan's ‘Prayers to Lord Murugan’ is good example of his quest for human touch in life. He prays:

“Lord of the twelve right hands

Why are we your mirror men

With the two left hands

Capable only of casting Reflections?” (89 to 92)

Lord Murugan is regarded as the God bestowing both plenty and fertility, in the Dravidian religious tradition.

“Lord of the sixth sense

Give us back

Our five senses” (99 to 101)

The height of his secular human search comes in the last stanza of the poem.

“Lord of answers,

Cure us at once

Of prayers.” (126 to 128)

In the poetry of Ramanujan human relationships are described through its complexities to bring out the suffering to the self. Although Ramanujan appears and wears a mask of secularism, his poems grouped as ‘Prayers to Lord Murugan’ shed subjective identity here. The Hindu poems is a process of implication that the persona or the mask cannot provide a consistent amour to the self because it can never fully cope with the variety and depth of inner life brought into the interplay in one’s encounter with reality. Thus, Ramanujan through his prayer motif is successful in inscribing the self. It assumes the qualities of a persona. It also becomes an object.

In ‘Zoo Gardens Revisited’ he explains how the animals suffer at human hands as they come as the visitors to the zoo. They ‘shrewdly’ set the tail feathers of ostriches on fire, or feed monkeys ‘bananas with small exquisite needles in them’. The natural world has been destroyed and now everyone see the effects of modern civilization where tigris, ‘superintended by curious officials adulterate their line with half - hearted lions to breed experimental ligers and lions’, and tigers ‘yawn away their potency’. Like the humans who torture animals, the repression of the natural finds other forms of expression, especially in hurting others or the self as in the poem ‘pleasure’ where the monk’s repressed sexual desire finds expression in the perverse pleasures of a painful death’.

Ramanujan handles the Indian myth and shows the various incarnation of God. Intertextuality and pastiche are also found in his poetry. In ‘Zoo Gardens Revisited’, he prays to God to save the animals:

“Lord of lion face, boar snout, and fish eyes, killer of killer

cranes, shepherd of rampant elephants, devour my lambs

devour them whole, save them in the zoo garden ark of your

belly.” (150 to 154)

Ramanujan harps on the essence of the religious faith which is universal. His poetry is like a circular labyrinth, in which all paths lead back to the point from where it started, no matter where it began. His poems and writings are influencing a fresh generation of students and scholars.

It can be said that to read Ramanujan’s poetry is to believe in immense human possibilities. He combines the post modern characteristics in his poetry with his Indian sensibilities, Indian ethos, potentialities and genuine poetic images with expressions. He has tried to create a link between life and art. He has fully explored the opportunities and he had tried to uplift Indian English Poetry to a new lever. And this all happen because of his inner poetic technique as M. K. Naik said about him:

“In Poetic technique, of all his contemporaries, Ramanujan appears to have the surest touch, for he never lapses into romantic lapses into romantic cliché. His unfailing sense of rhythm gives a fitting answer to those who hold that complete inwardness with language is possible only to be poet writing in his mother tongue. Though he writes in poem forms, His verse is extremely, tightly constructed.” (Naik, 201)

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TINAI THEORY AND

### ECO-CRITICISM

A. K. Ramanujan’s poetry is remarkable in its linguistic aspects. He is a master of creating marvellous pictures by force of his great technique. William Walsh honours and praises him as ‘the most gifted poet’. He says that he is a remarkable and original craftsman. He has a mastery of words and in his poems each word is used skillfully, attentively, and accurately.

Ramanujan shaped and polished his poems, and gave a new aspect with desired approach. His choice of words is distinct, he strives for using the simplest and shortest words to convey his thought and message to this wider world.

His poems like Snake, Breaded fish, Waterfall in a bank, Army Ants, Lookings for a causin on a swing, Ecology, River and A Minor sacrifice viewed nature as a source of inspiration in the composition. Each poem talks about his own speculation on its content. Ramanujan is especially known for his brevity of style in his writings. He expresses his thoughts and emotions in brief when he communicates with the readers.

Snakes are important elements in the native environments. This poem ‘Snake’ is connected with the Marutham Tinai. The Marutham Landscape is full of agricultural pasture lands with mango trees. Agriculture is the main occupation of these people. Though the poet gives various description in this name, snakes are the farmer’s friend and can be used as part of an integrated pest management system. Both the introduction and the removal of snakes can have unforeseen effects on an ecosystem. Insects are often

blamed for attacking seedlings. The real one could be a rat or a mouse. Not only do rodents damage seedlings, they also spoil stored grain. It really helps the farmers to preserve the seedlings.

In ‘Snakes’ he describes the human-animal relationship in vivid terms. A reference is made to snakes, flies and frogs. The poet brings out the reaction of his parents and himself to the snake. The snake seems like a terrible aunt. His mother gives it milk; father smilingly pays the snake man, but the poet screams at its sight. The poet beautifully describes the grandeur of the snakes

The twirls of their hisses  
rise like the tiny dust-cones on slow noon roads  
winding through the farmers feet.  
Black lorgnettes are etched on their hoods,  
ridiculous, alien, like some terrible aunt,  
a crest among tiles and scales  
that moult with the darkening half  
of every moon.(14 to 21)

The poet as a child does not get relief from his fear of snakes till they are killed. He is happy that small creatures like frogs can now hop on the dead snake which is like a ‘sausage rope’ and flies look in its eyes. The poet’s fear of snakes appears in ‘Breaded fish’ also. He could not eat a breaded fish as the hood of memory coiled on him. Commenting on this poem Lakshmi Raghunandan rightly says, “The killing of snakes, out of irrational panic reveals the inability of man to commune with Nature when he is restricted by innumerable self-made inhibitions” (A.K. Ramanujan uncollected poems page no. 21).

Now, the imagination and the description of the poet is of a forceful remark, ‘No, it does not happen when I walk through the wood’0. His fear of snakes happens when he is walking through museums or libraries. This panic is common to all human beings. Even in the petty objects he passes through, he is reminded of snakes. This is also a hint to the fact that snakes generally hide in the dark corners of the common places in the society. They take shelter in the museums. Different human reactions to the sight of a snake can be seen here. His mother has a religious feel for it and so she gives milk to the snake; the father takes it for entertainment and pays the snake charmer, but the poet screams at its sight. His mind is never free from this fear. Different types of emotions, compassion and passion are revealed in this poem.

An important fact revealed by Ramanujan’s poetry is his comprehensive knowledge of Indian mythology, folk-lore and religion. His expatriate experiences did not in the least dissuade him from his Indian culture. But possessing a rational mind, he was able to inculcate a practical approach towards his own culture. A.K. Ramanujan also describes the worship and reverence of the animals including serpents in

India, as they are considered to be the symbol and ornament of lord Shiva. Even the festival Naag Panchami is celebrated to show the dedication and reverence to them. And the poet also gives instance of this festival in his poem “Snakes” when he says :

“Mother gives them milk in saucers.”(line 27)

Also talks about different situations in this poem. His explication of the poet’s mother, father and himself is really awesome. The moves of the snakes look like a strange alphabet on the floor.

‘Ecology is not a study of the external environment. Ecology is a study of inter-relationship, with its bedrock being the recognition of the distinction between things- in themselves and things-for-us.’ (Introduction, Gaard 5-6)

‘Things in themselves’ refer to ‘existence as it is’, without human conceptualization or judgment as opposed to and ‘Things for us’ is the human perception or manipulation of reality. The discordance arises due to the limited vision of human eyes and mind. Human comprehension of the need for existence of a particular entity is very limited. The vast unknown reveals only some of the interconnections that lies in-between. Ecology attempts to study the inter relationship between the two perceptions, ‘things in themselves’ and ‘things for us’ and further tries to explore some of the myriad connections of the particulars with the vast. Poetry too is a venture in this direction. It not only gets inspired by nature but also unravels the mysterious ways of the natural world.

Ecology- All the facts and emotions are interlinked with a single sentence in the poem. The poem is loaded with different clauses and phrases, and are joined together precisely and appropriately. This poem can be interlinked with Marutham as well as kurinji tinai. The poem is very short. Though the poem is brief it doesn’t escape from the subject instead it creates a lilt, harmony in the content. The poet successfully conveys his ideas, thoughts and feelings like classical people.

The poet’s mother all through her journey of life she wants to live happy, healthy and sustainable life with nature like kurinji people. The fascinating details caught linked with Mother’s thought, father’s action, sister’s braid are nature, love, bravery and valour of the people’s life. The description of his sister’s long hair, adds beauty to the poem.

Mother was very stubborn and she never allowed his son to cut the tree, This also reveals the faith of Hindus in this poem. Her faith was keenly attached with the ancient Tamils who follow the roots of nature worship. This is talked about in Kurinji tinai and she had a close intimacy with a tree which is as old as her age.

In this Kurinji tinai, plenty of honey is seen on the branches of trees, but here the poet describes the Red Champak flower’s fragrance beauty are copious.

The poet's mother sees the tree as God. Ancient people's worship of trees was widely prevalent among the Tamil, and there are numerous references to the belief that trees were the abode of deity in the extensive Kurinji people in Sangam literature.

Trees which are worshipped in the temple are associated either with the village temple or the deity are known as Sthalavrikshas or sacred trees. When temples were erected for the idols of Gods who had originally existed in the shade of the trees, people took special care not to remove trees and thus they had been preserved and worshipped. Sangam people worshiped trees as God and Goddess.

Ramanujan reminds one of the cultural beliefs of the people. They don't want to perish the things which are attached with their emotions and sentiments. Here the poet shows how the people possess intense love and care for the things which have their place in their rituals, rites, traditions as well as in their daily practice of life, though these are natural objects. It has always been the general characteristics of the human beings to show intense care and affection for the lives that grow up with them or have passed a long time with them and because of this the poet's mother prohibits the cutting of the tree in the poem 'Ecology'.

All the facts and emotions are interlinked with a single sentence in the poem. The poem is loaded with different clauses and phrases, and are joined together precisely and appropriately. This poem can be interlinked with the landscape of Marutham as well as Kurinji. The poem is very short. Though it is brief, it doesn't escape from the subject instead it creates a lilt, harmony in the content. The poet successfully conveys his ideas, thoughts and feelings like classical people.

The poet's mother all through her journey of life wants to live a happy, healthy and sustainable life with nature like people from Kurinji landscape.

The fascinating details are linked with Mother's thought, father's action, sister's braid as nature, love, bravery and valour of the people's life.

River – describes the coldness of new poets towards the harsh reality of the things that happened in the past.. He talks about the beauty of the rivers and then tells how it killed people. This poem reminds us of Marutham tinai were the vast fields, rivers and irrigation of water flow. It shows that people, landscape, rivers and animals are inter related with Nature in this tinai.

The river that never fails. It proved from Sangam period, the poets praised rivers in their writings. "The River Cauvery" runs through Tamil literature from the Sangam age till today. This is a great example that nature played a vital role in human beings in all walks of life.

Even in later age, the *Kamba Ramayanam* drains parallels between Kosala Naadu and Chola Naadu. Speaking of the Chola Naadu's fertility, and Cauvery Rivers.

The poets have sung and praised about this Cauvery River in Sangam literature. These people always had a close relationship with the river and nature.

‘Long live this fertile country. Long live the Cauvery that nurtures the  
Country like a mother’.

- Elangovadigal

This famous line was penned by the great epic writer Elangovadigal. He compares river with mother because all love begins and ends there.

‘The river has water enough to be poetic’.

- A.K. Ramanujan

The greatness of the river is seen in Raman’s lines also. He describes the river as an essential source of all living things. These descriptions show that the poets vividly explain about the river that never fails.

Elangovadigal, the author of silappadhikaram penned several songs in the epic form of Aattruvari Padalgai (Songs sung to the river) and coined the iconic idiom.

‘Nadanthai Vaazhi Cauvery’ (And you walked ‘Long live Cauvery’)

River is an immortal source of human life since Sangam literature except paalai. The poets have sung about the ‘River’ in all the other Tinai. ‘She (River) is a shining literary icon an indelible part of our culture’ had seen in kurinji tinai.

River obviously was not only a life giving source, but the very sustenance for the people’s scowl. It is the main reason, that people settled near the river and then rise the civilization.

We have to thank nature’s bounty, there was an integral enjoyment of physical, intellectual, psychic and spiritual aspects of life in this atmosphere.

A.K. Ramanujan talks about Vaigai River, in a sweet city called Madurai. Which is a source of all living things. In Sangam literature, the poet has sung about Vaigai in Paripadal and Silappadhikaram.

In this poem ‘River’ A.K. Ramanujan not only talks about the river but also the human pain and sufferings.

Though Raman’s poem ‘River’ does not define the Sangam poetic tradition his poems are always classics.

His works have stood the test of time the remarkable works of a whole tradition. Those who have not read his poems are unaware of a unique and major poetic achievement of Indian civilization.

Ancient poet’s says rivers in India are compared with women and sea as their (lover) husband. Women’s beauty is compared to the beauty of Rivers. Though it may look strange Sangam people used this as a simile. Ramanujan’s poetry is a depiction of human sentiments, feelings and emotions in a direct way. He recaptures the past events in a very lucid way.

In the poem ‘Zoo Gardens Revisited’ the poet says that there is a touch of human qualities in the animals. The flamingos reminded him of his aunts and the black faced monkeys of his uncles. But he laments that now animals remind him only of animals because of human cruelty. The Orang-utans remind him of orang-

utans as they have become lean. Ostriches do not hide their heads in the sands as they naturally do. The visitors set their tail feathers on fire with lighter fluid and cigarette lighters. Some visitors feed the ring-tailed monkeys bananas stuffed with the needles. so the monkeys do not eat bananas now.

The poet pleads to God to defend and save the animals and he describes the various incarnations of the god who took birth in the forms of animals himself. As he says:

“Lord of lion face, boar snout, and fish eyes,  
killer of killer cranes, shepherd of rampant elephants,  
devour my lambs, devour them whole,  
save them in the zoo garden ark of your belly.”(33 to 36)

The poet in the praise of the Lord Vishnu describes various incarnation of the lord. The Lord of lion is Narsimha, who delivered the world from the clutches of Hiranyakashyap, the tyrannical father of the great devotee Prahlad . ‘Boar snout’ refers to his assuming the shape of a Varaha, who lifted the stolen earth from the waters of the deep and thus freed it from the demon-thief. Lord Vishnu also appeared as Matsya- fish eyes, in order to save Manu, the progenitor of the human race, from a great torrent. According to an Indian myth, the lord rushed to the rescue of Gajendra from the jaws of a powerful crocodile. He is also represented in our mythology as kurma, the tortoise, sitting on whose back he recovered some valuable things that are lost in the deluge.

The wrong deeds also served as the pivot of the mountain ‘Mandara’ during the churning of the ocean in a tug-of-war between gods and demons. The Lord is also depicted as Kalki, the White Horse, who purged the creation. Thus, the association of gods and goddesses with nature cannot be alienated.

The tree is a recurring symbol in Ramanujan’s poetry. In ‘Chess Under Trees’ the tree symbolises the ups and downs of life. The mountains skies were preoccupied by the dynasties of the mountain-pine whose banners became tattered and feebly harped at the driving strings of rain. The dying dynasty is represented by the living ex-maharajah who loses his queen in chess and his kingdom in politics. Kurinji, as mentioned in the tinai theory, was the hilly, forested terrain rich with verdant slopes, flowers, birds, bees and wildlife. It was the home of the nomads, the hunters and lovers of nature. The king losing his wife in the game of chess draws a parallel line to the great epic Mahabharata where the pandavas lose their kingdom and Draupadi in the game of dice.

Ramanujan is concerned with man’s cruelty to animals. In ‘A Minor Sacrifice’ he explodes the myth of king Parikshit and his son Janamejaya who had senselessly inflicted violence on snakes. Parikshit killed a snake and garlanded on to a sage’s neck. When he was cursed to death due to a snake bite, his son jenamejaya performed a great sacrifice of serpents to eliminate their species. Yet he could not succeed in his efforts. In the second part of the poem, Shivanna plans to eliminate the species of scorpions with the help of witchcraft. He believes that if one hundred live grasshoppers are fed to the scorpions God when the sun is in

Scorpio will eliminate the species. They succeed in their attempt but Shivanna dies the very next day, in the hospital of an illness caused by a bug.

Uncle says, later

‘Did you know, that Shivanna,

he claws and kicked the air

all that day, that newmoon Tuesday,

like some bug

on its back? (148 to 153)

The poem seems to suggest that both the puranic Parikshit and the modern Shivanna deserve their fate for their Karma.

Breaded Fish : In this poem he recollects how the sight of fish brought back his dreadful memories.

This poem reminds of Neythal Tinai, a landscape named in Tamil Literature. The description of a ‘Fish’ refers to the sea and adjoining lands. Their main occupation was fishing. The seashore brings out many examples of the compelling charm of Sangam Poetry and extra – ordinary freshness of realism.

The fishing village consists of small huts. There is a smell of fish in the air. The fisher folk leads a noisy and cheerful life. The children delight in bathing in the sea and gathering the flowers. The sketch of these images could be seen in Neiythal tinai. A.K. Ramanujan poem “Breaded Fish” also talks about the life of fishermen’s suffering and pains.

Ramanujan’s ‘Prayers to Lord Murugan’ are good example of his quest for human touch in life. This poem is linked with kurinji tinai as these people worship God Murugan. In Tamil Nadu, Lord Murugan is continued to be popular with all the classes of society right from the Sangam age. Murugan was originally a hero warrior who was worshipped by the tribes of the Kurunji land, which later emerged into a separate culture.

Lord Murugan was characterized as an eternally youthful, handsome and mighty warrior. These people worship him with utmost reverence ‘Ancient Tamils had the tradition of giving natural elements as symbols to their Gods. Such divine representations of Lord Muruga are the Peacock, rooster, the Vel and the Kadamba tree’. This description we can see in Kurinji tinai. Here the poet talks about the self sufferings and pains that one undergoes in his life. Ramanujan has a positive approach towards all problems in his poems. There is similarity in the basic religious outlook and themes, between the Dravidian and Hindu traditions with There is similarity in the basic religious outlook and themes, between the Dravidian and Hindu traditions with is a prominent mode of worship and ritual of kurinji people.

Murugan is the God with six faces and twelve hands. Ramanujan has described the attributes of Lord Murugan in the following verses. Another point here is that Ramanujan was an avid believer in Bhakti and its concepts, and also translated in many languages, which pertained to the movement.

Nature poetry reflects Keatsian aesthetic sense, Wordsworthian philosophic speculation and symbolic-imagist-modernist concern. The idea of oneness of all creation is expressed in many of Ramanujan's poems. His poetic self presents a unique amalgam of the traditional and the modern. If his sensibility is rooted in the Indian heritage, his vision is definitely that of a modernist's. His credit lies in his remarkable ability to maintain a considerable balance between tradition and modernity. A.K. Ramanujan recalls the varied experiences and anecdotes of his youth with a renewed sense of analysis. Another characteristic of Ramanujan's poetry is his anti-sentimental approach to life in general and personal experiences in particular. His poems scarcely reveal any sentiment bordering on tenderness. He can relate in a calm and detached manner any of the dismal realities of life. There is an immense difference between the approaches of both. "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thoughts". (Shelly's poem To Sky lark 94)

Ramanujan is involved in 'mapping the mutual independencies of body, nature, culture and time until they cover an immense span of human and natural history'. Though Ramanujan is primarily concerned with human relationships, Nature also plays a major role in defining his mode of poetic experience. He concludes that man and Nature are not separate altogether and there is a mysterious link between them. He also gives expression to his varied response to Nature in different poems. His reactions are personal and unique, but his expression is always acute and accurate.

The poet reveals the beliefs and traditional rites and rituals of the people in India and thus both aspects i.e. deities and nature occur in his poems naturally. Being an Indian poet it was natural for him to introduce the traditional beliefs of his native land. These traditional beliefs have been developed by the people from time immemorial and by those who have adjoined them with the natural objects because these natural objects occupy a great place in Indian myths and legends.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Tinai as an ecocritical concept, is a landscape and genre infused with several layers of meaning and identity. The central idea of tinai is the organic linkage of time, space, landscape, and emotion. The ancient Tamils classified their land into five existential territories or landscapes, Kurinji, Mullai, Marutham, Neythal and Paalai in relation to the human emotions. This classification that goes with the name Tinai is not merely geographical or geological, but describes the nature of people, their occupations, culture and religion that conditions their attitude. The environment influences the person's experience and shapes their personality. Even though the concept of ecocriticism is relatively new, traditional concept such as Tinai shows that the ecology has been a major concern since classical times.

The human being is, ultimately, not only a part and parcel, but also a product of nature. This is true to such an extent that natural atmosphere shapes human beings physically, mentally and emotionally. That is the reason why we have so many human races and cultures with their distinct characteristic features. But the anthropocentric attitude of human beings made him/her stand apart from nature and consider, human as superior to other forms of life and grant only a less significance to all other components. And it resulted in the blind destruction and exploitation of the planet. In this context, this study explores the concept of Tinai in Sangam literature as ecological trope. It affirms the interdependence of people, and exhibits how the landscape and culture are in communion with nature. Ecocentrism gives importance to the intrinsic value of all natural systems, thereby effectively denoting humanity to just one among the many components that make up a complex web of interrelationships and interdependencies. It is said that man is known by the company he keeps. This 'company' includes social and environmental company as well. There are examples which could be referred to in order to justify that man is influenced by nature, not only physically, but even emotionally and psychologically.

In India, Tamil Scholars have turned to the concept of Tinai as a foundation for a Tamil-inflected ecocriticism. The ancient Tamil literature has considerably contributed to the ecofriendly literary theory in the name of tinai poetics. Tinai is a concept that deals with interrelatedness and the connection between human, animals and spiritual beings and hence it is to be taken as an important aspect of ecocriticism.

The regions and the behavior patterns are referred to by the names of flowers peculiar to the geophysical aspects of each region, the flora and the fauna, the economic activities, the religion and behavior patterns peculiar to each region.

Tinai has no exact translation in English because it is a typical Tamil word used in Sangam age of Tamil Nadu. But it can be interpreted as a landscape for better understanding. According to Daniel and Cosgrove, Landscape is defined as an outward expression of human perception, "a landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolizing surroundings" (Eco 1). These landscapes include mountains and surroundings, forests, agricultural and pastoral lands, deserts, and the sea and coast.

Earth has six main biomes: deserts, grassland, temperate deciduous forests, rain forests, taiga or coniferous forest, and tundras. These biomes generally differ in their latitude, weather and relative humidity, sunshine, and topography. Each biome has a unique set of plants and animals that thrive in its climate. A biome is characterized by its plant and animal kingdom. When compared to biomes, only the landscape of aquatic biome is not applied to the tinai landscape, other than that, every other tinai landscape can be equated to biome.

A systematic study of A.K. Ramanujan's work reveals the interrelationship between nature and human being. Our forefathers lived a happy life with nature. Due to the advancement of science and technology and modernization, life has become mechanical. People would like to revive the past and the pleasant experiences of our ancestors which forced the modern people to focus on the environment.

It is the basic duty of scholars to study the needs of the society. Poetry too is a venture in this direction. In the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars of India turned their attention on the freedom struggle. The Great Tamil Poet Bharatiyar composed poems and thus set fire in the minds of youngsters to fight for freedom. Followed by that all the poets concentrated on the emancipation of women. It is a timely need to revitalize our forefathers dream to live with nature which has resulted in ecocritical texts and talk of environmental issues in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

People introspected the naturalistic life which was once the part of their daily chores which became the part of their literature. They wished to live the life of their dreamy vision. So they started to learn about the environment and try to rejuvenate it.

A K Ramanujan is one among the naturalists who considered nature as an integral part of day to day life and appreciated the blessings bestowed by the nature. All poems of Ramanujan displayed a profound interest in reforming the society. He never missed a chance to bring in environmentalism in his works. His ideas on ecocritical point of view not just creates new bits of knowledge in his work, but also holds different advantages for the theory of ecocriticism. The poet was aware of this notion and therefore he found a metaphor and a parable of nature to highlight the human degradation in the contemporary world. The title gains support, as loss of spirituality and decadence of nature result in the human downfall. It was this striking similarity between spirituality and nature which might have motivated the poet to choose his poems titles.

Tinai theory and ecocriticism are the different sides of the same coin. The former has genesis from Tamil culture and the later spread all over the world. The grammar is generated from the vast experiences of people which reflect on the lifestyle of general public. Likewise the Tinai theory is deducted from the life of ancient Tamils and their culture. Ecocriticism has its root from Aristotle but it got its real color only in the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as it became the need of the hour. Now people have realized the importance of rich environment which would facilitate the people to lead a happy and prosperous life within it. Whereas Tinai is an old concept which was once practiced during the medieval period and was given up later. Now people realized the importance of environment.

The study on A.K.Ramanujan reveals that he is a writer of social concerns. Nature has been perceived more powerfully, creatively and igneously in all his writings. One of the implicit goals of the ecocriticism is to rethink the relationship between culture and nature. His writings gave literature a new version of ecocriticism. A cultural belief of the people is clearly revealed in his poems. The writings of Ramanujan also draws upon the Tamil Sangam distinction of “Akam” and “Puram” poetry representing the exterior world and the inner world of emotions respectively in his own style of writing. As a translator, Ramanujan was well aware of his responsibilities to convey it in the regional language to the larger readers. The more ecocritical work will come in the future, the more men will learn to behave with nature in a proper way.

The aesthetic for the ancient Tamils was a significant system that had seen strictly conventional yet they are open-ended. They looked upon the entire environment as one unified whole, where meaning was not something that was realized at the end but as a process interlinked all and everything at all points. This comes quite close to what one now recognizes as a biosphere in ecological terms and makes Tinai a concept quite useful in making an ecological reading of literature.