



????????? ????????????? [Aalahayude Penmakkal]

Sarah Joseph

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Archana Vinod kumar says

Aani... a sad memory ..

Rhythm says

Aalahayude Penmakkal (Daughters of Aalaha) is the story of Mariam of Kokanjira village and her family. Kokanjira, the former dumping ground of Trissur City welcomed the dispossessed and untouchable, and all who were unwelcome at other parts of the city. As time goes by, when the land value increased everywhere in Kerala, those first inhabitants were chased out of land by the rich and the affluent. Duped by the church and political parties, they leave the place one by one like a group of crows scattered by a stone. The slow deterioration and alienation of first residents of Kokanjira run parallel to the disappearances and alienation of Mariam's son's and daughters.

A very powerful narration. Sarah Joseph's a forefront of feminist movement in Kerala and her language here is poignant and restraining, despite the heavy theme. There were times, I thought I couldn't take it anymore- the absolute submission with which they walk toward their doom, the way those in the lowest social strata take life and slowly slip into death- unbearable to read.

Sudheesh says

This story is very excellent

Sumith Prasad says

Dharmasankadangalum sandhosham ariyatha penn jeevithangalum iruttinte maravil rogathinte keezhil adimayayi jeevikkuna aanthunayum ..

charithravum rashtreeyavum mathavum 150 thaalukalil aavishkharicha sarah joseph.. !! Namikkunnu

Bilahari says

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Mahesh says

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Vijay says

One of the unique books I have ever read in any language, not to mention, Malayalam. Perhaps it is because of the feel of the subject that Sarah Joseph had chosen would give to any reader. Each chapter through the eyes of Annie and the occasional wise words of Kuttippappan gives an impression that the author had purposefully taken this route of story-telling. Truly a unique novel that deserves two more of the same concoction as a trilogy. I feel great that I have been introduced to Sarah Joseph's work through her novel that got Sahitya Academy Award.

Aathira Kamal says

Aalahayude Penamakkal, the 1999 published Malayalam novel by Sarah Joseph follows the life of a young girl named Annie who lives in Kokanchira (Kokanchira, an adaptation of the place known as Kuriachira now, literally means 'the place of beasts'). From the title to the core, the book is totally dedicated to the lives and stories of women who lives in Kokanchira, where the stories of the place becomes the stories of its women too.

The land had been previously used for dumping carcasses and dead bodies. But when the suburbs of Thrissur (a district in the state of Kerala where the story develops) started to develop places like Kokanchira was forced to become habitable despite of the ugliness because, for the lower class people there was nowhere else to go. They couldn't afford to live in the city and they couldn't find livelihoods in the villages which left the outskirts of the city like Kokanchira, which were far enough from the big city but close enough to allow them to find odd jobs here and there, as their only options.

The story's been narrated in the perspective of 8 years old Annie which itself was a clever idea of the author because the depiction of adult life from a child's point of view was fascinating. The occupants of Kokanchira are latrine cleaners, scavengers and generally other marginalized and oppressed people. These are the people the high class society never wants to acknowledge. Also these are the people without whose help the city life will get shunned, because quite frankly, without these cleaners and scavengers and servants the cleanliness of the city will be nothing but a beautiful dream.

The major characters are Annie and her 'Ammamma' (grandmother). Ammamma is said to be the sole possessor of the unique and powerful 'Aalaha's prayer' and young Annie dreams of the day Aalaha's prayer becomes hers so that she could drive all the evil from her family and surrounding world. But at the end of the novel when her dream comes true, it also happens to curse her to be the sole possessor of her people's damnation. The conversations between Annie and Ammamma are amusing as much as it's informative about the lives of Kokanchira before and after the onslaught of urbanization hit them.

Kochurotha, Annie's mother came from a better family as bride to her father, who left them shortly after Annie was born. But instead of going back to the comfort of her parent's home, Kochurotha decides to stay with her husband's family sharing their good and bad.

Kunjila, Annie's aunt and the only earning member of the family is a mid-wife. Because of the nature of her job, Kunjila has to take up on travelling with strangers day and night which makes her family worry about her safety. Widowed at 14, she develops an attachment toward her colleague, a compounder who is already married. Later the compounder commits suicide due to family problems and Kunjila's world once again shrinks to the four walls of her home.

Chiyyamma and Chinnamma are Annie's twin aunts. They were working in a nearby clothing company where they stitched buttons to the cloths. Chiyyamma got married but her husband banned her from visiting her family because of dowry issues and Chinnamma who flat out refused marriage became pregnant. To avoid a scandal to the list of the family's adding worries, she had to undergo 'home-made' abortion. Then she joined the Pentecost Missionary to escape from the guilt.

Cherichi ammayi and Velliyamma are Annie's other two aunts. One of them is married to Annie's maternal uncle and has to suffer physical and mental abusing from her husband because Annie's father left his sister (Annie's mother). The other aunt is married to a priest from a well-to-do family but she too is banned from visiting Kokanchira.

The only male member of the family, Annie's uncle Kuttipappan, is bed ridden with tuberculosis.

The main theme of the story is the displacement these people have to face as a result of urbanization and how they were forced to form a community of the lowest strata irrespective of the fact that they are the ones who answered to every whim of the privileged city folks. The people of Kokanchira are ignorant of the development and civilization around them. They live in the streets and slums without actually knowing how the world changes around them and suffocates to death when the city walls finally closes around them.

The street Annie's family lives, is called Kodichiyangadi which can be literally translated to 'bitch market'. As mentioned earlier from the title to characters to essence, Aalahayude Penmakal (Daughters of God, the Father) deals explicitly with women. The three generations of women of Kokanchira is depicted by the lives of Annie, her mother and aunts and Ammamma and the fact that Annie remains 8 years old throughout the story when others around her grow up leaving her to be fated as a perpetual child is made intentionally by the author. It's like the author needed a child's innocence and curiosity and wistfulness to tell this story of a culture, its development, destruction and everything in between.

Sarah Joseph made use of two other powerful instruments in the story. One is the Amara Panthal (broad bean trellis) above which Annie believes, exist another world – a world where she and her fellow people will never know the harshness of life. Sara Joseph made use of the amara panthal as a powerful symbol in her story. She used it to depict the peaks and bottoms of Annie's life. For instance, the amara dries off whenever her uncle Kuttipappan's tuberculosis becomes too much of a problem and it flourishes when Chiyyamma's marriage is fixed. And when the hands of urbanization began to enclose Kokanchira, a portion of the amara panthal was rolled over by a road roller.

The other instrument is the prayer to Aalaha which Ammamma claims only she knows and it's said to have divine powers capable of wiping all the evilness off earth. The prayer is used as a medium to vocalize these miserable people's yearnings and hope for a better tomorrow. Annie wants to learn it so that she can change the lives around her by driving off evil from the world. But the prayer is much like a devil's bargain rather than a God's gift, for she receives tuberculosis from her uncle the moment she learns the prayer from Ammamma.

Another speciality of the novel is the language used. Though the inhabitants of Kokanchira speak

Malayalam, their version of the language is considered as under developed and uncivilized. This language degradation extends to the point where most of the words, phrases and idioms – even the names of people, no longer exist.

Known for her feminist as well as humanist activities, Sarah Joseph opened the door of ‘Pennezhuth’ (woman writing) to the generations of female writers to come. Aalahayude penmakal is the first in a trilogy and is followed by ‘Mattathi’ and ‘Othappu’. The novel won Kerala Sahitya Academy award of 2001, Kendra Sahitya Academy award of 2003 and Vayalar Ramavarma award of 2004.

Varna Sindhu Venugopal says

magical

Daya Baburaj says

Its a book,portraying numerous female characters leading a different sort of life,from a poor downtrodden background .the protagonist is a young girl named Anne A self contained girl who is in deep love with a creeper growing in the coutyard,who observes everything happening in her household as well as her surroundings!the book ends with her unexpected death....its a heartbreaking novel in malayalam!!!!hope all reads it!

Jincy says

Thrissur slang is really lovable

Sree Hari says

Anniyod enik Pranayam thoni. kokanjira enna gramathodum.

kokanjira enna gramam und enu. Anne enu perulla aa cheriya kutti ipol valuthayi enu njan vishvasikate.

alohayude pennmakal, anneyude kadhayanu. Avalude kadha ennal, kokanjirayudem, avalde kudumbathinte kadha kude avunu.

Chuttum sambhavikunath elam, kokanjirayude charithram ulpade elam anneyude kunji kannukalilude namal kanukayanu..

Gibin Balakrishnan says

superbly narrated the life of a village/slum formed as a result of the conversion of a place to city. Its become the dumping yard of all the city wastes. The novel is narrated from the perspective of little girl, Annie. Great work of Sarah Joseph. Highly recommended.

THE PRINCE SEVENTHWOOD says

a true classic worthy of malayalam.lovedit

Achuthan Sivadas says

This is the first Sarah Joseph book I've read. The book started off well and it was good till the end. It is beautifully written. How a place that was looked upon badly, becomes a place of importance with the growth of the city and how the lives of the people change are all well written. Liked it very much. The "Thrissur Slang" is very lovable :)
