



PAVLAI OF THE TAMILS IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract. This article analyzes the novel Pavlai by the Tamil writer Chinnappa Bharati within the context of Uzbek literary studies. The main ideas of the work, the system of characters, and its socio-critical orientation are examined. Through the images of Pavlai and Tankamma, the novel reveals traditional views in Indian society, class inequality, and issues related to women's rights. In addition, the inner world of women, as well as the contradictions between love and duty, are portrayed in a realistic artistic style. The article also discusses the ideological and artistic features of the novel and its significance in Uzbek Tamil studies.

Keywords: Tamil literature, realism, female image, social criticism, gender issues, Indian society, character analysis.

Аннотация. Ушбу мақолада тамил ёзувчиси Чиннаппа Бҳаратининг “Павлайи” романи Ўзбекистон адабиётишунослиги контекстида таҳлил қилинади. Асардаги асосий гоялар, персонажлар тизими ҳамда ижтимоий-танқидий йўналиш ўрганилади. Романда ҳинд жамиятидаги анъанавий қарашлар, табақавий тенгсизлик ва аёл ҳуқуқлари масаласи Павлайи ва Танкамма образлари орқали очиб берилган. Шунингдек, асарда аёлнинг ички дунёси, муҳаббат ва бурч ўртасидаги зиддиятлар бадиий-реалистик услубда ифода этилган. Мақолада романнинг гоявий-бадиий хусусиятлари ва унинг ўзбек тамилшунослигидаги аҳамияти ёритилади.

Калит сўзлар: тамил адабиёти, реализм, аёл образи, ижтимоий танқид, гендер муаммолари, ҳинд жамияти, персонажлар таҳлили

Аннотация. В данной статье анализируется роман «Павлайи» тамильского писателя Чиннаппа Бхарати в контексте узбекского литературоведения. Исследуются основные идеи произведения, система персонажей и его социально-критическая направленность. В романе через образы Павлайи и Тангаммы раскрываются традиционные взгляды индийского общества, проблемы социального неравенства и прав женщин. Кроме того, внутренний мир женщины, противоречия между любовью и долгом выражены в произведении в художественно-реалистическом стиле. В статье также освещаются идейно-художественные особенности романа и его значение в узбекской тамилистике.

Ключевые слова: тамильская литература, реализм, женский образ, социальная критика, гендерные проблемы, индийское общество, анализ персонажей.



The novel Pavlai belongs to the Tamil writer Chinnappa Bharati. Even after finishing the translation and publishing the work for Uzbek readers, the emotional impression left by the novel does not fade. In my opinion, the novel resembles a collection of emotions and women's suffering.

Chinnappa Bharati (1935–2022) was one of the prominent representatives of twentieth-century Tamil prose and continued the realist tradition founded by Subramania Bharati in Tamil literature. The annual Chinnappa Bharati Award, presented in Namakkal, Tamil Nadu, to scholars, writers, translators, and literary figures who have achieved significant success in literature, demonstrates the writer's special place and importance in Tamil literary culture.

Chinnappa Bharati stands out as a writer with a unique artistic style. One of the distinguishing aspects of his works is that their plots are based on real events. Such realism further increases the reader's interest in the literary work.

In Russian Indology, Tamil literature has been thoroughly studied by scholars such as L. V. Bychikhina and A. M. Dubyanskiy, and monographs on Tamil literature have been published. In Uzbek Indology, however, Tamil literature remains a relatively new field. Today, for the first time, the works of Chinnappa Bharati are being studied as examples of Tamil novelism. The first step in this direction was the publication of the novel Pavlai in the journal World Literature.

Compared to the writer's other works, Pavlai stands out for its interesting plot and rich artistic style. The central theme of the novel is the life of a Tamil woman who chooses an unconventional struggle for the sake of her love. The writer sharply criticizes outdated traditions and attitudes that still exist in Indian society today and promotes the idea that women should have their own voice and that their wishes should be considered in marriage.

Unable to oppose the rules of society and the will of her parents, Pavlai gives up her love and is forced to marry Periyannan, a wealthy villager. In reality, Pavlai's beloved was simply a poor man with no one to support him, and therefore her parents refused to allow their daughter to marry him, choosing the wealthy Periyannan instead.

More than ten characters participate in the events of the novel. Some directly participate in the storyline and have personal names, while others are introduced through narration or through the speech of characters and are not given names.

Pavlai is portrayed throughout the development of events as a simple village girl, the owner of pure love, an obedient wife, a hardworking mother, and at the same time a courageous woman fighting for her feelings. Pavlai abandons ten years of peaceful married life and devotes herself to caring for her former lover, who has become disabled. Such an event was almost unheard of in Indian society. In order to protect the honor of the family, even Pavlai's husband hides from others that her former beloved has returned to the village.



On the day of the wedding, when Pavlai is applying eyeliner, a sharp conversation takes place between mother and daughter. At that moment, her mother's sacrifice of the younger daughter's happiness deeply shakes Pavlai's heart:

"Mother, do parents not love all their children equally? Why do they divide their affection differently, giving more to one and less to another? Why are you sacrificing my life for my younger sister's happiness? How could such thoughts even enter your mind?"

This emotional wound never leaves Pavlai throughout her life. The writer skillfully portrays the pain awakened in a woman's heart through artistic descriptions and comparisons.

Immersed in the ocean of life and submitting to fate, Pavlai works side by side with her husband in the fields, manages household duties, and lives without complaining about endless labor. In time, she gives birth to a son. However, little attention is paid to this child throughout the novel. The climax of the work appears when Pavlai tells her husband the truth about her former lover. Periyannan had long known about it but remained silent in order to preserve the family's dignity and because of his love for Pavlai.

Pavlai confesses: "I had decided to leave you completely. I cannot say that living with you has made me unhappy. Many women are not fortunate enough to have husbands even half as good as you. In my foolishness, without thinking of the consequences, I committed a sin. Fearing that if I returned to the village and met him again, my heart would turn toward him and I would betray you, I tried to stay away. But fate had other plans. Unable to forget me, he never married and ruined his life because of me. He became disabled and helpless. If he had been rich, my parents might have allowed me to marry him. Now no one remains to care for him. That is why I decided to look after him. Yet there is no way for me to live apart from you forever."

Eventually, Pavlai's first love triumphs, and she destroys her own family happiness with her own hands.

Periyannan is portrayed as a strong-willed, patient, hardworking man accustomed from childhood to enduring life's hardships. Since he never experienced maternal affection in his youth, he sincerely loves Pavlai from the very beginning of their marriage. Even after learning about Pavlai's former lover and despite her leaving him, he never speaks ill of her to anyone. Had life not forced him into hardship and illness, perhaps he would not have agreed to live with Tankamma. Yet betrayal was contrary to his nature. Thus, the writer presents Periyannan as a compassionate man who submits to fate.

Another suffering woman in the novel is Tankamma. She is a poor, illiterate widow with no relatives or children and no rights in society. In Indian society, widows are traditionally viewed negatively and are often excluded from the joys of life. Tankamma is one such woman.



After Pavlai leaves, Tankamma enters Periyannan's dull and colorless life first as a servant woman. Later, despite social condemnation, she becomes his companion and eventually experiences the happiness of motherhood. However, in order to protect her child's future and the family's honor, she sacrifices not only her own life but also the life of her unborn child.

Usually, in the works of Indian writers, goodness triumphs over evil. However, Pavlai is an exception. At the end of the novel, Tankamma dies, and Pavlai's fate remains uncertain. This uncertainty encourages readers to reflect deeply on the work.

Blind obedience to ancient traditions, poverty, social inequality, and the lack of women's rights are revealed in the novel through the moral struggles of several characters.

While reading the novel, readers may naturally ask: "Why is the work named Pavlai if Periyannan's fate is described in greater detail?" However, a full acquaintance with the work demonstrates that the inner experiences of women are fully revealed in the novel. Pavlai's childhood, love, family, sense of duty toward her husband, and the uncontrollable power of emotions are portrayed very impressively. She could have abandoned her love and devoted her entire life to her family, but instead she chose an unexpected path by following the voice of her heart.

Through this, the author emphasizes that women are human beings just like men, that they also have the right to happiness, that they should not be viewed as weak creatures, and that if they wish, they are capable of overcoming all difficulties in life. Therefore, one should not conclude from the novel that "a woman should always follow only her heart."

Periyannan is also portrayed as a broad-minded, kind, and forgiving person who does not divide people by social class and treats everyone equally. Even after learning of his wife's past and despite her leaving him, he forgives Pavlai. He also attempts to protect Tankamma from oppressive traditions and systems. In short, Periyannan is depicted as a man striving to defend women under all circumstances.

The position of women in Indian society is also revealed through the image of Tankamma. Through her character, the writer expresses criticism of the negative attitude toward widows in Indian society. According to outdated traditions that still survive in India today, widows are often considered unfit for remarriage regardless of their age. The writer strongly criticizes such views and raises questions about how long women will continue to be treated as objects and whether human dignity and emotions truly hold no value.

As the novel progresses, the writer increasingly calls for the reform of social attitudes that violate women's rights. Ultimately, the fate of both women is connected to Periyannan, a broad-minded man capable of understanding women's dignity. Yet even he alone cannot stand against society.



In conclusion, Chinnappa Bharati's novel Pavlai reveals in an unconventional manner the fate of women in Indian society, attitudes toward widows, and the emotional strength of women through the characters of Pavlai and Tankamma. The writer seeks to answer important questions concerning women's role in society and the power hidden within the female soul.

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