

When the Wind Speaks



A flower never hangs a banner on the cathedral of its bloom,
Nor teaches the dawn how to pronounce its name.

It opens, quietly, as though unlocking a secret door in light,
And lets its fragrance write an invisible scripture on the air.

The moon does not campaign for the night; it simply becomes its silver wound,
And oceans never announce their depth, they keep their thunder beneath.

A mountain wears no medal for touching the shoulders of heaven,
While rivers earn their greatness by forgetting the road behind them.

The finest stars are often born where no telescope is looking,
And pearls are perfected in darkness, far from the applause of waves.

A tree does not count the birds that borrow its branches,
Nor does the sun invoice the earth for every golden harvest.

True greatness is a lamp that has forgotten its own flame,
A silent bell whose music arrives before its sound.
It is a seed carrying an entire forest without boasting of tomorrow,
A book whose deepest pages are written in the reader's transformation.

So bloom without begging the world to turn its head;
Let your deeds become fragrance, and let time become the wind.
For those who need to proclaim their height may still be climbing
While the truly great stand quietly, and make the horizon taller.

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The Being, Breath, Aspiration and Movements of Dravidian Literatures

Dravidian literatures are not merely four distinct scripts or four separate linguistic traditions. They are four different ways of experiencing life. To examine them comparatively is not to decide which is greater than the others, but to recognise the immense breadth of human experience. A comparative study of the Dravidian languages reveals that their literatures are not simply a family of languages; they are a family of shared experiences. Beneath their different styles and sensibilities, one finds a profoundly human-centred vision. The unity of Dravidian literatures, therefore, is not merely a political proposition; it is also an organic literary reality.

Yet, when we speak of Dravidian literatures, we often stop at language itself-Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam, their different scripts, sounds and grammatical structures. But literature may begin with language; it does not end there. It continues into the soil of a region, the life of its people and the lived experience of a particular age. Seen from this perspective, Dravidian literatures are not entirely separate entities. They are different chapters of a shared cultural consciousness. At the heart of these literatures lie the fundamental experiences of agrarian life, labour and working-class existence, rain and drought, festivals and the rhythms of the seasons. Forests, hills, seas and fields are not merely landscapes or backdrops; nature itself becomes a living presence, almost a character within the literature. That is why village streets often appear more vividly than royal courts, and the struggles of everyday life speak more powerfully than tales of heroic



grandeur. Dravidian devotional literature, too, does not leave God seated upon a distant throne. It brings the divine closer to the human being. Here, devotion does not necessarily mean fear. It can mean questioning, arguing, challenging and sometimes even expressing anger towards the divine. This devotional tradition, in its own distinctive ways, opened pathways towards social equality and raised fundamental questions about caste, class and authority. Each Dravidian language possesses its own vision. Though affinities exist among them, their differences are equally striking. Tamil literature, from its earliest periods, developed an intricate understanding of love, war and social life. It gave emotional experience an extraordinary degree of structure and sophistication, almost treating human feeling as a discipline in itself. Telugu literature transformed storytelling into a fine art. Through the epic, the prabandha and drama, it carried the language

into wider circles of society. Ornamentation and rhythm became natural features of the Telugu sentence and poetic imagination. Kannada literature, particularly through the vachana tradition, brought literary expression out of royal courts and into the lives of ordinary people. In a simple, direct language, it raised intense questions about society, caste and human dignity. Malayalam literature, especially in the modern period, turned increasingly towards the inner world of the human being. Loneliness, psychological conflict and the experiences of migration became themes. Amidst all these different voices and characteristics, what holds Dravidian literatures together is one central presence: the human being. Here, literature does not remain close to power. It stands beside the vulnerable and the marginalised. It questions inequality. It does not merely glorify suffering or transform

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pain into ornament. Instead, it records lived experience with honesty and immediacy. That is why Dravidian literatures have always travelled alongside history. They have become spaces of resistance, and at times, instruments of social transformation.

Dravidian literatures are not simply the story of four languages. They are the cultural autobiographies of the societies of South India.

They should not be viewed in isolation. What needs to be recognised is the continuous stream of shared experience flowing through them. Languages are never static, they change. Times change as well. Yet the fundamental voice of human experience remains remarkably persistent. That enduring voice is the true unity underlying Dravidian literatures.

If examined more deeply, Telangana can be seen as one of the regions where the political character of Dravidian literary consciousness found particularly vivid expression. Telangana literature has rarely placed ornament, royal privilege or praise of authority at the centre of its concerns. It has spoken of drought and hardship, questioned injustice in the distribution of water, and voiced the humiliations of caste and class with directness and force.

The sharpness, irony and impatience found in the Telangana idiom are not merely stylistic qualities, they are cultural responses to historical injustices.

Oggu kathas, burrakathas and village songs are not simply forms of folk art. They are the voices of people standing in opposition to power.

This tendency stands on a common line with the political consciousness of the Tamil Dravidian movements, the anti-caste voice of the Kannada vachana tradition, and the uncompromising realism of modern Malayalam literature.

During the movement for a separate Telangana state, literature transformed language not merely into a means of asserting identity but into an instrument of resistance. In that transformation lays a powerful reminder of the fundamental spirit of Dravidian literatures. Telangana literature, in this sense, can be seen as a living continuation that has translated the political soul of Dravidian literary consciousness into the language of our own times. It is therefore both timely and necessary that we speak today of the existence, breath, aspirations and movements of Dravidian literatures.

Such a conversation is not merely about preserving linguistic identities. It is about recognising a deeper cultural continuum-a shared human consciousness that has breathed through the diverse languages, histories and struggles of South India.

And perhaps that is where the enduring strength of Dravidian literatures lies: many languages, many voices, many histories-yet one inexhaustible human pulse.

Jeeva Jala - Where the Pen, the Voice and Humanity Become a Living Stream

A Review of the Felicitation Volume on Gajoju Nagabhooshanam

Some lives merely pass through time. Some leave their footprints upon it. And a rare few become rivers gathering people, memories, struggles, songs and dreams along their course, enriching every shore they touch.

The life of Gajoju Nagabhooshanam is one such river. That is why Jeeva Jala is not merely an apt title for this felicitation volume; it is perhaps the most fitting metaphor for the man himself: a life that has kept flowing, giving and nourishing. Published by Sahithi Sopathi, Karimnagar, this 420-page volume, brought out on the occasion of Gajoju Nagabhooshanam's retirement, transcends the conventional boundaries of a commemorative publication. It is a many-voiced portrait of a poet, singer, storyteller, children's writer, teacher, activist and organiser-and above all, a profoundly compassionate human being.

Under the chief editorship of Kukatla Thirupathi, the volume brings together the memories, literary assessments, poems, messages and personal reflections of nearly 156 writers, friends, colleagues and family members. The careful DTP work of Vaddepalli Harish lends the substantial volume an appealing and readable form. Priced at ₹300, Jeeva Jala is as much a literary document as it is a treasury of relationships.

Eminent literary figures such as Dr. Nalimela Bhaskar, Prof. N. Gopi, Juluru Gowri Shankar and Dr. Yakub, among many others, illuminate different dimensions of Gajoju's personality and creative journey. Prof. N. Gopi aptly sees in him the rare union of pen and voice. Dr. Nalimela Bhaskar's affectionate description of Gajoju's friendship as being "worth a thousand elephants" goes beyond literary praise; it captures the strength, warmth and dependability of a man who has consistently stood beside others.

For Gajoju, friendship is not merely acquaintance; it is a shoulder offered when another is burdened. Literature is not merely an artistic pursuit; it is a responsibility towards life.

When the Pen Finds a Voice
It is difficult to contain Gajoju Nagabhooshanam within a single literary identity.

His Matti Sarigamalu, a collection of Naani poems; Prana Deepam, his poetry; Gajoju Nagabhooshanam Kathalu, his stories; and Nethuti Gayalu, his songs of struggle, reveal a creator who moves naturally across literary forms.

Yet beneath this diversity runs one unwavering current: the human being. He can discover history in a blade of grass. He can turn tears into poetry.

He can make a song rise against injustice. He can transform lived suffering into a story. His literature, therefore, is not born merely of imagination. It rises from the soil beneath his feet from hunger and hardship, friendship and resistance, social consciousness and compassion.

His is not an art that observes life from a distance. It carries the dust, sweat, wounds and heartbeat of life itself.

When Hunger Became a Teacher

Among the most moving passages in Jeeva Jala are those in which Gajoju turns towards his own childhood.

He lost his father when he was barely three. His mother was left to raise four children amid crushing hardship. She stitched clothes. She rolled beads. There were days when the family had no rice, nights when water itself had to quieten hunger, and years when even a pair of footwear remained beyond reach. These are not simply memories of deprivation. They are the furnace in which his humanity was forged. Hunger did not teach him bitterness; it taught him empathy. Hardship did not



harden him; it sensitised him to another's pain. Injustice did not imprison him in helplessness; it awakened resistance. His mother, who struggled against every adversity to honour the promise that her children's education would never be abandoned, became perhaps the first and greatest university of his life. The lessons learnt there were not written on a blackboard.

They were written in sacrifice. Perhaps that is why compassion in Gajoju is not an intellectual position. It is a memory carried in the blood.

A Teacher Beyond the Textbook
What he inherited from his mother as a value, Gajoju carried into his own life as an educator. For nearly three decades, as a teacher and Headmaster, he did more than complete lessons and curricula. He recognised hidden talent, encouraged young minds and sought to shape children into confident, humane individuals.

For a true teacher, a classroom is never merely four walls. It is a field in which futures

are sown. His affection for children, his contribution to children's literature and his commitment to education reveal one of the gentlest dimensions of his personality: the tenderness of a mother joined with the responsibility of a teacher. Many teachers teach subjects. A few teach life. Gajoju belongs to the latter tradition. From the Classroom to the Movement
His journey, however, did not end at the school gate.

His active participation in the later phase of the Telangana movement and his long association with the Telangana Rachayitala Vedita gave his literary consciousness a broader social direction. His engagement with Swarajali Cultural Association, Eagle Trust, Lok Satta, Karimnagar Film Society, Sahithi Sopathi and other cultural and social organisations demonstrates his conviction that literature cannot remain isolated from society.

He travelled with movements. He worked with organisations.

tions. He stood beside fellow writers. He raised his voice with people.

His appointment as a jury member for the TV Nandi Awards in 2009 was another recognition of his artistic sensibility and cultural engagement. But the greater distinction lies elsewhere. Gajoju did not merely speak from platforms; he walked where his convictions led him. He did not merely write about values he tried to live them. The distance between word and deed, so wide in many lives, appears remarkably narrow in his.

156 Voices . One Portrait of Affection
One of the defining strengths of Jeeva Jala is its remarkable plurality of voices.

Nearly 156 people write about one individual, yet each discovers a different Gajoju.

To one, he is a poet.

To another, a singer.

To another, a fellow traveller in a movement.

To a student, a teacher.

To a friend, a dependable shoulder.

To his family, an affectionate presence.

To literature, an untiring practitioner.

Yet behind all these identities, one image repeatedly emerges: a good human being.

Certain incidents and qualities naturally recur across the contributions. But such recurrence is not a weakness. It is like viewing the same lamp through many windows: the flame is one, while each window gives its light a different frame.

Thus Jeeva Jala gradually becomes more than a collection of tributes. It becomes a collective biography written by affection. Awards may recognise talent. Titles may acknowledge achievement. Institutions may honour service.

But when more than a hundred and fifty hearts gather around one life and speak of

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with warmth, gratitude and respect, that is an honour no medal can manufacture.

The Grace of Gratitude

The dedication of the volume to his parents-in-law is itself a quiet but meaningful reflection of Gajoju's culture of gratitude. It reveals a man who remembers the relationships and hands that helped shape his journey.

There is, indeed, something profoundly maternal in his temperament-an "Amma Tatvam," a motherly spirit that places another's need before one's own comfort.

A mother gives before she counts.

Water flows without asking who will drink.

A tree never rests beneath its own shade.

The true measure of Gajoju's personality, therefore, may lie not in what he accumulated, but in what he shared: with students, friends, fellow writers, movements and society.

And perhaps here the title Jeeva Jala reaches its deepest significance: Water fulfils itself by giving life.

So does a human being.

Retirement Is Only for the Job

Retirement may close an official service record. It cannot retire a creative spirit.

For Gajoju Nagabhooshanam, this moment should therefore be read not as an ending, but as the opening of another literary season.

There are still stories waiting to be written, songs waiting for his voice, memories waiting to become literature and experiences waiting to be passed on to another generation.

His journey may be summed up in a few lines
Hunger tested him.

Struggle sharpened him. Teaching matured him. Literature gave him a voice. Humanity gave that voice a purpose.

And that is ultimately what makes Jeeva Jala significant. It is not merely a retirement felicitation volume.

It is a life reread by society.

When the final page is closed, what remains is not simply the record of how many awards Gajoju received, how many organisations he served or how many works he wrote.

A deeper question remains:

At the end of our own journey, the true measure may not be how many honours carry our name, but how many hearts carry our memory with affection.

By that measure, Gajoju Nagabhooshanam is rich beyond counting.

For when his pen moves, it becomes poetry;

when his voice rises, it becomes song;

when his feet move, they join a movement;

when his hand reaches out, it becomes support;

and when his heart opens, it becomes humanity.

Jeeva Jala is therefore not merely a book. It is a confluence of grateful hearts.

A river of memories flowing through literature.

A life translated into affection. A testament to the quiet strength of goodness.

And long after the applause of felicitation fades and the ceremonies become memories, one truth will continue to flow through these pages like living water.

Gajoju Nagabhooshanam is not merely a name in literature; he is a name written in the hearts of people.

Gajoju Nagabhooshanam truly, a synonym for goodness.