

# CHAPTER III

## CHAPTER III

### SUMMARY OF THE NOVELS

All the thirteen novels of the author have been summarized in this chapter. The summarization of the novels has been done to synthesize the author's key objectives in writing the novel while keeping the content and mood intact.

The role of the main characters and interaction between them to form the plot and the author's message through the novels is captured below.

#### III.I *Āvartam*

'*Āvartam*' (48 pages) captures the modern lifestyle through the mythological saga of Indra and Vṛttasura. The novel depicts the conflicting and disturbed existence of human life. The novel has 20 short chapters to cover 48 pages. The development of ancient civilization is presented through the stories of Indra and Vṛttasura in the backdrop of modern materialistic world. The novel presents the dilemma between the cultural value system and the modern era with the problems that arise due to the same.

Jājāvari has two sons. She is a victim of the male lust, whereby she was physically tortured with force. Jājāvari had taken her revenge by blocking the path of the cave forever with a large boulder where the culprit was taking rest. The author presents a scene where Jājāvari is sitting by the riverside and cherishing her life. She stops her two sons from quarreling against each other. The two sons were totally different from each other in all respects. Jājāvari comes across a group of nomads. She brings her two sons in front of the tribe and seeing their hair and clothes of bark, they are named as Indra and Vṛtta.

The novel hits a fast forward when Indra is seen to be lost in the beauty of Urvaśi and follows her till her cave. There, he meets Gr̥tsamad, who tells him that he would get Urvaśi only if he is successful in becoming a king. He also assured Indra that he would become his assistant if the aforesaid thing matured. He asked Indra, whether he would follow his instructions or not. Indra agreed.

In the meantime, mother Jājāvari instructed Vṛtta to follow younger maiden Jājāvaris. Accordingly, Vṛtta went to follow a young Jājāvari who was healthy sized. He got excited at the thoughts and many questions aroused in his mind.

Urvaśi tried to maintain her relationship with Indra. If Indra is not able to lead the tribe of nomads, then he would lose the opportunity of having Urvaśi. Everyday, she used to follow up with Indra on his progress on whether the nomads are following him or not? Indra responded – ‘to some extent’. Indra had to hide his strategies in order to know the permanent staying place of the tribe. Urvaśi was extremely pleased in getting to know about Indra’s intelligence in the progress of his assignement. When Gr̥tsamad sat for his meditation, Urvaśi offered herself to Indra.

Meanwhile, Vṛtta considered himself a strong person and accordingly, adjudged himself to be the king of the group of nomads. Once, he entered a cave, where a young female nomad was lying down. Vṛtta made her to give herself to him through a lot of persuasion. The young lady called all the other nomads and identified Vṛtta as the King of the Cave. Thereafter, the nomadic tribe used to offer Vṛtta various useful things.

Indra and Urvaśi’s guarded love continued. Gr̥tsamad appreciated Indra’s mental condition and ordered him to take Urvaśi’s responsibility. Indra was very happy with this decision. The two of them started to lead a happy and prosperous married life.

Vṛtta, in the meantime, ordered his followers to wage war - defeat the enemies and capture their possessions. Indra was highly disturbed by this and spent his time reflecting in the cave. He was down with varied diseases and got critically ill. Urvaśi's life started to move southwards. Sitting in the cave, Indra could see the permanent staying place of the nomads. He could hear the cheering of the people with his name. They felt that Indra was their leader. Hearing this, Indra asked them about the whereabouts of Gr̥tsamad and goes to his house. However, Indra fails to find him. Urvaśi was pleased and Indra also felt a sense of accomplishment on being a people's leader. He also had a sense of gratitude for Urvaśi.

Suddenly, the shouts of some nomads were heard, who were trying to capture the entire river. Indra also went downtown to prepare his own force. On the other hand, Vṛtta was in a tired and demoralized state. Vṛtta called the nomads and asked them to get prepared for victory. Indra also called the nomads and asked them to fight for protecting their ancestral property and agricultural land. Indra bathed in the morning and remembered his mother. Vṛtta felt weak at heart and observed a large intense battleforce on the other side of the river ready to attack him. He immediately ordered his own force to wage war. Indra was tensed. The war was his first one. Whether he faces victory or defeat, he realizes that many nomads would lose their lives, there would be loss of infrastructure and wealth, homes and civilization would be destroyed. Whether he is doing the correct thing? How does one win over the opponent and protect his own self? All such questions raise a storm within Indra. He thinks whether all such things were required – showing strength or disturbing peace. Thereafter, a deadly war followed. Many people died in the war and there was huge loss of property.

Indra and his army won the battle and wanted to go to Urvaśi's cave where he would be coronated. The captured prisoners of war would be punished. Meanwhile, Vṛtta lied beside the river, hurt and injured badly. Gaining life, he got

immersed in his thoughts at the foothills. He tried to open his eyes and saw some nomads were shouting. He closed his eyes.

Urvaśi decorated her cave with lights. Hearing everything about the deadly war, she was very saddened. Many Jājāvaris had been assaulted. The captured females had been made slaves. Indra turned out to be an arrogant character who had lost dignity to her. She lied down in her cave when Indra came to her. Indra thought that Urvaśi would grace him and respectfully accept and welcome him. He repeatedly tried to embrace Urvaśi but the latter pointed out that she never imagined that Indra would win in such a bloody fashion. Indra became angry. He forcefully attacked Urvaśi. Urvaśi was surprised and turned speechless and motionless.

Some nomads were in the process of rebuilding their homes after the war. After relishing his victory, Indra could not find Urvaśi any more. He searched Urvaśi frantically. The aggrieved common people started feeling afraid of Indra. All the people came together and thought about searching for Urvaśi. They went to the cave and saw blood over there. They thought that Indra must have beaten her and hence started beating Indra. Disappointed and hurt, Indra goes away.

Indra spends his time searching only for Urvaśi. The pride of the victory in war is washed away from his mind. He thinks that his mother, Urvaśi and Gr̥tsamad have all left him and gone away. He felt thirsty. On going to the river, he finds naked Urvaśi in it and he feels saddened. He also finds himself in naked condition and is surprised by it. Everything came in front of him in a naked manner. He began thinking of his childhood. His dress had been the root cause of all his problems. Urvaśi had committed suicide only due to his coronation dress. He could not carry its weight. Indra turned blank in his speech and thoughts of mind. On the mountain peak, he saw his mother Jājāvari trying to build some new civilization by removing the boulder from the mouth of a cave.

### III.II Añjaliḥ

‘*Añjaliḥ*’, (100 pages) means divine offering. *Añjaliḥ* is an outright family drama with many of the characters offering their comfort to the feet of time for the sake of self-esteem and truth. This story depicts the struggling family life of an honest and simple man named Vimala and his trusting, witty and devoted wife named Milī. The couple had two children named Liṭī and Mitu, who loved their parents.

Vimala works as a lecturer in a city college and stays away from his family in the village. He is only able to meet his family over the weekend during Saturdays and Sundays when he comes to the village. Milī managed the family all by herself taking care of the daily family needs as well as the children. Vimala did not have economic prosperity and Milī often used to complain about the same to Vimala during his weekend visits. Vimala loved his family very much and assured Milī of a brighter future for all.

During his course of work, Vimala refused to perform dishonest deeds for the Principal. In spite of being pursued by his colleague, Vilāsa, he strongly felt that it is against his moral values and held onto his decision. Vimala was ultimately transferred to another college in a new city which was far off. Milī was surprised and sad upon hearing the entire incident.

Vimala joined the new job and gradually discovered that his new colleagues were not co-operative and helpful at all. However, one lady named Kakalidevī helped Vimala very much by allowing him to stay over at her home. Kakalidevī was also a lecturer at the same college. The other colleagues started ridiculing and laughing at Vimala’s decision to stay at Kakalidevī’s home, since she was

unmarried and loved a married man. Kakalidevī, on the other hand, had no evil intentions and she and Vimala were very good friends.

One day, Vimala received a letter from his children – Liṭī and Mitu, stating that Milī is not keeping well. Vimala went home to his village on receiving the letter. When he reached home, Vimala came to know from his son, Mitu that he is frustrated with his monotonous village life and wanted to go outside to study. Vimala agreed to Mitu's proposal after appreciating the reason for his anger. Milī also started teaching in a nearby school. Under the changing circumstances, Vimala felt that their daughter Liṭī would be left alone at home and hence decided that time is appropriate for Liṭī's marriage. In the meantime, Vimala again received a transfer order to a college nearby Milī's school. Naturally, Milī was very happy when she first heard the news but became disappointed when the reason for transfer was known. The transfer order was a result of punishment for the friendship between Kakalidevī and Vimala. Milī trusted her husband and decided to move on in life.

The new college principal, Bidhu, was a friend of Vimala and agreed to help him with his daughter's marriage. Bidhu assured Vimala five thousand rupees from some college fund and also made him sign certain papers as a procedure of granting the same. However, Bidhu cheated Vimala as he did not turn up with the assured money on the marriage day. The family was ultimately saved by Kakalidevī who was an invitee for the marriage and gave them the money which helped them see off their daughter, Liṭī respectfully. Mitu also went off to study away from the village after Liṭī's marriage.



After the marriage, a letter came from the college authorities demanding five thousand rupees from Vimala. Milī proposed to sell off all her ornaments to pay for her husband's false debt. In spite of being innocent, Vimala went to the college to repay his untaken loan. Bidhu was not present and his position was temporarily occupied by Nirañjan who was a good person and refused to take the money, knowing Bidhu's character. Nirañjan asked Vimala to wait for the repayment until Bidhu joins college.

In the meantime, Mitu's letter comes to Vimala stating that he does not want to return to village and that he has found his life partner. Mitu also wanted his parents to come over to his place. After waiting for many days, Vimala forced Nirañjan to take the money along with his resignation letter.

Vimala came back home to Milī and started a fresh life all over again.

### **III.III Aruṇā**

'*Aruṇā*' (36 pages) is a novel in and around the story of a few individuals – Varuna, Yaminī, Nīlamanī who see ups and downs in their professional lives in the backdrop of a downfall in societal values. '*Aruṇā*' refers to the redness of the rising sun and it depicts the inner potential and strength of the characters portrayed by Dr. Dash.

Varuna is shown as an individual without any family ties. He has been thrown out of his home on account of his irresponsible nature and improper behaviour. Varuna is also fed up of life and gasps at the thought of being the best. He feels that being the best decreases one's scope for improvement and wonders if being 'the best' is another form of approaching 'one's end'. His thoughts span through the night and Varuna finds himself in a poor locality in downtown. The locality is formed as a conglomerate of mud huts with drains passing by.



Nīlamanī lives in this locality. He is better known as ‘Nīludā’ (*Dā* referring to somebody being like an elder brother). Nīludā is respected by one and all and people come to him for various needs. Nīludā is an artist and makes pictures for his livelihood. His house is filled with colourful pictures and he lives alone.

Varuna goes to Nīludā’s place. Nīludā expresses to Varuna that he has lost everything over a period of time due to the people around him. He becomes excited narrating his story and Varuna calms him. Nīludā asks Varuna to stay over the night at his place. Nīludā tells Varuna about Yaminī who comes to Nīludā’s house to dance and play the flute. Yaminī is also called Baṇśeswari (Baṇsha meaning bamboo). She also entertains the people by her tricks with bamboo and rope. She has an accompanist – Lallū who plays the ‘*dhāk*’ (a form of drum).

Yaminī starts her day with the rising sun and returns home at dusk. The redness of the sun, both at dawn and dusk has an interim story – the story of hardships of human life, of the daily ups and downs, for which the author has aptly named the novel as “Aruṇā”. The author narrates nicely the natural acts of various commoners such as an old man searching for his spectacles, a hungry elderly woman washing her face, a housewife going outside, a young lady dressing casually, jumping of an young girl and running of young boys. Nīludā whispers into Varuna’s ears – ‘This is my Yaminī’. There is a nice little paradox in the name Yaminī which means night but the character brings along with her, all the activities which the day starts with. Thus the name Aruṇā and Yaminī are very symbolic in their perspectives.

The storyline continues with Nīludā advising Varuna to do something for livelihood. He tells Varuna that he possesses some works of art, which if sold, can earn money for some days. Varuna ponders over his newly acquired profession and goes to the city to sell the articles. Many people pass by in the marketplace, but Varuna was unable to sell any of the pictures. In the market, many people gather to

enjoy Banśeswari's dance and applaud the same. Varuna gets lost in his thoughts seeing the dance – when he comes back to self; he finds to his utter disappointment that all the pictures are stolen. He returns back to Nīludā and being ashamed, expresses that he wants to leave Nīludā's place. Nīludā tells Varuna that situation is the same everywhere and requests him to take his dinner. At night, Varuna overhears Nīludā's conversation with some businessmen regarding his remuneration for some advertising work.

The next morning, again Yaminī comes to Nīludā's place and starts her day with a dance. Varuna feels her love for Yaminī but again thinks of his weak financial condition. Varuna decides on giving up all his moral values. He feels that money is the way to social success and any means to earn the same is fair and right. He also feels that luxury can only be experienced with quick earned money, even obtained through wrongful deeds. Gradually, Varuna becomes a street vendor sacrificing all his social egos. He becomes successful in life. He makes new friends and relationships. He flourishes in his trade and earns materialistic wealth.

Later, Varuna indulges in a debate with Nīludā regarding his profession. Nīludā terms Varuna's profession as a stealing profession. Varuna protests and responds that ethics, morality and justice are all theoretical in nature and are only present in the word of mouth.

Sometime later, Varuna falls ill. Meanwhile, Nīludā is also attacked by some people – Nīludā repents his situation but remains calm. Varuna visits Nīludā and informs about his illness. Nīludā warns Varuna for his increasing solitary nature. Varuna expresses to Nīludā that he wants to marry Yaminī. Nīludā remains neutral on the proposal. Nīludā mentions that he is expecting some clients and asks Varuna to take rest. On client's arrival, Nīludā starts discussing about the pictures and storyline of a book. However, to his utter surprise, Nīludā discovers that his client's name is not appearing in the book although he is writing the story aided by

Nīludā's pictures. Nīludā learns that his client is using Nīludā's fame and reputation for his book but hiding his own name as the author, since the story is not of good taste. Nīludā gets angry on the issue and considers his client to be unethical traitor. He asks him to leave for the day and immerses himself in deep thoughts.

On inquiry from Varuna, Nīludā reveals that his client was an erstwhile teacher but the downfall of society and value system has rendered that teacher to become a drunkard and dishonest person. Both Nīludā and Varuna go to sleep discussing the degraded value system of modern era.

Thereafter Nīludā introduces Yaminī to Varuna and the duo engages in a dialogue. Varuna asks Yaminī about her teacher and the origin of her profession. Yaminī mentions of a megalomaniac youth who died in his own hands while showing tricks in public. That youth had in turn, learnt the trick from a crane and its fishing techniques. It is to be noted here that the author has nicely used nature as a source of learning for earning one's livelihood. It is in sharp contrast to the context of the plot, where the degradation of value system is discussed for earning one's livelihood. Coming back to the storyline, Yaminī was further motivated by the villagers with her dancing skills and all this spiraled as a means for her living. When Varuna asks Yaminī about why she has not married as yet, Yaminī subtly replies that she is married to her dancing profession. Yaminī tells that an artist has no individuality – she has sold everything to her profession and she would like to live her life that way only.

While returning home at night, Varuna comes across the dishonest teacher who had cheated Nīludā. He follows him and finds him reaching Nīludā's home. The teacher shouts at Nīludā abusing him and ends up in beating him up. Nīludā falls down and dies in the incident. Varuna enters and finds Nīludā lying down –

he takes him in his lap and starts mourning and lamenting. Varuna asks for help from the neighbours but nobody comes to help him.

The next morning, Varuna cries a lot. The advent of dawn brings the reflection of Nīludā's treaded path and author uses this theme to name the novel as 'Aruṇā' which signifies transformation – from night to day and from darkness to light.

The neighbours try to steal Nīludā's belongings. Varuna is left deeply hurt by the turn of events. Varuna begins his life as a vagabond and a new struggle starts.

Meanwhile, Yaminī is also seen not to be doing well. Lallū, her assistant is sick and without the drummer, Yaminī's show is incomplete.

Varuna changes his lifestyle, comes to the city and establishes himself. Varuna comes across a sick and weak Lallū who describes that Yamunā has gone out to get his medicines. Lallū also requests Varuna to get him some liquor. Dejected Varuna, leaves Lallū and moves out when he hears the sound of drum at a distance. He finds Yaminī showing her dance with the aid of another drummer. However, her dance is unable to attract the crowd, as it did in the past. Making things worse, Yaminī falls down while showing her bamboo tricks. Varuna gets to know about Yaminī's poor condition. He goes to find food for her but returns later only to discover that the new drummer had fled stealing Yaminī's belonging and left her alone.

Yaminī gains conscience and proposes to Varuna. She suggests Varuna to become her new drummer so that she can begin dancing. So the duo start a new life after due practice.

The storyline ends with Yaminī herself being referred to as ‘Aruṇā’ with the transformation of her life.

### III.IV Madhuyānam

‘*Madhuyānam*’, (105 pages) is one of the early novels of the author which is a love story on the backdrop of hard austerity of Jainism. The background of the story is printed in the decadent phase of Buddhism and Jainism in India.

Samajña, a young Brahmin comes across a Jain monk Arhat Pudgala in a festival. He inquires on the various traits of Jain culture such as wearing white garments, torturing body, fasting, constant travelling and residing in hill caves. Arhat Pudgala explains him the theory of Triratna – perfect character, perfect knowledge and perfect philosophy which enables the spiritual upliftment of an individual. The theory also explains that a *Jīva* attains *Nirvāṇa* through knowledge of seven categories – *āśrava*, *bandha*, *samvara*, *nirjara*, *moksa*, *jīva* and *ajīva*. Samajña was deeply influenced by Pudgala’s theory and initiated into Jainism. With his deep faith and active participation in spreading the message of Mahavira, he later became the leader of the religion and turned famous as Arhat Sāmapratim.

Once on the way of return to his hermitage, Sāmapratim rescued a young and rich businessman whose leg was trapped under a fallen tree. He further took the man to a Jain Brahmin’s family in the nearby village and advised the Brahmins to heal the young man. The young man, named Śīlaprajña is taken special care by the family’s young and beautiful daughter, Nilāñjanā. She falls in love with Śīlaprajña and prays to Lord Mahāvira for his speedy recovery. She also takes oath to initiate him into Jainism on his recovery. Gradually, the duo’s love matures in the light of Jain spiritualism.

Arhat Sāmapratim visits the Brahmin's family once gain and feels irritated with the closeness of Śīlaprajña and Nilañjanā. He advised Nilañjanā to bring Śīlaprajña to the hermitage for his initiation. Since Nilañjanā had already taken an oath for the same, both of them went to the hermitage without knowing the nature and consequences of initiation. Arhat Sāmpratima was once again displeased with the proximity of the duo on that full-moon day. Śīlaprajña enters the initiation chamber while Nilañjanā is made to wait outside – probably an eternal wait.

Śīlaprajña's hair was neatly razored, he took bath, wore white garment and recited mantra from palm leaf. Then he was made to close his eyes while the initiator imprinted three marks on his body with deep and long red hot burning iron rods. The inhumane act was enough to cause Śīlaprajña to lose consciousness. Meanwhile, Nilañjanā returns home after a long wait with a guilty feeling and heavy heart.

Śīlaprajña stays in the unrelenting routine of the hermitage. The barbaric environment and daily torturous lifestyle add to the burning pain of Śīlaprajña. He is compelled to speak about human values and individual opinions against the method of body torture as a means of attainment of *Nirvāṇa*. But Arhat Sāmpratima rejects his arguments on the ground that individual opinions have no place in the hermitage.

Nilañjanā comes to the hermitage to meet Śīlaprajña and talk about her marriage with him. But before her arrival, Śīlaprajña is out to attain higher realization in the form of begging. Again Nilañjanā returns empty handed only to return once more after three years after her father's death. She continues to wait for Śīlaprajña's return. After a long wait, Arhat Sāmpratima advises Nilañjanā to get initiated, supported by the argument that her attractive costumes distract the mind of the monks. After her initiation, Nilañjanā's beauty is reduced to a moving skeleton when she goes for begging. Śīlaprajña happens to meet her and asks her

about Nilañjanā. It is such irony of fate that Nilañjanā, after her initiation, is so transformed that she does not reveal her true identity and suppresses all her desires. Śīlaprajña recognizes Nilañjanā only after her departure but tries in vain to find out her.

Meanwhile Śīlaprajña discovers more truth while begging. He collects money for the poor by begging and becomes famous for his discourses to the people. He discovers the path of sweetness which is the title of the novel – *Madhuyānam*. To him, life is beautiful and each person has a beautiful desire. So he is *sāhasthya*. This *sāhasthya* is the beauty of life. Religion simply controls the excess of *sāhasthya*. Man's liberation is his realization of the beauty, *sāhasthya*.

Śīlaprajña returns to Sāmpratima's hermitage. With his long hair and beard, his identity is not revealed. He discusses the religious path and upholds the value of love. He condemns Sāmpratima's theory of self-inflicted torture and criticizes his arrogance. However, he is soon recognized by Nilañjanā who rejects his marriage proposal. Nilañjanā also rejects his philosophy of *sāhasthya* and *madhuyāna* and perfectly identifies herself as a matured Jain *sanyāsini*. Śīlaprajña departs and builds a hermitage near Nilañjanā's village.

He continues to serve and console the people around the village in the hermitage and gradually his hermitage becomes famous. With the persisting influence of Śīlaprajña in the backdrop, Nilañjanā realises that she is pursuing a mirage of *nirvāṇa* through her hard austerity, discipline and fasting. She argues with Sāmpratima that *nirvāṇa* cannot be attained by torturing the body and soul and questions as to how *nirvāṇa* can be attained after death. Nilañjanā argues that when body is absent after death, soul can neither feel the pleasure nor the pain without the body. All her protests go into vain, when Sāmpratima again advises Nilañjanā to go out for begging for higher realization.



Nilāñjanā gradually feels her bodily desires and goes to Śīlaprajña's hermitage with her ill health and fatigue. She dies on the lap of Śīlaprajña with great love and satisfaction. The latter disappears after the cremation.

Sāmpratīma is deeply touched by the series of events and gets converted to Buddhism. He succeeds the Buddhist leader Yogadeva after his death. But gradually, Buddhism also dies with the rise of tantric cults and lack of physical discipline. Sāmpratīma is left alone in the caves of Puspagiri hill.

The background of the novel well depicts the downfall of Jainism and Buddhism due to extremities of discipline and the entrance of a woman into monasteries. The author has given importance to the humanitarian values as a pre-requisite to belief in any religion. A tantric touch is also seen in the storyline with the value of physical pleasures even in the path of realization.

### **III.V Nikaṣā**

‘*Nikaṣā*’ (40 pages) is a short story depicting the problems of near ones. It is portrayed in a typical village environment wherein the characters are plotted with reference to the socio-economic conditions prevailing in poor and rural areas. The story highlights the problems that are near to the central characters of the novel.

Govinda, the central character is an old priest in a dilapidated temple. The temple is Govinda's ancestral property and he stays along with his old widow sister, Yamunā, in a broken portion of the temple. Govinda is old too; yet enthusiastic with his work. Yamunā remains sick for most of the time and waits for her imaginary daughter named Māyā. The naming of the character is symbolic with the author's intent to reach the mind of the reader. Māyā is actually not a real character but an imagination of Yamunā who thinks that Māyā is her daughter who is growing up in her maternal uncle's place and has grown up to an age suitable for

marriage. Yamunā always asks Govinda about Māyā's wellbeing. She requests Govinda to make proper arrangements for Māyā's stay in their temple.

Although poor Govinda thinks about constructing two rooms in the temple – one would be meant for their own use while the other would be let out on rent for visitor devotees. He plans to use the rent for his livelihood. However, with the passage of time, Govinda manages to build only one room and plans to use it for letting the devotees stay in it. In this way, Govinda thought that he would be able to collect money for construction of the second room. Govinda and Yamunā continue to stay in the broken temple. On the other hand, Yamunā believes that the new room is built so that Māyā is able to stay in it. Yamunā always dreams about Māyā – her childhood, her adolescence, her youth, etc. She continues to be very sick and expresses her last wish to see Māyā. Govinda brings an astrologer and convinces Yamunā that she is passing through a bad phase and still has considerable amount of life left in her. Mīnākṣī, a neighbour, who is also a widow, visits their place and informs them about a doctor. Mīnākṣī's husband was a teacher and currently she is also in the same profession – like others, she also has her eyes on Govinda's newly built room. Mīnākṣī proposes to have Govinda's new room on rent but Govinda refuses to let out the same.

The next day, Govinda goes to the young doctor, Charaka and narrates the story of his ailing old sister. He persuades Charaka to come to their village. Seeing Charaka, Yamunā imagines him to be her son-in-law, but Govinda corrects her. Charaka examines Yamunā and prescribes medicines which are too expensive for Govinda to buy. Govinda, however, proposes Charaka to stay in his new room so that he is able to use the rent for purchasing medicines for Yamunā. Charaka agrees to the proposal and returns the next day to stay on rent in Govinda's new room. Yamunā heals gradually, again inquires about Māyā and thinks about

Māyā's marriage. Charaka uses his time to roam about in the village jungle in search of medicinal herbs. He happens to meet Sūci, who is Mīnākṣī's daughter. Sūci is concerned about Charaka and Charaka realizes Sūci's love for him.

In the mean time, Govinda continues to be bombarded with Yamunā's madness – her questions on Māyā, 'When will she come? What about her marriage? Where will she stay? How is Charaka as a groom?' Govinda expresses to Yamunā that he will discuss with Charaka on the marriage proposal and then arrange for bringing Māyā. Govinda, at last, narrates the proposal to Charaka, who instantly reacts by leaving the room and going away. Govinda continues to explain Charaka about the fakeness of the character Māyā and narrates to Charaka that Yamunā's husband had passed away before Yamunā had given birth to a girl child. The child had also passed away and Govinda took shelter of a false upbringing of Māyā to prevent Yamunā from facing a shock. Govinda makes Charaka promise about not revealing the truth to Yamunā. Charaka goes and visits Yamunā carrying a sentimental feeling for the old lady.

Yamunā, continuing with her thoughts, takes the advice of an astrologer about fixing up the date and time of Māyā's marriage with Charaka. The astrologer tells Yamunā that Māyā is to be seen before deciding upon the same. Charaka, however, had a soft corner for Sūci. He was convinced that both Govinda and Yamunā were mad – one for constructing rooms and one for Māyā. Yamunā again fell sick and noticed Charaka's indifferent attitude.

Sūci meets Charaka and informs him about Mīnākṣī's sudden illness. She requests him to pay a visit to their house. Charaka notices that Sūci's house is flooded with dirty water and the ambience is unhygienic. He recommends them to change their house. Charaka goes to Govinda and inquires as to why the new room was not given on rent to Mīnākṣī? He realizes that Govinda had done so in order to

extract more money from foreign visitors compared to local residents. Charaka was disgusted with the idea and plans to leave the place by telling Govinda that he was going away for sometime to bring medicines from headquarters. He silently remembered about Sūci and Yamunā. Charaka never returned.

Few days later, Mīnākṣī inquired from Govinda about Charaka only to learn that he had left. She again requested Govinda to allow her to live in the new room but Govinda refused again. Later Sūci notices that Govinda is bringing along with him a person to the new room, but he is not Charaka! She repents.

The author uses the various characters in the novel to describe individual motives in life. All the characters highlight the downfall in our value system to fulfill the desires for a more steady and stable life.

### III.VI Oum Śāntiḥ

‘*Oum Śāntiḥ*’ (120 pages) is an engrossing novel whose plot is another edition of a commonly found film plot. The quest and search for peace has been an eternal problem for mankind. Every person tries to get hold of peace and serenity. It is in the very search of this rare element, that mankind has developed civilization and culture but still life has not been peaceful. Through an entire lifespan, one searches for peace but the more he tries, the more he becomes restless!! *Oum Śāntiḥ* is a novel that maneuvers through this search and quest for peace.

‘*Oum Śāntiḥ*’ is a combination of three novels namely, *Oum Śāntiḥ*, *Aruṇā* and *Āvartam*. All the three novels deal with the restlessness and disturbance in human life. *Aruṇā* captures the struggle of lower middle class in urban cities. *Āvartam* captures the modern lifestyle through the mythological saga of Indra and Vṛttasura. Both of the novels depict the conflicting and disturbed existence of

human life. The purpose of human struggle is peace and happiness; however, the results are seldom in line with the goals. Infinite desire, limitless wish lists, endless ambitions and dissatisfied nature are the prime reasons for loss of tranquility. Human life shall only be peaceful, provided selflessness prevails and all deeds are done for the benefit and betterment of others. The author has tried to communicate this message to his readers through various characters portrayed in his novels. Here, in this section, we would take the opportunity to discuss *Oum Śāntih*, the first novel.

In the village Madhupur, lives a poor lady Dhārā with her son Cakradhara near an old temple. Poverty lets her child go with a middleman who sells him off to a contractor. Cakradhara later flees from the construction site of the contractor and finally settles as a doorkeeper in the office of the manager, named Mahendra, of a big industry. The novel hovers around this industry with all the characters having individual motives. The industry belongs to Chandanaswāmī. Trapped in the net of beauty, Chandanaswāmī is married to the beautiful Caruśilā who happened to be his classmate. The base of the marriage is lust and not love. Chandanaswāmī and Caruśilā give birth to an invalid son and later on a daughter named Candrā, who is not looked after by them. Caruśilā falls in love with another youth named Devendra. Through a conspiracy, both Devendra and Caruśilā are killed by a sage named Devrāj. Meanwhile, without proper parental care, Candrā develops to be an ill-mannered child.

When Cakradhara grows up as a labour leader, Mahendra turns out to be the villain who wants to grab the whole property of the industrialist Chandanaswāmī. Chandanaswāmī finds Cakradhara a faithful man and appoints him as the special manager. This is opposed by Candrā who is already in the love-trap of Mahendra. Candrā also displays another side of the disturbed human nature. Candrā represents the selfish side of modern women.

Meanwhile, Mahendra gets arrested after failing to kill Cakradhara in a bomb blast that killed a driver and the bodyguard. Cakradhara manages the industry with honesty and love of the labour folk. Chandanaswāmī, although a wealthy man, is an unhappy man as his daughter wishes to marry Mahendra. He is an insulted father when he expresses his desire before her that she should rather get Cakradhara as her life-mate.

Candrā requests Cakradhara to release Mahendra on bail. Mahendra, once out of jail, marries Candrā in a plan to get the whole property of Chandanaswāmī. But after returning from the honeymoon, he finds that all the property is willed in the name of Cakradhara. He divorces Candrā and as a next plan of action, pressurizes Chandanaswāmī to cancel the will for a remarriage between them. But Chandanaswāmī dies of a heart attack. Frustrated Mahendra sets the industry on fire and dies in that fire after stabbing Cakradhara with a burning stick.

Candrā is now a changed lady. She realized Mahendra's ill motives of confiscating their property. Candrā falls in love with Cakradhara by looking at his simplistic attitude and selfless lifestyle. She brings Cakradhara back to her house for giving him personal care. But Cakradhara passes on entire Chandanaswāmī's property to Candrā and goes back to his village by a car driven by his friend Vikram. Lately informed about this, Candrā follows him and catches him up only when he dies in his old mother's lap.

Candrā builds a monument in Madhupur in Cakradhara's memory and renders a permanent stature to his sacrifice. Madhupur turns to be a pilgrimage due to Cakradhara's memories.

### III.VII Pratipad

*‘Pratipad’*, (59 pages) is one of the novels of the author which is a triangular love story written on simple lines. The storyline describes the reawakeing after a period of dormancy.

Udbhava lives in an orchard with his aged parents. The orchard belongs to them and the family takes utmost care of the orchard. Mānā is a neighbourhood girl who had been playing in the orchard since her childhood. Udbhava is always very pleased to hear Mānā’s voice. The orchard is life to Udbhava. If the trees are hurt, Udbhava also feels hurt. He is very sensitive to the trees in the orchard. How many different kinds of trees are there, which tree has grown how tall – all such things are known to Udbhava. He leads an involved family life in the vicinity of his parents as well as Mānā.

The image of Udbhava also rises in Mānā’s mind. She also remembers Udbhava at all times. One day, Mānā was waiting for Udbhava by the window-side, when he came and informed that classes are going to start in the orchard soon. Udbhava also informed that his parents had given heir consent to materialize the same. Udbhava’s parents had been discussing about his marriage. Udbhava thought that this might be the ideal time to bring Mānā’s name on the table. His parents could not reach any conclusion and started quarelling with each other. In fact his mother informed that unless something is fixed, she would go ahead and fix up her son’s marriage all by herself.

Mānā continued to follow the rigorous and disciplined routine alongwith the students. Udbhava’s love for Mānā increased. Mānā was the responsible teacher in the orchard. A blind person came alongwith his wife to Mānā in the orchard to beg. Mānā insulted them and asked them to go away. Then the blind duo went to Udbhava. He was kind to give them some money. They inquired from Udbhava whether it was the right place for begging. Udbhava was surprised with the



question and sympathized with the blind beggar and his wife. Thereafter, he went to Mānā. Looking into Udbhava's facial expressions, Mānā informed that her work is completed at the orchard and she was leaving. Udbhava remained silent and Mānā went away silently.

Mānā was disturbed on her way back. Udbhava was a very kind person – but he did not know much about discipline and the ways of life. He was knowledgeable but did not know the application of it. He was not having a vision. He himself was a symbol of shelter of hunger. His mother asked him to take care of the farming, since same was avoided for sometime. Udbhava's father is old. Earlier villagers used to pay them a portion of the harvest after farming in their fields, but currently the fields had turned to be theirs. This was mainly due to their ignorance.

Mukunda's flute was heard in the orchard. Mukunda used to study in the morning from Udbhava. Thereafter he spent the day taking care of the grazing of cattle. He was intelligent, well built and attracted all through his flute playing abilities.

Mukunda informed Udbhava that people were not paying royalty after farming in their fields. Udbhava had a socialistic mindset, wherein he informed that he desires that all should live. That day onwards, Mukunda took the responsibility of looking onto Udbhava's fields. Udbhava was also very satisfied with this. He had Mānā's eyes in front and Mukunda's flute behind him. He was very happy.

Mānā was surprised to see the beggars on her return. The next day Mukunda came to the orchard keeping in mind, his loyalty for Udbhava. On his conversation with Mānā, Mukunda failed to realize that her liking for Mānā had increased. Both got attracted to each other. Once, Mānā greeted Mukunda with flowers on hearing his flute. This inspired Mukunda very much and his liking for Mānā continued to

increase. Meanwhile, Udbhava came and informed that he was taking his parents for pilgrimage – it had been their longtime desire and hence he entrusted the complete responsibility of the orchard on Mukunda and Mānā. The love of the blind man's wife towards her husband filled Mānā's mind. She tried to find out Udbhava's virtues through Mukunda. The tussle in Mānā's mind continued for sometime and the music from Mukunda's flute overtook Udbhava over a period of time.

Mānā's parents were concerned about her marriage. They did not discuss about Udbhava as the prospective groom, instead they discussed about Milinda. Mānā was surprised. Milinda came from a respectable family. He was an able portion of a decaying family. He was involved in hunting. Today Milinda belongs to the middle class and his income is not enough. He is not in favour of his marriage but chose not to protest as a mark of respect for the elders in his family.

Meanwhile, Mānā desires of the blind couple's love, Udbhava's face and Mukunda's body within Milinda. She gets married. Mukunda is aggrieved by the turn of events and spends a lonely time in the orchard. Udbhava's father dies in pilgrimage. After performing the rites, Udbhava becomes anxious of his father. He wishes to return and tell Mānā everything. He wishes to see if Mukunda is looking after the orchard properly.

Mānā turns to be a mother. Her earlier desires succumb. But Milinda remains as he was. His conflict with Mānā continues to increase. Milinda does not believe in being intimated by anyone. But Mānā wants the financial condition of her family to improve. Mānā's family encountered new problems and conflicts everyday. Amidst all this, the thoughts of Udbhava's calm self and eyes rise in Mānā's mind. Mānā ponders about the condition of the orchard and the whereabouts of Mukunda. Mānā waits for Udbhava.

Udbhava would return after one year from the pilgrimage after completion of performing rites associated with his father's death. Udbhava continues to think about Mānā and the orchard. Udbhava's mind is filled with hunger. In order to live, work and money is required. So he desired to get some work from an eminent master. He wanted to stay in house and also earn something. The master exclaimed that Udbhava is speaking like a mad person. Udbhava replied that he always did whatever he thought to be correct. Meanwhile, the young daughter of the master came in and inquired about the answer to some question. The old master decided to keep Udbhava as a tutor to her daughter, Itiśrī and asked her to arrange for his food. Udbhava was satisfied. Itiśrī came in with food. The master told that after their lunch, they would discuss further.

Udbhava wanted to impart education to Itiśrī in subjects such as science. Itiśrī was interested about the universe. Udbhava mentioned that it was not possible to go from one place to the other with weak health. Itiśrī was surprised and observed Udbhava fully. Udbhava saw Mānā in Itiśrī. In Itiśrī's eyes, Udbhava is a water-filled container. She wants to purify herself in that water, but all such thoughts are vain in her mind.

Meanwhile, not hearing about Udbhava for quite sometime, Mukunda thinks that Udbhava might have met with an accident and hence he declared the entire property to be his own. Subsequently, it is observed that the entire orchard is treated poorly by all. Even Mukunda's flute does not bring in harmony. Mukunda turns aggrieved. He fears that if Udbhava returns, he would also be very angry upon finding the orchard in this poor condition. Mukunda wanted to find solace in Mānā. He finds Mānā's kohl pot from the orchard. With this, Udbhava was wished by Mukunda's mother before his journey to the pilgrimage. Mukunda finds a reason to go to Mānā to return the same and becomes happy.

Milinda is arrogant about his manliness. He often enters into family conflicts with his wife and child. His son also quarreled like him. One day, Mānā found Milinda to be hitting their child constantly and abusing Mānā. She asked Milinda to go away. She closed the door on Milinda's departure. Mānā's condition was maddening at that time. Mānā also turned angry on her child due to their neighbour's complaint. Her bangles were blooded with her child's blood. The mother and the son calmed thereafter.

After a year, Udbhava took leave of the master and her daughter after completing all the formalities of his father's last rituals. It was the first day after full moon and a good day for his new journey. Itīśrī bowed towards Udbhava. She had a desire for Udbhava in her belly but bid adieu to him. Udbhava went away thinking about Mānā, Mukunda and the orchard. Udbhava had in mind settling down with Mānā and beginning a happy family.

Upon his return to the orchard, Udbhava became suspicious looking into the poor condition of the orchard. He searched for Mānā. The neighbours could not tell anything about her whereabouts. He was surprised in finding his slippers and Mānā's kohl pot in the orchard alongside Mukunda's flute. Suddenly, he met Mānā. He heard Mānā's entire story. Mānā wants everything to be just as before and seeks Udbhava's help in settling down. Mānā wants her child to become Udbhava's disciple. Udbhava returns to reality. He thinks the day was the first day and let that day be a new beginning for the child.

Udbhava gives the entire orchard to the child and asks him to play. The child was surprised by the sudden turn of events. Udbhava became one with the western sky at sunset. A new beginning to all the characters results in the naming of the novel as '*Pratipad*'.

### III.VIII Rtam

‘*Rtam*’, (91 pages) is a closely knit family drama penned by Dr.Dash. It reflects upon the path of truth to be treaded upon by various characters in the story. The novel is characterized by its high level of drama that is built into it.

Kulabhadra, one of the central characters in the story is a simple man who promises to fulfill all the wishes of Shannodevī during his marriage to the lady. After the marriage, however, Shannodevī loses two sons in succession and plunges into a sorrowful life being affected by a weak health. The couple becomes thoughtful about how to carry forward their family tree. With these thoughts, Kulabhadra marries Avani without the knowledge of Shannodevī and brings her home to take care of Shannodevī. With Avani’s nursing powers, Shannodevī gradually heals and gives birth to Subhāṅka.

After Subhāṅka’s birth, Shannodevī’s relation with Avani becomes cold and Kulabhadra tries to advise both of them but to little effect. Subhāṅka is sent to a *Gurukula* (a boarding school) and time passes on. Shannodevī’s jealousy of Avani gradually dies down and both wives maintain a healthy relationship. Once, Kulabhadra inquires to Avani about Subhāṅka’s return and Avani grows angry with a view that Kulabhadra is over concerned about Subhāṅka. She tells Kulabhadra that it is time to fix Subhāṅka’s marriage as per Shannodevī’s wishes.

Subhāṅka almost finishes his studies at the *Gurukula* and becomes ready for marriage as per his mother’s wishes. Kulabhadra is also worried about the marriage. Avani, however wants her child Ananta to inherit Kulabhadra’s property inspite of Subhāṅka being the rightful heir. It is also a matter of fact that Avani’s opinions carry much importance in the family. Ananta is innocent of all such

intentions of his mother while Subhāṅka's life is centred on his hermitage. Matters related with inheritance of property are not of importance to Subhāṅka.

Uparka is Subhāṅka's friend in the hermitage and both of them perform all the work at the hermitage of Alekh, their Guru. An elderly person named Upkantha visits the hermitage with his daughter, Avidhā and Uparka meets Avidhā. They develop a friendly relationship. They also meet Subhāṅka. Their conversation does not please Avidhā about Subhāṅka. However, Subhāṅka happens to develop a soft corner for Avidhā.

Meanwhile Kulabhadra and Avanī come to the hermitage and ask about the wellbeing of Subhāṅka. Both Kulabhadra and Avanī request the Guru, Alekh to give permission for Subhāṅka and Avidhā's marriage. After a lot of persuasion, Alekh agrees to the proposal.

Kulabhadra asks Avanī to decide upon Subhāṅka's place of stay after his marriage. Avanī tells Kulabhadra that Subhāṅka shall stay at Upakaṇṭha's place and look after his father-in-law's property, while Kulabhadra's property shall be looked after by Ananta. Avanī's proposal bares her thoughts and Shannodevī also comes to know about Avanī's mind. Kulabhadra too disagrees to Avanī's proposal.

Uparka meets Avidhā and comes to know that Subhāṅka is not in Avidhā's good books. This pleases Uparka as he also likes Avidhā. The love triangle gradually develops in the storyline. Meanwhile Alekh asks Uparka to go to Upakaṇṭha's place to invite him to the hermitage. Kulabhadra had also visited Upakaṇṭha earlier on three occasions but could not finalise Subhāṅka's marriage with Avidhā. Uparka comes to invite Upakaṇṭha and brings Subhāṅka along with him. Upakaṇṭha comes to know that Subhāṅka is Kulabhadra's son and Avidhā

also comes to know of this fact. Upakaṇṭha agrees to Uparka and Subhāṅka's invitation of going to the hermitage.

Not getting the expected response from Upakaṇṭha for the finalization of the marriage, Kulabhadra gets frustrated and decides to call off the marriage. Shannodevī and Ananta try to cool down Kulabhadra. Ananta feels that probably due to Kulabhadra's ageing, he is burdened with the family pressures and also volunteers to help his father. However, he is demotivated by her mother telling him that he is too young for the job – this rages Ananta further. The drama ends here with Ananta coming to know that it is Kulabhadra's worry about Subhāṅka's marriage and not anything more serious. The news of Subhāṅka's marriage pleases Ananta.

Uparka gets restless about Avidhā. Subhāṅka is also restless and worried about his family problems, that is, the proposal of him staying at his in-law's place after marriage. Subhāṅka requests Uparka to go to his place and inform all about his agreement for the same to avoid further problems. Uparka hides the news to buy time and delay the entire process. Uparka visits Avidhā when his feelings further deepen his desperation. Uparka's distance with Subhāṅka increases. Just as Subhāṅka gets ready for the marriage, Uparka surprises by mocking him with a marriage invitation card announcing Uparka's marriage with Avidhā. Subhāṅka gets unhappy and curses his ill fate for the incident.

Avanī also gets worried on the turn of events. Ananta expresses to Avanī that he does not have any greed for Kulabhadra's property and he wishes the property to be inherited lawfully and rightfully by Subhāṅka. Avanī gets very angry on Ananta's behaviour. Kulabhadra curses himself for the state of affairs and identifies himself as the root cause of all problems.



Uparka and Avidhā's married life is not very happy. Day-to-day problems irritate both of them. One day, Subhāṅka comes to Uparka's place as a monk expressing his inability to attend their marriage. Avidhā treats Subhāṅka as a guest of honour. Hearing that Uparka is not at home, Subhāṅka takes Avidhā's leave reassuring her of coming to their place again.

Subhāṅka meets Ananta at the hermitage and comes to know about the worries of all family members regarding his marriage. Ananta wants to take Subhāṅka along with him to home but Subhāṅka tells that Alekh is not present in the hermitage and assures Ananta that he will return home after Alekh's return from pilgrimage.

Uparka gets angry upon Subhāṅka, feeling jealous about Avidhā's nice behaviour with him. He goes to the hermitage and insults Subhāṅka even after the latter's forgiveness and friendly attitude. Uparka takes Subhāṅka's assurance of never coming in front of Avidhā. Uparka's family problems continue to mature in all respects and Avidhā also grew unhappy day by day.

Ananta continues his perseverance for Subhāṅka's rights of inheritance and confronts Avani. He expresses that Subhāṅka's coronation ceremony must happen on the full moon day of *Vaisākha* month. Avani finally agrees.

Kulabhadra comes to Alekh's hermitage to invite the monk on Subhāṅka's coronation and asks for his blessings. Alekh accepts Kulabhadra's invitation.

Alekh meets Uparka and curses him for his wrong doings on Subhāṅka. He advises Uparka to follow the path of truth. Uparka realizes the truth and feels sorry for Subhāṅka. He quickly returns to Avidhā, who seeing water in Uparka's eyes forgives him for all his misdeeds. They settle peacefully. They are intercepted by Ananta who comes to invite them for Subhāṅka's coronation ceremony.

Dr. Dash has thickened the plot by suitably creating a meaningful climax to the story. The climax is narrated by him as follows:

Ananta is very enthusiastic of Subhāṅka's coronation. Shannodevī feels strongly for Ananta. Subhāṅka is all dressed up. Among the many guests, Uparka and Avidhā have also come to attend the ceremony. Uparka and Subhāṅka exchange greetings with each other. Kulabhadra brings Alekh to the occasion. Alekh reminds Kulabhadra of his promise. Kulabhadra seeks Alekh's advice to follow the path of truth. Shannodevī also supports Kulabhadra for his actions. Avani cracks the suspense by reminding Kulabhadra of his promise. During his marriage with Avani, Kulabhadra had promised to Avani's father that Avani's son would inherit his full property. Also, Shannodevī had once promised that she would sacrifice Subhāṅka on a full moon day of the Vaisakh month. All eyes opened on the path of truth. Ananta was coronated while Subhāṅka went along with Alekh as a monk away from family life.

The story is dramatic in all respects with various elements of surprise, joy, sorrow, romance and selfishness. The author has interleaved all these elements into a storyline with a great climax. The author emphasizes that the path of truth is eternal even among the inevitable ups and downs of family life.

### **III.IX Śaśirekhā**

'*Śaśirekhā*' (87 pages) brings out the ill-effects of arrogance in human nature. The novel also indulges in exposing the readers to the metaphor of moonlight in the path of darkness traversed by various characters in the novel.

Abhrapad is a proud megalomaniac who is elated about his wealth. His neighbour Raghupati had a daughter Lipsā who was also very arrogant in nature and did not believe in the theme of marriage and male dominance in the society. Abhrapad had proposed to Lipsā with high hopes but Lipsā had rejected him. This

enraged Abhrapad who thought of taking revenge on Lipsā. Dinamāṇi, the old servant of Abhrapad, came to know about the incident and tried to counsel Abhrapad about accepting the refusal of his love proposal.

The author introduces other characters Medinī and Śrāvaṇī, who are mother and daughter and live in the same village named Madhugram. They are very poor and Medinī is always very concerned about Śrāvaṇī's future. Śrāvaṇī had attained her youth which was perhaps her only possession, all the other material belongings being already sold off to run the household.

Śrīmukh, an old friend of Abhrapad came to the village. He is a vagabond and a great believer of divine existence. He also knew Śrāvaṇī, who happened to be his childhood friend. Śrīmukh became nostalgic on visiting his old house, where he happened to meet Raghupati, who granted him permission to stay as a guest in his own house. Śrīmukh, however, was having thoughts of Lipsā at the back of his mind on his arrival at Raghupati's house. Consequently, Medinī who came to meet Śrīmukh at Raghupati's house also had in her mind, Śrīmukh's pairing with Śrāvaṇī. Medinī's thoughts could not come to her lips due to the arrival of Raghupati, Lipsā and Bhavāni to the scene. Bhavāni was Lipsā's mother and did not prefer Śrīmukh due to his absence of wealth. Bhavāni was also an arrogant mother providing full support to Lipsā on all her decisions.

On the other hand, Raghupati liked Śrīmukh very much and thought about marrying his daughter, Lipsā with Śrīmukh. This was contrary to his wife's preference and as such resulted in divergence of opinions. Raghupati tried to explain both Bhavāni and Lipsā about the latter's marriage proposal with Śrīmukh and ultimately succeeded in convincing both mother and daughter.

Meanwhile, Dinamāṇi advised Abhrapad to marry Śrāvaṇī. Abhrapad was astonished at Dinamāṇi's proposal and asked for an explanation as to why

Dinamani had selected a poor woman's daughter to be Abhrapad's bride. Dinamani explained to Abhrapad that the latter had already been rejected by others (Lipsā) and marrying a poor girl would secure Abhrapad's self esteem and pride. Abhrapad was already infuriated with Lipsā and seemed to be convinced with Dinamani's logic. Dinamani carried his master's marriage proposal with Śrāvaṇī to Medinī's house and gave a bright picture about Abhrapad and Śrāvaṇī's future after the marriage. He also assured that Medinī would stay at Abhrapad's house after the marriage. Śrāvaṇī was ecstatic on hearing about Abhrapad's proposal – it was like moonlight (*Śaśirekhā*) in Śrāvaṇī's life. Although Śrāvaṇī knew about Abhrapad's arrogance, being a poor girl, she could not opine much. Abhrapad's marriage with Śrāvaṇī and Śrīmukh's marriage with Lipsā happened to be on the same day. Abhrapad did not like Śrīmukh and felt that it was a nice revenge on Lipsā, since Śrīmukh was not a wealthy person. Both the marriages took place without any commitment from brides and grooms.

After marriage, Śrīmukh entered Lipsā's room, only to be rejected. Śrīmukh felt humiliated at Lipsā's actions and left her on that very day. Both tried to maintain their ego, position, superiority and did not hesitate in the separation.

Śrāvaṇī was submissive in nature and tried to maintain a peaceful married life. But Abhrapad's arrogance and dominating nature became a repellent for peace. He even discouraged Śrāvaṇī's speaking with Medinī, who in his eyes was a mere servant and reserved no rights to talk with her daughter, since Śrāvaṇī was now his wife. Medinī continued to be anxious about Śrāvaṇī but had to accept her fate. Dinamani continued to be the faithful housekeeper who cared for both Medinī and Śrāvaṇī. Śrāvaṇī tried to help her husband in various matters, but Abhrapad was reluctant to take her help, discarding and ignoring her due to the poor upbringing and her lack of intelligence. Śrāvaṇī led a sorrowful married life.

Meanwhile, Raghupati was not keeping good health after Śrīmukh's departure and blamed himself for the mishap. He tried to persuade Lipsā to find out Śrīmukh. The latter had found shelter with an old and established person named Induketan and served him. Śrīmukh was ordered to visit various places established by Induketan to bring in updated news. Raghupati passed away thinking about the reunion of Lipsā with Śrīmukh. This further enraged Bhavānī. Lipsā has softened a bit towards Śrīmukh after such long gap, but was still perplexed on what needs to be done.

Śrāvaṇī gave birth to a girl child which was against Abhrapad's wishes. He wanted to have a male child so that he is able to accrue more wealth. Śrāvaṇī thought about ending her life in misery but could not actually do so considering her mother and new born child. Abhrapad was determined in making money out of his child and named her Urvī.

Śrīmukh continued with his assignment of visiting the places told by Induketan. He visited a temple, few villages, schools, hospitals and various other places. Everywhere, Śrīmukh found misery, poor maintenance, dilapidated conditions and malpractices. He was very disappointed on inspecting all this and started for his return journey.

Medinī died of fever and Śrāvaṇī became unhappy. She felt that she is no better than a servant in Abhrapad's household. Against Śrāvaṇī's wishes, Abhrapad trained Urvī to become a dancer, so that she can earn money for him. Gradually, Urvī came to realize her father's true nature. She was a good dancer and Dinamaṇi guarded her against all odds.

Śrīmukh narrated his experiences to Induketan and both discussed about the well being of villages and schools. Meanwhile, Lipsā was frustrated and realized her mistakes. Her brothers acquired the parental property after Raghupati and

Bhavānī's death. Lipsā was only left with a hut. Abhrapad came to know about Lipsā's condition and found happiness in it. It was a nice revenge for him. Śrāvaṇī however did not encourage Abhrapad and advised him not to make merry on somebody's ill fate.

Śrīmukh met an affectionate motherly lady named Candrāmaṇī who counseled him to return to his wife, Lipsā. Meanwhile, Induketan was invited by some people to establish a *Nāṭyamandira* (Dance academy) for which he decided Śrīmukh as a representative. Śrīmukh visited the academy where he witnessed a dance performance by none other than Urvī. Śrīmukh observed immense similarity between Urvī and Śrāvaṇī and decided to meet her in person. He was surprised to find out Dinamaṇī alongwith Urvī and they exchanged identities. Śrīmukh inquired about Lipsā but could not gather much information.

After Induketan's death, Śrīmukh rose to his stature and position. Śrīmukh was aged by this time and desired to have Lipsā back in his life. Urvī returned to Madhugram after the function with the money received for dance performance. Abhrapad was delighted while Śrāvaṇī was disturbed. She blamed Abhrapad for his misdoings and misguidance. During the confrontation, Abhrapad beats Śrāvaṇī and the latter loses her voice. Abhrapad repented his actions after cooling down.

Śrīmukh returned to the village and Urvī decided to meet him. Dinamaṇī and Śrāvaṇī were afraid of Urvī's visit, keeping Abhrapad's temper in mind. Lipsā was also very excited in getting back Śrīmukh in her lonely life.

Abhrapad came across Urvī's interaction with Śrīmukh and characteristically got infuriated. Abhrapad could not control his temper and in the rush of blood, hit Śrīmukh. Lipsā tried to save Śrīmukh – meanwhile all came to hear Śrāvaṇī's scream. Abhrapad was also astonished and overwhelmed at his wife's recovery. He realized his mistake once again.

The story ends on a happy note with reunion of both the families. Śrīmukh returned to Lipsā's house while Abhṛapad, Śrāvaṇī, Urvī and Dinamaṇi also returned happily. The false pride and ego of all individual characters had faded and it was again Moonlight (Śaśirekhā) in the path of darkness travelled by individual characters.

### III.X Śikhā

'Śikhā', (66 pages) is one of the novels of the author which is based on a village boy's ambition to adopt urban lifestyle, his life in the city, his northward and southward journey in life. The storyline describes the mindset of the rural middle class who have an affinity for making it big in the cities.

Kulamapi is an old widower Brahmin who has a son, Vilāsa and a daughter Rajanī. He remained busy with his involvement in worshipping God. Murmu was a poor orphan whom Kulamaṇi rescued from the temple. Murmu was very aggrieved with his mother's death and Kulamaṇi took care of him by giving him shelter. Since then, Rajanī was the sister and Murmu, the brother. Vilāsa was more of a trader. His attachment to home was lesser due to his business. He is always in conflict with his father. While the father believes that one could get in touch with divinity from the position of poverty, Vilāsa did not believe in poverty. Vilāsa's yardstick was economic prosperity. Rajanī was a widow. She spent time taking care of the old in the village. In spite of nurturing a wishlist, she concentrated in prayers, fasting and devotion to God. In front of her, were many other fortunate girls. Such was Śāmpā, who was an educated girl. Śāmpā was the wife of Nīśānt, who was Vilāsa's friend.

Nīśānt worked in the minister's office. He was a corrupt individual who did not differentiate between ethical and unethical practices. He believed in dumping people for self-benefits. He did not bother to care for his family.



Once, Kulamaṇi returned from pilgrimage carrying holy water in a container. Instead of taking blessing from him, Vilāsa sarcastically mentioned that he would have been happier if Kulamaṇi had brought the container full with money.

Kulamaṇi expelled Vilāsa on hearing his remark. Rajanī and Murmu could not follow what was right. Since then, Vilāsa used to live away. Rajanī also understood with the passage of time, that her chances of remarriage were very lean. Murmu understood Rajanī's situation and requested Kulamaṇi to arrange for Rajanī's remarriage. Kulmani entrusted the responsibility of searching for a groom with Murmu. Murmu tried his best, but could not find a suitable match for Rajanī. Then Kulamaṇi explained that in recent times, marriage was a big problem and many unmarried girls were leading lives like widows. So it would naturally be very difficult to find a match for a widow. Meanwhile, Kulamaṇi became thoughtful on seeing the successful children of neighbours.

Vilāsa and Nisānt discuss about their means of earning money. Both opine that they would be able to earn money till the time they are dishonest. Vilāsa thinks of establishing a women's rights organization for his publicity. He also decides to appoint Śampā as the Secretary of the organization. Both Nisānt and Śampā became happy and excited about it.

Gradually, Śampā turned a puppet in the hands of Vilāsa. Śampā was beautiful – the reason for Nisānt's pride. She went from door to door speaking about women's rights. She finds out that women are exploited everywhere – at homes and even at workplaces. Women should have better education and thoughtfulness. They should rise above all narrow mindedness. While Śampā leaves the house for a noble cause, Nisānt leaves the house for working dishonestly.

Vilāsa was too busy to think about his family. He only had the thought of Rajanī's remarriage. His modern mindset allowed him to think that being a widow does not necessarily imply leaving all worldly pleasures and spending the rest of one's life in misery. Most men would not do so. In fact, maximum men would restart their family lives afresh. But Vilāsa's thought process would never match with that of Kulamaṇi's. Śampā supported Vilāsa's thought process.

Śampā travelled to Vilāsa's village. She inquired about Vilāsa from Kulamaṇi. In turn, Kulamaṇi abstained from responding and ordered Rajanī and Murmu to look after the guest. When Śampā came to know about Rajanī, she informed her that she was the secretary of a women's organization and her organization arranges for the remarriage of widows such as Rajanī. She also informed Rajanī that Vilāsa was the sponsor of such an organization. Śampā tried to explain matters to Rajanī and motivates her but goes away after some time being apprehensive. Rajanī continued with her dreams.

Śampā became more involved in running the organization and started to return home late. This led to her conflict with Niśānt and the same reached extremities. Śampā started to speak about equality of rights. During their conflict, Vilāsa's name also came up. Śampā expressed that it was due to Vilāsa that Niśānt was well off. Niśānt asked Śampā to leave and Śampā informed that she was going away to her father's place. Niśānt was drunk and expressed that he wanted to kill both Śampā and Vilāsa.

Meanwhile, Vilāsa was unanimously selected to contest the election for the position of Mayor. He came out for his election rallies propagating that he would eradicate everybody's unhappiness. He also thought about using Śampā in his campaign to attract more women. Śampā came and informed him that she had left Niśānt and requested for more organizational work. Vilāsa tried to explain her but she was firm with her decision.

Three ladies come to work for Vilāsa – Rajanī, Rojā and Śāmpā. Another girl, Varṣā was the second wife of the village head. Earlier, Varṣā loved Chinmay, but when he went to his uncle's place, Varṣā's father got her married off to the village head to return his loans. Chinmay was saddened by the turn of events and became a sage. Varṣā was dissatisfied with her marriage. Some days later, Varṣā came to know about Chinmay's death and became restless. She also died in grief. Vilāsa tried to think about Śāmpā in Varṣā's backdrop. He tried to think about his father and sister. Rojā gave him peace. Vilāsa fell in love with Rojā and inquires whether she is married or not. Rojā informed in turn, that she belonged to a different religion and their marriage was not possible. Vilāsa tried to explain logically to Rojā. Rojā agreed and Vilāsa married Rojā by giving her a ring and his necklace. Rojā began to wait for Vilāsa but the latter seemed to forget her. He was running after new excitements. Consequently, Śāmpā and Nīśānt had a divorce.

Kulamāṇi was ailing and Murmu and Rajanī looked after the household. Rajanī was saving money for her father's pilgrimage to Puri during the full moon day of the month of *Kārtika*. Meanwhile Vilāsa won the election, which displeased Kulamāṇi. He thought that his son must have won by evil means. He was content with his simple lifestyle. Murmu was thoughtful about Rajanī's marriage and continued to discuss the issue with Kulamāṇi.

Vilāsa thanked Śāmpā for her assistance to the former in fighting for the election. Śāmpā was pleased. They came across ailing Nīśānt's letter seeking aid from Vilāsa, if required. Śāmpā condemned Nīśānt's approach. To divert the topic, Vilāsa informed Śāmpā about the higher state election and again requested for her help. Śāmpā confirmed to help him. Vilāsa spends time in sorting out various labour issues.

Murmu organized for the pilgrimage to Puri. Kulamaṇi counted his days and Rajanī got converted to be a disciple of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Murmu did everything for the household dedicatedly and took his father and sister to the pilgrimage.

Śampā continued to campaign for Vilāsa relentlessly. She ultimately fell sick and reflected upon her past life. She recollected that she had undergone abortion during her early days and that is the reason she was childless till date. It was irony of fate that she now campaigned to control population growth. Feminism boils within her.

Vilāsa suffered defeat due to conspiracy by his associates. He went to Śampā who refused to speak with him. He also remembered Rajanī and Rojā. Amidst all this, Śampā came to know about Niśānt's death. She turned mad and lost conscience.

Murmu, Kulamaṇi and Rajanī used to spend their days in Puri. Kulamaṇi did not differentiate between Murmu and Vilāsa. At night, Kulamaṇi called Murmu and told him that he would inherit the property after Kulamaṇi's death. He also informed Murmu that he had to take care of Rajanī after his death. Murmu disagreed to take the property. Kulamaṇi also requested Murmu to perform his last rites. Murmu had to give away Kulamaṇi's sacred hair and other things of prayer in the Ganges River. Murmu agreed. The next day, Kulamaṇi died. Murmu performed all the last rites as per his commitment.

Vilāsa returned upon hearing the death news. He spoke foul to Murmu and asked him to return the property to Vilāsa. Murmu was composed – he came with a box with the will, the sacred hair etc. and requested Vilāsa to take over everything. Rajanī also came to the scene on hearing the shouting. Seeing Rajanī, Vilāsa returned to his conscience. He wanted to leave everything but Murmu tried to explain matters to him.

Leaving everything, Vilāsa went away and nobody was able to trace him further. Śāmpā also thought about the past and lamented.

### **III.XI Śitalatṛṣṇā**

‘Śitalatṛṣṇā’, (76 pages) as the name suggests is a story of suppressed human desires, unfulfilled appetite for lust and lack of physical desires of the central male character, Ṛtwik. The novel illustrates a strained relationship between a husband and wife and how unfulfilled desires continue to haunt the central characters in the plot.

Ṛtwik is married with Ṛti and the couple shares a peculiarly cold relationship. Ṛtwik’s love for Ṛti is purely platonic and he strongly believes that real happiness does not exist in momentary physical relationships. However, Ṛti did not believe in Ṛtwik’s theoretical approach to their married life and always desired to have a carnal relationship with her husband. The divergent opinion of the couple led them to arguments and both Ṛtwik and Ṛti tried to put forward each other’s logic but to no good effect.

The story continues in Ṛtwik going to sleep and Ṛti sitting sleepless by the door. Ṛtwik dreams of a sage about to make love with Ṛti and frightened, he wakes up to shout for Ṛti. He finds Ṛti to be safe and both husband and wife continue the night without any physical relationship. Ṛtwik was an academic person and the next morning he starts his journey for a village along with some manuscripts. On his way, Ṛtwik takes a boat to cross the river. On the boat ride, Ṛtwik learns about the love of the boatman for his wife, Sumatī. He comes to know that the boatman had two children out of his happy family life. It was late in crossing the river and the boatman and his wife offered Ṛtwik to stay over at their house for the night.

That night, Sumatī offered a flower to Ṛtwik. She mentioned that the flower had both fruits and seeds in it and asked Ṛtwik to search for it. The author creates

an impression in using a paradoxical analogy of Ṛtwik's search for flower, fruit, seed and his cold physical desires. During his night stay, Ṛtwik also happened to see the boatman making love to his wife. However, he was determined with his coldness and lack of thirst for sex.

Bidding adieu to the boatman and his wife, Ṛtwik returned home to Ṛti the next day and gifted her with the flower. Ṛti was feeling happy to see Ṛtwik gift her with a flower but she was abruptly stopped in her thoughts by Ṛtwik who bluntly responded that the flower was not a gift signifying of any carnal romance or desire. Ṛti felt depressed on Ṛtwik's behaviour.

Next, Ṛtwik proposed Ṛti to go with him in search of wealth, child and fame. They started off their journey and first came across an old man who was very upset with his own son. The old man expressed that his son had not taken care of him and hence he was disturbed. Ṛtwik explained to Ṛti that the old man was not satisfied with life because he possessed desires to spend more.

Then they meet a farmer, Rāmdās whose wife is about to deliver their fifth child. Rāmdās was worried about his wife who was suffering from pain and asked the couple to bless them. Ṛtwik explained to Ṛti that once the baby is delivered, the couple would once again indulge in meaningless momentary bodily pleasures which would again, in turn, lead Rāmdās and his wife to a similar situation. The author is successful in bringing out Ṛtwik's pessimism for lust, desire and sexual pleasures.

Ṛti was tired and they decided to take some rest by the shades of the palace of Śilāditya, who is a rich and ill-natured person. There, they hear the shouts of a girl and decided that it is better to move out of the area. Again, the author is successful in bringing out the adverse side of the subject matter.

Searching for water, R̥twik and R̥ti visit a temple, where they find a sage propagating the cardinal principles of philosophy and life. In the meantime, the sage was attacked by a local bull and in turn, the sage managed to escape with the accumulated money from the proceedings. R̥ti understood that the sage was a fraud and it was only by his mischievous acts, that he was trying to build fame.

R̥twik and R̥ti continue their journey till they hear the melodious sound of flute being played by a boy named Mohan. Soon, they see Vasumatī, a girl approaching Mohan and the couple end up having sex. R̥ti was excited and held R̥twik's hand, who again scolded her and explained that such deeds are momentary and do not yield real happiness.

It started raining suddenly and R̥twik and R̥ti were forced to take shelter in the balcony of a closed house. The old house owner provided shelter to the couple along with food and clothes. Both R̥twik and R̥ti were taking the old man's gestures with much apprehension. However, the old man continued to narrate the story of his sorrowful life where he had lost his family due to his own business and natural calamities. The old man had to accept the fact that his wife was no longer his own but belonged to another person who had provided her shelter during a flood when the old man happened to be out of the village for personal business. Hearing the dreadful story, R̥ti started crying and felt that she is suffering from fever. The old man was now a teacher in a local school and spent his time with the school children thinking them to be his own children. Although, R̥ti was not keeping good health, the couple started their return journey the next day.

They returned home and R̥ti fell terminally ill. R̥twik cared for R̥ti, sat besides her and rubbed her whole body. He started thinking of various incidents including that of Mohan's flute tune and felt aroused. It was an irony that R̥ti was now too ill to respond to R̥twik's expressions. R̥twik wanted that R̥ti should not leave him so soon and also desired to spend his next life with R̥ti. With all her

unfulfilled desires, R̥ti passed away and left behind R̥twik with both of them drowning in the cold thirst for lust and physical desires.

### **III.XII Tilottamā**

‘*Tilottamā*’ (102 pages) is a novel describing a complete love story of two young college students – Puṣpavallava and Tilottamā. Puṣpavallava is an honest human being while Tilottamā is a pretty lass. He is promoted as a leader by his hostel mates – Aśutoṣa and Vadrikeśa.

Once, the friends decided to organize a picnic in the Kālijaī hills for the entire batch of students. Puṣpavallava falls in love with Tilottamā during the college picnic, where their love blossoms during a boat ride in the Chilka Lake. After returning to their respective native places during vacation, they are forced to marry in different places due to compelling circumstances.

Tilottamā gets married to Bhāgyadatta who is a rich and capricious youth but not at all gentle in nature. On the first day of their marriage, Bhāgyadatta comes across a letter and some photographs of Tilottamā and Puṣpavallava sent by the latter himself, wishing Tilottamā a happy and prosperous wedded life. Bhāgyadatta, being possessive was infuriated with all this and decides to take revenge on Tilottamā.

After spending the night with Tilottamā, who was innocent of all this, Bhāgyadatta elopes with a village girl named Nīlimā who was a former classmate of Tilottamā and always envied her. Nīlimā’s eyes were always upon Puṣpavallava and she discouraged Tilottamā of having any relationship with Puṣpa. Bhāgyadatta takes Nīlimā to a holiday home in a jungle where both of them are unfortunately



killed by tribal people. The tribals had suspected that Bhāgyadatta glanced lustfully at their women and girls. Tilottamā also leaves Bhāgyadatta's home and spends life as a hermit named Madhusmitā in a hermitage near Dhauli hill. She is also well looked after by Padmakāñcana, another hermit.

On the other part of the story, Puṣpavallava, after knowing about Tilottamā's marriage, gets married to Madhuchhandā under social pressures from near ones. Madhuchhandā happened to be a beautiful girl. The two were leading a peaceful life, while all of a sudden, Madhuchhandā's death happens while giving birth. Puṣpavallava broke down both mentally and physically after his wife's death.

Aśutoṣa and Vadrikeśa, who happened to be Puṣpavallava's college friends, are teachers in a school at the foothills of Dhauli hill nearby Tilottamā's hermitage. One day, the two friends travelled to the hermitage hoping to meet lady hermit and happened to meet Tilottamā by surprise.

The two friends travelled to Puṣpavallava's village to convey Tilottamā's sad and unique story. Having found Puṣpa in a broken down condition, the two friends convince him to think about rebuilding his life with Tilottamā.

Tilottamā hears everything from Vadrikeśa and Aśutoṣa but is not sure about accepting the marriage proposal. She felt that having lost her purity, she was inappropriate for Puṣpavallava. She requested for a week's time so that she can prepare herself for marriage. When the three friends reached the hermitage to meet Tilottamā after five days, they find her dead of silent fasting in her room.

### III.XIII Visargah

‘*Visargah*’ (78 pages) is a novel whose plot hovers around a potter’s family and the struggle for escaping the shooting pain of life. Nakula is a potter. His family comprises of his wife – Avinā, son – Jina and ailing father – Kapila. He also had a daughter Ilā, who has died. The family is struck with poverty and Nakula goes for a suicide attempt. Avinā interferes and saves Nakula. She tries to bring back normalcy in Nakula’s life.

Nakula reflects that even after a decade of their marriage, there has been no financial stability to their family and he blames himself for that. Kapila advises Nakula to stay away from such sorrowful thoughts. Kapila is a symbol of traditional values, patience and of oceanic thoughts. Meanwhile, Avinā asks Nakula to sell the dried utensils and meet her parents on the way. On his way to the in-law’s place, Nakula remembers her dead daughter Ilā and also ponders upon the reason for his very existence. His mind was again motivated for another suicide attempt. So, he climbed a tree at the river banks and consequently, a piece of cloth fell down onto a passerby. The person below was astonished at the turn of event and thought that Nakula was a thief. Nakula consoled him and realized that he was blind and none other than Kalanidhi, a distant relative of his. All the family members of Kalanidhi had earlier died in a fire which resulted in the turn around of Kalanidhi as a *Sanyāsi*.

Kalanidhi also explained Nakula and tried to divert him from his suicidal objective. He pointed out, that even committing a suicide would neither make Ilā return, nor get rid of his financial distress. Nakula was surprised by Kalanidhi’s transformation. Nakula went on to his initial destination of his in-law’s place. When his father-in-law tried to explain him, Nakula expressed that Ilā was creating hinderances in his livelihood. After seeing his father-in-law, Nakula met his sister-in-law, Suparnā and started his return journey.

On returning home, Kapila and Avinā were relieved to have Nakula back. They inquired about his in-laws, while Nakula responded in counter-inquiring about their son. He laments with the thought of his financial incapability to buy medicines for his son.

The absence of Ilā is predominant in the first thirty pages of the novel. Both the parents deeply miss her and plunge into the ever-diffusing thoughts of life, death and their dreadful state. In order to create sensations in the novel, the author creates two suicide sequences for Nakula as an attempt to break away from the thoughts of their deceased child, Ilā. Suicide has been articulated to be an effective theme in the novel.

Nakula wanted to discontinue their family business of pottery and proposed to start a brick business – however, Kapila did not agree to it. One day, after selling the earthen pots, a dejected and tired Nakula goes to Kalanidhi's hermitage and asks for solace. Avinā is also in search of means for ending their impoverished state of life.

Meanwhile, Nakula tells Avinā to organize for her mother's 'shraddh'. Kapila recalls that her wife had earlier died of hunger and feels sorry for it. After the 'shraddh', Nakula goes out to find a girl running for a suicide attempt. Nakula saves her and finds that it is none other than Suparṇā, who had lost conscience. After regaining her sense, Suparṇā feels ashamed and sorry. Fed up with her husband Sukarṇa's wayward and distressing behaviours, Suparṇā was forced for the suicide attempt. Nakula successfully rescues Suparṇā and brings her home. Avinā consoles Suparṇā. She thinks to herself that both Nakula and Suparṇā are similar in their suicidal tendencies.

Nakula informs Avinā that Sukarṇa had undergone change after his migration to the city – hence, the problems. Avinā instructs Nakula to visit the city and explain matters to Sukarṇa. On his way to the city, Nakula stops over at

Kalanidhi's ashram and describes everything to him. Kalanidhi blames everything on materialistic wealth and advises Nakula to read Sukarṇa's mind effectively. After meeting Sukarṇa in the city, Nakula comes to know that the origin of the problem is that Sukarṇa is continuously being compared by Suparṇā with Nakula and hence the dissatisfaction. Nakula requests Sukarṇa to return and informs that presently, Suparṇā was at his residence. Hearing this, Sukarṇa gets agitated and enters into a conflict with Nakula. Nakula turns sad and concludes that Sukarṇa does not have any wish to return back.

Nakula returned home and tells Avinā about his meeting with Sukarṇa. However, Suparṇā remains unaware of the incident. Avinā started taking extra care of Suparṇā, since she was pregnant. One day, after doing his pottery, when Nakula was washing his hands, he overheard neighbours discussing about an improper relation between Nakula and Suparṇā. Nakula was disheartened by this.

Nakula's father, Kapila was very sick and Nakula took him to Kalanidhi's hermitage. Kapila died over there. Suparṇā and Avinā came over to the hermitage to attend the last rites of Kapila. After returning home, Nakula turned sad remembering the discussion of neighbours. Avinā explained not to worry. Suparṇā also turned sad, but mentioned not to pay heed to such discussions. The couple turned happy thinking that Ilā may return through the new born baby of Suparṇā. Avinā again requests Nakula to inform Sukarṇa about the pregnancy. However, Nakula disagrees to go anymore and informs that he would take all responsibilities of Suparṇā and the new born. He took his son to Kalanidhi's hermitage.

Meanwhile, Suparṇā gave birth to a girl child. Nakula and Avinā, both thought that Ilā had again arrived in their family. Avinā again asked Nakula to inform Sukarṇa. Nakula found out that Sukarṇa had remarried and gone elsewhere. He informed back the same to Avinā disappointedly. As the child grew, Suparṇā also understood that Sukarṇa would not return. Hence, she explained her situation