

Nadugadhika

K.J. Baby

Introduction

K.J. Baby (born, 1954) is a well known playwright, novelist and film maker from Kerala. His life is dedicated to the study of the life of Adivasis in Kerala. The Paniya tribe in Malabar had many customs and rituals which they observed with much faith. They were made slaves by landlords and were controlled by the leader called the Mooppan.

This Play is an attempt to portray their life in the modern period. When the British occupied Malabar the Masters like the Thamburan made them spies to betray Pazhassi Raja to them. When British rule ended the Thamburan persuaded them to vote for the party that came into power. In spite of all the changes that happened since independence the life of these aboriginals is still miserable.

The play dramatically presents the life and rituals of the Paniya tribe.



SUMMARY

The play is in the form of a ritual drama, part song and part dialogue. It is about the centuries old slavery of the adivasi tribes Adiyas and Paniyas of Kerala.

The characters form a family of the tribal community, the Thamburan their traditional feudal lord and the Gadhikakaran who is like a chorus.

Sound of *thudy* (a drum) and *cheeni* (flute) heard and the tribals enter dancing. The Thamburan comes and places them in different parts.

Lakshman is an educated member of the family. The Thamburan tells him not to forget that Brahman created the four castes from his forehead, his mouth, his chest and his limbs. Others below including the slaves were created to serve the four high castes.

The song in praise of Kali is heard; it is the slave's song to liberate him from misery and hunger.

Vella, the daughter of Yachan is tempted by a local big shot to satisfy his sex hunger, asks her to come to the woods. The dancers advance and take her to their group.

