

**Politics is Savage to Common Man: A Study of Kandasamy's
*Visaranai Commission***

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The novel *Visaranai Commission* by Sa. Kandasamy is a traditional novel which possesses the characteristics of a strong plot which portrays the problems of the characters. This novel has high intensity clashes between political factions which destroys the life of a common man. This novel is so precise and emotional in its description. While reading this novel, the reader can sense that the characters are our real-life personas that travel with us. This novel was published in 1994 and received Sahitya Akademi Award in 1998.

Sa. Kandasamy was born in 1941 at Maayiladuthurai. He started writing fairly at the age of twenty-five. His first novel is *Chaayaavanam*. This novel has been listed as one of the masterpieces of Indian literature by National Book Trust and Doodarshan has turned this masterpiece into a short film too. This novel is not traditional; it is very unique and is much ahead of time. He combines nature along with its beauty and bounty and the traditional lifestyle of the people. This novel discusses the destruction of forests in a period during which this topic was not even raised to talk. During his long and illustrious career, Sa. Kandasamy has received several prestigious awards and honors such as Sahitya Akademi Award, Lalit Kala Akademi Fellowship, Kalaimamani Awards, etc. He has a series of collections of works which portray the Tamil culture and tradition to the world.

In today's context, the three important aspects of social life in Tamil Nadu comprise of politics, cinema and religion. When politics is taken into account, it not only means the politicians and political parties but also the concepts they follow. It speaks about the bureaucratic class, the politicians as a communication device and the people who are behind the politicians to drive them. Cinema is also included in the same category; it does not comprise of just heroes and heroines. Cinema creates habits and sets trends. It can easily change the mindset of the people. The impact of cinema in today's world is huge. Further,

religion has become the highest source of business in today's world. A human being, rather than describing his birth according to Darwin's principle, starts to explain his identity based on a particular religion or community.

In this situation, the writer has chosen politics and religion as the background for his novel. This novel has two main characters – Thangarasu, a bus conductor and Rukmini, a school teacher. The protagonist loses his life by involving himself in a social mess to which he has no relevance. His wife, Rukmini, is losing her strength and will to live because of a disease. The importance of this novel is understood when it is read with deep attention and understanding. A cold war between the transport department employee and the police department employee quickly turns into a street fight in which Thangarasu loses his life. A meaningless death of a common man has deeply affected the author. *Visaranai Commission* is a novel which portrays fifty years history of Tamil Nadu.

Thangarasu and Rukmini serve as the epitomes of every middle-class citizens living their lives. They go through everyday issues like water problems and financial issues. They have no child, life is not a bed of roses, but nothing has gone wrong till the day Thangarasu leaves for work when a procession is about to happen. The narration shifts between the past and the present. The author gives information about his childhood, his irate father trying to teach him football, his school days, him settling to the job of a bus conductor and his marriage to Rukmini, side by side as the story moves in the present. Rukmini is portrayed as a dignified and a pleasing character. She becomes the only support for her husband. Thangarasu's life as a conductor is humdrum, sometimes problems are raised and sometimes the co-workers mess up among themselves. He does not involve himself in anything but in the end, everything falls apart. This novel stands as a hard-hitting piece of reality.

The story begins in a usual way as Thangarasu is getting ready for his day-to-day work. The author gives a brief description of the regular life of a middle-class life. He tries to portray the influence of politics in a common man's life by explaining how Thangarasu acquired his job though he did not pass his SSLC exam. Rukmini got her job as a teacher as soon as she finished her studies but in the case of Thangarasu, he attained his job through the recommendation of a politician from his village. The influence of the politicians starts from the basic needs of people. The author gives many instances to reveal the fact that the politicians lean towards the side which offers more money. When a man has wealth, he can become a bureaucrat in the society.

The author introduces many characters into the novel to show the different and versatile kind of personalities existing in this world, who live without knowing their purpose

of living like a boat without a sailor. He introduces a character named Anthonisaamy, a teacher working with Rukmini, who writes poems under the pen name, Bharathivaanan. He flirts with Rukmini at times and he promises that he will give her two philosophical books of Dr. Radhakrishnan, but till the end he does not even show the book to her. He positions himself in the MLA election as a representative of the teachers. He collects money from the teachers in installment and buys a white ambassador car. Through this character, the author tries to convey the fact that he is a person who could not even keep the promise he gave to his favorite teacher and raises the question on whether he will execute the promises he gives to the people.

Kandasamy exposes two deaths in this novel. First, he exposes the murder of Narayanan who is the brother of a heroine. The murder happens in front of Thangarasu's house. Though he witnesses the crime, he is unable to do anything and he does not take any initiative to report that crime to the higher officials' notice.

A bus driver named Kannabiran kills seven people in three accidents. The case goes on in the court. Even though he receives three memos, four suspensions and three changes of depot in a month, he does not reduce his speed which exposes the lack of humanity among the people. The writer also speaks about the lack of humanity among the doctors in treating the patients. He gives a statement that "biggest idiots in the world are the people in the police department and the military people" (136).

It is the time when the transport union election takes place. Everyone is completely involved and busy in the campaign. The election is won by Ganapathi who promises to work for the betterment of the transport system. He poses the demand that after the completion of their work for five years the driver and the conductor have to be promoted as the supervisor, after completing seven years as a supervisor he needs to be promoted as a foreman and after the completion of twelve years of service one has to be given promotion to the post of an assistant engineer.

There is lot of chaos just because a revolutionary actor is thrown out of a party. The public starts to protest by throwing stones at the bus and break the glasses. The police department arrests ten people randomly and torture them brutally which leads to death. Not one politician takes steps to control the riot or seek justice for the cruel treatment meted out on the people despite having made promises to work for the welfare of the people. During this issue Thangarasu gives a statement that "if we are an MLA, police won't arrest us right!" (240). This statement is an emotional outrage of a common man.

The author does not give any information about the date or the time of the story but he informs about the death of Indira Gandhi which reveals the period to the readers. As soon as the news of the death of the Prime Minister is announced, the riot bursts out in the surroundings and the election candidates start using the situation against the minority parties and raise their campaigns against them.

The driver Sundaram stops the bus and waits to know whether any riot is about to happen in the village but there is no sense of any chaos. A van crosses by with a song campaigning for a candidate. Thangarasu listens to the sound of the bus and doubts that the engine has some problem and gets down from the bus to check the shaft of the bus. A police jeep comes fast, stops near the bus and the sub-inspector Sidhaarthan orders the driver to start the bus. He does not wait for an answer and starts scolding the driver. An argument starts between the driver and the sub-inspector and the driver gets injured as the argument turns into a full-blown fight. The conductor comes between them to bring peace but he is pushed down from the bus. Thangarasu falls down from the steps and the police orders the constable to catch hold of him and throw him inside the jeep and take him to the police station.

The driver drives the bus to the centre of the road and starts to protest against the anarchy of the police. They are given support by the workers of the transport department and they start a procession. Thangarasu is brought to the station and he is not given any chance to tell his side of the story. He is taken to prison. The sub-inspector narrates the incident to the inspector in an exactly opposite manner that “the bus was standing in the middle of the road and it disturbed the election procession. When the sub-inspector asked to clear the road, they hit him” (263).

The author gives the exact scenario of the happenings in the police station. Two police constables have a conversation about the prostitutes they have contact with. In the meantime, workers of the transport department come in procession to the police station and ask to release Thangarasu. The sub-inspector lies to them that they do not have anyone named Thangarasu in the station. This makes them vigorous and a riot breaks out where both the police and the workers start using weapons. Many are wounded and lying on the ground. The inspector asks the constables to take them to the hospital along with Thangarasu so they can lie that he was also one among the workers who had come in the procession to the station.

The information is passed on to the collector, Sivakaami Thomas and is asked to take steps regarding the injustice made to a common man. She visits the hospital through the back

door instead of facing the crowd in entrance of the hospital. Inside the hospital the authorities are waiting to welcome the collector. They are worried as the incident has happened during the time of the election which might lead to them losing the votes of the people. The superintendent of police informs her that the riot has no relevance with the police department, and it was purely due to the anger of the M.D. He says that the police functioned in a way that stopped the situation from getting worse. She informs the crowd that the death of the worker has happened by accident and she promises that the dead worker's family will be given cash aid.

Through this novel, the author tries to portray the reality of the society. A common man's life is taken advantage of and not given any importance. The bureaucratic people do not choose to know the truth and punish the guilty.

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Works Cited

Kanthasami, Sa. *Visaranai Commission*. Kavitha Publications, 2014. Print.

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