

## **Tortuous Triad of Religion, Caste and Money: A Rereading of Pudhumaipithan's Select Short Stories**

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### **Abstract**

*Pudhumaipithan, born in the early half of the 1900s, is well known for his satirical short stories that poke fun at contemporary Tamil society. Pudhumaipithan is a revolutionary writer for his satires of the fundamental facets of society, including religion, beliefs, economics, existing institutions, education, and interpersonal relationships. Pudhumaipithan has spoken out against the socially repressive elements by merely identifying the issues facing the community, whereas no firm solution has been presented in his texts. In an effort to portray the lives of those who live below and slightly above the poverty line, he has attempted to undermine accepted moral principles and ethics. The caste system that is resisting doesn't have to be explosive; it can be gradual, as evidenced by the subtle shifts in societal attitudes and behaviours that Pudhumaipithan illustrates in his narratives. This study attempts to trace the intimidating interplay of religion, caste and money in combination, as presented in the selected short stories of Pudhumaipithan.*

**Keywords:** satire, religion, caste issue, education, deconstruction

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Society is a collective form of beliefs, social institutions, cultures, social groups and human relationships. When talking about typical Tamil society, in the first half of the 20th century, caste and religion played a dominant role in constituting Tamil identity. The present scenario has changed in a few cities and among the young generation. Religion is a form of belief that is based on the existence of God, the omnipotent. When the existence of God is believed, the views and approaches are numerous. Those numerous ways are called religions. Caste is an identity given to a person based on birth and ancestors. It is a practice prevalent in India, and it is hard to count the number of castes. The caste system is very vital in promoting hierarchy among the people, such as the so-called low and high caste members. Money is a concrete concept to regularise trade in any society, including India. These three are very much interrelated among themselves to create a system and communities in Indian society. These three factors working together to create a system that includes suppression and dominance paves the way for a biased social structure. Being a socially conscious writer, Pudhumaipithan has dealt with all three aspects of subverting the system. His focus is very particular to the Tamil society. Among the three, caste is a minacious form that is fundamentally rigid. When a person is able to become rich or poor and shift from one religion to another, the person cannot change from one caste to another.

Pudhumaipithan, a Tamil writer, was a prominent writer of novels and short stories in the first half of the twentieth century. His short stories gained popularity and also invited controversies. His works were nationalised by the State Government of Tamilnadu in 2002. Pudhumaipithan studied at St. John's School and then at the Hindu College, Tirunelveli, graduating in 1931 with a B.A. (Puthumaipithan in Tamil Movies). "Puthumaipithan in Tamil Movies: Cinemavukku Pona Chithaalu" denotes that everyone knows Pudhumaipithan, the King of Short Story, is a prolific writer (Puthumaipithan in Tamil Movies). The article entitled "A Heart for Art" states"

. . . a Tamil journalist named C. Vriddhachalam, who introduced realistic, modern notes into a literature then predominantly romantic and didactic. Over a mere 17 years, up until his premature death at 48, Pudumaippithan's essays and short stories traced an anti-establishment stance, a subversive voice under several pseudonyms. (The Hindu: "A Heart for Art")

In his "Puthumaippiththan: His Contribution to Modern Tamil Literature", Visswanathan states, "The third stage began immediately after 1930, with Puthumaippiththan and a group of brilliant and talented story writers" (Visswanathan). Puthumaipiththan can be considered a deconstructive writer; as stated by Visswanathan, "the one considered by many critics as the writer who broke free from past Tamil tradition and stereotyped formalism is Puthumaippiththan" (Visswanathan).

Pudhumaipithan's short stories portray the real representation of pre-independent Indian society. The present study tries to unearth the satiric notions of Pudhumaipithan through his stories. He has touched upon different issues prevailing

in contemporary society. In the short story “The Golden City”, Pudhumaipithan talks about the lives of underprivileged people in the slums of Tamil Nadu. There are different views on the role of money in society being the deciding factor of social status and as the fulfilling factor of necessities like food, clothing and shelter. When the rich consider money for social ranking, the poor take it for sustenance. Pudhumaipithan describes the living quality of the people in the Golden City as “a narrow path to an arrack shop, and that is our ‘main’ road. Four people can walk... provided there is no traffic in the other direction. ... like dwelling in a rabbit warren. ... when the rain is .... there will be mud and puddles” (15). He calls the gutter “municipal Ganges” or “Yamuna River” (15). This reflects a system of life that has the utmost oppression portrayed by Pudhumaipithan.

It is very important to note that “The Golden City” was one of the literary texts to be removed from the curriculum of the University of Madras claiming that it had anti-Dalit views. Kannan, in “Reading Puthumaipithan with Caste,” strongly denotes that how literature in Tamil is understood by the majority is erroneous and often dangerous. It has its roots in our curriculum. Classrooms are workshops for reading the absurd, reducing each work to its conceptual content. With rare exceptions from Tamil and English professors, the betrayal of Tamil modern literature over the past centuries has been appalling (Kannan). The deconstructive representation of Puthumaipithan has been misunderstood and systematically destroyed. Kannan’s argument becomes clearer when he says that there is no evidence in the story that “Ponnakaram” is the story of a poor Dalit girl. There is no caste identity in the story, only class identity. The names ‘Ammalu’ and ‘Murugesan’ in the story do not refer to any caste identity. Ammalu works in a mill. Murugesan drives the Jutka. So there is no caste identity in the profession. It is a favourite among progressive literary circles because of its simple, class-identifying story (Kannan).

Though there is no mention of any caste identity in the short story “The Golden City”, the external interpretations have paved the way for controversies. This throws light on the society that is always ready to mix caste with money-based class to make a complex system of society. The plot of the short story progresses with a woman, namely Ammalu, and her husband, Murugesan, who has met with an accident while riding a ‘jutka’. He asks “for some milk porridge!” but Ammalu has no money on her (17). Here comes the powerful role of money for livelihood. She has sexual intercourse with a man “who had been leering at her for quite some time” (18). The social construct says “about chastity! Chastity! Just remember, sir, that this is Ponnagaram!” (“Golden City” 18). Pudhumaipithan has subverted the socially constructed norms and structure at the beginning of the short story by saying, “People may talk of the moral code of old, and by applying the same set of principles. . . for the sake of the luxurious comforts of a few ‘mahajarajas,’ specialises in a few active bees in what is known as a “golden city” (15). He connects the beginning with the end, stating that though there are many stereotyped visions of life with morality and social norms, money plays the dominant role as the superstructure. Pudhumaipithan tries to state that money is the basis for any social

construct. The availability of money creates social norms, and at the same time, the social norms are violated by a lack of money.

“Justice” is another short story by Pudhumaipithan that deals with the concept of justice manipulated by money concerning religion and caste. Devairakkam “is a good Christian. . . rendering civil justice as a magistrate” (51). Pudhumaipithan satirises the combination of religion and social work as “during these days of raja bhakthi [devotion to higher authority] and social service which do not align themselves together” (51). Pudhumaipithan reiterates the idea that social service and religious piety are not at all related. When religion has the concept of God at its centre, social service has humanity at its centre. “His religious attachment is always in conflict with his patriotic feeling”, as noted in the story about Devairakkam, and “he respected the Bible as the closest thing to the Indian penal code” (52). This is a comparison of a religious text to a state administrative text. Devairakkam, one of the magistrates, instructs the accused not to use the name of the caste. He is of the idea that Christianity does not support caste identity in society. The story further puts forth the role of money in matters of justice and religion. A man is presented in front of the court for hurting an injured horse by driving a cart. The man explains, “Don’t I take care of my horse as if were my own child” and he states, “It’s because of poverty and deprivations, sir” (52). The accused also assures, “It won’t happen again” and begs pardon, “Please forgive me this once” (52). Not accepting the apology of the accused, Devairakkam becomes angry and sentences the accused to one month of imprisonment with a fine of five rupees. The accused runs to Devairakkam and grasps the legs, saying, “My lords of justice! Just this once, please show mercy! Don’t punish my poor children” (52). Devairakkam is not moved.

The matter of justice and kindness comes into play in the nighttime when Devairakkam prays in “Justice”, “Give us this day our daily food, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us!” (53). This is where religion faces money in society. Devairakkam asks his God for his daily food, forgetting that the man whom he has sentenced to five rupees was using the horse for money, ultimately to get some food. The punishment given to the horse driver would have deprived his children of their day-to-day food. It is to be noted that though Christian devotional values are prominent in social life and those values demand the caste system to be subdued, money takes the upper hand, and thereby social values and devotional qualities are nullified. Devairakkam works for money, the horse driver rides the horse for money, the horse driver is fined money, his children will go foodless, lacking money, and Devairakkam prays to God for food which can be availed by money. Money paid to Devairakkam for being a magistrate makes him forget one of the devotional and social values of forgiveness.

The short story “A Saint, a Child and Some Snacks” talks about a guruji who preaches about the beginning of God and human beings. Pudhumaipithan presents his views on how human beings and God compete with each other. “Even now the competition is not over. ‘Till yesterday, Man who was born slightly ahead of God was

holding his own with Him” (453). The author says that it is difficult to decide who is great. The competition is about who is the dominant source of the earth. This story questions the concept of God and man. Pudhumaipithan wants to portray that the concept of God was created by human beings. The fight between God and human beings started at that moment. This competition developed with human beings interpreting God from different views. Human beings manipulated the concept of God to categorise human beings into different categories according to profession. That categorisation led to dominance and oppression. “‘Without doubt, man is good,’ said swamiji. ‘If he had deposited his intelligence with the God that he created, he could have lived an intelligent life’” (455). Human beings created the concept of God without intelligence. The foolish creation of God concept has stopped human beings from living an intelligent life.

The concept created with the intelligence of human beings started disturbing the human back. One of the concepts created about God by human beings is caste. That caste system has started troubling human beings. The author in “A Saint, a Child and Some Snacks” has remarked, “The folly that man created without being aware of his own power goes by the name of God. . . He does not know how to destroy. All he can do is wait until that which he made perishes . . . the extent of his follies is limitless . . .” (455). The follies that were made by human beings in the name of God have been pestering human beings with the ideology. The caste system, as one of the by-products of the God concept, has dominated humanity in full. Pudhumaipithan is very particular in deconstructing the illusionary concrete ideology of God. Knowing that no one will listen to his revolutionary idea, he ends his story by saying, “. . . there was nobody to hear the sound” (455). He has known that deconstructing the concept will be hard and no one will ever sit and listen to such ideas in the beginning. In “God’s Representative”, on hearing the revolutionary words of Sankar, the audience to whom he had talked left the place. It shows the deep-rooted intensity of the dominant ideology. Though he knows that it is an unnoticed affair, he ensures the beginning of deconstruction.

“God’s Representative” is a short story that deals with the events taking place between Sankar, a revolutionary against the caste system, and Subbu Sastrigal, the temple priest of the village Chittoor. Both were from the so-called high caste community. Pudhumaipithan describes the people of the so-called low caste as “the slave beggars for the noble beggars in the Agraharam” (182). He wants to state that the so-called high caste people are the noble beggars in the name of religion. He goes on to say, “If one of them is fasting in accordance with orthodox conventions, then the other is starving in dirt and filth” (182). This is where Pudhumaipithan tries to throw light on the complex relationship of religion, caste and money. People work for money with which they can manage to get food for their livelihood. But caste makes the so-called high caste people starve according to religious convention, and despite being a part of the same religion, the so-called low caste people starve as they lack money. This is the complex connection of these structures in social life. He attacks the religious texts describing Subbu Sastrigal: “Since he did not know the

meaning, he was fully devoted to them” (183). If a tender-hearted person like Subbu Sastrigal had known the real meaning of the texts, he would have denounced devotion. A strong revolutionary writer like Pudhumaipithan has been very particular in stating that religious texts are the basic and visible materials that support the concept of religion and God. A rational interpretation of them will be beneficial to humanity. It can be found in the short story “A Saint, a Child and Some Snacks” Pudhumaipithan starts the story saying, “Man created God; then God began to shape mankind.” (453). The statement ‘man created God’ deconstructs the religion based on God and the texts that support the religion. The interpretation of the religious texts can be deconstructive to nullify the oppressions effected on people.

The short story “God’s Representative” narrates the role played by Sankar to propagate his reforms. He says, “. . . they are tossed about without the guidance of God” (184). Subbu Sastrigal felt so moved by what he heard that his eyes began to fill with tears” (184). This shows the humanitarian tenderness of Subbu Sastrigal. He wants all the people to come up in life and have a peaceful life. But this sympathy shatters when “Sankar went on to suggest that Harijans should be allowed to enter into temples, and if they were prevented from doing so, it would amount to a terrible sin. Subbu Sastrigal felt as if someone had stuck him in the chest with a hammer” (184). The sympathy in Subbu Sastrigal disappears, and he curses “Hey! You Wretch! Will not your tongue get burnt after uttering such evil words?” (184). When the matter of caste comes for discussion, all the humanitarian implications in Subbu Sastrigal fade away. That is the power of caste in Indian society. A religious man like Subbu Sastrigal wants everyone to be happy. When the matter of caste comes into play, his unconscious, premeditated hierarchy overpowers. It was then the practice that a person from the so-called low caste community should not enter the temple. They should not use the wells, ponds and other regular things that were used by the so-called high caste people.

Sankar in “God’s Representative” places a few quotes from the Vedas and Hindu dharma sastras to support his idea of making the so-called low caste people enter into temples. This confuses Subbu Sastrigal, and he starts questioning his ancestral knowledge “Was it possible that the holy Vedas in which he had thus far placed such trust, ever say this sort of thing? This wretch is telling lies. Could it be true? If it were true, how is it that our forefathers had not been aware of it? Perplexity, doubt, confusion” (185). When the traditional meta-narrative is questioned and overturned, there will be room for confusion, doubt and allegations. Mini narratives are the tools for questioning the construct, and they start interpreting the text in full. One such mini-narrative puts Subbu Sastrigal into confusion and doubt. That has started questioning the ancestral past and narrations, the origin. Pudhumaipithan makes remarkable observations on society and states, “He knew for certain that with the kind of reaction he had aroused his only option there was starvation” (185). This is where the tortuous triad plays its role that if a person tries to disturb the traditionally constructed religion and caste, that person will go without food, i.e., food earned of money. Money-made things play a

supporting role in the preservation of traditional monopolistic production and interpretation of texts. A large amount of energy and textual representation is necessary to change such a monolithic conservative society that does not care about individuals but rather cares for a large setup that stands for propagating the past as a glorious one. Pudhumaipithan brings out the dangerous effects of the intertwined trio of religion, caste and money in the society that is supportive of preserving the stereotyped construct.

Coming to know about the speech made by Sankar in “God’s Representative”, a few so-called low caste people decide to beat him. They fear that “Would not preaching that lower caste people could go into the temple along with the high-caste ‘saints’ amounts to a sin as a result of which we might lose the sight of one of our eyes?” (185). This shows how extreme the concept of binary has been inflicted on society through convenient interpretation of devotional texts. As the term ‘saint’ is used to refer to the so-called high caste people, the so-called low caste people consider themselves ugly or dirty. Though they both belong to the same religion, the religion has not been able to equalise both. Instead of equalising, religion has introduced a social hegemonic view. Entering into a temple will cause the so-called low caste people their eyesight is an idea of a socio-spatial hierarchy that supports the sustained existence of the caste system. It is a well-planned orientation in society with religion aided by the concept of God and supported by money.

After all the people leave the place without listening to Sankar in “God’s Representative”, a few so-called low caste people attack Sankar, and he falls to the ground. He is rescued by Subbu Sastrigal and given food. They both decide to sleep in the temple, and they are not able to sleep because of different reasons. “One was in pain. The other was suffering from mental confusion” (186). This is a typical kind of mental condition when an established meta-narrative is challenged by mini-narratives. The agitation found in Subbu Sastrigal is the symbol of either change or stubbornness in the challenged narrative. Pudhumaipithan has tried to give a solution in the form of Subbu Sastrigal demanding an answer from God. “His faith was completely shattered. He began to suffer from doubts about what he could believe” (186). This ignites doubts about the available dominant interpretation of the devotional texts. This allows different versions of interpretations, understandings and executions. The multiplication of narrations leads to multiple views on the texts, and the manifold nature of the texts is unearthed, thereby subverting the manipulated version of texts.

Pudhumaipithan does not stop with doubt about the devotional texts in “God’s Representative”. Subbu Sastrigal, the representative of God to the village, asks God, “Is whatever happened so far truth? Is what he says the truth? You are keeping silent! Are you real? ... Oh! God, are you real?” (185-86). These lines represent a radical change in the mind of a humanitarian like Subbu Sastrigal. When the base of a structure is questioned, it is a symbol of a shaken foundation. Through the representation of Sankar, besides Subbu Sastrigal being questioned, he starts questioning the concept of God. Religion, backed by the concept of God, in a

broader view, is the basis of the caste system in India. Hence, questioning the existence of God is a way of shaking the entire system. Shaking the concept of God cannot happen on a social level. Questioning the God concept can happen only at the individual level in the beginning. In the state of Tamil Nadu, many leaders tried to abolish the caste system by rejecting the concept of God. But they were successful on a small scale as their followers opposed the caste system but believed in God. Resisting the belief in God has become a failure politically, whereas interpreting the religious texts with deconstructive ideologies has been successful enough practically.

In the short story "A Nandan for Our Times", Pudhumaipithan presents different versions of Nandanar. Nandanar is one of the 63 Nayanars found in Tamil Literature and known for having become a Nayanar from the so-called low caste. Pudhumaipithan does not talk about this historical character. He has made three characters and left it to the audience to decide who among them the modern Nandan is. The story also criticises Christian and Hindu religions. "On one occasion Rev. John Aiyar came . . . Noticing Pavadai, he tempted Karuppan by suggesting that, if the boy were to join his religion, his social position would become equivalent to that of a landlord" (56). These lines reflect the social reality of Tamilnadu with the caste system. The caste system is something that is given to one when one is born. It embraces a person whether the person likes it or not. It is a social stigma sealed on any individual born in the Indian atmosphere. Once a person is not able to shift from one caste to another, money paves the way for overcoming this issue with financial status. The caste system, which has its base on religious text, is counter-narrated by money. The meta-narrative of the religious texts can be subverted with the use of money. Money plays a dual role in both supporting and opposing the caste system in Indian society. The landlord, in the short story, has a strong belief "in the dead superstitions of long ago. Only those who respected these beliefs would be considered his followers" (55). The superstitious beliefs are the bases for the biased caste system that prevails in India. Hence, a man from the so-called high caste wants to make sure that the superstitions that enhance the caste system are to be believed always. Money, with superstitions that support the caste system, intensifies the monopolistic interpretation of religious texts.

In "A Nandan for Our Times," Pudhumaipithan goes on to deal with the practical stand of Christianity on the matter of the caste system. Pavadai, named to be Daniel Johns, is adopted into the belief system of Christianity that preaches "that Christian religion did not maintain the harsh caste distinctions of Hinduism. . ." (57). He and Mary Lily, the daughter of Rev. John Aiyar, start loving each other. When he approached Rev. John Aiyar for his daughter's hands in marriage, Rev. John Aiyar "shouted and took him by the scruff of the neck and threw him out", insulting him with ill-treating words about his caste. The writer has already made a clear note of the caste of Rev. John Aiyar that he belongs to a so-called higher caste than that Pavadai belongs to. Pavadai has studied the Bible thoroughly and embraced the Catholic faith. The writer mocks the religious structure, saying, "Some take the view

that religion provides a remedy for this state of mind” (57). The term ‘some’ brings in the question of who they are. The story answers the question that the people who have the religion in their hands, like preachers, say that the Christian religion can treat the issue of the caste system. But, in the presence of religion, a boy is prohibited from his natural love just because he belongs to the so-called low caste. Pavadai has “developed an impression that all the regulations of the world were just a fraud on mankind” (57). This enunciates the failure of Christianity about overcoming the dominant caste system.

In “A Nandan for Our Times”, Ramanathan, the son of the landlord, and the sister of Pavadai, a girl from the so-called low caste, fall in love with each other. Ramanathan approaches the girl’s father for his daughter’s hands in marriage. But Karuppan, the father, says, “If that were to happen, it would be a terrible sin. Marriage like that is not possible” (59). These lines show the deep-rooted thinking in the so-called low caste people about inter-caste marriages. The dominant ideology in support of the caste system has been able to infiltrate minds. Inter-caste marriage has been considered a sin against God in the social history of Tamilnadu. The strong construction of narrations against inter-caste marriages has been so effective that it has been voluntarily accepted and passed on from generation to generation. The effect of the narrations has been possible as they have been created by powerful people who had religion and money under their control. Deconstruction of such structures needs more time and energy than the time and energy taken for their construction. It is a big question whether inter-caste marriages will be possible if the deconstruction of ideology takes place. A different path should be selected, as inter-caste marriage itself is a counter-narration. Consciousness of caste should be marginalised in a different form. When many forward thinkers and the Government encourage inter-caste marriage now, it should not be denied that this also enhances the caste consciousness is enhanced. The people who involve themselves in inter-caste marriages do not come out of caste oppression; instead, they accept and go into the complex system of caste. They reiterate that the caste system prevails in them and they want to destroy it with marriage. This practice has always created societal unrest and increased caste consciousness. In this regard, the more one acts against the caste system outwardly, the more one receives the reactions. These reactions make caste consciousness an infectious one. Education with an unconscious diminishing of caste identity is possible with a widespread free flow of financial advancement and love.

While interpreting the scenario of inter-caste marriage, Pudhumaipithan can be referred to with the short story “Gopala Aiyangar’s Wife”. This short story is an extension of Bharathiyar’s novel *Chandirikai*, which ends with Gopala, a man belonging to a so-called high caste, and Meenakshi, a woman from a so-called low caste, getting married. Pudhumaipithan takes the story further by describing their life after marriage. The caste system strongly sticks to endogamy that considers inter-caste marriage a sin. “The whole town was buzzing with the news that Gopala had got himself married to a girl from the herdsmen caste. . . Some uneducated

people were of the view that it was simply a matter of their living together. . . they had a quiet laugh behind his back” (188). The description of how the gap that Meenakshi, as a former maidservant, maintains from her husband vanishes is the major objective of the story. Gopala asks “‘I have been here all this time, and you still haven’t kissed me. We don’t have that practice in our caste,’ she explained” (191). Meenakshi’s longing for non-vegetarian food and Gopala’s longing for Meenakshi’s love are intertwined elegantly by Pudhumaipithan. The husband introduces alcohol to his wife, and the wife introduces non-vegetarian to her husband. This all happens without their knowledge. This develops their love for each other and mends the gap.

Though social resistance looks easy and attractive, the action gets completed once love becomes spontaneous. This love makes them forget their socially constructed preferences and accept each other completely. The author deconstructs the caste system by the end of the short story with the conversation between the husband and wife. One “may overhear them engaged in conversation. ‘Hey, you, brahmin fellow,’ she will be heard saying with affection. What do you want, you shepherd bitch!’ he will reply lovingly” (193). Their love has enabled the deconstruction of the caste system with language as a tool. The author does not fail to register the ill effects of alcohol consumption.

Renaming Pavadai to David John does not promise any improvement, whereas education promises notable progress to him. It is a logocentric attitude of Western Christian religion. Logocentrism claims that words show the structural and social reality with truth. India was under the control of the British, and the freedom struggle was taking place in full swing in the year 1934 when the short story “A Nandan for Our Times” was originally published in the magazine Manikkodi. When a native is renamed with a Christian name imported from the Western lifestyle, an illusion is created that the native’s social, financial and personal status has been enhanced. It is also believed that the new name brings many positive changes to the person. These illusions have become a part of social structure. It is also important to make a note of another illusion that one’s conversion to Christianity would gain the favour of the British. Above all these details, one cannot deny the fact that Christianity brought education to the masses in India irrespective of caste. Pavadai also gains education through Christianity and later starts fighting the caste system using his education. Education makes one realise one’s situation and helps the same find a way out of the issues. To diminish the intensity of the caste system, educating one is preferred to renaming one.

Though the article “Pudhumaipithan - Revolutionary Writer Who Held up a Mirror to Migrant Life” denotes “In an era of the Harijan temple entry movement, he would even dare to bring Nandanar into modern times and, while retelling Nandan’s ageless tale, would allude to Gandhi and Periyar”, Pudhumaipithan, as a writer, cannot be considered without errors and social stigma (“Pudhumaipithan - Revolutionary Writer). He uses the term ‘slum-dwellers’ to refer to the so-called low caste people in the short story “God’s Representative”. This exposes how

Pudhumaipithan has been dominated by the stereotype that the so-called low caste people are expected to live only in slums. This is a stereotyped vision for which Pudhumaipithan is criticised. There have been many criticisms of him that his works have a few dominant tastes of the caste that he belongs to. It is remarkable to note that Pudhumaipithan has not hesitated to use the names of castes from Tamilnadu in his short stories. In “Gopala Aiyangar’s Wife”, the author narrates, “Thus it was that, instead of Meena becoming a brahmin girl, Gopala Aiyangar became a shepherd” (192). This indicates how Pudhumaipithan has been influenced by the hierarchal foundation that the society expects that one can be better if one adopts the practices of the so-called high caste. He has also used the word ‘shepherd’ to indicate the caste of Meenakshi, whereas he has the proper words for the so-called high caste. An unconscious biased stereotype has played a role in this instance when there is no need for changing from one caste to another, and also there is no possibility for the shift. The usage of the caste names sounds awkward in many places to the current readers of his works. Being a revolutionary writer who wanted to stand against the caste system, he is expected to have used those names with much care and very few times when needed. The social history of Tamilnadu could have been as he depicts in his works related to caste and religion.

The researcher submits the research findings with a social inquiry that the caste system that dominates the official proceedings of government has to be diminished with the help of education and a well-spread economic system. Money plays a double-headed role in society of being able to promote and demote caste and religion. Having realised that the concept of God cannot be destroyed and there is no need for that, Pudhumaipithan has tried to deconstruct the concept. Compelled inter-caste marriages lead to social unrest and turmoil, whereas love and its spontaneity can ease it. These changes cannot happen in a day or two. It is recommended that Indian society can expect a ‘caste-undermined society’ instead of a ‘casteless society’. A gradual change through education with a widespread economy and selfless love can bring a caste-undermined society into existence where the concept of God remains for the well-being of human beings and money does not overpower humanity. The tortuous triad of caste, money and religion is to be interpreted more and decoded with a deconstructive point of view to have a better Indian society.

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