

lib

29 December 2007



**Sahitya Akademi**

(The National Academy of Letters, India)

*Invites you to*

**meet the author**

**Aa. MADHAVAN**





*"My works are a slice of the life of Tamilians living in Thiruvananthapuram. They have the elements of both Tamil and Malayalam cultures."*

Aa. Madhavan was born in 1934 in Thiruvananthapuram. Both his father Aavudai Naayakam and mother Chellammal hailed from Kanyakumari dist, which was part of erstwhile Travancore state before state reorganization. As Thiruvananthapuram was the capital of Travancore this couple also migrated to Thiruvananthapuram like other business communities of the time.

Though Madhavan discontinued his formal education after school final class in a nearby Malayalam school, his flair for and deep interest in literature prompted him to read the monumental works of world famous writers like Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, Mappasant and others in Tamil and Malayalam versions. His favourite writers in Tamil were

Puthumaippithan, Ku.Pa. Rajagopalan, La. Sa. Ra., and T. Janakiraman.

Kerala has a long historic background of Dravidian Culture dating back well before the time of the ancient Chera Kingdom which produced epic poets like Ilankovadikal the author of *Silappathikaram*—one among the five great epics in Tamil. Above tradition continues in modern period too through creative writers like Madhavan. Hailing from this bilingual milieu, Madhavan has recreated an individual style of writing by absorbing the tone and accent of the colloquial terms of both Tamil and Malayalam languages peculiar to the region. He has to his credit three novels, five short story collections and translations of two Malayalam novels.

Madhavan tries neither to idealize nor to justify the characters of his long and short fictional works though they may find wicked or cruel in some aspects. He sheds light realistically on men (of course on women too) and matters without bothering about value judgment. His first novel *Punalum Manalum* (1974—Water and Sand) distances itself from the established family theme of then popular Tamil novels and finds a new path in creating an awareness on ecopoetics highlighting the dangers of polluting of our natural treasures like rivers. This novel has been translated into Malayalam. Next novel

*Krishna Parunthu* (1982) presents people and places surrounding the marketing place of Kerala capital sarcastically. The Brahmani kite (*Krishna Parunthu* or *garuda* -Vainatya the celestial bird vehicle of Lord Vishnu) that flies high in the sky above the busy market place and surrounding areas where the inhabitants are struggling to meet their various material needs has been highlighted as an eternal symbol to trace out the nameless internal quest of the human beings to free themselves from the bondage of life. His third novel *Thoovanam* (1990 Drizzle) which deals with the life of a writer leads us an entirely different atmosphere of art and agony.

Madhavan's short stories are lucid and have no technical trickery. They pierce readers' mind and one cannot easily forget the contents of them due to their cruel irony in sharpened colloquial style. Most of his stories are based on the business world. One of the collections is aptly entitled as

*Kadaitheru Kathaikal* (i.e Stories of the Bazaar). In these stories Madhavan realistically pictures the people who are losing their human values while they are busy in their business in making money. In *Paachi* (it is a name of a street dog), *Poonai* (The Cat) and *Kaalai* (Ox), Madhavan interestingly brings out the complicated affairs and problems of the human beings around these animals in an artistic as well as psychological manner.

In *Ettavathu Naal* (Eighth day) which may be considered as a novella, Madhavan exposes the hypocrisy of people in and around the Bazaar through the peculiar and extraordinary eight day experiences of a head load worker Saiyd Pattani. By mixing his past and present day life Madhavan skillfully pictures a striking world in this work. Some of Madhavan's typical short stories have been translated into Malayalam and English and included in many anthologies.



Shri Aa. Madhavan receiving the shield from Sri Neela Padmanabhan



Smt. Jothy Venkatachellam, Governor of Kerala with Shri Aa. Madhavan

Madhavan is a translator as well. He has translated from Malayalam the novels of Karoor Neelakanta Pillai, *Sammaanam* (1974) and P.K. Balakrishnan's *Ini Naan Urangatte* (2002) into Tamil.

Madhavan was the President of Thiruvananthapuram Tamil Sangam from 1984 to 1996 and had edited T. Janakiraman's *Siru Kathai Ninaivu Malar*, *Kerala Sirappu Malar*, *Puthina Pookkalam* (Studies on novels) and an anthology in Tamil translation of Malayalam works. Besides, he was the Editor of the organ of this Sangam *Kerala Tamizh* for a long period. Now he is in the Editorial Advisory Board of this magazine. Also he was in the Editorial Board of the famous Tamil literary magazines *Kadir*, *Deepam* and *Thamarai*. He is a current member in the General Council of the Sahitya Akademi (The National Academy of Letters, India).

Madhavan was honoured

with the title *Sirukathai Selvar* by the literary organization "Shenbakom" in 1977 and with the title *Tamizh Maamani* by Kanyakumari District Tamil Writers' Sangam in 2003. He was awarded Thiruppur Tamil Sangam Award for his short story collection *Arabiya Kudirai* in 1994. In 2002 he was awarded Ulloor Award by Thiruvananthapuram Tamil Sangam.

Madhavan married Santha in 1966 and they have three Children- two daughters Kalai Selvi and Malar Selvi and a son Govinda Rajan. His wife expired in 2002 and after two years i.e in 2004 his son also expired very young in his 35 years, which is a tragic event in his life. Still, with this unhealed scar in life he is in the, literary field in his old age of 74.

He lives now in Thiruvananthapuram with his younger daughter. at MR.A.35, Ottukal Street, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 024.

---

## A Select Bibliography

---

### Short Story Collections

- Kadaitheru Kathaikal* 1974  
*Mooha Pallavi* 1974  
*Kaamini Moolam* 1975  
*Madhavan Kathaikal* 1984  
*Aanai chantham* 1990  
*Arabiya Kudirai* 1995  
*Aa. Madhavan Kathaikal* 2002

### NOVELS

- Punalum Manalum* 1974  
*Krishna Parunthu* 1982  
*Thoovanam* 1990

### TRANSLATIONS

- Sammaanam* 1974 (Karooor Neelakanta Pillai's Malayalam novel)  
*Ini Naan Urangattum* 2002 (P.K.Balakrishnan's Malayalam novel)

### Edited

- T. Janakiraman Sirukathai Ninaivu Malar*  
(Anthology)  
*Kerala Sirappu Malar*  
(Anthology)  
*Puthina Pookkalam*  
(Anthology)  
*Tamizhil Siru Pathirikaikal*  
(Anthology)  
*Mozhiperppu Cirappithazh*  
(Anthology in Association with *Thamarai*)  
*Kerala Thamizh* (Organ of Thiruvananthapuram Tamil Sangam)  
*Kadir*  
(Co-editor)  
*Deepam*  
(Co-editor)



Shri G. Karthikeyan, Minister for Culture, Govt. of Kerala with Shri Aa. Madhavan and Sri Pollachi Mahalingam

## A CHRONOLOGY

<p>1934 Born at Thiruvananthapuram</p> <p>1948 Completed School final education</p> <p>1955 First short story appeared in Sirukathai magazine</p> <p>1966 Married</p> <p>1974 First short story collection <i>Kadaitheru Kathaikal</i> published</p> <p>1974 First novel <i>Punalum Manalum</i> published</p> <p>1977 Honoured with the title Sirukathai Selvar</p> <p>1994 Thiruppur Tamil Sangam Award for the short story collection <i>Arabiya Kudirai</i></p>	<p>1984-96 President, Thiruvananthapuram Tamil Sangam</p> <p>2002 Chosen as a member in the General Council, Sahitya Akademi</p> <p>2002 Thiruvananthapuram Tamil Sangam's Ulloor Award.</p> <p>2002 Complete short story collection <i>Aa.Madhavan Kathaikal</i> published</p> <p>2003 Thamizh Maamani title from Kanyakumari Tamil Writers' Sangam</p> <p>2005 Chosen as president of Thiruvananthapuram Tamil Writers' Sangam.</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



Shri Aa. Madhavan with his wife



Shri Aa. Madhavan's daughters, wife (centre) and deceased son