

**ST. JOSEPH’S UNIVERSITY, BENGALURU -27**

**B.A JOURNALISM –6th SEMESTER**

**END-SEMESTER EXAMINATION: MAY 2024**

**JNE 6223: LITERARY AND ETHNOGRAPHIC JOURNALISM**

**Time: 2 hrs Max Marks: 60**

**This question paper has THREE PAGES and FOUR SECTIONS.**

1. **This paper is only for students of VI semester Journalism who have opted for the LITERARY AND ETHNOGRAPHIC JOURNALISM elective.**
2. **You may use a dictionary.**
3. **Read the following extract from *Intertidal*, a book by naturalist Yuvan Aves and answer the questions below.**

Palayam Anna teaches me the wind system of Chennai’s artisanal fisherfolk. I take notes in a pocket notebook. Wind straight from the sea is *ner eeran*, the northeast wind is *vaadai eeran* and the southeast is *kacchaan eeran.* These are good winds, he tells me. One can start to sea at night or early morning and they will bring you back safely to the shore. I try to recall what he taught me and mix up the nine wind names and their directions, and he stresses, slightly annoyed, that I must listen more carefully. Palayam Anna is a fisher elder from *Urur Kuppam,* and along with Nity is among my greatest teachers of the coast and ocean, after the coast and ocean themselves. His uncles and other elders, he tells me, would be quick to give a hard whack to young boys who mixed up their wind names on the kattumaram.

I provoke a conversation about whether it is possible to teach without harming the learner, and what fear does to the learning atmosphere and the learner. Palayam Anna complicates my educational values. He calls me a ‘land teacher’ and says that my profession is on an unmoving and highly predictable surface, with little weather action happening, which allows me to have debates like these. He is, however, a ‘sea teacher’ and in his vast, fluid medium the conditions are constantly changing and highly unpredictable. One must attach one’s fears to the right things, and firmly so. Speaking the right names can mean life or death. To learn at sea requires so much more discipline and alertness than learning on land.

He left me thinking about how systems of learning would be different in an ocean world or if we were humanoid marine creatures. Or for young whales, dolphins, and fish themselves.

Whether I remember any of the winds or not, Palayam Anna tells me that I should know for sure the *kun vaadai* even if I never went to sea. These are what he calls ‘vicious’ winds from the north-northwest, which indicates that a bad storm is about to strike soon, swirling in the nearshore. What was widely documented during the (Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004) was how the native tribes of the islands—the Sentinelese, Jarawa, Nicobarese and others–left the shores much before the disaster and moved to the hills. The great Indian linguist G.N. Devy, who conducted the People’s Linguistic Survey of India, says, ‘Their languages have words which let them sense the different textures of waves. As the tribes moved uphill, they supposedly told people, “The ocean is angry with us. We must move up in repentance”

**I.A. Answer ANY FIVE of the following questions in THREE-FOUR sentences. (5x2=10)**

1. Why do you think the writer is more than willing to share how Palayam Anna chastises him for not getting the names of the wind right? What is being emphasised here?
2. In making a strong distinction between sea teachers and land teachers, is it also implied that there are sea learners and land learners? Explain.
3. As someone who has lived and studied in the city for a while now, do you think we are yet to learn how to attach fears to the right things? What may those be?
4. Is there evidence in the passage to suggest that the writer is man/woman? What is your guess? Explain.
5. What ethnographies apart from the fishing community are being presented to the reader here? Comment.
6. There is a strong absence of the sea/fish smell in this extract. What does this tell us about the writer?

**B**. **Read the following extract from an essay on Kasimedu’s Fish Market published on The Locavore and answer the questions below.**

As I walk into the street that leads to the Kasimedu market, it is not the typical flurry of a fish market that startles me, but the strong smell of fish and the sea. The salty smell hangs heavily in the air, clouding my nose and throat. A variety of fish lie lifeless. Lifting a small flap away from the eyes of the fish, a vendor calls out, “Look, its eyes are red and clear, very fresh stock.” When a disinterested customer walks away, her face droops in frustration. The Kasimedu fish market, known for selling fish wholesale, is set amidst the bustling neighbourhood of Royapuram, within the Chennai Fishing Harbour. This part of Chennai, from the north of Marina beach onwards, is also known as Vada (North) Chennai, and is home to thousands of daily wage workers who work as sanitation staff, auto drivers, hawkers, peddlers, and so on.

In the last decade, Vada Chennai has inspired some of the best gangster sagas in Tamil, such as *Madras and Vada Chennai*. Popular narratives often portray this part of Chennai as rather menacing; what tends to be overlooked is how its inhabitants constantly strive for upward mobility in spite of numerous setbacks. An important manifestation of this everyday struggle can be seen in the Kasimedu fish market. Most archival pictures do justice in capturing the pandemonium of the market and trade, but what is amiss is its smell—an integral part of any fish market. For outsiders, this smell can be overpowering and even ‘off-putting’. But what does it mean to the fisher community, for whom it is a persistent part of their trade? I ask a group of fisherwomen eating at a food stall to describe the smell of the market. They use the Tamil word koutcha (கொச்ச)—often used to describe an unpleasant smell of rotten or ‘impure’ food. Parvathi, aged 55 says, “It is the smell of our life and livelihood.” I understand that she doesn’t consider the smell to be ‘bad’. She uses the word koutcha with acceptance, not with the negative connotation implied by those unacquainted with the ways of the market. “This is just how we speak, our language is rough around the edges,” she adds.

**I.B. Answer the following questions in FIVE - EIGHT sentences each. (3x5=15)**

1. What changes would you make to the opening paragraph of this essay? Why?
2. Which of the two extracts you’ve read demonstrates a sharper understanding of the landscape it writes about? Give reasons.
3. Do you think the extract has lost an opportunity to do something more interesting with the piece by not being able to go beyond the smell? Explain.

**C. Answer the following questions in 100-150 words each. (2x10=20)**

1. Examine Paromita Vohra’s explorations of masculinity(ies) in her essays on Shah Rukh Khan and Rahul Gandhi. Explain how they become expansive investigations into the political contexts of our times.
2. Take ANY ONE film essay studied in class this semester and explain how it has changed your approach to watching a film. How does the writer establish her cultural observations in the essay and how do they speak to yours? Explain.

**D**. Literary journalism is also called ‘slow journalism’. Its critics are of the opinion that journalism cannot be anything but fast. Examine these arguments in light of all the texts and discussions studied in class this year and explain your viewpoint in **not more than** **150 words. (15 marks)**

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