

The Experience of Translating Tamil Poetry into English

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Translation plays an important role in India. Translating a poem written in Mother Tongue language (Tamil) into English is somewhat difficult because the translator has to translate a poem into a poem. Translating a poem should give a complete record of the ideas of the original work. The translator always faces the difficulty of getting equivalent terms for rhymes, meter and other poetic devices used in Source Language Text. The translation has to create an effective, elegance, recapturing the beauty and music of the Source Language Text into the Target Language Text. The translator must attempt to reach the spirit of the original text. Now, look at the following Tamil Poetry *Pen – Ivalthana?*

பெண் இவள்தானா?

குழந்தைச் செல்வத்தை ஈன்றெடுக்கும் காமதேனும் இவள்தான்
அ ஆ இ ஈ என்ற உயிர் எழுத்துக்களை தன் உயிரைக் கொடுத்து
கற்றுத்தருபவளும் இவள்தான்!

சித்திரம் படைக்க மண் கோலமும் இடுவாள்
சரித்திரம் படைக்க விண் கோள்களையும் ஆராய்ச்சி செய்வாள்!

துணைவியாக பலவகை உணவையும் சமைப்பாள்
துணைவேந்தராக பல்கலைக்கழகத்தையும் ஆளுவாள்!

தன் அழகை பராமரிக்க அணிகலன்களும் அணிவாள்
தன் நாட்டைப் பாதுகாக்க அணிவகுத்தும் செல்வாள்!

உறவுகளுக்காக மன வேதனையையும் வலியோடு தாங்குவாள்
மாணவர்களுக்காக மாமேதையாய் வழிகாட்டியாகவும் திகழ்வாள்!

மாட்டுக்குத் தீவனமும் வைப்பாள்
மானசீகமாக மருத்துவத் துறையிலும் மேலோங்குவாள்!

வண்ண வண்ணப் பொதியையும் துவைப்பாள்
வக்கீலாக வாதாடியும் ஜெயிப்பாள்!

ஓவியத்தையும் தீட்டுவாள், நம் கலாச்சாரத்துடன்
ஓவியமாகவும் நடந்து கொள்வாள்!

இம் மண்ணில் போற்றப்படும் ஆணுக்குப்பின்
இருப்பவளும் இப்பெண்தானே!!

Now let us see the translation of Tamil poem entitled *Pen – Ivalthana?* into English:

WOMAN – AN AWESOME ANGEL!

Is she a *Kamadenu* who delivers baby?
She who teaches a,e,i,o,u to lisping baby...
Each day at front door, she creates art and craft
Records History by research at and on spacecraft;
As a chef, she does cook food dainty
Being a Vice-chancellor governs University;
Wears ornament to decorate her beauty
She, as a soldier guards the society with duty;
Bears the agony to maintain relationship
Shows path to students' community by her guideship;
As maidservant who serves the cows with reverence
She, a doctor who cures the ill by her perseverance;
She, a machine washes dirty clothes of multi-colours
As attorney-general debates by her powerful valours;
She does create drawings, an art of passion
In her acts, she, the cultural beauty of nation;
Stands, supports, morally behind every man
Appreciated by praiseworthy men, an awesome angel, woman!

The title of the poem *Pen – Ivalthana?* cannot be translated into English as the same because it will not create the same effect on the reader's mind. If it is translated as *Woman – Is She?* the meaning of the title in English differs a lot. The same sense (meaning) cannot be created sometimes while translating a word from Source Language Text to Target Language Text. That is why, the translator has picked up a suitable title as *Woman – an Awesome Angel!*

Each verse differs from style and presentation. The Indian mythical characters can only be written only in Transliteration because the meaning of the word differs from SL Text into TL Text. For example the translator has used the term '*Kamadenu*' in transliteration only. Certain Tamil cultural words may not have proper equivalents in English. Similarly, the word '*Kolam*' does not

have any equivalence in English. So the translator has used the term ‘art’ only. Then the word ‘*oviyamaga nadandhukolval*’ in Tamil could not be expressed with an impact in English. Literally the word has been translated as “cultural beauty in her acts”. In Tamil Poetry, the rhyme scheme follows the pattern of *Edhugai, Monai* at the beginning of each poetic line, whereas in English poem, the rhyme scheme follows at the end of each poetic line.

The translator has to face the challenge on cultural, climatic, description of nature and feature terms from Source Language Text into Target Language Text. Replacing Tamil culture with English culture is entirely different. Sense for sense translation method is adopted by the translator from Tamil to English poetry. The translator must have a sound knowledge in both the languages. Thus this paper accounts the translator’s experience in translating Tamil into English poetry. At the same time, translation enriches the readers’ mind and provides a lot of ideas on culture, concept and thought. The study of both Tamil and English language and literature will acquire the readers with a lot of skills.

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