



# BOOK REVIEW: DWEEPA

(BOOK ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN KANNADA BY NA. D'SOUZA

TRANSLATED TO ENGLISH BY SUSHEELA PUNITHA AND RETITLED AS 'ISLAND')

Review by  
**Kannika Prakash**  
*Research Scholar,*  
*Srinivas University, Mangalore*

## ABOUT THE BOOK

The book 'Dweepa' has a beautiful storyline which revolves around a married couple who are involved in a situation where they are isolated from the whole world for months together. The author writes and narrates the story in such a way that the reader can feel and experience the journey of a middle class family of the Western Ghats of Southern India who own a small piece of land, work and toil hard in the field and rely on the yield for sustenance every year.

The author has beautifully described the houses, fields, people of the Western Ghats and their culture making the readers feel surreal. This novel depicts the helplessness of an innocent land owner when the government decides to build a dam and orders permanent evacuation of surrounding area as a precaution to avoid consequences due to water level rise in that area especially during monsoons. The story mainly focuses on the decision making of this land owner, his wife and her cousin who end up in the land owner's house isolated from the whole world for the entire monsoon season.

## PLOT

The lead character in the book is the above stated land owner named 'Ganapayya' who has to make right decisions involving and impacting not only his life, but also the fate of his family. The character 'Ganapayya' in this book exhibits different emotions and is portrayed

as the main character. His wife ‘Nagamani’ plays a pivotal role in the book.

The author has divided the book into six chapters and named the chapters beautifully as Krithika, Rohini, Mrigashira, Aridhraa, Punarvasu and Pushya – The six rain astrological stars among the eleven rain astrological stars. These stars have certain period of time falling in the time of monsoon and it is believed that these rain stars bring rain to the earth during this above said certain period of time.

Further, the author describes the rising of water during each stage or phase of monsoon that is during the astrological rain stars’ period. He knits the story so well that the reader gets connected to the story as one goes on reading chapter by chapter. The author initially depicts Ganapayya as a strong, rude landlord who does not mind any obstacles in his way. But as the story proceeds, Ganapayya can be observed as a fearsome man where he can be seen fearing the idea of relocating to a new place, fears his wife that she may leave him, fears his wife’s cousin who has a stronger built than him, he fears the deep waters and steps back in saving his wife from drowning, he is frightened of the wild animals, he gets scared after seeing a snake in his house and finally gets out of his mind when he encounters a tiger at the end of the story.

Whereas the author shows Nagamani as an innocent loving wife committing her whole life and toiling for the sake of her husband’s family and showering immense affection towards her husband at the beginning. But when Nagamani meets her old mate ‘Krishnayya’ who is ten years older to her and with whom she grew up together in her house, she tries to fill the void created by her husband by adding Krishnayya to her life which is contrary.

The author shows Krishnayya as a lover boy initially but as the story proceeds, he seems to be more concerned of Nagamani, her life and to get rid of the beatings to her by her husband, to keep the trust of Nagamani’s father intact and also about the people and society. In the end of the story, Krishnayya sacrificing his life for Nagamani depicts the true love he had for her.

The way Nagamani convinces her husband in bringing Krishnayya to their house, the love between Krishnayya and Nagamani behind the back of Ganapayya, the rising floods in the monsoon, the submerging fields and the formation of island leading to migration of wild animals from forest to their backyard are the major elements of the story.

The author in the book has mentioned many animals which play major role in the storyline. Ganapayya’s cow named ‘Belli’, the tiger which kills Belli and Ganapayya, the rabbits, the foxes and the snakes are beautifully pictured by the author. The author also has given minute detailing in the writings like the lower lands, Parameshwarayya and Heramba’s fields submerging before higher lands of Ganapayya’s and also describing Sita Parvatha being the highest hillock turning to an island during the monsoons shows how good the author has taken geography into consideration.

The author who was born in Shimoga knows the cultural, demographical and

emotional values of the people of Western Ghats. Thus he could stitch a perfect storyline with very minimal characters. The story consists of very minute details and it seems to be self-experienced by the author and has presented it very creatively in the book. The traditional, cultural and orthodox way of thinking can be seen in the book, where characters like Ganapayya, Nagamani and Krishnayya are depicted fearing the people and society.

### **MY THOUGHTS**

The book can be finished reading in a couple of hours along with twists and turns along the various chapters of the book. The choice of words is very well done. I totally loved the book. The book shows that the journey to your destiny is as important as the destiny itself. The author has won in keeping the readers not to get distracted while reading the book. Perhaps, a better ending could have been given if the story had taken place in different parts of the world. But this ending cited by the author seems apt in the era and place the story takes place. Overall, 'Dweepa' is a very exciting book and a must read for all book lovers.

