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Poetic expressions

PREMA MANMADHAN



Meera Venugopal, winner of Mampazham, Season Six, on Kairali TV

The winner of the fifth season of 'Mampazham' on Kairali TV, Meera Venugopal, talks about her experience

Has poetry gone out of our lives? In the times of business administration, IT, engineering and medicine, leading to lucre and hi-fi living, have lilting verses been shown the door? Especially, in the language of the people of the erstwhile land of coconuts? Not yet, if you see 'Mampazham' on Kairali TV, in the evenings. Here the haunting lines of legendary Malayalam poets like Changampuzha, Vylopilly, P. Kunhiraman Nair, ONV and others reverberate in your drawing room.

A new interest in the poetic tradition of our land is being kindled, says P. U. Mohanan, creative head, programmes, of Kairali TV. The reality show with substance, called 'Mampazham', has entered its sixth season.

"Malayalis living outside the country and State are addicted to this programme, for it sort of connects them with their mother tongue and land. I get so many calls from people all over," he says.

Meera Venugopal, the winner of the fifth season, has a special reason to have a broader smile. The contestants were semifinalists from all the editions of 'Mampazham', so the competition was tough and her success was all the sweeter. She recited S. Rameshan Nair's 'Kaviyum Chakravarthyum' for the semifinals and G. Sankara Kurup's 'Bharathendu' for the finals in Mumbai.

The second year degree student (Physics) of Chengannur Christian College has won several prizes for 'Kavyakeli' at the School Youth Festivals. Meera grew up in a home where poetry was the rule rather than the exception. Her mother M. G. Manjula, an engineer and a newsreader at Doordarshan, was a regular winner in the 'Kavyakeli' State level school festival and her late grandfather, Thrickodithanam Gopinathan Nair was a Malayalam professor and also a poet. Her mother helps her with the poems usually. "I just read out the poem a few times to her and she would learn it," says her mother. Her father, M. K. Venugopal is a constant source of support, accompanying her to the contests and encouraging Meera.

Meera is also a budding Carnatic vocalist and has sung in several temples, with brother Vishnu accompanying her on the mridangam. What 'Mampazham' has given her is a treasure of experiences, she says. "I have learnt so many new things, met so many important people and shared so much with my friends." What will she do with her Rs.2

lakh prize? “Put it in a fixed deposit, maybe,” she laughs.

Meanwhile ‘Mampazham has crossed 300 episodes and more and more Malayalam poems are being shared with the viewers. Maybe this interest will see Malayalis paying more interest to their own language and speaking it properly as it should be, without the crutches of an alien accent.

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