3.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, we present to you two Sahitya Akademi Award winners, the Kashmiri poet Dina Nath Nadim and the Dogri poetess Padma Sachdev. We have selected Nadim’s poem *The Moon* and Padma Sachdev’s *The Moment of Courage*. The poems will be discussed in the context of their literary milieu with annotations and critical appraisals. The discussion we hope will give you some idea of the excellence of their creative work.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Jammu and Kashmir is an important state in the Indian Union for its natural splendour, rich culture and history. The two common languages spoken in that state are Kashmiri and Dogri. In the rest of India, there is not much awareness of these two northern languages and the richness of poetry written in their medium.

3.2 A BRIEF LIFE-SKETCH OF DINA NATH NADIM

Dina Nath Nadim was born on March 18, 1916, in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir. His father died in 1923, when Nadim was only seven years old. His mother came from a village near Metragam, the home of Mahjoor, the great Kashmiri poet of the first half of the nineteenth century. Poverty and weak health troubled Nadim all his life. Supporting him
somehow, the mother was his best friend and teacher till she passed away in 1944.

Nadim got his early education at a Middle School near his home in Srinagar. He passed his tenth examination, 1929, at a Government High School, where he formed a life-long friendship with Ghulam Hassan Beg “Arif”, who later became his mentor. Nadim joined S.P. College, Srinagar, but, due to economic pressures, dropped out after two years. While studying for his graduation as a private candidate, he gave tuitions to needy students. He was also interested in reading Indian and Western literatures. The strong influence of T. S. Eliot, the great English poet, absorbed by him in 1945, can be traced in his writing after 1955. Qualifying as a trained graduate by 1943, he rose to be the Principal of the Lal Ded Memorial School, Srinagar. He was also one of the founders of the Gandhi Memorial College, the first private degree college in J & K.

Among the Urdu poets who influenced Nadim most were Iqbal, Josh, Chakbast and Bismil. He was mainly inspired by their patriotic songs and also by the works of Gorky, Chekov and Mayakovsky, three notable Russian writers. Becoming a member of the Communist Party of India in 1950, he participated in the ongoing political revolution in J & K, and joined the Progressive Writers’ Association, of which he was the General Secretary for some time. In 1971, he received the Soviet land Nehru Award and visited the Soviet Russia for a month. He also got the first Kalhana Award in 1985; the Sahitya Akademi Award for Shihil Kul, a collection of poems, in 1986; and the Sharda Samman (posthumously) in 1993. Suffering from partial paralysis, he died at Jammu on April 7, 1988, and his last rites were performed in Srinagar.

3.3 AN OVERVIEW OF HIS POETRY AND THE AGE HE BELONGED TO

Nadim recited his first Kashmiri poem at a mushaira (poetic symposium) held in 1947 at Nishat Bagh, the famous Mughal garden of Srinagar. From that time onwards, he wrote mostly in Kashmiri. Hence, the second half of the
twentieth century is regarded as the Age of Nadim. Up to 1930, Kashmiri poetry existed only in the oral tradition. With the exception of Habba Khatoon (16th century) and Arnimaal (18th century) — two women poets — the poet had no connection with the ruling class. He was closer to the common people. Tyranny under the Afghan and Sikh rule frustrated the Kashmiris, and that encouraged writing of the mystic kind of poetry. The only songs that the people know were Hindu and Muslim devotional poems, satirical verse called ladi-shah, the gul songs for women’s group dance and chhakree (chorus) music. The traditional images of gul (rose) and bulbul (nightingale) recurred in Kashmiri verse.

A new age began with Ghulam Ahmed Mahjoor and Abdul Ahad Azad, in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Mahjoor’s great achievement was to make the Kashmiri language acceptable as a natural poetic medium. Others, who till then wrote in Persian and Urdu, turned to Kashmiri at his insistence and due to the success he achieved for himself. This applied to Azad, Arif, Zinda Kaul and Nadim. The new age beings with Mahjoor’s Wolo Haa Baagvano (Come O Gardner). The poetical revolution that started in 1938 reached its height in 1947. Following the invasion of Kashmir by Pakistan in late September, 1947, came the call for Naya Kashmir (New Kashmir) and the beginning of the Progressive Movement in Kashmiri literature. A new generation of educated young men, influenced by the Marxist ideology and the Indian nationalism of Gandhi and Nehru, became active as writers. Socialism appealed to them more than the romanticism of the past.

The popular Kashmiri poets after 1947 are Nadim, Arif, Rahi, Kamil, Firaq, Nazki, Santosh, Saqi, Khayal and Muzaffer Azim. The gazal was a common form since it had been used by the great Urdu poets like Ghalib, Iqbal and Faiz. After 1947, the stress on realistic themes led to the rejection of the traditional gazal form, and the introduction of the musalsal (continuous) gazal, which required a central theme rather than disconnected verses. Modern Kashmiri poetry discard the artificial poetic language and prefers the rhythms of common speech. Out of the poets mentioned above, only Rahi, Kamil and Firaq are still writing significantly. But Nadim was the most important poet of this age.

Nadim has been compared to the deodar tree (a kind of cedar), which the Kashmiris associate with elegance and strength. B. B. Kachru writes, “The revolutionary fire in him would light up on the platform when Nadim recited his poems of social revolution and change. It was a different Nadim — a deodar tree in a storm”. He took up every important social and political issue; he used strong propagandist language to support the ‘land to the tiller’ (farmer) programme of the J & K Government. Nadim regarded his 1951 poem, Me Chhama Aash Pagahuch (I Have Hopes of Tomorrow), as the very best that came from his pen. He says in this poem that true joy comes from peace for which freedom poverty and fear is most necessary:

I dream of tomorrow
When the world will be beautiful!

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I dream of tomorrow
When my husband is coming!
I’ll run to the door when he calls my name,
And, holding him tight, dance with delight.
Then I’ll make him a nice, soft couch of grass;
My husband is coming!
It is an artistically composed poem, consisting of three intimate monologues, spoken in turn by a pregnant woman, a young girl waiting for her lover, and a wife looking forward to the return of her husband from a distant land.

*Dal Bathy Bathy* (Along the Shores of the Dal Lake) is a tongawala’s address to his horse, but which metaphorically express the pain of the dispossessed Kashmiris. Frustration compels the poet to replace the imagery of a day in spring with the darkness of the night. Nadim, Rahi and Kamil are the leaders of the new age of Kashmiri poetry. All the three excelled in the *gazal* form, but Nadim alone deliberately uses the soliloquy and monologue as dramatic elements in his *musalsal gazals*. By 1960, he realized that the Marxist socialism was a dream that might not come true in its full form. The opening lines of *Shihil Kul* (The Shady Tree), the Sahitya Akademi Award — winning collection of Nadim’s poems, express the soul of Kashmiri life and culture, symbolized by the mighty chinar tree, found all over Kashmir and sheltering birds, beasts and people. *Chaary Kath* (The Tale Told by an Idiot) of 1977 is an excellent piece in the new kind of the short poem. It is interesting to note that, among other things, Nadim also experimented with the Japanese *haikui* form of verse.

Nadim visited Peking in 1952, and there he saw the Chinese class opera, *The White Haired Girl*. On his return to India he decided to write a Kashmiri opera in the same style. The result was *Bombur ta Yambarzal* (The Bumble-bee and the Narcissus), which he wrote in 1953. The story follows the popular legend that the two main characters in the opera, even though deeply in love, are not destined to meet. The opera was staged at the Nedou’s Hotel, Srinagar, and the performance was repeated when the Russian leaders, Bulganin and Krushchchev visited Kashmir. After the show, the two distinguished men congratulated Nadim on his great achievement. The next opera that he wrote in collaboration with Noor Mohammad Roshan, was *Heemal ta Naagirai*. It follows the story of a legendary folk-tale of Kashmir. Nadim’s third full-length opera, *Vitasta*, came out in 1977. *Vitasta* (the Jhelum) holds the same place in Kashmir as the Ganga in North India, the Nile in Egypt and the Mississippi in the U.S.A. In February, 1977, the opera was presented at the all India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, New Delhi. The national praised the performance as a “glorious feat of colour, dance and drama”, writes T. N. Raina in his *Dina Nath Nadim*, a monograph published by the Sahitya Akademi.

### 3.4 NADIM’S POETIC ART

Nadim is a master of language, perfect in his choice of words. Rejecting the worn out poetic conventions, epithets and imagery, he gave a new life to the Kashmiri poetry. He transformed the speech of everyday life into a new poetic language, and gave it a strength it had not known before. In the words of G. R. Santosh, the internationally renowned painter-poet, Nadim became “beyond doubt the foremost modern poet with an unusual mastery of language, using each word with a telling effect”. The language he uses is still the spoken language in Kashmiri. He told Zafar Ahmad, in an interview, “Kashmiri poetry needed a new voice and a new idiom, and I could give it”. No Kashmiri poet of the modern times has equaled Nadim in his excellent use of imagery. *Shikil Kul* is a wonderful treasure-house of symbols and images.
Prof. S. L. Sadhu comments, "It is difficult to say which is more beautiful — a scene in nature or its portrayal by Nadim". Here are two unmatched examples.

1. Peak of the mountain ranges blushed red. (Subhagheev)
2. Lightening spread her tresses behind the clouds. (Sonth ta Harud)

According to B. B. Kachru, "The secret of Nadim’s art is an intuition for an effortless use of a limited but highly appropriate vocabulary, a keen eye for the sound of his mother language and, above all, an artist’s instinct for combining all this formal apparatus in fresh imagery". Nadim always looks for the right word for any situation, and the main source of his verse is the folk songs and the vatsun (marriage songs). In metre and rhythm, he prefers the overtones of the folk dance.

Like Byron, the English poet of the early nineteenth century, Nadim never revised his verse. Shamim Ahmad Shamim, the late Urdu journalist and M. P., called him the "Emperor of Sloth". In 1984, Santosh suggested that Nadim's collected work should be published, but the poet remained indifferent to the idea. Later on, Moti Lal Saqi, another fellow poet, also used his persuasive powers, which ultimately bore fruit. The main work was done by Saqi in making the publication of Shihil Kul possible in 1985, and that fetched Nadim the Sahitya Akademi Award. Most of his poems were not lost since these had appeared in several literary magazines of Kashmir.

Nadim was a literary giant of his time, and perhaps the most outstanding Kashmiri poet of the second half of the twentieth century. He surprised the followers of the traditional literary art by his firm belief in the power and potential of the Kashmiri language. He used the speech of the common people as the medium of his poetry. He experimented with and introduced new forms of verse — the sonnet, haiku and opera. At the same time, he drew freely form the old Kashmiri forms like the vaakh of Lal Ded (the great mystical poet of the 14th century), the popular vatsun of the later romantic poets, and the folk songs of Kashmir. Harivansh Rai Bachchan, the eminent poet, translated two of his poems into Hindi. Prabakar Machwe, the Hindi writer and critic, said that Nadim was at par with Mayakovksy (Russian), Pablo Neruda (Spanish), Kazi Nazrul Islam (Bengali), Josh and Faiz (Urdu), Shri Shri (Telugu), Vallathol (Malyalam) and Nirlal (Hindi).

3.4.1 The Moon (Zoon)

Among other non-Kashmiri forms of verse that Nadim experiments with and introduce into his writing is the sonnet. In this respect, perhaps he follows the lead provided by Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal of Lahore, hailed as the national poet of Pakistan after 1947, who composed some excellent sonnets in Urdu. In the Moon, Nadim repeats the Italian model of Petrarch rather than the Shakespearean sonnet form. The theme chosen by the poet is the full moon, generally treated as a highly romantic subject associated with young lovers and their youthfull emotions. But Nadim jolts our sensibility by the very first line, where the moon, for its round shape, is surprisingly compared to a "pancake" or chappatti. The reason for this odd simile or comparison is the stark fact of how the moon would appear to a poor hungry man. The succeeding metaphors spring from this very realistic analogy.

The moon looks dull as a worn out cloak of woollen material, woven at Pampore [a suburban town near Srinagar famous for its saffron (kesar) and red chillies].
The shadows on the surface of the moon are compared to scratches on a white breast. It is pale as a false silver coin that the contractor pays an ignorant woman labourer, thereby cheating her of the wages for her honest work. Even the hills look hungrily at the chapatti-shaped moon as if to devour it. After sunset, the red fire in the west is put out by the gathering dark clouds. But, at the same time, the forest fairies start the cooking fires of the moonlight on the eastern hills, in the glow of which the mist rises like steam from boiling rice. The hope of a satisfying meal gives solace to the empty stomach of the poet, who continuously and hungrily looks at the moon in the sky.

The unusual symbolic image of the moon as a chapati dominates this sonnet from the first to the last line and, thereby, rounds off the perfect unity of the theme and form of the poem. One wonders at the originality of the imaginative power of the poet by which he transforms a traditional romantic theme into a modern realistic statement of Marxist ideology. The full moon of the universal lovers becomes a hypnotic and attractive symbol of satisfying the hunger of the poor workers of the world. And the dominant image is not special to Kashmir but common to the skies of different lands all over the earth. The guarded reference to the contractor’s cheating of the labourer draws one’s attention to the universal exploitation of the helpless poor by their rich employers. The last picture of the hungry poet gazing at the moon repeats the main theme of the poem as introduced in the very first line.

3.4.2 The Bumble-bee (Bombur)

As has been stated earlier in this unit, Nadim was inspired to write Kashmiri operas or dance-dramas after watching one such performance in Chinese at Pekin (now known as Beijing), the capital of China, in 1952, for his first theme, in this form of writing, he chose that of the bumble-bee and the narcissus flower, both common to Kashmir. The latter, which generally grows near sources of water in moderate climate is an abundantly found spring flower in Kashmir, blooming soon after the winter snows melt away. It has white petals and a miniature yellow cup in the middle, for which the Persian and Urdu poets have compared it to a wide-open eye. The scent of the narcissus is so strong that a small bunch fills a large room with its delicate but unmistakable smell. Hence, quite naturally, it attracts the black bumble-bee wandering in its pursuit of honey, just as the candle attracts the moth. The poet uses this traditional theme to create an artistic composition of great merit and haunting melody. Incidentally, the popular bombro bombro song in Mission Kashmir, the Bollywood film of 2000, is taken from this very opera, and here you are going to study that song in its English rendering.

“The Bumble-Bee”

O bumble-bee, the black bumble-bee!
Wherefore are you so sad and forlorn?
Getting hold of the slim and dainty narcissus,
We’ll put the tornado on the run.
O bumble-bee, the black bumble-bee!
Wherefore are you so sad and forlorn?

Tell us how you feel, O handsome black!
We’ll give our life for you.
The garden has withered in autumn:
It might be deserted soon.
O bumble-bee, the black bumble-bee!
Wherefore are you so sad and forlorn?

We’ll strive to unite the narcissus with you.
And she’ll be able to satiate her longings.
O bumble-bee, the black bumble-bee!
Wherefore are you so sad and forlorn?

The poet asks the bumble-bee why it is feeling so sad and lonely. He promises to seek out the narcissus flower for its sake. And when the two lovers are united, the storm and fierce wind will be forced to run away. There is no reason for the bumble-bee to languish and despair. The lovers of the garden will do anything for the happiness of the black bee. The autumn has accused the leaves of the trees and plants to wither and grow pale; the migratory birds might desert the garden soon and fly away to their winter homes. That is enough reason for the bee to feel sad. But the poet and his friends shall make every effort to unite it with its beloved narcissus so that both are happy together. Therefore, the black bumble-bee should not feel so sad and lonely.

Nadim transforms the conventional theme of the rose and nightingale into a sad tale of two lovers who are destined for separation and the consequent tragedy. They try their best for a union but the revolutions of time and natural upheavals conspire to keep them apart. The bumble-bee is a virtual Krishna who yearns for the company of a fair Radha, but Kansas of the world put hurdler in the path of their union. The agents of doom in Nadim’s opera are autumn, winter, frost and the thunder strong that scatter the petals of the delicate narcissus and prevent her from getting united to her bold and persistent lover. The other flowers of the garden sympathise with her and try to help her but to no avail. At the end of the opera, one is left with a feeling of despair by this engrossing tale of unfulfilled love.

3.5 A BRIEF LIFE-SKETCH OF PADMA SACHDEV

![Image of Padma Sachdev]
Born in 1940 at Purmandal (Jammu) in a family of Sanskrit scholars, Padma was taught by her father, Pt. Jai Dev Sharma, the art of reciting Sanskrit shlokas even before she went to school. This carried a direct influence on the rhythmic beauty of her verse in Dogri and Hindi. As young girl, she would play an amazing game by adding stanzas of her own composition to the folk songs sung by her. Nobody realized the trick played by her as she was too shy to claim the verses as her own. But she was destined to become Padma Sachdev, the first Dogri woman poet and that too of national stature. Unfortunately, she lost her father during the Pakistani attack on Jammu and Kashmir in 1947. In consequence, she had to face very difficult circumstances before the family moved to Jammu.

Padma married twice. First, at a very young age, to a fellow Dogri poet, Ved Pal Deep, but that marriage did not succeed, leading to a separation. Frustration and mental suffering brought about Padma’s ill health, forcing her to undergo treatment for three years at the Chest Diseases Hospital, Srinagar. She had already joined the AIR at Jammu. After a miraculous recovery from tuberculosis, she moved to Delhi, where she met and eventually married Surinder Singh, the younger of the Singh Bandu classical singers. In 1971, Padma received the Sahitya Akademi Award for her first collection of poems, Meri Kavita, Mere Geet, published in 1969. She also wrote lyrics for a Hindi film, Prem Parvat. Later, she visited London and some other European cities, and compered concerts of Lata Mangeshkar in Canada and U.S.A. Padma got the J & K Culture Academy Award twice for Neherian Galian (1983) and Pota Pota Nimbal (1988). Another three collections of her Dogri poems, two novels, a collection of short stories and an autobiography, all in Hindi, have also appeared. Besides, she has done several translations from Dogri Advisory Board of the Sahitya Akademi. Currently, she lives with her husband and daughter in Delhi, and continues to write in Dogri and Hindi.

3.6 AN OVERVIEW OF HER AGE AND THE ART OF HER POETRY

After 1947, when the political workers in Jammu went to villages to mobilize people for constructive activities, the latter responded enthusiastically if the workers talked to them in Dogri instead of Hindi or Urdu. This realization brought about a change of values. Dinooh Bhai Pant, Ram Nath Shastri, Ved Deep and Yash Sharma started writing in Dogri rather than in Hindi or Urdu, the two accepted languages of literary art till then in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Kishan Smailpuri and Parmanand Almast also joined this movement. When these poets went to small towns and villages and recited their Dogri poems, the local poets also started writing in Dogri. In this scenario, short poems and songs were more effective than the long complex speeches of the politicians. Hence, poems were written by an increasing number of writers to express their patriotic feelings. Songs in praise of the Duggar Desh (i.e. Jammu) were composed, similar in mood and tune to the National Anthem.

The fifties of the twentieth century were a period of consolidation and expansion for Dogri writing. The individual works of Kripam Sastri, R.S. Samyal, Ved Rahi, D.C. Prashant and V.P. Nagar were published in this
period. Deeno Panth's poems express the poet's preoccupation with social injustice, the breaking up of the feudalism, and the immediate need for social reform. Shivnath writes in his History of Dogri Literature:

The Old Duggar was a decaying and rotting set-up in which the common people went half-clad and half-fed but Jagirdar and money lenders and the princely class had all that they wanted and he hopes that the new Duggar will be the Duggar of common people. (p.89)

Rammath Shastri composed none poems, two ghazals and translation of Bhartihari's Niti-Sataika, which was very popular in the land of the Dogras. The poems of Ved Pal Deep deal with four main sentiments: unfulfilled love, the communist ideology, the workers against the capitalists, and the changing moods of nature.

In one of his poems, Dinoor Bhai Panth sings in praise of the Duggar Desh, protected by the tall mountains of the Pir Panchal Range, where green meadows, fields, fruits and flowers add to its beauty. Kishan Smailpuri argues in a poem why talk of heaven, why not sing of the glories of the Duggar Desh. Many other poets wrote songs in praise of the glories of the simple, unsophisticated but handsome and brave Dogra youth. In "Duggar Desh Bachana, Meri Jinde" (We Have to Defend Duggar Desh, My Love), a poem by Yash Sharma, a young couple sing of their determination to defend their land against aggression.

In 1969, the Sahitya Akademi recognized Dogri as an independent literary language of India. This encouraged many new writers to contribute creatively to the increasing treasure of literature in this language. The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages also started patronizing Dogri publications. Collections of Dogri folk-songs, folk-tales, and selections of writings of different kinds were published. The Academy extended subsidies to Dogri writers for making it possible for the common people to have access to their works. The Chinese aggression against India in 1962, and the Indo-Pakistan conflicts of 1965 had a deep impact on the Dogra people, since a large majority of them served in the army. The martial spirit and patriotic feelings of the Dogra's found expression in their poems of this period. There was a spurt in the creative writing which saw the publication of nearly 100 books of poetry, plays, novels, short stories and essays. It was only after this impetus that some new writers like Tara Smailpuri, Madhukar, Durga Dutta and Padma Sachdev appeared on the scene.

Early in her life, Padma discovered the charm of the Dogri language and its treasure of folk poetry, and that helped her to emerge as a poet of great promise. Being a sensitive person she was overcome by the suffering and injustice that her widowed mother had to put up with. She withdrew from the people around her and turned to Nature. The sky, moon, stars, hills, fields, streams and trees became her companions, and these reflected her moods. Padma's first poem appeared in a local newspaper in 1955, when she was only fifteen. She moved from her village to Jammu city at a time when the Dogri poetry of Panth, Shashtri, Madhukar, Deep, Almst and Yash Sharma had become popular all over Jammu. Padma could not remain untouched by the prolific literary activity of that time. One of her early poems "Raje Dyan Mandian" (Palaces of the Raja) is regarded as a classic of modern Dogri verse. The poem is written from the point of view of a mentally deranged woman who accosts the poet, asking the question if the surrounding big buildings
belong to her. Here, Padma challenges the institutions of decaying landlordism, responsible for the oppression of the innocent and helpless common people. It is amazing how, so early in her poetic career, Padma achieves in this poem such intensity and depth of meaning with a brevity of expression. The revolutionary poem exposes the hollowness of royal palaces. For Padma, the red bricks are soaked in the blood of the labourers who build the tall structures, and the lamps burn their life-blood as oil.

The powerful movement of Dogri poetry inspired Padma to express her inner feelings in verses of her own composition, which gave her great satisfaction. Being still young, she wrote poems like “Icchya” (Desire) and “Vijog” (Separation) in her adolescent infatuation with moods of love and its pain. “Do Pakhro” (Two Birds) is an allegorical tale of two young lovers forced into separation by a cruel society. They unite only in death. “Nikre Fungroo, Uchhii Ura” is a beautiful lyrical poem that is direct, intense and touching at the same time. It contains nostalgic references to the joys of life before marriage and criticism of how the mother-in-law and sister-in-law ill-treat a girl after she is married. There is a touch of sentimentality and self-pity in her poems of this period. That is explained by the grief and suffering she had to undergo in the early part of her life. But she boldly faced that phase of her life and emerged successfully out of it.

Padma’s poetry expresses the joys and sorrows of the typical Indian woman. Even when conscious of the social injustices that they have to face, her women characters maintain their dignity under all circumstances. Her poems present womanhood in its fullness, as beloved sister and mother. Padma considers poetry to be the spirit of a person, and she feels that one’s mother tongue could be the only medium of its expression. Therefore, she works tirelessly for propagating Dogri and the culture it represents. Her desire to introduce this language to a wider reading public encourages her to write Hindi prose. In this respect, she acknowledges her debt to Dharamvir Bharti. It is the same zeal that motivates her to translate from Dogri into Hindi and vice versa.

Today, Padma Sachdev appears as a warm-hearted and affectionate person, who is known for her uninhibited laughter. It only indicates that the sad experiences of life that she has undergone have failed to dim her love of life.

3.6.1 The Moment of Courage

This is a very sensitive poem about the close relationship existing between nature and human beings. It also provides some glimpses of the village life, away from the hustle and bustle of the urban society. The elements of nature that one finds in the poem are a hill, the well at its bottom, water covered by the green mango blossom, and the solitary calf that meets a tragic end in the depth of the well. All there are usually associated with the country-side then with towns and cities. The poem also refers to superstition and caste considerations that keep the people away from the well after the drowning of the unfortunate calf. It could be presumed that the calf’s body must later have been removed from the well, but nobody would care to go back to it for a bath or a drink of water. The poet is a different kind of person from the common people. She does both these things but only in the darkness of the night. Yet she waits for that courageous moment when she would drink from the well in broad daylight.
The poet writes about the well which is to the right of the village hill and full of water. One particular summer, it got covered by the green mango blossoms. That attracted a calf which wanted to feed on it, and consequently drowned in the well. Since that day nobody drinks the water of that well. But, the poet sometimes goes secretly at night to bathe in it and drink from it. Yet, by doing so, she does not get full satisfaction. She thinks there are in it dark and sad shadows of the girls who stopped going to the well for drawing water. The well too is, perhaps, awaiting that day when, in full sight of all the villages, the poet will dare to extend her hands for a drink of water.

To give voice to her love for the well, Padma Sachdev uses certain pleasing images like the ‘shining brimful’ water, green mango blossoms, wistful shadow of the maidens, and ‘the rope on its nail’. These images give the well a life of its own, and personify it as a human being waiting to welcome back its former friends. There is a touch of sadness in the reference to the maidens who never come back. It recalls the fate of the village girls who get married and go away to the homes of their respective husbands. Gesture of hanging the rope of the well on its nail conveys the sadness of farewell and departure. The poet’s own longing for the well is in contrast to the dismissive attitude of the other villagers. She is only trying to rise above her weakness of going to the well only at night and not in broad daylight.

### 3.7 LET US SUM UP

After going through this Unit, you must have realized what an important place Dina Nath Nadim has among the Kashmiri poets of the second half of the twentieth century. He not only gives up writing in Urdu in order to allot the Kashmiri language its rightful place as a medium of creative expression, but makes many new experiments that have enriched his mother tongue as well as Kashmiri literature. Nadim’s use of native words and phrases recall the nineteenth century English poet William Wordsworth’s passion for using the language really used by men. And then his skill in employing the common speech rhythms and, thereby, evoking real life experiences is at par with the art of T. S. Eliot and other modern English poets. Nadim started his career as a realist and revolutionary poet, but he ended as a romanticist who accepted the softer human emotions. His later poems, especially the three operas provide ample evidence of this progression of thought and imagination in a poet who so obviously dominated his age.

Padma Sachdev, on the other hand, is a pioneer for being the first woman writing Dogri poetry. She must be a compelling source of encouragement to many budding women writers all over the Jammu region. Padma has faced the hard realities of life and still evolved a philosophy which gives her a cheerful outlook that infects all those who come into contact with her. Hence, the readers perceive in her work an evolution from sadness to optimism, which is the most welcome feature of her poetry. Apart from this, her constructive efforts towards popularising Dogri language, literature and culture, not only in Jammu and Kashmir but also throughout India, deserve high praise. Both Nadim and Padma Sachdev have contributed greatly to the evolution of their respective mother tongues as mediums of literary writing, and their efforts have won national recognition.
3.8 GLOSSARY

Pancake: something like a *chapatti* or *puri*
Robe of Pampore tweed: woolen *pharan* or gown worn by the Kashmiris.
Collar-band: neckline of the *pharan*
Counterfeit: forget or fake
Mite: small amount of money
Wood nymphs: kind of fairies poetically associated with forests.
Shoots: new growth of plants.
Gazed: looked constantly
Moon-flooded: Moonlight spread like flood waters.
Forlorn: lonely and unhappy
Dainty: pretty, soft and attractive
Tornado: fiercely blowing wind, great storm
Deserted: empty of singing birds
Satisfy: Satisfy
Longings: desires, wishes
Brimful: full to the top
Tempted: attracted, drawn
Quenched: satisfied as one’s thirst after drinking water
Wistful: full of sad desire

3.9 QUESTIONS

2. Write a short essay on the position of Kashmiri poetry at the time when Nadim started writing.
3. What is Nadim’s contribution to making the Kashmiri language popular as a medium of literary expression?
4. What are the new forms that Nadim introduced into the Kashmiri literature, and what measure of success did he achieve?
5. Write a short note on Nadim's experiments with the use of language in his poetry.

6. Attempt a critical appraisal of "The Moon" or "The Bumble-bee".

7. What was the position of Dogri poetry when Padma Sachdev started writing at a young age?

8. What were the hardships faced by Padma in her life, and how did she overcome those?

9. What are the major themes treated by Padma? Elaborate by reference to some of her poems.

10. Assess Padma's contribution to making the Dogri language, literature and culture popular at the national level.

11. Write a critical appraisal of *The Moment of Courage*.

12. Write critical notes on the following verses:

*The Moon*

(a) The moon looked like a pancake as she rose behind the hills. She looked dull as a robe of Pampore tweed worn off threadbare and torn at collar-bands...

(b) The moon looked like a pancake and the hills looked hungry; and the clouds put out the fire in the western skies.

(c) I whispered hope to my hungry belly, and gazed and gazed with hungry looks at the moon-flooded sky.

*The Bumble-bee*

(d) O bumble-bee, the black bumble-bee!
Wherefore are you so sad and forlorn?
Getting hold of the slim and dainty narcissus,
We'll put the tornado on the run.

(e) Tell us how you fell, O handsome black bee!
We'll give our life for you.
The garden has withered in autumn;
It might be deserted soon.

(f) We'll strive to unite the narcissus with you,
And she will be able to satiate her longings.
O bumble-bee, the back bumble-bee!
Wherefore are you so sad and forlorn?

*The Moment of Courage*

(g) Last year
Summer covered it with
The Green
Of mango blossoms;
It tempted a calf
Which fell in and drowned.

(h) At night
Like a thief
I bathe in it;
I cup my hands
And drink.
(i) There are shadows...
Of the maidens
Who hung
The rope on its nail,
But never came back
To draw water.

(j) The dark of the wall
Longs for that moment of courage
When, in full sight of all,
My hands
Will stretch out
For a drink.

3.10 SUGGESTED READINGS


Raina, T. N. An Anthology of Modern Kashmiri Verse.

-------------Dina Nath Nadim (Makers of Indian Literature), New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1998.

