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### Vision

We all are known that one of our academic agendas is "Lab to Land" (University to Village). Now as an Educational based trust we want to promote "Land to Lab". That can be redefined as "Village to University". The purpose is to integrate people with the mainstream academic excellence for sustainability.

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# REECHOES OF FEMALE POWER IN LAKSHMI KANNAN'S *MUNIYAKKA*

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## Abstract

Lakshmi Kannan asserts herself in her writings which are characteristically Indian in spirit and tone with a significant surge in the Indian English literary scene of much greater promise. Her short stories are sharply evocative and haunting in their exploration of the lives of women in India, and Indian women living abroad. The women in these stories are unforgettable in their struggle towards self-realization, committed to a special feminine sensibility, strong-willed, pathetic and rebellious and a kind of revelation of a new and unexpected dimension of an ordinary simple reality. *Muniyakka*, a short story from the anthology *India Gate and other Stories* projects the powerful resonating waves of female gender. The vibrant, earthy old servant maid *Muniyakkata* talks constantly to herself reveals the tenderness inherent in her, ultimately attending to the needs of her master and mistress merrily without any regret or repose. With extraordinary finesse, her outspokenness asserts her 'self', battered by discrimination by *Bairappa*, her husband an equally worthless man and her three sons, who represent the conditioned and regulated patriarchy of Indian society. This paper records *Muniyakka's* orchestrations that reechoes the female power held within her, waiting for eventual release in multitudinous vibrations. *Muniyakka* indulges in brilliant conversations to herself, questioning and restructuring the amelioration in her social position.

Sun, rain, curving sky

Mountain, oceans, leaf and stone

Star shine, moon glow

You're all that I can call my own.

-Maya Angelou (*Women Work*-Lines 27-30)

Lakshmi Kannan is a bilingual Indian writer and uses the pen-name Kaaveri for her writings in Tamil. She is a poet, short story writer, literary critic and novelist and is her own translator. Besides translating her own works into English, she has also translated the works of many major Tamil writers- *Wooden Cow* (Translation of T.Janakiraman's *Marappasu*) and *Through the Veils* (Translation of Indira Parthasarathi's *Thiraiyalukku Appaal*). She works with major British and American universities. Among her numerous publications are volumes of poems-*Exiled Gods*, *The Glow and Grey Impressions*, *Crossing the River* (1995) and *Restless Waters* (2005), short story collections *Parijata* (1992), *India Gate* (1993) and *Rhythms* (1986), and the novels *Paratem* (1996) and *Going Home* (1999).

The short story titled *Muniyakkain* the short story collection *India Gate and other Stories* pictures the life of an extraordinary voluble woman *Muniyakka*, who displays an uninhibited flow of speech, rapturous and exquisite, sprinkling out her veiled thoughts and feelings and thereby amuses the listeners. She is not the garrulous being, going around in an ambiguous way of disposition. Carrying herself on thin, spindly legs shivering and conquering the bitter chillness, she works tirelessly. Lakshmi Kannan has represented her as 'The Vibrating Personality', whose life had been battered and torn by her husband, sons and

destiny. Her fluent mutterings to herself were the most meaningful conversations filled with queer humour. Her strange behaviour and jocular conversation secures her a mirth-provoking name "walkie-talkie" from the children in her locality.

Lakshmi Kannan enters into the inner psyche of womanhood and tells a captivating story. *Muniyakka's* mastered art of soliloquy during her work shows her inner turmoil wherein she allows her soul to feel the freshness of freedom rejected to her by the patriarchal society. The position of *Muniyakka* posits her cultural space and throws considerable light on her societal pressures. Sociologically and psychologically, family is very important both for the individual and society. According to MacIver and Page, "Of all the organizations, small and large, which the society unfolds none transcends the family in the intensity of its sociological significance" (203). All the altruistic attitudes of life – cooperation, self-sacrifice, service to humanity, universal brotherhood, and love of human beings are ensured by the cooperation and understanding between a husband and his wife in a family. *Muniyakka* deprived of the fragrance generated by marital life, demonstrates her assertive, free spirit when she declares, "Wretch" and "Bairappa be damned". (108)

Her routine duties of mopping, sweeping, washing and cleaning, to sustain herself in her old age