



INTERPRETING D. R. BENDRE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF KEERTHINATH KURTHUKOTI'S VĀGARTHA AND G. S. AMUR'S BHUVANADA BHAGYA

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INTRODUCTION

Dattatreya Ramachandra Bendre (1896–1981), popularly known as Da. Ra. Bendre or Ambikatanayadatta, stands as one of the prominent figures of modern Kannada literature. A pioneering voice in the Navodaya movement, he is celebrated as a varakavi (gifted poet-seer) for his lyrical genius, insightful engagement with the Kannada language—especially its Dharwad idiom—and his ability to blend folk traditions with classical and modern sensibilities. His vast compositions, spanning nearly seven decades, includes iconic collections like *Naaku Tanti* (for which he was conferred the Jnanpith Award in 1973), and his poetry is noted for its musicality, imagistic richness, philosophical depth, and innovation in form and rhythm.

Keerthinath Kurthukoti and G. S. Amur are widely recognized as the notable commentators of D. R. Bendre's poetry in modern Kannada literary criticism. Kurtakoti (1928–2003), a scholar-critic with deep roots in polyglot traditions (Kannada, Sanskrit, Marathi, English), brings a philological, tradition-grounded, and aesthetically nuanced approach. Amur (1925–2020), an important academic critic, emphasizes cultural heritage, evolutionary phases, and a broader literary-historical contextualization. Through their reflective and incessant engagement with Bendre's poetic works, they made lasting contributions to the development of Kannada critical discourse. While both share a deep appreciation of Bendre's literary genius, their critical perspectives, interpretative methodologies, and analytical emphases differ significantly. Kurthukoti's criticism is primarily grounded in close textual analysis and Indian aesthetic theory, whereas Amur adopts a broader literary-historical and comparative approach. These complementary perspectives have collectively enriched the understanding of Bendre's poetry and expanded the horizons of modern Kannada literary criticism.

Two major critical works on Bendre—Keerthinath Kurtakoti's *Vāgartha* (often subtitled or understood as focusing on Bendre *Kāvyaṇusandhāna*, or poetic inquiry) and G. S. Amur's *Bhuvanada Bhagya* (roughly “The Fortune/Luck of the World,” a wide-ranging study of Bendre's literature)—offer different yet complementary lenses for understanding and interpreting this multidimensional aspects of Bendre's poetry. This comparative study examines their methodologies, key insights, strengths, and divergences in illuminating Bendre's genius.

KEY WORDS- Poetic Inquiry, Desi, Preserving, Articulating, And Revitalizing / Renewing, Critical Renaissance

Keerthinath Kurtakoti's Vāgartha: Philological Depth and Aesthetic Inquiry

Vāgartha is not a single monograph but a collection/compilation of Kurtakoti's writings, analyses, and reflections on Bendre's works — often described as a deep *kavyanusandhana* (poetic inquiry or contemplation).

Kurtakoti, approaches the poet through close textual engagement, linguistic sensitivity, and an exploration of the “word-meaning” (*vāgartha*) dialectic central to Indian poetics (echoing *Kālidāsa's Raghuvamśa*). His work investigates into Bendre's mastery of language as a living, auditory, and cultural entity—particularly how the poet rejuvenates *desi* (folk/regional) Kannada while drawing on classical Sanskrit and broader literary traditions.

Kurtakoti highlights Bendre's euphony, metrical innovation, and fusion of folk rhythms with sophisticated imagery. He treats Bendre's poetry as a site where sound and sense (*śabda* and *artha*) achieve near-mystical unity. Kurtakoti places strong stress on Bendre's deep connection to the Dharwad ethos, highlighting the vibrant interplay between folk traditions, the urban literary renaissance of North Karnataka, and the poet's own charismatic presence. He views Bendre's poetry as an embodiment of the region's “divine vigor”—the vital spirit of its people and its lush, inspiring landscape.

Kurthukoti emphasizes Bendre's formative role as a cultural and literary bridge between the ancient and medieval traditions of Kannada literature and the incipient sensibilities of modernity. Drawing extensively upon the legacy of classical Kannada poets such as Pampa, as well as the principles of Sanskrit poetics, Kurthukoti portrays Bendre as a poet who fully internalizes Kannada's millennial tradition, incorporating its folk, devotional, classical, and emerging modern strands, while forging bold innovations within it. In Kurthukoti's interpretation, Bendre occupies an exceptional historical position, marking both the culmination of a long and distinguished literary tradition and the beginning of a new phase in the evolution of modern Kannada poetry. Kurtakoti positions Bendre as a pinnacle who enhances vast traditions (Pampa, Kumara Vyasa, and beyond) while forging a modern voice. His *earlier Bhiringada Benneri* also offers an overview of Bendre's poems, suggesting *Vāgartha* as a deeper, more sustained meditation.

Kurthukoti highlights Bendre's extraordinary aptitude to create a richly polyphonic poetic universe, one that effortlessly accommodates diverse modes of expression, including myth, narrative, mystery, eros, riddles, elegy, and lyrical introspection.



Rather than following a single poetic voice or stylistic register, Bendre continually reinvents his expressive idiom, moving with remarkable flexibility between the individual and the universal, the colloquial and the elevated, the immediate and the metaphysical. Kurthukoti characterizes this remarkable resourcefulness as one of the defining features of Bendre's poetic genius. His poetry possesses a chameleon-like quality, seamlessly shifting from intimate, conversational simplicity to expansive, cosmic vision without sacrificing artistic coherence. Central to Kurthukoti's interpretation is the dynamic interplay between *vāk* (word) and *artha* (meaning), wherein sound, rhythm, imagery, and semantic suggestion converge to create a unified aesthetic experience. Bendre's poetry, therefore, is understood not merely as a vehicle of ideas but as a living embodiment of the inseparable relationship between language, emotion, and philosophical insight.

Cultural and Historical Context

Kurthukoti firmly locates Bendre within the distinctive cultural landscape of northern Karnataka, particularly the Dharwad region, whose vibrant synthesis of folk traditions, classical learning, urban intellectual life, and linguistic diversity profoundly shaped the poet's sensibility. He argues that Bendre's creative imagination emerged from this fertile cultural milieu, which endowed his poetry with what may be described as a unique spiritual vitality and artistic vigour. At the same time, Kurthukoti situates Bendre within the broader context of the Kannada Navodaya movement, recognizing him as one of its foremost architects. While acknowledging the influence of modern literary developments, he maintains that Bendre's modernity was never derivative or merely imitative of Western literary models. Instead, Bendre fashioned an authentically indigenous modernism by creatively assimilating the resources of Kannada's folk, devotional, and classical traditions, thereby producing a poetic voice that was simultaneously rooted in cultural memory and responsive to contemporary experience.

Philosophical and Critical Foundations

Kurthukoti's interpretation of Bendre is underpinned by a broad philosophical vision that extends beyond conventional literary criticism. Consistent with the concerns evident in his wider critical writings, he views literature as an evolving dialogue between tradition and innovation, individual creativity and collective cultural memory. His readings emphasize the transformative role of myths, narratives, and symbolic structures in shaping human consciousness, demonstrating how Bendre continually reinterprets inherited cultural forms to articulate new aesthetic and philosophical meanings. Kurthukoti also recognizes translation, adaptation, and creative rewriting as dynamic processes of cultural negotiation through which literary traditions are renewed rather than merely preserved. Within this framework, Bendre emerges as a poet of perpetual renewal, one who repeatedly revitalizes the expressive possibilities of Kannada by integrating inherited traditions with an intensely individual imaginative vision. His poetry thus exemplifies the continuous evolution of poetic language, where each new creative act

redefines the relationship between tradition, modernity, and artistic originality.

Kurthukoti's critical style is distinguished by its immersive, text-centred, and *rasika* orientation, characterized by an aesthetic sensitivity that seeks to experience and illuminate the inner life of poetry rather than merely subject it to abstract theoretical scrutiny. Instead of proceeding comprehensive critical formulations or imposing external theoretical frameworks upon the text, he privileges close reading, meticulous textual exposition, and nuanced interpretation. His criticism unfolds through sustained engagement with individual poems, revealing the subtle interplay of language, imagery, rhythm, symbolism, and philosophical suggestion that constitutes Bendre's poetic artistry.

A defining feature of Kurthukoti's scholarship is his remarkable multilingual scholarship. His command of Kannada, Sanskrit, and English literature enables him to draw illuminating comparisons across literary traditions without diminishing the uniqueness of Bendre's poetic vision. References to classical Sanskrit poetics, medieval Kannada literature, Indian philosophical thought, and selected Western critical ideas are woven seamlessly into his analyses, enriching rather than overshadowing the primary text. These comparative insights are employed not as displays of scholarship but as interpretative tools that deepen the reader's appreciation of Bendre's aesthetic complexity and cultural rootedness.

Consequently, Vāgartha transcends the conventional boundaries of literary criticism. It is not merely an analytical study but an intimate dialogue between a discerning critic and a great poet. Kurthukoti writes with the sensitivity of a *sahridaya*—the ideal appreciative reader of Indian aesthetics—whose criticism emerges from profound aesthetic participation, intellectual discipline, and cultural insight. The result is a work of exceptional literary intimacy, in which critical inquiry becomes an act of aesthetic communion, enabling readers to experience the richness, subtlety, and spiritual resonance of Bendre's poetry in all its depth.

Kurthukoti's critical engagement with Bendre marked a significant milestone in the evolution of modern Kannada literary criticism. Through Vāgartha, he established a rigorous mode of textual analysis that combines close reading with a deep sensitivity to aesthetic form, cultural tradition, and historical context. His criticism demonstrates that poetry can be appreciated as an autonomous artistic creation while remaining firmly embedded within the intellectual and cultural milieu from which it emerges. Rejecting reductive ideological or purely sociological interpretations, Kurthukoti advocates a balanced critical approach in which literary meaning arises from the dynamic interaction of language, symbolism, artistic structure, and cultural consciousness. In doing so, he helped shape an indigenous critical methodology that successfully integrates the insights of classical Indian poetics with the analytical demands of modern literary scholarship.



Influence and Legacy

The influence of Kurthukoti's scholarship extends far beyond his own generation. His perceptive readings of Bendre significantly transformed the critical reception of modern Kannada poetry and provided subsequent scholars with a sophisticated framework for textual interpretation. By demonstrating how Bendre's poetry could be understood through the complementary lenses of aesthetics, philosophy, and cultural history, Kurthukoti profoundly influenced later critics, teachers, researchers, and creative writers. His scholarship also inspired prominent literary figures, including Girish Karnad, who acknowledged Kurthukoti's role in deepening their appreciation of Kannada literary tradition, artistic craftsmanship, and the creative dialogue between classical inheritance and modern expression. Consequently, Kurthukoti's critical writings continue to occupy a foundational place in the study of Kannada literature and remain indispensable to serious scholarship on Bendre.

Contemporary Relevance

Kurthukoti's critical insights have acquired renewed significance in recent years through the republication of *Vāgartha* and the increasing availability of his essays in English translation. These developments have introduced his scholarship to a wider readership beyond Kannada literary circles, enabling comparative literature scholars and students of Indian aesthetics to engage more fully with his distinctive critical methodology. The renewed academic interest in *Vāgartha* underscores its continuing relevance as a model of culturally grounded, text-centred criticism, demonstrating the enduring value of Kurthukoti's interpretative approach for contemporary literary studies and for ongoing discussions on the relationship between tradition, modernity, and poetic creativity.

Tradition and Modernity: As a critic who rewrote Kannada literary history,

Kurthukoti's style is often described as immersive and *rasika* (aesthetically appreciative), favoring detailed exegesis over broad theorizing. His multilingual scholarship allows rich comparative allusions, making *Vāgartha* a work of profound literary intimacy.

G. S. Amur's Bhuvanada Bhagya: Cultural-Historical Synthesis and Evolutionary Perspective

Amur's *Bhuvanada Bhagya* (1991), which earned him the Sahitya Akademi Award (1996), is a full-length study of Bendre's life and works, widely regarded as a classic of Kannada criticism. It analyzes Bendre from the vantage of Kannada's cultural heritage, tracing an evolution across phases while evaluating thematic breadth, symbolic imagery, and philosophical underpinnings.

Salient Features

Phased Evolution: Amur delineates Bendre's poetic journey into periods—an early experimental phase, a “first flowering” (peaking in lyrical *bhaavageete*), and a “second flowering” of greater complexity and abstraction. This provides a developmental narrative.

Universal Literary Sensibility: Amur employs a comparative lens across traditions (Indian and Western), assessing Bendre against epic standards. He praises the poet's vision, linguistic richness, imagery, metre, and stylistic variety, declaring the *bhaavageeta* (lyrical song) transformed into mantra-like expressions.

The book locates Bendre within the broader continuum of Kannada literary and cultural traditions, examining themes such as illusion and reality, the notion of an integrated personality, and the poet's role in the linguistic and literary renaissance of Kannada. By harmoniously combining biography, poetics, and critical evaluation, it also provides valuable perspectives on Bendre's translations and the wider dimensions of his literary compositions.

Amur's critical engagement with Bendre is distinguished by its systematic, analytical, and academically rigorous character. Rather than approaching Bendre's poetry merely through biographical impressions or subjective appreciation, Amur situates the poet within the larger historical, cultural, and literary evolution of Kannada. His method combines close textual analysis with a broader historical perspective, enabling him to examine the development of Bendre's poetic sensibility, his engagement with Kannada's literary heritage, and the distinctive features of his poetic imagination. This comprehensive approach makes Amur's interpretation particularly valuable for sustained scholarly inquiry and places Bendre's achievement within a wider framework of Indian and world literature.

At the centre of Amur's assessment is his recognition of Bendre as one of the greatest lyrical geniuses of the twentieth century. For Amur, Bendre's greatness lies not merely in his mastery of lyrical expression but also in his ability to transform personal experience, nature, culture, philosophy, and collective consciousness into poetry of universal resonance. Bendre's lyrical intensity, linguistic creativity, symbolic richness, and philosophical depth enable his poetry to transcend the boundaries of region and language.

Amur's assessment of Bendre extends beyond the conventional framework of regional literary appreciation. He perceives Bendre's poetry as possessing an imaginative range and cultural depth that enable it to engage with the fundamental concerns of human existence. In this sense, Bendre's achievement can be placed alongside the great poetic and epic traditions of world literature, not because he imitates those traditions, but because his poetry achieves a comparable depth of vision, emotional intensity, symbolic richness, and philosophical resonance. His engagement with nature, love, death, spirituality, human relationships, cultural memory, and the mysteries of existence gives his poetry a universal dimension.

For Amur, the greatness of Bendre lies particularly in his ability to transform the local into the universal. Although deeply rooted in the Kannada language, its cultural ethos, folk traditions, philosophical heritage, and regional experience, Bendre's poetry speaks to experiences that transcend geographical and linguistic boundaries. His creative imagination converts individual emotions and culturally specific experiences into expressions of broader human consciousness. Consequently, Bendre's poetry



need not be confined to the category of Kannada regional literature; it can be read within the larger context of world poetry.

Amur's criticism thus establishes Bendre as a poet of both cultural rootedness and universal significance. Bendre's profound relationship with Kannada becomes the very basis of his universality: the deeper he enters into the linguistic, cultural, and philosophical resources of Kannada, the more effectively he articulates experiences shared by humanity at large. His poetry combines lyrical immediacy with philosophical depth, enabling the personal, the cultural, and the cosmic to coexist within a single poetic vision. Amur therefore presents Bendre not merely as an outstanding Kannada poet but as a major poetic personality whose creative achievement deserves recognition within the broader history of Indian and world literature.

Comparative Analysis: Convergence and Divergence Similarities

Both Keerthinatha Kurthukoti and G. S. Amur recognize Bendre as a poet of extraordinary linguistic mastery and acknowledge his decisive role in transforming the course of modern Kannada poetry. Although their critical approaches may differ in emphasis and methodology, both critics converge in identifying Bendre's intimate relationship with the Kannada language as the foundation of his poetic originality. For them, Bendre does not merely employ Kannada as a medium of expression; he explores, expands, and revitalizes its expressive possibilities through his inventive use of vocabulary, rhythm, idiom, imagery, symbolism, and musicality.

A significant aspect of Bendre's linguistic achievement, as highlighted by both critics, is his capacity to bring together folk and classical traditions with the sensibilities of modern poetry. His poetry draws extensively upon the rhythms, idioms, metaphors, oral traditions, and cultural consciousness of Kannada folk life, while simultaneously engaging with the philosophical, aesthetic, and literary resources of classical Indian traditions. Bendre's poetic language thus becomes a meeting ground between the inherited and the innovative. He absorbs the richness of the past without becoming confined by it and introduces modern modes of perception without severing his connection with tradition.

Kurthukoti's critical perspective particularly draws attention to the cultural and linguistic rootedness of Bendre's poetic imagination. Bendre's engagement with folk consciousness, regional idioms, traditional symbolism, and the living speech of Kannada enables him to establish a direct relationship between poetry and the collective cultural experience of the people. At the same time, his poetry demonstrates considerable intellectual and philosophical sophistication. The apparently simple language of folk expression frequently becomes a vehicle for profound reflections on existence, identity, nature, love, spirituality, and human destiny.

Amur, from a more systematic and historically oriented critical perspective, emphasizes the larger significance of this synthesis. He sees Bendre as a major force in the development of modern Kannada literature. It is because of the reason that Bendre succeeds in making tradition dynamically relevant to modern

consciousness. His poetry does not simply preserve the past; rather, it reinterprets tradition through a modern sensibility. In this process, classical inheritance, folk wisdom, individual experience, and modern intellectual awareness are brought into productive dialogue.

Thus, for both Kurthukoti and Amur, Bendre occupies a transitional yet transformative position in Kannada literary history. He serves as a bridge between the oral and the written, the folk and the classical, the traditional and the modern, and the regional and the universal. His linguistic experimentation revitalized Kannada poetic expression and demonstrated that a modern poetic voice could emerge organically from the cultural resources of the language itself. Bendre's prominence therefore lies not merely in his individual poetic excellence but in his capacity to renew the Kannada poetic imagination and redefine the possibilities of modern Kannada poetry.

Both Keerthinatha Kurthukoti and G. S. Amur draw particular attention to Bendre's distinctive contribution to *bhavageete*, his profound use of symbolism, and the deep cultural rootedness of his poetry in the ethos of North Karnataka. Their readings suggest that Bendre's lyrical achievement cannot be understood merely in terms of emotional expression; it must also be examined in relation to his linguistic experimentation, regional cultural consciousness, and ability to transform everyday experience into philosophically suggestive poetry.

Bendre's innovation in *bhavageete* lies in his ability to give a new artistic and intellectual dimension to the lyric form. While *bhavageete* is traditionally associated with the expression of personal emotion and intimate experience, Bendre expanded its scope by integrating elements of folk song, classical poetic traditions, philosophical reflection, and modern psychological awareness. His lyrics frequently appear simple and spontaneous, yet beneath their musical surface lie complex reflections on love, nature, loneliness, mortality, spirituality, and the human condition. Through rhythm, repetition, sound patterns, colloquial expressions, and carefully crafted imagery, he transformed the Kannada lyric into a form capable of expressing both individual emotion and collective consciousness.

Another important feature of Bendre's poetry, emphasized by these critics, is its figurative density. Natural objects, seasons, birds, flowers, rivers, darkness, light, journeys, dreams, and everyday incidents often acquire meanings that extend beyond their immediate reference. Nature, for instance, is not merely decorative background in Bendre's poetry; it frequently becomes a symbolic language through which the poet explores the relationship between the individual self and the larger universe. Similarly, images drawn from ordinary life can suggest questions concerning existence, spiritual identity, time, death, and transcendence. This multilayered symbolism enables Bendre's apparently simple lyrics to sustain multiple levels of interpretation.

The cultural embeddedness of Bendre's poetry in North Karnataka is equally significant. His poetic imagination is deeply connected with the linguistic rhythms, folk traditions, beliefs, customs, landscapes, oral narratives, and social experiences of the region. The speech patterns and idiomatic richness of North



Karnataka frequently enter his poetry, giving it an unmistakable regional character. Yet this regional specificity does not restrict the significance of his work. Instead, Bendre transforms the particularities of North Karnataka into expressions of broader human experience. The local becomes a means of reaching the universal.

Kurthukoti and Amur therefore perceive Bendre's regional consciousness not as a limitation but as a source of poetic strength and authenticity. His rootedness in North Karnataka provides his poetry with a distinctive cultural vocabulary and imaginative landscape, while his philosophical and symbolic vision enables that regional experience to transcend its immediate boundaries. In this respect, Bendre successfully negotiates between folk culture and literary sophistication, regional identity and universal humanism, emotional immediacy and philosophical depth.

Ultimately, their assessment presents Bendre's bhavageete as a significant site of literary transformation. He revitalized the Kannada lyric by bringing together musicality, folk expression, symbolic complexity, philosophical inquiry, and regional cultural memory. His achievement lies in demonstrating that the intimate lyric could simultaneously function as a repository of cultural experience and as a vehicle for profound reflections on human existence. Through this synthesis, Bendre emerged as a transformative figure in modern Kannada poetry whose regional rootedness became the very foundation of his wider literary universality.

Differences

Methodology

Vāgartha and Bhuvanada Bhagya follow two different but complementary approaches to the study of Bendre's poetry. Vāgartha mainly focuses on the close reading of individual poems. It examines words, images, symbols, rhythm, and meaning in detail. Bhuvanada Bhagya, on the other hand, takes a broader historical and cultural approach. It studies Bendre in relation to the development of Kannada

Literature and Culture

Vāgartha gives importance to the language and aesthetic qualities of Bendre's poetry. It examines how Bendre uses words and expressions to create deeper meanings. Particular attention is given to his choice of words, poetic images, symbols, rhythm, and musical quality. The method of *anusandhāna* involves careful investigation and interpretation of these elements. It helps the reader discover meanings that may not be immediately visible.

The concept of *vāgartha*, which suggests the close relationship between *vāk* (word) and *artha* (meaning), is central to this approach. In Bendre's poetry, the sound and meaning of a word are often closely connected. His use of language is therefore important not only for what he expresses but also for how he expresses it. Vāgartha examines this relationship between sound, language, and meaning. It also studies the musical and suggestive qualities of Bendre's poetic language.

This close-reading method is especially useful for understanding Bendre's symbolism, linguistic creativity,

bhavageete, and poetic imagination. Simple images and ordinary expressions often carry deeper philosophical, cultural, or spiritual meanings. A careful reading helps to reveal these different layers of meaning.

Bhuvanada Bhagya follows a broader approach. It does not focus only on individual poems or words. Instead, it studies Bendre in relation to the history of Kannada literature and culture. It traces the growth of his poetic personality and examines his place in the development of modern Kannada poetry.

The book also considers Bendre's relationship with classical traditions, folk culture, regional identity, and modernity. It shows how Bendre drew from the cultural traditions of Kannada while also developing a modern poetic voice. His poetry is therefore understood as part of the continuous growth and transformation of Kannada literature.

The two approaches, however, should not be seen as contradictory or mutually exclusive; rather, they are complementary and mutually enriching. Vāgartha provides an intensive study of the inner dimensions of Bendre's poetry by closely examining his language, imagery, symbolism, rhythm, diction, and aesthetic expression. It helps to reveal the subtle meanings and artistic techniques that operate within individual poems. Through this close textual engagement, the complexity and richness of Bendre's poetic imagination become more clearly visible.

Bhuvanada Bhagya, in contrast, places Bendre's literary achievement within the broader framework of Kannada literary history, cultural traditions, and intellectual development. It examines the poet's relationship with tradition and modernity and considers his contribution to the evolution of modern Kannada poetry. Thus, while Vāgartha offers depth through detailed textual and aesthetic analysis, Bhuvanada Bhagya provides breadth through historical, cultural, and literary contextualization.

When considered together, these approaches offer a more complete understanding of Bendre's multifaceted personality and achievement. One illuminates the inner artistic structure of his poetry, while the other explains its larger historical and cultural significance. Their combined perspective enables us to appreciate Bendre not only as a gifted lyric poet but also as a profound thinker, a cultural visionary, and one of the important architects of modern Kannada literary consciousness.

Focus: Kurtakoti's criticism is marked by a close sensitivity to language, regional culture, and tradition, whereas Amur's approach is more systematic, historical, comparative, and evaluative. Their different methods reveal different dimensions of Bendre's poetic achievement.

Kurtakoti is particularly attentive to the poet's extraordinary ability to transform ordinary Kannada words, idioms, sounds, and expressions into highly evocative poetic forms. For Kurtakoti, Bendre's language is not merely a medium of communication; it is an active creative force. Bendre uses the musical possibilities of Kannada, its folk idioms, regional expressions, rhythmic patterns, and semantic richness to create a distinctive poetic world. Kurtakoti's criticism pays close attention to the relationship between sound and sense, word and emotion, language and experience.



Another important strength of Kurtakoti's criticism is his emphasis on regional ethos. He recognizes that Bendre's poetic imagination is deeply rooted in the cultural life of North Karnataka. The region's folk traditions, speech patterns, customs, beliefs, landscapes, social experiences, and collective memories enter Bendre's poetry in diverse forms. Kurtakoti does not treat this regional character as merely local or decorative. Instead, he sees it as an essential source of Bendre's originality. The regional becomes a foundation through which Bendre expresses larger human experiences. Bendre draws upon classical Indian thought, folk culture, mythology, spirituality, and inherited literary traditions, but he does not simply reproduce them. He transforms and reinterprets them through a modern sensibility. Kurtakoti's criticism brings out this process of creative transformation. Tradition in Bendre is therefore not static inheritance; it becomes a living resource that is renewed through poetic imagination. In this sense, Kurtakoti helps us understand how Bendre establishes a dialogue between folk and classical, traditional and modern, regional and universal.

Tone and Scope- Kurtakoti's engagement with Bendre is marked by a strong sense of personal aesthetic involvement. He approaches Bendre not simply as an object of academic investigation but as a poet to be experienced, savoured, and inwardly responded to. His criticism often carries the quality of a *rasika*—a sensitive connoisseur who enters into the emotional, linguistic, and cultural textures of poetry. Rather than reducing the poem to an abstract theoretical structure, Kurtakoti seeks to reveal the living energy that animates it. His criticism therefore frequently feels intimate and interpretative: he tries to understand how Bendre's words generate aesthetic experience and how the poet transforms the local and traditional into something universal.

G.S.Amur, by contrast, approaches Bendre with a more systematic, scholarly, and comprehensive critical framework. His work seeks to situate Bendre within the larger history of Kannada literature while also examining the development of his poetic personality across different phases of his career. Consequently, Amur's Bendre criticism has a broader chronological and intellectual reach. One of Amur's major strengths is his ability to connect the poet's life, intellectual development, historical circumstances, and poetic achievement. Bendre is not treated merely as the creator of individual memorable poems; he is understood as a poet whose creative consciousness undergoes development and transformation. Thus, Amur's approach accommodates the life-work continuum—the relationship between the poet's biography, experiences, intellectual evolution, and successive stages of literary production.

The two approaches are therefore complementary rather than contradictory. Kurtakoti provides the depth of the *rasika*'s response, while Amur provides the breadth of the scholar's synthesis. Together, they enable a fuller understanding of Bendre—as poet, cultural consciousness, linguistic innovator, inheritor of tradition, and evolving literary personality.

CONCLUSION: Enriching Bendre Studies

Kurtakoti's Vāgartha and Amur's Bhuvanada Bhagya occupy a foundational place in Bendre criticism. Vāgartha

approaches the poet's imagination through a close, language-centered reading marked by deep appreciation, whereas Bhuvanada Bhagya situates him within a broader cultural, historical, and literary framework, tracing his place within the larger continuum of Kannada and world literature. Read together, these two studies present Bendre not merely as an exceptional poet but as a committed practitioner of *kāvyaōdyōga*—a sustained and disciplined creative pursuit in which poetry becomes a vehicle for cultural, spiritual, and aesthetic self-realization.

The complementary character of their critical approaches offers significant possibilities for future scholarship on Bendre. Further research could place their insights in conversation with contemporary theoretical perspectives such as postcolonialism, ecocriticism, cultural studies, translation studies, and comparative literary studies. A sustained examination of Bendre's poetry in its translations into Indian and international languages could further broaden the understanding of his linguistic creativity, philosophical depth, and cultural rootedness. Such interdisciplinary and cross-linguistic engagements would not only facilitate Bendre's wider reception beyond the Kannada literary tradition but also illuminate hitherto underexamined dimensions of his poetic imagination and intellectual legacy.

In an era of increasingly global and interconnected literary discourse, Kurtakoti and Amur's scholarship illustrates why Bendre still deserves sustained and wider critical engagement. Their work transcends mere interpretation; it plays an active role in preserving, articulating, and revitalising Kannada's literary and cultural consciousness. A comparative study of Vāgartha and Bhuvanada Bhagya thus honours both Bendre's poetic accomplishment and the critics whose rigorous yet affectionate approach helped shape the critical renaissance of modern Kannada literature.

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