**I B.A. ENGLISH SEMESTER I**

**INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH**

**UNIT II**

***Of Mothers, among other things***

* A.K.Ramanujan

I smell upon this twisted blackbone tree  
the silk and whitepetal of my mother’s youth.  
From her earrings three diamonds

splash a handful of needles,  
and I see my mother run back  
from rain to the crying cradles.  
The rains tack and sew

with broken threads the rags  
of the tree tasseled light.  
But her hands are a wet eagle’s  
two black-pink crinkled feet,

one talon crippled in a garden-  
trap set for a mouse. Her saris  
do not cling: they hang, loose  
feather of a one time wing.

My cold parchment tongue licks bark  
in the mouth when I see her four  
still sensible fingers slowly flex  
to pick a grain of rice from the kitchen floor.

**Smelling upon** - remembering.

**Twisted blackbone tree** - her old age like an old tree with a bent stem.

**Silk and whitepetal** - softness and beauty of his mother in her youth.

**Tack** - A long stitch used to fasten fabrics together temporarily,

**Rag** - An old piece of cloth usually torn from a larger piece.

**Rags of tree** - Mother’s weak body.

**Tasseled light** - The sun ray which penetrates through the tree.

**Crinkled**-rough and having creases

**Black-pink** -eagle’s struggle which puts its life in danger in order to feed its young ones.

**one talon**- claw, here it means her foot

**cold** –emotionless

**parchment** -harsh tongue

**bark** -dry surface

**sensible**-working

**flexing**-bending

**SUMMARY**

The poem ‘Of Mothers Among Other Things’ written by A.K.Ramanujan is about a mother’s struggle and her sacrifices for her children. All the mothers face the same hurdles in their lives and hence the poem is for all the mothers.

The first part of the poem deals with the youth of the poet’s mother.

The poet says that he smells silk and whitepetal of his mother’s youth upon this twisted blackbone tree. The poet says that while seeing his old mother (who is bent like an old tree), he remembers her youth when she was soft, beautiful and charming. The poet says that during her youth days, there were beautiful diamond earnings in her ears which would sparkle like a handful of needles and the rays of sun. His mother would run from rain to the crying cradles of her young children. Rain symbolizes hardships. This line brings into light the struggle of his mother even in her youth.

The second part deals with her middle age.

The rain tried to stop the poet’s weak mother, her daily activities and her enthusiasm. But her hands were like a wet eagle’s two black-pink crinkled feet. The hands of poet’s mother are compared with the feet of eagle. The poet describes the hardships that tried to stop his mother. But the mother faced them boldly and did everything for her children without thinking for herself. The mother was crippled in a garden trap set for mouse. Finally, the poet describes the weakness of his mother. According to him, the saris of his mother do not fit her and rather hang like the loose feather from the weak wings of the eagle which spent its only life for its young ones.

The final part of the poem describes the last phase of poet’s mother – her old age.

The poet feels sad when he sees the condition of his old mother who is very weak but still tries to do all the work. The poem ends on a sad note and gives the message of love for all the mothers. The theme of the poem is the manner we treat our mothers without understanding them. The poet says that he is feeling guilty because he used to talk harshly to his mother and could not understand her sacrifices for them.