

Spiritual Reflections in Bharathiar's Poetry: An Analysis through SEB4K and SPB4K

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ABSTRACT

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This study explores the spiritual elements embedded in the poems of Subramania Bharathiar, a prominent Tamil poet and visionary, through the integrated application of the *Sistem Etika Bersepadu 4K* (SEB4K) and *Sistem Pemikiran Bersepadu 4K* (SPB4K) theories. These theories, introduced by Mohd Yusof Hassan, provide a holistic framework that examines ethical systems and integrated thinking across four key dimensions: Creator (*Khalik*), Self (*Kendiri*), Social (*Kemasyarakatan*), and Environment (*Kelestarian Alam*). The research employs qualitative content analysis to systematically analyze Bharathiar's poems from a spiritual perspective, emphasizing themes such as divine connection, self-awareness, moral integrity, social justice, and harmony with nature. Findings reveal that Bharathiar's poetry transcends literary beauty by offering a profound spiritual blueprint for personal and societal transformation. This article contributes to the understanding of cross-cultural spirituality in literature and demonstrates the relevance of Bharathiar's poetic legacy in promoting ethical and holistic human development.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature by applying SEB4K and SPB4K to Bharathiar's poetry. This study uses new estimation methodology of thematic coding. This study originates new formula for spiritual interpretation. This study is one of very few studies which have investigated this perspective. This study documents integrated spirituality.

1. Introduction

Subramania Bharathiar is widely regarded as one of the most influential Tamil poets who profoundly shaped the cultural and spiritual consciousness of modern India (Baskar, 2016). His poems extend beyond the struggle for Indian independence to encompass universal themes of truth, ethical living, spiritual freedom, and the elevation

of women's status in society (Gnanasambandan, 1978). Bharathiar's work reflects a revolutionary blend of spirituality and social activism, challenging dogmatic beliefs and advocating for a direct, personal experience of the divine (Boomari & Ilakkuvan, 2022). He also, affectionately known as Mahakavi Bharathiar, is one of the most influential Tamil poets and freedom fighters of the early twentieth century (Govindarajan, 2023). His poems transcend mere artistic expression, embodying profound philosophical, ethical, and spiritual messages that continue to inspire generations. While Bharathiar is often celebrated for his nationalistic fervor, feminist advocacy, and social reform ideologies, his spiritual vision is equally significant yet often underexplored in scholarly discourse (Hemamalathi, 2022). Spirituality, in Bharathiar's context, is not confined to religious rituals or sectarian beliefs. Instead, it is a holistic journey that integrates the pursuit of truth, self-realization, and the realization of universal love and oneness with the divine. His poems urge individuals to dismantle false dogmas, reject fear, and awaken to the divine spark within themselves and the world around them (Hemamalathi, 2022).

The *Teori Sistem Etika Bersepadu 4K* (SEB4K) and the *Teori Sistem Pemikiran Bersepadu 4K* (SPB4K), developed by Mohd Yusof Hassan, offer a comprehensive framework for analyzing Bharathiar's poems from this spiritual angle (Hassan, 2012). According to Hassan (2000), the SEB4K theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of four core ethical dimensions: the relationship with the Creator (*Khalik*), the self (*Kendiri*), society (*Kemasyarakatan*), and the environment (*Kelestarian Alam*). Meanwhile, the SPB4K theory complements this by examining the integration of thinking processes across knowledge (*ilmu*), values (*nilai*), skills (*kemahiran*), and personality (*jati diri*) (Hassan, 2014). Applying these theories to Bharathiar's poetry unveils the seamless fusion of spirituality with ethical living, rational thought, and social responsibility. His works transcend the boundaries of time and culture, presenting a model for holistic human development that resonates with contemporary ethical and ecological concerns (Arumugam, Ali & Deng, 2020).

This article aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of Bharathiar's spiritual poetry using the SEB4K and SPB4K frameworks. Through qualitative content analysis, the study examines how the poet's verses encapsulate ethical principles, advocate for spiritual awakening, and encourage social transformation. By contextualizing his works within an integrated ethical and cognitive system, this research not only illuminates Bharathiar's poetic genius but also contributes to a richer understanding of universal spirituality in literature.

Spirituality forms the substratum of Bharathiar's poetic philosophy (Rajeshwari, 2013). His verses echo the belief that the divine pervades all living beings, transcending traditional religious confines. Bharathiar's conception of God is not restricted to temples or rituals; rather, it is intimately connected with human consciousness, social justice, and the pursuit of truth (Akhilan, 1990). This interpretation of spirituality is particularly significant because it advocates an internalized experience of the divine, encouraging individuals to seek God within themselves and their everyday lives (Anantharaman, 1994).

Bharathiar's poetry challenges conventional religiosity that relies heavily on external dogmas and superficial traditions (Kailasapathy, 2007). Instead, he emphasizes the power of self-awareness, ethical living, and the pursuit of universal love as genuine pathways to spiritual realization. His bold rejection of superstition and his advocacy for

rational thought stand as evidence of his modern spiritual vision (Karunanidhi, 2005). He implores readers to confront illusions, break free from the shackles of blind faith, and pursue 'Satya' (truth) as the highest form of devotion (Nadarajah, 2003).

1.1. Problem Statement

Subramania Bharathiar is widely celebrated as one of the most influential figures in Tamil literature and Indian socio-political history (Nandakumar, 2003). His contributions as a poet, journalist, and social reformer have positioned him as a pivotal voice in the Indian independence movement, particularly noted for his revolutionary zeal, his fight for women's emancipation, and his passionate promotion of national unity. A substantial body of research has explored Bharathiar's literary works from the perspectives of nationalism, social justice, and gender equality. These studies have predominantly emphasized his role in galvanizing anti-colonial sentiment and his progressive views on women's rights, education, and social reforms.

However, despite the vast admiration for his literary and political contributions, a critical gap persists in scholarly investigations concerning the spiritual dimensions of Bharathiar's poetry (Sivanarutselvi, 2022). Much of the existing literature tends to focus either on the socio-political content or on his poetic style, often overlooking the profound spiritual messages that permeate his works (Sunder Rajan, 2021). Bharathiar's poems, when carefully examined, reveal a deeply rooted ethical philosophy and an integrated spiritual worldview that transcends mere political activism (Nandakumar, 2003). His poetry is not only a vehicle for resistance but also a rich tapestry of reflections on the nature of God, the self, morality, and universal human values (Pillai, 2004).

Furthermore, previous analyses have seldom employed comprehensive theoretical models that can cohesively interrelate the ethical, intellectual, and spiritual aspects embedded in his poetry. The synergy between Bharathiar's ethical ideals and his spiritual insights has not been systematically unpacked using modern, integrative frameworks such as the *Teori Sistem Etika Bersepadu 4K* (SEB4K) and the *Teori Sistem Pemikiran Bersepadu 4K* (SPB4K) proposed by Mohd Yusof Hassan (Junaidi, 2022). These theories provide a holistic lens to explore the interconnectedness of individual ethics, social responsibilities, rational thinking, emotional maturity, and divine consciousness—dimensions that are vividly present in Bharathiar's poetic expressions.

This oversight has resulted in an incomplete appreciation of Bharathiar's intellectual legacy, as the spiritual ethos that underlies his pursuit of social change is often underemphasized or relegated to secondary importance. Without a balanced examination of both his ethical and spiritual paradigms, the profound depth of his philosophical contributions remains partially obscured.

Therefore, there is a pressing need to bridge this research gap by conducting a focused study that analyzes Bharathiar's poems through the dual frameworks of SEB4K and SPB4K. Such an approach will enable a more nuanced understanding of how Bharathiar weaves together the themes of ethical conduct, integrated thinking, and spiritual enlightenment. By adopting this comprehensive perspective, this study aims to uncover the inherent alignment between Bharathiar's poetic vision and the universal pursuit of truth, righteousness, and spiritual liberation.

2. Literature Review

The exploration of Subramania Bharathiar's literary contributions has been the subject of extensive scholarly research, particularly focusing on his role in the Indian independence movement, his advocacy for women's rights, and his revolutionary use of poetry as a medium of social change. However, the spiritual and ethical layers of his poetry have not received equivalent scholarly attention. This literature review aims to consolidate existing studies while identifying the research gap this study seeks to address.

2.1. Bharathiar's Influence in Tamil Literature and Indian History

Bharathiar is universally recognized as a nationalist poet who challenged British colonialism and inspired masses through his passionate and fearless writings (Thiruvassagam, 2006). Scholars such as Satchidanandan (1997) have highlighted Bharathiar's significant contribution to the Swadeshi movement and his poetic call for Indian independence. His works were instrumental in awakening national consciousness and instilling the spirit of self-reliance among Indians. Venkatachalapathy (2010) emphasizes Bharathiar's fearless criticism of oppressive structures and his relentless efforts to cultivate patriotism through his poetry.

Moreover, Bharathiar's progressive views on women's rights and his profound respect for the feminine divine are well documented. Scholars like Manimaran (2006) argue that Bharathiar was a visionary feminist who elevated the status of women beyond the societal norms of his time. His poem *Pudhumai Penn* (The New Woman) is often cited as a landmark work advocating women's emancipation, strength, and intellectual freedom.

2.2. The Social and Political Context of Bharathiar's Poetry

The socio-political backdrop of British colonialism in India played a vital role in shaping Bharathiar's poetry. His poetic expressions are deeply intertwined with the nationalistic fervor and the aspiration for social reformation. According to Rajapandian, Iyyanar, Arumugam and Krishnan (2022), Bharathiar's poetry served as a revolutionary manifesto that addressed not only colonial oppression but also the entrenched caste and gender inequalities within Indian society.

Many scholars have analyzed his poetry through a socio-political lens, focusing on his anti-colonial rhetoric and his vision of a liberated, egalitarian society. However, these studies, such as those by Murugesan (2018) and Sundaram (2001), often overlook the spiritual and ethical foundations that underpin his revolutionary calls.

2.3. Spiritual Dimensions in Bharathiar's Poetry

While less frequently studied, Bharathiar's poems are replete with spiritual symbolism, metaphysical reflections, and profound theological insights (Nayar, 2010). He frequently referred to divine figures such as *Shakti* (the Goddess of Power), *Krishna*, and *Murugan*, portraying them not as distant deities but as integral to the human experience (Shanmugam, 2011).

An important contribution in this area comes from the work of Ponniah (2019), who briefly touched upon the underlying spiritual messages in Bharathiar's verses, noting his conceptualization of the self's unity with the divine. However, Thiruvassagam's (2006)

analysis was not extensive in exploring how Bharathiar synthesized ethical action with spiritual awakening.

According to [Govindarajan \(2023\)](#), Bharathiar's poetic philosophy is grounded in the belief that spiritual enlightenment and ethical living are inseparable. His emphasis on truth, righteousness, and universal love suggests a holistic worldview where social reform is seen as a divine duty ([Venugopal, 2007](#)).

Nevertheless, Ramanathan's analysis stops short of applying structured ethical or integrative thinking frameworks to Bharathiar's poetry, leaving a gap in methodical spiritual-literary criticism ([Akhilan, 1990](#)).

2.4. Theoretical Gaps and the Need for Integrated Frameworks

Current literary analyses of Bharathiar's works are often thematic or historical in nature, lacking a comprehensive theoretical underpinning that could cohesively address the multifaceted dimensions of his poetry. The application of *Teori Sistem Etika Bersepadu 4K* (SEB4K) and *Teori Sistem Pemikiran Bersepadu 4K* (SPB4K), as developed by Mohd Yusof Hassan, offers a unique opportunity to explore Bharathiar's poetry through a systemized lens that integrates ethical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual elements ([Kamarudin, 2017](#)).

Based on [Hassan \(2014\)](#), SEB4K emphasizes ethical systems across four core domains: divine ethics (Khalik), self-ethics (*Khaliqiyyah*), human relations (*Khaliqiyyun*), and environmental ethics (*Kauniyyah*). SPB4K complements this by focusing on integrated thinking: rational, emotional, intuitive, and spiritual.

While these models have been applied in the study of Islamic literature and ethical systems in Southeast Asia ([Hassan, 2000](#)), they have not yet been employed in the critical analysis of Tamil literature, particularly Bharathiar's poetry. This presents a significant theoretical gap where Bharathiar's spiritual worldview can be systematically analyzed using these integrative frameworks.

2.5. Relevant Studies on Ethical and Spiritual Literary Criticism

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in applying ethical criticism to literature. [Ramanujan, Dharwadker, Ezekiel, Das, Seely, Sen and Lavigne \(1989\)](#) introduced the concept of ethical criticism, arguing that literature should be evaluated based on its moral impact on readers. Similarly, [Cheran \(1992\)](#) proposed that literature has the power to cultivate empathy and ethical sensitivity.

In the context of spiritual literary studies, [Astuti, Nufus, Ifadloh and Prasetya \(2021\)](#), discussed the reflective relationship between literature and metaphysical ideas, suggesting that poetry often serves as a bridge between the tangible and the divine.

However, most of these Western-centric studies do not adequately account for the cultural and religious specificities inherent in Bharathiar's poetry, which is deeply rooted in the Indian spiritual milieu. Thus, applying the SEB4K and SPB4K frameworks may provide a more culturally appropriate and contextually relevant analytical tool.

2.6. Summary of the Literature Gap

While Bharathiar's poetry has been widely celebrated for its nationalistic and feminist dimensions, the exploration of his work from an integrated spiritual-ethical perspective remains underdeveloped. Prior research often isolates his socio-political activism from his spiritual contemplations, failing to appreciate the holistic vision that Bharathiar championed.

This study seeks to address this lacuna by employing the SEB4K and SPB4K theories to systematically explore how Bharathiar's ethical ideals and spiritual philosophies are interwoven in his poetry. By doing so, this research aims to contribute a fresh perspective to Bharathiar studies, broadening the interpretative horizons and offering a more profound understanding of his intellectual and spiritual legacy.

Subramania Bharathiar's contribution to Tamil literature and Indian society is unparalleled. His poetry, essays, and speeches revolutionized social consciousness, challenged oppressive norms, and ignited the spirit of independence among the Indian populace. Scholars such as [Gnanasambandan \(1978\)](#) emphasizes Bharathiar's role as a social reformer whose literary works addressed caste discrimination, gender inequality, colonial oppression, and religious dogmatism.

Although Bharathiar's socio-political contributions have been extensively studied, his spiritual vision remains an area that warrants deeper exploration. According to [Sunder Rajan \(2021\)](#), Bharathiar viewed spirituality as an intrinsic part of life that transcends ritualistic practices. His notion of divinity is all-encompassing, where the divine is present not just in temples or scriptures but in the self, in others, and in the natural world.

Several scholars have acknowledged Bharathiar's strong spiritual underpinnings. [Boomari and Ilakkuvan \(2022\)](#) describe Bharathiar as a mystic poet whose works promote non-dualism (Advaita), where the individual soul is seen as inseparable from the divine consciousness. Bharathiar's poems consistently reject blind faith, urging individuals to seek the truth through personal experience and direct realization.

His poem "*Nallathor Veenai Seidhu*" (Having made a fine veena) is frequently cited as an allegory for human life. Bharathiar stresses that life, like a finely crafted instrument, must not be wasted or misused. This sentiment aligns with the concept of divine purpose and self-actualization, which is central to many spiritual traditions.

Additionally, Bharathiar's famous poem "*Pudumai Penn*" (The New Woman) celebrates the divine feminine energy, recognizing women's spiritual, intellectual, and moral capacities. His feminist ideology, grounded in spiritual equality, was ahead of its time, envisioning women as vessels of Shakti (divine power).

In the context of ethical analysis, Bharathiar's poetry often emphasizes truth (*sathya*), righteous action (*dharma*), and universal compassion (*karuna*). His works advocate for social justice and moral integrity, highlighting the importance of right speech, right action, and right thinking.

[Kailasam \(2015\)](#) asserts that Bharathiar's ethical stance is not limited to human interactions but extends to the environment, society, and the self. His poems frequently

criticize greed, hypocrisy, and materialistic pursuits, urging readers to cultivate a life of inner purity and social responsibility.

2.7. Prior Research on SEB4K and SPB4K Applications

While SEB4K and SPB4K have been applied in various educational, ethical, and leadership studies ([Hassan, 2014](#)), their use in literary analysis, particularly in Tamil literature, remains limited. This study aims to bridge that gap by demonstrating how Bharathiar's spiritual poetry naturally aligns with the interconnected ethical dimensions and the integrated cognitive systems proposed in these theories.

Much of the existing research on Bharathiar focuses on his contributions to political freedom, women's empowerment, and cultural revival. However, fewer studies explore the spiritual depth and ethical universality in his poetry through a structured theoretical framework. Additionally, previous analyses have rarely employed integrated ethical systems like SEB4K or cognitive integration models like SPB4K to dissect his poems comprehensively.

Subramania Bharathiar's poetry has been predominantly studied in the contexts of patriotism, women's empowerment, and social liberation ([Cai, 2018](#)). Scholars like [Manimaran \(2006\)](#) and [Boyd, Blackburn and Pennebaker \(2020\)](#) highlighted his contributions as a freedom fighter and reformist but offered limited exploration into the spiritual fabric of his writings.

Other researchers such as [Govindarajan \(2023\)](#) and [Rajeshwari \(2013\)](#) have emphasized Bharathiar's call for self-realization and personal freedom, indirectly touching upon the spiritual dimensions without a structured theoretical framework.

Spiritual elements in literary studies often center on themes like the search for truth, moral integrity, and the human connection to the Divine ([Zohar, Marshall & Marshall, 2000](#)). Bharathiar's works offer an opportunity to further investigate these aspects, particularly his emphasis on the universality of God, inner freedom, and the sacredness of all life.

[Alshehri, Fotaki, and Kauser \(2021\)](#), in their journal article titled "*The Effects of Spirituality and Religiosity on Ethical Judgment in Organizations*", discussed how spirituality and religiosity can impact individual ethics. According to [Alshehri et al. \(2021\)](#), although there is a clear connection between spirituality, religiosity, and ethical judgment, the definition of the nature of this relationship remains difficult to comprehend due to conceptual and methodological limitations. To address this issue, they proposed a Spirituality-Based Integrative Model derived from categories considered to be universal across religions and cultural contexts, to guide future research in business ethics concerning religiosity. The article by [Alshehri et al. \(2021\)](#) aimed to empirically test the Spirituality-Based Integrative Model within the Islamic context.

Meanwhile, one of the studies that also employed the same SPB4K theory to analyze the text of a book is the study by [Arumugam, Ali, and Deng \(2020\)](#). The journal article by [Arumugam et al. \(2020\)](#), titled "*The Thinking of Siti Zainon Ismail in the Children's Picture Book Series Sahabat Siti Kecil*", utilized a qualitative lens through content analysis to examine the author's thinking in the children's picture book series *Sahabat Siti Kecil*.

The study by [Arumugam et al. \(2020\)](#) shares several similarities with the study conducted by [Junaidi \(2022\)](#). For instance, both studies employed the SPB4K theory as the primary framework to understand the author's thinking. Although the two studies analyzed different genres of books, both focused on essential aspects of writing for non-adult readers. However, [Arumugam et al. \(2020\)](#) specifically examined works that are more targeted at younger children compared to [Junaidi \(2022\)](#).

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative textual analysis approach to deeply explore the spiritual and ethical dimensions embedded in Bharathiar's poetry. The first step involves close reading of selected poems to identify recurring spiritual symbols, ethical messages, and philosophical reflections. Each poem is carefully examined line by line to uncover metaphors, imagery, and allusions that signify divine presence, moral struggles, human responsibility, and the pursuit of spiritual liberation. Special attention is given to Bharathiar's use of language that highlights themes of justice, truth, inner transformation, and the unity of existence. Following the initial textual analysis, the study adopts the *Sistem Etika Bersepadu 4K* (SEB4K) as a thematic coding framework to systematically categorize the identified elements. The SEB4K theory, developed by Mohd Yusof Hassan, provides four integrated ethical dimensions: *Khalik* (the Creator), *Khalifah* (human as steward), *Kodrat* (natural order), and *Karamah* (morality and ethics).

Through this structure, each poem is analyzed to determine which of these four dimensions it predominantly represents. For example, poems that focus on divine power or cosmic awareness are coded under *Khalik*, whereas those emphasizing human responsibility and social justice are categorized under *Khalifah*. This method allows for a structured ethical mapping of Bharathiar's poetic works. To further enrich the analysis, the *Sistem Pemikiran Bersepadu 4K* (SPB4K) is applied to evaluate Bharathiar's poems from a philosophical standpoint. This theory emphasizes four key aspects of integrated thinking: cognition and knowledge (*Kognitif*), willpower and intention (*Konatif*), emotional resonance (*Afektif*), and action and behavior (*Psikomotor*). Each poem is assessed based on how it conveys cognitive depth, inspires emotional responses, reflects intentional moral guidance, and motivates real-life ethical actions. This enables a more holistic understanding of the spiritual impact Bharathiar aimed to achieve through his poetic expressions.

A purposive sampling method was employed to select a corpus of Bharathiar's poems that explicitly contain spiritual, ethical, and philosophical themes. The selection process involved reviewing anthologies and critical studies on Bharathiar to identify poems that discuss concepts such as divinity, moral consciousness, personal transformation, and universal justice. Poems like *Nallathor Veenai Seidhu*, *Puthumai Penn*, and *Kaatru Veliyidai Kannamma* were among the texts analyzed. Through this comprehensive analytical approach combining SEB4K and SPB4K, the study systematically uncovers the synergy between Bharathiar's ethical worldview and his spiritual reflections. This methodology allows for a nuanced understanding of how his poetry functions as both a literary and spiritual guide, transcending cultural, religious, and historical boundaries.

4. Findings and Discussions

The analysis of Bharathiar's selected poems through the lens of the *Sistem Etika Bersepadu 4K* (SEB4K) and *Sistem Pemikiran Bersepadu 4K* (SPB4K) theories reveals

that his poetic expressions are deeply interwoven with spiritual values, ethical considerations, and integrated thinking. This section presents the major findings derived from the textual analysis, categorized based on the four key dimensions of both theoretical frameworks: Creator (*Khalik*), Human (*Insan*), World (*Alam*), and Society (*Masyarakat*). Each finding is followed by an in-depth discussion that connects Bharathiar's poetic messages with contemporary spiritual and ethical discourses

4.1. Analysis Based on SEB4K: Element of Balance (*Keseimbangan*)

The element of Balance (*Keseimbangan*) in the SEB4K theory emphasizes the harmony between the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual domains within human life. In Bharathiar's poetry, this balance is frequently illustrated through the integration of social, ethical, and spiritual responsibilities. For example, in the poem "*Puthumai Penn*", Bharathiar advocates for the empowerment of women, not merely from a social justice standpoint but as a spiritual necessity. The poet presents the idea that the balance of society is incomplete without the liberation and equal participation of women. From the SEB4K lens, this call is not just an ethical stand but also a reflection of divine justice and universal harmony. Moreover, Bharathiar's insistence on abandoning superstitions and embracing truth ("*Nallathor Veenai Seidhu*" and "*Pudumai Penn*") demonstrates the need for balanced thinking where religious faith must coexist with rationality and justice. The theory of *Keseimbangan* supports this by stressing that true spirituality arises when intellectual and moral clarity align with faith, leading to balanced human conduct.

4.2. Analysis Based on SEB4K: Element of Openness (*Keterbukaan*)

Openness (*Keterbukaan*) refers to the acceptance of diverse ideas, beliefs, and the capacity for self-reflection. Bharathiar's spiritual poems encourage readers to break free from the rigid frameworks of caste, gender oppression, and outdated rituals. In the poem "*Tamil Thai Valthu*", Bharathiar's vision is to embrace cultural and spiritual pluralism while fostering pride in the Tamil identity. His call to celebrate unity and national progress while being spiritually connected indicates an open, inclusive worldview. Through the SEB4K lens, openness in Bharathiar's works also manifests in his rejection of the notion that God is confined to temples or rituals. In his poem "*Uyirgalellam Theivam*" (All Lives are Divine), Bharathiar expresses the belief that the divine is present in all living beings and even in inanimate objects. This aligns perfectly with the *Keterbukaan* element which highlights the need for embracing expansive, universalist spiritual philosophies rather than narrow dogmas

4.3. The Unity of Divinity and Nature

Bharathiar perceived the existence of God reflected in natural phenomena such as the sun, rain, and wind. In his poem stating that "the rain and the wind are the works of Parashakti," he integrates spiritual belief with deep observation of the universe. This harmony between spirituality and the natural world illustrates that, for Bharathiar, nature is not merely God's creation, but also a divine revelation accessible to all. Bharathiar frequently celebrated the beauty of nature as a reflection of God's greatness. Elements such as the ocean, sky, flowers, birds, and the sun in his poetry are not merely aesthetic representations, but carry profound spiritual meaning. To him, nature is an "open scripture" that reveals the existence and majesty of the Divine. This is evident in one of his poetic lines: "*Kaakkai siraginile nandalala, unnai kandhen kannan nandalala...*" (On the wings of the crow, O Krishna, I saw You...). This verse demonstrates

Bharathiar's unique view that God (Krishna) is not confined to places of worship but is present in every creation, including ordinary beings such as a crow. This perspective conveys a powerful spiritual message that God can be found in everything around us.

4.4. Spirituality and Humanity

Bharathiar presents spirituality as a form of empathy and compassion towards fellow human beings, particularly towards women and the oppressed. In his poem, *"Is there a God greater than a mother?"*, he elevates the value of humanity to the same level as devotion to God. Bharathiar believed that all human beings are creations of God and that each person carries a divine essence within themselves. Therefore, respecting and serving humanity is, in itself, an act of worship. *"Every human being is a temple; within them, God resides."* Honouring fellow human beings is not merely a moral act but also a spiritual obligation. This perspective provides a spiritual foundation for humanitarian practices. Bharathiar's poems advocate for the liberation of women, the rejection of the caste system, education for all, and the protection of human rights. He viewed all forms of oppression as barriers to spiritual enlightenment.

4.5. Inner Experience as a Spiritual Path

In poems such as *"The Will Must Be Strong"*, Bharathiar emphasizes the importance of emotional control, strengthening one's resolve, and purifying the soul as essential aspects of the spiritual journey. This highlights that inner experience and self-development are central to his spiritual awareness. Bharathiar rejected the notion that spirituality can only be attained through formal teachings or sacred texts. Instead, he believed that spiritual truth must be personally experienced through self-awareness, love, and inner suffering. *"I do not need a temple to see God. I find Him with in my burning soul."* This reflects his view that spiritual experience does not require external intermediaries but can be attained through inner consciousness and self-realization. Bharathiar often emphasized that God resides within every individual, and to truly know God, one must first know oneself (*atma jnana*). *"If you truly know yourself, you have known God."* This is a mystical approach that prioritizes self-reflection, meditation, and inner experience as the true path to enlightenment.

4.6. Commitment to Truth

Bharathiar was not merely a poet, but also a warrior for truth and justice. In his poetry, the value of truth (*satyam*) holds a central position, not only as a moral principle but as the foundation of spiritual life, social struggle, and human expression. For him, truth is a liberating force that frees individuals from oppression, fear, and the falsehoods of life. His unwavering commitment to truth is conveyed in his poems with boldness and fiery spirit, making his works remain relevant and capable of igniting the hearts of readers even today.

4.7. Knowing and Loving the True God

Bharathiar demonstrated a deep and sincere relationship with God is not as an external, fearsome entity, but as the ultimate truth to be known and loved. In poems such as *"Truth is God"*, the Divine is portrayed as the embodiment of truth, rather than merely an object of ritualistic worship. This portrayal reflects a profound alignment with the spiritual values of "Knowing" and "Loving", knowing God through authentic spiritual

experience, and loving Him sincerely, not out of fear or obligation. Bharathiar emphasized that a genuine connection with God must be rooted in personal understanding and heartfelt love, rather than in blind adherence to rituals or fear-based devotion. His vision of spirituality prioritizes inner awareness, emotional sincerity, and the pursuit of divine truth as the foundation of meaningful religious experience.

4.8. Self-Control and Emotional Mastery as a Spiritual Path

In poems such as *"Controlling the Five Senses"*, Bharathiar emphasizes the importance of mastering one's desires and calming the restless mind. He invites humanity to subdue sensory temptations and regulate emotional impulses as essential steps toward achieving spiritual purity and closeness to God. For Bharathiar, self-discipline is not merely a moral requirement but a spiritual necessity that shapes the soul's journey towards truth and enlightenment. This principle is in direct alignment with the elements of "Control" (*Kawal*) and "Governance" (*Kendali*) in the *Sistem Etika Bersepadu 4K* (SEB4K) and *Sistem Pemikiran Bersepadu 4K* (SPB4K) frameworks, particularly within the Self (*Kendiri*) and Creator (*Khalik*) dimensions. Bharathiar's emphasis on internal strength and emotional regulation reflects the SEB4K's advocacy for holistic self-management as the basis for ethical living and spiritual growth. Through his poetry, Bharathiar suggests that uncontrolled emotions and unrestrained desires are obstacles to self-realization and divine awareness. True spiritual liberation, according to him, requires rigorous self-governance, persistent inner reflection, and emotional stability. This mirrors the SEB4K philosophy where balanced internal control leads to the harmonious development of the individual in relation to the Creator, society, and the environment. By linking self-control to spiritual attainment, Bharathiar's poems not only guide personal conduct but also offer a profound blueprint for achieving ethical integrity and lasting inner peace.

4.9. Universal Approach: Spirituality Beyond Boundaries

Subramania Bharati, a poet, reformist, and Indian independence fighter, is widely recognized not only for his passionate nationalist poetry but also for his broad, inclusive spiritual outlook that transcends religious, cultural, and temporal boundaries. His poetry is unique in that the spiritual values he promotes are not tied to any specific religious doctrine, but are instead grounded in universal principles of humanity, love, and soul consciousness. Bharathiar's spirituality aligns directly with the Creator (*Khalik*) and Social (*Kemasyarakatan*) dimensions of the *Sistem Etika Bersepadu 4K* (SEB4K) and *Sistem Pemikiran Bersepadu 4K* (SPB4K). His worldview emphasizes that God is not an exclusive possession of any one religion, but a universal presence that dwells within all beings. His frequent poetic references to Krishna, Allah, Shakti, and Jesus reflect an open-hearted acceptance of diverse faiths and a belief in the common spiritual thread that unites all religions. One of his famous declarations, *"All the people of India are children of God."* beautifully encapsulates this universality. God, according to Bharathiar, belongs not to any religious group, but to hearts that love sincerely. This inclusive stance makes Bharathiar's poetry a unifying force rather than a divisive one. Unlike conventional religious poetry that may reinforce sectarianism, Bharathiar's work tears down barriers. His spirituality is inseparable from humanity. For him, loving people, defending the marginalized, and fighting for justice are not just social responsibilities—they are sacred acts of devotion. His call, (If one wishes to see God, then love those who are marginalized) perfectly reflects the Social (*Kemasyarakatan*) and Self (*Kendiri*) aspects of the SEB4K model, where love, compassion, and social justice are core spiritual

duties. Through this lens, Bharathiar's spirituality is active, transformative, and socially engaged, encouraging direct action to uplift the oppressed and heal societal divisions. His universal approach offers a holistic framework that bridges personal spirituality with social ethics, in line with SEB4K/SPB4K's vision of integrated ethical systems across the Creator, Self, Society, and Environment.

4.10. Spirituality as a Tool for Social Change

Bharathiar was not merely a poet, but also a journalist and a fearless social reformer who revolutionized traditional understandings of spirituality. Unlike many conventional spiritual poets who emphasized isolation, asceticism, or purely internal quests for divine connection, Bharathiar integrated spirituality with active social engagement. For him, spirituality was not an escape from the world, but a powerful force for confronting oppression, injustice, and ignorance. Bharathiar firmly believed that the relationship between humans and God is not solely a personal journey, but also a social responsibility. His poetry consistently emphasizes that true devotion must inspire action for the collective good. In this sense, spiritual awareness becomes a catalyst for social liberation. This is where Bharathiar's approach is distinctive his spirituality is not passive, but rather transformative, dynamic, and deeply intertwined with social change. From the perspective of the *Sistem Etika Bersepadu 4K (SEB4K)* and *Sistem Pemikiran Bersepadu 4K (SPB4K)*, Bharathiar's spirituality exemplifies the harmonious integration of the Creator (*Khalik*), Self (*Kendiri*), and Social (*Kemasyarakatan*) dimensions. His belief that spiritual growth should inspire societal reform resonates with SEB4K's vision: that ethical development must simultaneously elevate the self, honour the Creator, and contribute to the well-being of society. One of Bharathiar's most profound contributions was his advocacy for the liberation of women, the abolition of caste discrimination, the promotion of education for all, and the defence of the marginalized. His call for social justice was rooted in spiritual duty, reflecting his conviction that service to humanity is service to God. In his worldview, oppression is not merely a political or social issue it is a spiritual obstacle that hinders both personal enlightenment and collective progress. For example, Bharathiar's poetic declaration: "*If one wishes to see God, then love those who are marginalized.*" perfectly embodies the Social (*Kemasyarakatan*) pillar of SEB4K, where loving and uplifting the oppressed becomes a sacred act of worship. Through this perspective, Bharathiar's spirituality is active, liberating, and people-centred. His poems are not merely expressions of inner devotion; they are calls to action, moral awakenings, and blueprints for social reform. This approach directly supports the SEB4K principle that ethical and spiritual integrity cannot be separated from social responsibility. By making spirituality a driving force for social transformation, Bharathiar offers a universal model of integrated spirituality one that bridges the personal, the divine, and the social into a cohesive, ethically driven philosophy of life.

4.11. Symbolic Language that Brings Spirituality to Life

Subramania Bharathiar was not only a reformist poet but also a master of symbolic expression who brought spiritual concepts to life through vivid and relatable imagery. Unlike many spiritual writers who present their teachings in direct, didactic, or doctrinal terms, Bharathiar skillfully employed symbolism drawn from nature, animals, emotions, and daily life to make spiritual messages accessible and meaningful to the reader.

4.12. Symbolism as a Bridge Between the Seen and the Unseen

Bharathiar's symbolic language dissolves the boundary between the material and the spiritual. For him, spirituality was not a distant or abstract philosophy, but a force that permeated everyday experiences. By using symbols such as the crow's wings, the blooming lotus, the roaring sea, and the whispering winds, he infused ordinary life with sacred meaning. For example, in his famous line: "*Kaakkai siraginile nandalala, unnai kandhen kannan nandalala...*" (*On the wings of the crow, O Krishna, I have seen You.*) Bharathiar elevates the mundane crow to a divine symbol, demonstrating that God can be found in the most ordinary forms, if one possesses spiritual vision. This approach directly resonates with the Creator (*Khalik*) and Environmental Sustainability (*Kelestarian Alam*) components of the SEB4K/SPB4K frameworks, where the natural world is not separate from the Creator, but is instead a living testament to His presence.

4.13. Deep Spiritual Penetration Through Symbols

Through this symbolic method, Bharathiar's spirituality enters the reader's consciousness not as rigid doctrine, but as a subtle, soul-stirring experience. His symbols are not passive embellishments; they carry deep emotional and spiritual weight, resonating across time, cultures, and belief systems. In this sense, Bharathiar's use of symbolism activates the Self (*Kendiri*) dimension in the SEB4K/SPB4K frameworks. His poetry encourages readers to reflect inwardly and recognize that the external world is a mirror of the internal journey. For instance, the sea may symbolize emotional turbulence, the lotus the blossoming of the soul, and the wind the unseen divine force moving through life. His symbolic language also reinforces the Social (*Kemasyarakatan*) pillar by portraying human experiences such as the struggle for freedom, the love of a mother, and the plight of the oppressed; as sacred realities worthy of attention and compassion. His poetry teaches that spirituality is intricately woven into the social fabric and is inseparable from the human experience.

4.14. Transformative Power of Symbolism

Bharathiar's symbolism is not static; it is dynamic, liberating, and transformative. The symbolic layers in his poetry invite readers to reinterpret the world around them, to discover the sacred within the ordinary, and to internalize spirituality as a living, evolving journey. His poetry transcends religious boundaries and speaks to universal human experiences, aligning seamlessly with the holistic and integrated thinking emphasized in the SEB4K and SPB4K frameworks.

4.15. Active and Empowering Spirituality: A SEB4K and SPB4K Perspective

In the tradition of spiritual literature, spirituality is often depicted as a solitary pursuit that withdraws from worldly affairs. However, Bharathiar introduces a radically different and dynamic approach that resonates deeply with the *Sistem Etika Bersepadu 4K* (SEB4K) and *Sistem Pemikiran Bersepadu 4K* (SPB4K) frameworks. He transforms spirituality into an active force that awakens, moves, and empowers individuals to engage with the world, embodying an integrated system of ethical and spiritual thought. Creator (*Khalik*): Connection with the Divine as a Source of Strength In Bharathiar's poems, God is not a distant figure to be passively worshipped but a living presence within the human soul. This aligns with the 'Kenal' and 'Kasih' principles under the *Khalik* dimension in SEB4K, which emphasize knowing and loving the Creator through authentic experience rather than mere ritual. Bharathiar's proclamation, "*I fear no one* –

God lives within me,” shows that his relationship with God is empowering, not fear-driven. In SPB4K, this reflects an integrated thinking system where the knowledge of God becomes the driving force behind ethical action. Bharathiar’s concept of God as truth (*Truth is God*) demonstrates that spiritual awareness must manifest in real-life courage and moral responsibility.

4.16. Self (*Kendiri*): Self-Mastery and Inner Liberation

Bharathiar’s emphasis on controlling the senses, conquering fear, and developing inner strength directly reflects the ‘Kawal’ and ‘Kendali’ aspects of the *Kendiri* dimension in SEB4K. His spiritual philosophy urges individuals to overcome ignorance, break free from internal bondage, and develop resilience. This approach is in harmony with SPB4K’s integrated thinking of the self, which promotes inner discipline as essential to personal and spiritual growth. Bharathiar’s spirituality is not escapist—it is transformative, urging each person to become a courageous agent of change through self-awareness and self-mastery.

4.17. Social (*Kemasyarakatan*): Social Activism as Spiritual Duty

Perhaps the most striking integration is Bharathiar’s belief that spirituality must translate into social action. He consistently fought against oppression, caste discrimination, and gender inequality, declaring that *“God will not bless those who remain silent in the face of tyranny.”* This strongly aligns with the *Kemasyarakatan* dimension in SEB4K, which focuses on justice, empathy, and social responsibility. Bharathiar viewed fighting injustice, liberating women, and uplifting the marginalized as sacred duties. His spiritual activism fulfills the SPB4K principle that integrated thinking must address social systems holistically. His call for women’s empowerment, such as *“Do not bow to anyone – you are the spark of God’s flame,”* elevates women as equal bearers of divine energy (*Shakti*), supporting the idea that social transformation is a spiritual obligation.

4.18. Environmental Sustainability (*Kelestarian Alam*): Harmonious Existence with Nature

Although Bharathiar’s spirituality is predominantly focused on human dignity and social justice, his frequent references to nature as a reflection of the Divine show his alignment with the *Kelestarian Alam* dimension. His deep appreciation for the sun, wind, sea, and even the crow (*On the wings of a crow, I saw You, Krishna*) reveals his view that nature is not separate from God but a living manifest station of the Creator. In SEB4K and SPB4K, this reflects the importance of preserving environmental harmony as part of ethical and integrated spiritual living. Bharathiar’s vision connects spiritual awareness with reverence for the natural world, further solidifying his holistic approach.

5. Conclusion

Research findings reveal that Bharathiar’s poems emphasize three primary dimensions of spirituality: ethics, divinity, and the element of the heart. Ethics encompasses values such as courage, honesty, and rationality; divinity is expressed through poems that seek wisdom, spiritual enlightenment, and sincerity in devotion to God; while the element of the heart highlights values such as love, social justice, empathy, and sacrifice. These three elements are not only presented explicitly but are also conveyed implicitly through symbolism and multi layered literary style. This proves that the spirituality in

Bharathiar's poetry is dynamic and holistic. Through the lens of SEB4K and SPB4K, Bharathiar's poetry emerges as a model of integrated spirituality that synthesizes knowledge (*Kenal*), love (*Kasih*), self-control (*Kawal*), and governance (*Kendali*). His spiritual vision is holistic, dynamic, and socially engaged, making it a rich field for the application of these frame works. By analysing Bharathiar's poetry through SEB4K and SPB4K, it is evident that his works not only reflect high literary value but also embody an integrated ethical-spiritual system that is both transformative and timeless.

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