

Reflection of Rural and Agricultural Aspects in Indo-Anglian Fiction – A Brief Survey

Dr. S. J. Ghotekar

Assistant Professor (English)

MVP Samaj's KRT Arts BH Commerce &

AM Science (K.T.H.M.) College, Nashik (M. S.)

Abstract:

Literature is the representation of social life. The novel is an extended prose narrative. It presents a multi-level impression of a fragment of life. The novel has a vast canvas. The aim of the novel is the interpretation of life. The importance of Indo-Anglian fiction has been recognized. Many good Indo-Anglian novels have demonstrated the feasibility of Indian's writing English fiction. This paper takes a brief survey of the works of Indian writers of English fiction. The paper discusses and explores the reflection of Agricultural aspects in Indo-Anglian Fiction. The novels are about rural life and society.

Keywords: Literature, Indo-Anglian Fiction, Agricultural Aspects, Rural Life and Society.

Introduction:

Literature is great because of its universality. Literature indicates the universal element i.e. what is true for all times and ages. It contains the particular i.e. what is true of the men, events, customs and culture of an age. Literature has close link with life. The subject – matter of literature is the manifestation of life. It involves the subjective and objective outlook of the writer. Literature is the representation of social life and the quality of life.

The Origin of the Novel:

The novel is an extended prose narrative. The term 'Novel' has the same origins as the French 'Nouvelle,' the German 'Novelle' etc. It is a short tale in prose. The above words are taken from the Latin word 'Novellus; which means 'new'. The novel covers such a wide variety of writing. It is difficult to define it. **E. M. Forster** in his book Aspects of the Novel defines the novel as "a fiction in prose of a certain extent." **Walter Allen** defines the novel as "a working model of life." The crisis and turbulence in human life are depicted in the novel. It represents the complexity of human life. In short, the novel reflects the writers experiences and observations of mankind.

The Novel of Ideas:

Novels are the most popular, because they reflect the currents and forces which are shaping and molding society. Problems of workers, of agriculture, of unemployment and relief were

projected into imaginative reality for a multitude of readers. Social revolution, capitalism, democracy, social reconstruction, communism, political doctrines became realizable. In short, the aim of the novel is the interpretation of life. The novel is the great work of art of our day. Life is a continuous flux. Life means change, possibly in art. The modern novel remains a vehicle of expression of all these profound changes that move us and colour the thought process and mental make-up of our experience.

Indian Writers of English Fiction:-

The marvelous Toru Datta wrote her teens an English novel 'Bianca' or 'The Young Spanish Maiden'. It was certainly a special performance. Ramesh Chunder Dutt was a gifted novelist. Two of his Bengali novels were also published in English. 'The Slave Girl of Agra : An Indian, Historical Romance' (1909) deals with Mughal times. It gives a picture of social life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. 'The Lake of Palms: A Story of Indian Domestic Life' (1902) is an intimate and reliable picture of social life in the Bengal.

S. B. Banerjee's 'Tales of Bengal' (1910) is a sincere collection of rural India. The plots are based on police corruption and Zemindari oppression. B. R. Rajam, a South Indian writer wrote an English novel 'Vasudeva Shashtri.' Among more recent writers from the south, Shankar Ram, K. S. Venkataramani, J. C. Dural, A. Subramanyam and Panchapakesha Ayyar may be mentioned.

The only writers from the Punjab who have attempted English fiction are Miss. Sorabji, Sir Joginder Singh.

Dr. Mulk Raj Anand hails from the extreme North-West of India. His important publications are 'The Coolie', 'The Untouchable,' 'The Village' and 'The Big Heart'. Anand's heart bleeds for the down-trodden people in Indian social life. Raja Rao wrote a well-known novel 'Kanthapura.' R. K. Narayan wrote 'Swami and Friends,' 'The Guide,' 'The Bachelor of Arts' etc. Bhabani Bhattacharya wrote the novel, 'He who Rides a Tiger' is an attack on both profited by peoples mercy during the famine. The novel 'A Passage to India' by E. M. Forster relates to rural scenes. Manohar Malgaonkar mirrors the deep-seated caste prejudices of Indian Society in 'A Bend in the Ganges.' Kamala Markandaya points the picture of rural Indian society in 'A Handful of Rice.' Markandaya's 'Nectar in a sieve is an important landmark in the history of Indian English fiction.

Indo-Anglian Fiction in the Post-Independence Era:

After Independence, the Indo-Anglian writer of fiction is more self-confident than ever before. We find a conflict of Ideas and ideologies raging in the minds of our post-independence novelists. Sudhin Ghose wrote his three books, 'And Gazelles Leaping,' 'Cradle of the Clouds' and 'Vermilion Boat.' The other fiction is Ruskin Bond. The other novelists of this era are Dilip Kumar Roy, Khushwant Singh, Venu Chitale, Roma Sharma, Santha Ram Rau and K. A. Abbas.

The women novelists of the post-independence are Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabvala and Shakuntala Shrinagesh.

In short, many good Indo-Anglian novels already demonstrated the feasibility of Indians writing English fiction. The Indo-Anglian novel made a different appearance in the 1920s then gradually gathered, confidence and established itself in the next decades.

Rural and Agricultural Aspects in Indo-Anglian Fiction:

Many Indo-English writers have delineated social cum rural roles of the fictional characters in their novels. The novelists came of the very rustic background of India and its peasantry world. They are semi-urban and semi-rural. Their novels are about rural thoughts, ideals and behavior of characters, concerned. Then Indian novelists created rural scenes in such a way in their novels that they seem more beautiful and wonderful. They have beautified and sanctified the Indian rivers, mountains and their majestic flow. The Indo-Anglian writers have presented Indian Villages. They have also shown one scene after another like a series of bulb in their novel.

Firstly, now to begin with Anand MulkRaj's novel. 'The Untouchable'. The novel 'The Untouchable.' The novel dealt with the rural scenes and characters of the novel. The central figure in this novel is Bakha. He is a eighteen years old boy. Bakha meets colonel Mutchin's son, the Christian missionary, who takes him to his home but his shrewish wife shouts at him and he runs away. He hears with rapt attention to a speech of Gandhi, the saviour of the untouchables. Thus 'Untouchable' is a forceful indictment of the evils of a perverted and descendent society.

Anand's 'The Trilogy' is a work of Indian rural society. The atmosphere of the village Nandpur is vividly evoked and it is main outline like other village in India.

Mulk Raj Anand's 'Coolie' speaking, consists of poverty, exploitation, racial relations, capitalism, hunger etc. Coolie is the Odyssey of Munoo, an orphaned village boy from the Kangra Hills. He sets out in search of livelihood.

The novel 'Kanthapura' by Raja Rao depicts a South Indian Village. This novel shows the rural scenes and characters. Kanthapura is a village in Mysore in the province of Kara. We have seen the people, their poverty and their ignorance in the novel. The villagers are depicted in realistic rural way. 'Kanthapura' acquires a symbolic significance. It is a microcosm of the macrocosm one out of the lakhs and lakhs of Indian villages in which live 85 percent of the people of India.

R. K. Narayan too, has somehow managed to bring the rural scenes and characters in his novels. In 'Swami and Friends', Malgudi is a town of modest size. The River Sarayu flows by its side. There are various streets and lanes. The novelist presents semi-rural character of Natraj, this character is based on rural background. He has established encounter with the rustic buffoon the milkman, the old asthmatic at the end of the street, the lawyer as well.

'The Guide' in this novel, R. K. Narayan gives us a change to see them pass from an agricultural to an industrial economy. We get a vivid picture of bullock-cart with its wooden wheels grating and grinding, the dust of the road, the smell of straw, men, vehicles, bags, boys.

Bhabani Bhattacharya's novel 'He who Rides a Tiger' is an attack on both who profited by people's mercy during the famine and those who exploited them in the name of caste. The novelist presents the misery of the poor as well as the rich. The contrast between poverty and property, power and helplessness, goodness and hypocrisy is shown effectively. Kalo, a character feels oppressed by the selfish and caste-ridden society. Hunger drives him to commit a theft and this takes him to the jail.

The novel 'A Passage to India' by E. M. Forster relates to rural scenes. "The day dawned over the ghats, the day rose over the Blue Mountain churning through the grey, rapt, villages, swirled up and swam across the whole air." (P. 54 - 55).

Manohar Malgaonkar faithfully mirrors the deep seated prejudices of India society. In the novel 'A Bend in the Ganges,' the novelist's narrative power is not blind to socio-cultural mores of Indian life and society.

In 'A Handful of Rice' Kamala Markandaya points the picture of both rural and urban Indian Society. The novel is the story of hunger. Ravi, the protagonist of the novel joins such an exodus. Markandaya's 'Nectar in a Sieve' is an important landmark in the history of Indian English fiction. The novelist viewed the village as a place of idyllic existence and placid rhythm of life. The subtitle of the novel, a novel of rural India, gives a clue to her

predominant preoccupation in the novel. In the rural India, the farmers are sufferers in many ways. He is buffeted by man and nature. Nathan is a tragic victim of the vagaries of nature. His crops fail either due to excessive rain or lack of it. In both cases he is destroyed. We see Kuti and old Granny surrender their lives and Nathan becomes as dry as a bamboo.

Kamala Markandaya shows the Zamindari system of rural India. 'Nectar in a Sieve' is a fictionalized sociological picture of rural peasantry, hunger and landlordism give to the novel a brooding sense of sadness and pathos.

Conclusion:

The Indo-Anglian novelists thus faces a curious predicament. The Indian novel in English is, no doubt, the product of the socio-cultural awakening which had its origin in the 19th century. As far as the study of Indo-Anglian novelists is concerned, it can be evaluated recalling the name of major contemporary novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgaonkar, E. M. Forster, Kamala Markandaya and other modern writers. We know Indian writers in English are the sons of the soil. They created rural scenes in such a way in their novels that they seem more wonderful and beautiful. They described the places and characters of India in an apt English language.

We can say with confidence that in many novels the above novelists emerge as the greatest exponents of rural life and its problems.

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