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Mythical Impact and Indian Social Aspect of Narayan's Novel 'The Vendor of Sweets'

Abstract

Literature is considered as the mirror of society and this is an eminent way to express human personality and sentiments of any human being in universe. Literature is also in itself a way for human beings to meet with their soul. It cannot express completely human norms, values and meaning in broad sense. India is a country which has many languages and every language has its own identity and culture and in the world every civilisation is renowned for its consisting culture and history. All these things blossom under the shade of literature from the beginning period to the present time. An essence of Hinduism and spiritualism gets an excellent height through prominent literary works of R. K. Narayan. Mythological aspects along with shadow of Indian society aspects are integrated up to the depth in realistic novels of Narayan. The attempt in this research is to make sure, how he presents concerned myths and social structure in a very realistic way through his series of novels such as 'The Man Eater of Malgudi' and 'The Vendor of Sweets'.

Keywords: Mythological aspects, Mythical, Indianness, Social life, Divine spirit, Protagonists, Reality and Conflict of views.

Introduction

In English, Indo-Anglian is a specific term that denotes original literary creations in the English language by the Indians. Seeds of Indo-Anglian literature were sown during the pre-independence period in the first half of the twentieth century. These seeds blossomed under the observation of gardeners like Tagore, Sir Aurobindo, Toru Dutt, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao and many other similar eminent personalities. Now, it is in full swing. The Big Three i.e. Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao gave a new shape and colour to Indo-Anglian literature like other writers in foreign countries. All of these have their own medium to express Indian sensibility and emotions with a different lucid style. They arouse a voice of Nationalist consciousness and evoke the patriotic sentiments of the masses. They stabilised and fortified the Indo-Anglian literature with their ample and unique literary style and their consequences attain higher peak of excellence. It also cleans the air that the norms, values, myths and soul of Indian society reveal in Indo-Anglian literature.

Rashipuram Krishanaswamy Iyer Narayanswamy (1906-2001), a prominent prolific fictionary belonging to first generation of writers in Indo-Anglian literature. He was fond of English language and that is why he chooses the same as medium to express his sentiments in true colours. With the publication of 'Swami and Friends' (1935), his first novel, he got recognition as a dominant figure in the literary world as a realistic novelist. Graham Green called it 'A book in ten thousands'. His fiction was having a universal appeal with aesthetic satisfaction. As a realistic and satirist he was more Indian by nature. He created a fictional town named Malgudi situated somewhere in south India. He created a mini India in Malgudi and depicted in depth and real essence India and customs, traditions, myths, epics and fairy tales of Indian society. Myths, which are webbed by many other writers are considered as irrelevant and untrustworthy, R. K. Narayan used it as a weapon to take aesthetic advantage.

The Vendor of Sweets (1967)

'The Vendor of Sweets' brings immense popularity for R. K. Narayan as a welcomed novelist. It holds ample reflection of Indianness in its characters. Describing happiness, sorrow and relationships in the family of Jagan, the writer weaves typical Indian social structure. Jagan, a sweet maker and seller is a 55 year old keen follower and believer of Hinduism, Gandhism and Gitaism. He prefers simplicity of ways of living. Through the relation of father and son we see conflict between different view holders and generation gap. It represents Indian culture and Indian life minutely.

Jagan spins Charkha for one hour daily and wears clothes weaved by the yarn spun by his own hands. He wears sandals made of leather of the animals died of natural death. He has keen interest in naturopathy and prefers honey to sugar. He also does not like toothbrush as he believes it is made of pig tail hairs. He chews bitter leaves of '*neem*' tree and collects yellow flowers. He evolves a number of natural cure theories about diet, nutrition and hygiene.

Jagan gets married to Ambika and they have only one child named Mali by the blessings of Sanatan Krishan. Ambika dies of brain tumour after 10 years of marriage. She has a problem of headache which Jagan tries to cure with natural remedies instead of allopathic medicines, but he fails to save her life. This is the main reason why Mali starts nursing hatred for his father as he considers his father responsible for the death of his mother. Instead of all Jagan considers Mali the pearl of his eyes and up brings Mali in very loving manner.

Growing conjectures of Mali are beyond the apprehension of Jagan. Mali is a college dropout and steals money to move to America to take lessons in writing programme. From America he writes many letters to his father informing him about America and surrounding world. He also reveals that he has started to eat beef which is a great shock to Jagan, a keen

follower of Hindu philosophy. Jagan stands for the old values of Indian society and Mali a firm figure of westernisation. Mali demands fifty thousand dollars for starting new business, but his father disagrees with him and wants him to continue family business. Mali has never been obedient and loving to his father. At one time he is caught driving in a drunkard state and is sent to jail. Jagan refuses to arrange bails for him as he wants him to realise his mistake and necessity of moral value in life.

Jagan, later on, discovers the reality of Mali and Grace's relation that they are living tainted life without marrying each other. He arranges tickets for Grace so that she may return to her own country. At last Jagan feels disconnected and tarnished by the ill manners and wrong deeds of his son. He decides to retire and abandon his business and home and moves to the way of '*sanyasi asharam*' leaving Malgudi. Here we see many examples of myth, reality, tradition, ethos, day-to-day Indian human relationship, children philosophy and conflicts of life prevailing in Indian society. The deft ending of the novel reflects withdrawal from the materialistic world that is a symbol of Hinduism.

Conclusion

Thus the analysis on one of the pure artist who wrapped himself in Indian customs and belief, a renowned figure of 20th century, R. K. Narayan's fictions explores the vivid pictures of social life, tradition, myth of Indian society. He illustrates the doctrine of *Karma* through the life span of its protagonists and shows a vision of life related to belief, reality and vision. It is considered that religion makes people prey of orthodox superstitions. It, on the other hand, gives strength to human being through suffering to stand vigorously in catastrophic period of their lives.

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