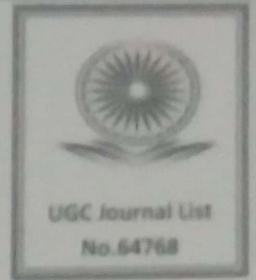




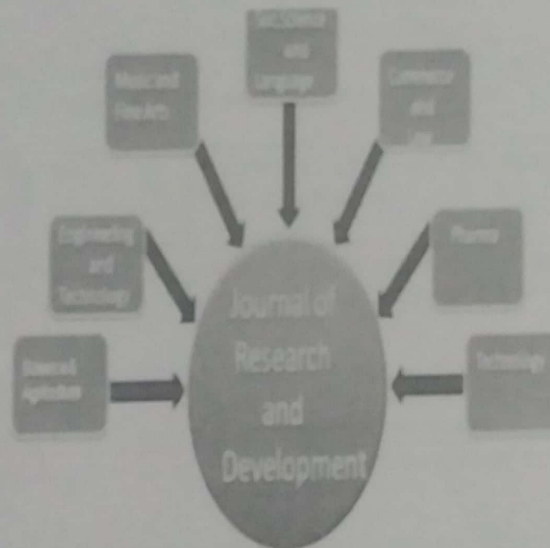
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A Study of Indian English Fiction in the Light of Women Empowerment

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Abstract:

The present paper is an effort to understand the contribution of the various male and female writers who have tried their hands in issues which show the women empowerment as well as woman as a rebel. The paper focuses on some of the Indian fictional texts written in English to study the portrayal of the changing images, positions, awareness levels and attitudes of Indian women since the last few decades of the nineteenth century till the beginning of the twenty first century, and some of the issues pertaining to them which demand serious attention for consideration and necessary action. These issues have been discussed with reference to a few selected fictional texts. The entry of women writers in literature was the sign of her independence. The most striking incident is the education of English language to the Indian masses, through which women also became successful to put themselves on the world map. For the higher education Raja Rammohan Roy wanted more English as well as more Englishmen in Indian. The Feminist wave started with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's first novel *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864). The Post-Independence Indian English Literature saw many works added in this concern.

Key Words: missionaries, education, phenomenon, secondary status, rebellious, feministic, orthodox, rebuffs, modern world

During the British colonial rule also, the English missionaries worked against the cruel customs, slavery and demanded human treatment for women. In the year 1813, the commercial monopoly of the company over India came to an end. The missionaries were got freedom to publish various writings in English. And day by day, the English education started spreading through the private schools in the country.

The development in English fiction writing in Modern Indian literature, began with Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833). For the higher education he wanted more English as well as more Englishmen in Indian. With the help of these people, Indians learnt at first to read and speak English and quickly they started writing also. Once this started, Indian writing in English reached to the height from the most utilitarian prose to the most ambitious verse-epic, for example.

In the ancient India, there was no novelist at all. They were regarded merely the story-tellers whom the world remembers and honors even in present, and whose tales it is always wonderful and interesting in listening. But, when the novel is introduced as a medium of story-telling and art-form is essentially the west and it represents a tradition of fictional writing which is different from the Indian way of story-telling. According to K.S. Ramamurti, "The novel is of the West. It is part of that Western concern with the condition of men (...) It is a part of the mimicry of the west, the Indian self-violation." (Ramamurti: p.2)

In the history of Indian writing in English, the real beginnings were with the work of great Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94). Bankim Chandra established the novel as a major literary form in India. His first published effort *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) was in English. His first successful novel *Rajmohan's Wife* gives us a faithful picture of the life of the times in however narrow a perspective, and makes us see in that picture the phenomenon of change, a change from medievalism to modernity. Mantagini, the central character is but one of the symbols of that change, for she typifies the new Indian woman seeking her release from the cruelties and tyrannies of a medieval past.

Mantagini, it should be said, is a bold creation. She is not the usual Indian woman who accepts her husband with all his faults or wipes away as sinful as memories and thoughts of men whom she has admired and respected better. The readers know that Mantagini was only a forerunner of many more women characters of great, independent and revolutionary spirit, and the creation of a character like Mantagini in the first Indian novel in English was certainly a good beginning for that class of writing in India

It is believed that the Indian English novel made a real beginning between 1920s and 1930. The big three rose in Indian English fiction and India saw the new ray of hope with the arrival of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao. They are considered the big three or trio that formed the precursor of Indian writing in English as we know today.

The issues like the secondary status of women, social disharmony and human relationship are focused by Mulk Raj Anand. *The Old Woman and the Cow* (1960) is the example of the fact. Gauri is the protagonist of the novel, who face the bad circumstances in her life. She is presented a rebellious Indian woman who protest against disloyalty of her husband Panchi. In the end, she stands on her own feet and never returns back to her husband.

R.K.Narayan (1906-2001), the South Indian writer had the unique place in pre-independence and post-independence era.

The tradition of social realism is seen continued by women novelists like Ruth Pravar Jhabvala, Kamala Markandya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Vimala Raina, Shkuntala Shirnagesh, Bharati Mukherjee, Kamla Das, Shashi Deshpande, githa Hariharan, Arundhati Roy, Dina Mehta, namita Gokhale, Neelima Sinha and Kiran Desai have done miracles in the field of fiction. These women left no space in writing to their male counterparts. They have taken up various social, political, economic, religious and cultural issues for discussion. Their themes range from Gandhi, Independence struggle, Partition, violence, women, love, sex, marriage, East-West encounter, alienation, crisis of identity to exploitation etc. In this regard, it is rightly stated, "every cloud has a silver lining." (Anand: p.18)

The contribution of the women writers fixed the novel (fiction) in its proper mould and brought it in a good shape to survive in Indian writing in English. The English education in India opened the doors to the slave Indian women who for ages had to be content with playing only a subordinate role in the social life of the country now had opportunities for playing new roles. The feministic wave came and they also wanted to vent to the world their own bitter experience as women as well as their ideas of social reform, turned writers. K.S. Ramamurti observes, "They tried to tell the world the obstacles women faced and the

disadvantages they suffered in an orthodox Hindu world. These women writers struggled to give form and shape to their autobiographical accounts, which attracted publishers both in India and abroad. ” (Ramamurti: p.67)

A new kind of woman emerges from struggles and rebuffs of the nationalist days: the mother and wife, the beloved and the adolescent with the greater responsibility of readjusting the hearth. Will she forget her primary biological function and will she just vie with men in every respect? This problem was further tackled by post-war Indian novelists more confidently, more artistically and with an open mind.

R.K. Narayan is among the well known and widely read Indian novelist's writing in English who was also the recipient of various honours. His novel *The Dark Room* (1938) present Ramani, who works in the Engladia Insurance Company. The uneducated heroine Savitri has low weightage in the house. She bears every ill-treatment given by her husband. The readers feel sympathy toward Savitri when she is dominated by Ramani. She has feeling to this, "How impotent she was, she thought; she had not the slightest power to do anything at home, and that after fifteen years of married life." (Narayan: p.5)

Savitri can tolerate all physical and mental torture inflicted by her husband but she rebels against her husband's relationship with any other woman. The affair of her husband with his secretary Shantabai results in the clashes between them and consequently Savitri leaves her home. She also tries to commit suicide, but fortunately she is saved by Mari, the locksmith. Unable to live in the outer world, she remembers her house and ultimately, she comes back to the fold subdued. The question arises that what compel Savitri to return back to her home again. It may be due to the Indian culture, and also she is the mother of three children. Moreover she is independent. In Hindu scriptures woman is always shown having her identity in relationship to man alone and Indian women have been expected to follow the role model of Sita, Savitri and Draupadi who always suffered and sacrificed for the comforts of their husband. The protagonist of the novel, Savitri, is not like that of a mythological Savitri. She was an embodiment of wifely duties enjoyed by her as per the Hindu 'Sanskriti'. The present Savitri is a product of a modern world. Being a man, the novelist has keen observation of woman psyche of those days when the social structure was very rigid.

A few women novelists like Kamala Markandaya delineates the suffering and miseries of rural women in her early novels who resign themselves to their fate and adhere to their traditionally assigned roles, Nayantara Sahgal advocates new morality and new understanding in man-woman relationship.

Most of the recent Indian women novelists have shown that in the changing socio-economic scenario educated Indian women are no longer ready to bear any kind of exploitation. They have become aware of the demands of their self and are committed to struggle for the fulfillment of these demands. The writer of both gender have tried their hands to speak or write for women; however, we know the truth that, it is not easy to spread awareness and sensitize people about such issue, all in one go.

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Gold From The Grave : A Psychological Perspective

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Abstract:

Dalit literature has generally seen from social perspective. It generally discusses about the real lives and autobiographic stories in which narrator suffer social, economical and religious segregation. Due to it, they have been treated as inhuman or dehuman. All human behaves as per our instinct. Our biological instinct like hunger, thirst and sex play important role in making our personality. So critics have to focus on the psychological perspective of Dalit so, that to judge them as they are human being. Although Anna Bhau Sathe was by heart communist but his depiction of Dalit life is on the basis of human behavior. Hence, it is necessary to study his literature as per the psychological approach.

Key Words: Dalit, lower caste, migrated, alienation, hunger, fear, untouchables, inner self.

Anna Bhau Sathe was born on August 1, 1920 in the small village of Wategaon near Sangali in Dalit Matang community. Lack of education, powerless by money, and lower caste, his family was migrated from Wategaon to Mumbai. Despite lack of education, Anna Bhau developed his writing career. He has written 35 novels, 15 collections of short stories, a travelogue on Russia, and 12 screen plays.

Unlike Dalit writers, Abba Bhau was enriched with communists. So naturally his writing focuses on Caste struggle, but he depicts inner life of his characters. *Gold From The Grave* is originally written in Marathi, and translated it in to English by H. V. Shintre and included in to 'Homess in My Land', which is edited by Arjun Dangle. The protagonist of 'Gold from the Grave' belongs to the Dalit community. His birth is indirectly a curse upon him. He was migrated from Wategaon to Mumbai. He digs grave to find out gold which lies there with the dead person. The situation makes him so and he adopts the grave digging as his profession. The story moves around Bhima; a dalit man, struggle to survive in his daily life.

Humans migrate from one place to another, with the feeling of alienation and in a hope for better life. Bhima chooses to work in stone quarry. It was hard work but delusion about Mumbai makes him so frustrate, that to choose this hard life.

The quarry closed within six months. "It was shock for him that he was jobless."¹ This being jobless is a state which is directly attached with our basic needs, which is called hunger. Hunger is a basic instinct and need of human being. He in that state of 'how to fulfill our hunger' crosses the river

He was scared and frustrated by 'hunger need', Anna Bhau rightly remarks, "He thought that the dead person must have been jobless, and death must have given him relief. He knew that starvation was staring him in the face."²

His stream of consciousness was moving around the remedies to fulfill the needs of his family. Hence, he was thinking about his daughter Nabda, his wife and their expectations. He found gold ring in the stream. The gold was conditioned to his hunger. He should have become





happy after discovering food but he was happy by seeing gold. Our desires and hopes are conditioned with material things. In city, humans generally are conscious about material importance. Having objectified with material things, he chose to search gold from the grave that to earn among human.

Human being is generally having unknown fear for corpses. But Bhima having conditioned his hunger with gold, search corpses live with them in dark night, grope total bones, ashes and everything. About such conditions, Anna Bhau writes, "Days and night he searched cremation grounds and graveyards. Like a ghoul, he lived on corpses and so his life was inextricably woven with corpses."³

Bhima being conditioned with gold avoid human world and lives with corpses. The news that the corpses have been shifted from one place to another place is spread around the villages. People keep surveillance at night. In such extreme situation, Bhima departs in search of gold. Gathering of clouds in the sky, dark night, lack of light indicate the inner self of Bhima. His inner self takes control over his outer self. He was frightened. He heard different sounds. He felt hallucination about somebody is kicking. It is human nature whenever we felt guilt about anything, we feel personally horrified about such incident. That particular human remember his guilt again and again. Hence, Bhima felt the same.

In such worst circumstances, Bhima conditioned with gold fights furiously with group of jackals. In this situation human body react as if facing the danger and our body produces different hormones in a blood stream. So he faces that situation and hallucinate that there would be no fear. Hence, he becomes successful in defending the attack of jackals.

In the last scene of the story, Bhima's fingers were tightly held by the jaw of dead body. There were people approaching towards cemetery. Anna Bhau presents a picturesque description of the above mentioned incident:

"He saw people coming to the burial ground, with lanterns in their hands. Fear grasped him and anger against the corpses welled up in him. In sheer rage he hit its skull with his crowbar. The impact of this blow tightened the hold of the jaw bones on his fingers"⁴

Thus, this is the great pity and predicament of a dalit hero, Bhima. His story mainly focus the contemporary caste system of the mid twentieth century India. From the beginning, the Shudras later called as Dalits were meant to serve the upper-caste of society. They were always labeled as 'untouchables' and were forbidden to have jobs and well education. Through his present writing, Anna Bhau Sathe can be metaphorically analyzing Bhima as a lower-caste man struggling for survival with his family. But the rigid upper-caste system prohibit him to enter in it.

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