



Indianness as reflected in novel

KEYWORDS

Baldevbhai M. Vaghela

Research Scholar, JJTU University Jhunjhunu (Rajasthan)

Dr. Dipti H. Mehta

Research Guide, JJTU University Jhunjhunu (Rajasthan)

Now, India is emerging as a great literary force in the century. The modern generation has been able to continue the great heritage of the older generation with new perspectives. Almost all the genres of literature- poetry, drama, novel, prose and non-fiction are flourishing everywhere. Literature in India has been survived only because of the interested readers, curious critics, encouraging publishers, and above all talented writers- a changing society from orthodoxy to modernity, traditionalism to scientific views and modification of various conventions. A 'New' India has been projected everywhere in modern Indian English literature.

Few decades back, Indian writing in English was not able to create a sense of curiosity because of the lack of spread in abroad, especially in English speaking countries. Now, the will and determination of the Indian authors have made them quite popular not only in India but in abroad also. They are of 'majority' for which they were aspiring for a very long period. Their name and fame have crossed the border and they have universalized themselves because of their qualitative and voluminous output.

Among different genres of literature, again novel writing is in dominating form. Almost one hundred forty years after the publication of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel, 'Rajmohan's Wife' in 1864, writing in English in India has achieved a respectable position. Prof. R.S. Pathak rightly observes in this direction:

'Ever since the publication of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel Rajmohan's Wife' in 1864, Indian novel in English has grown by leaps and bounds in respect of bulk, variety and maturity. In the first half of the 20th century, the arrival of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao in Indian English Literature provides everlasting life to authenticity of the portrayal of characters, systematic plot construction and projection of a variety of themes in novels. Anand is much concerned with the social problems of tradition and orthodox Indian society. His works are concerned with the pathetic condition of under-privileged, down-trodden, underdogs, and untouchables of Indian society. Specially, his two novels- 'Untouchable' and 'Coolie' are much concerned with the burning problems of Indian Society. Untouchable is the microcosm of Indian Society in terms of highlighting one of the evils of social set up. The novel, although experimental in nature, presents the various ups and downs in the life of Bhakha, an untouchable who works in cantonment area. The novel is an account of only one day in his life, but that day is quite eventful. The novelist narrates the three events of his life, the attempt of molestation of his sister Sohini by Kalinath, his encounters with Mahatma Gandhi and his participation in the hockey match. The real beauty of the novel lies in the projection of Anand's 'humanism' which refers to the 'transformation' through the process of technological development. His second novel 'Coolie' is the microcosm of Indian Society in highlighting the problems of starvation, exploitation, suppression of human emotion and inequality rooted in Indian social condition.

If Anand is more concerned with social reality, R.K. Narayan is more concerned with psychological realism of the Indian

society. All the novels of the R.K. Narayan are the plight from mundane to special. His novels like Swami and Friends, The Bachelor of Art, The English Teacher, The Dark Room, Mr. Sampath, The Financial Expert, The Guide, The vendor of Sweets, the painter of Signs, Waiting for the Mahatma, the world of Nagraj, etc., are his wonderful creation. In all these novels, the Writer R. K. Narayan presents the hopes and aspirations, failures and frustration, and emotions and passions of ordinary human beings of the Indian society are praiseworthy. His projection of themes of love, human relationships and economic concerns are justified in all these novels. His characters are wonderful in depicting the different colours of Indian life.

On the other hand, Raja Rao is much concerned with the 'Metaphysical journey of man' in this world. His first novel 'Kanthapura' throws lights on the certain events related to 'freedom Movement'. His novels are much concerned with the intellectual and spiritual journey of human beings in the midst of economic upheaval. Thus, we can see various problems of Indian society in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, and Raja Rao.

There is considerable development after 1980 in Indian novel in English. The novelists like Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Upmanyu Chatterjee, Shashi Tharoor, Rohinton Mistry, Firdaus Kanga, Raj Kamal Jha, Pankaj Mishra, Arundhati Roy, Chetan Bhagat, Aravind Adiga, etc., have shown considerable interest in presenting various facets of Indian life in broader perspectives. The present the Indianness in their novels.

The concluding two decades of the 20th century witness the emergence of a large number of Indian novelists in English. Shashi Deshpande, Deepa Mehta, Namita Gokhale, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Chetan Bhagat etc., are able to maintain their identity by showing strong hold on theme and style both. Amitav Ghosh's cultural pluralism, or 'cross-border culturalism', Pankaj Mishra's concept of 'traditional conflicts', Chetan Bhagat's 'easy going life disturbance', Aravind Adiga's 'cobweb of human struggle' Rajkamal Jha's 'individual broodingness', Vikram Seh't's 'cultural dualism' are some of the well known concepts on which a large number of novels have been written. The contribution of third generation is considerable and voluminous.

Modern Indian English novelists are much interested in the presentation of modern man's disillusionment in the world of intellectual and spiritual void. The modern man is surrounded by multiple problems and is too difficult for him to survive in such conditions. A large number of modern Indian English novelists are concerned with the questions of alienation, rootlessness, boredom, disillusionment and sorrow caused by 'conflicts'. All these novelists are preoccupied with modern man's struggle for survival in this world of speed and barrier.

Almost all the modern Indian English novelists are preoccupied with thought of identity. Their characters are much concerned with the question of identity. Prof. R.S. Pathak rightly remarks:

'The modern man has shown a serious concern for the spiritual malaise of modern life, and the search for identity has been one of his chief preoccupations.'

In Indian English writing, the problem of identity is linked with 'Indianness'. The Indian English writers suffer from two serious problems – firstly, they want to search their identity in Indian, and secondly, they want to establish themselves in the vast domain of world literature. The modern Indian English writers are in the state of dilemma in the presentation of cultural identity, they are always in conflicting position to 'locate' themselves.

In the last ten years, the novels like Khushwant Singh's 'The Company of Women', Salman Rushdie's 'The Ground Beneath Her Feet', Raj Kamal's 'The Blue Bedspread', Pankaj Mishra's 'The Romantics', Chetan Bhagat's 'Five Point Someone', 'One Night @ the Call Center', 'Three Mistakes of My Life', Kiran Desai's 'Inheritance of Loss', Aravind Adiga's 'The White Tiger' are able to project the various facets of life in India in the era of globalization and rapid development.

Khushwant Singh's 'The Company of Women' may be considered as the 'blue' film in the form of fiction although he tries to make this novel readable by attaching the theme of AIDS with the life of Mr. Mohan Kumar. Salman's 'The Ground Beneath Her Feet' is an ample example of the intermingling of love, sex myth, modernity and materialism. Apart from the theme of love, the novel is also full of political events concerning to various scams in recent times in Indian politics. Thus he presented the Indianness in his novels. Raj Kamal Jha's 'The Blue Bedspread' throws lights on the family rela-

tionship which is fighting within for the survival of decorum and tradition. But the novelist shows us the degrading and dehumanizing fabric of modernity in which there is no questions of respect and devotion, demarcation and limitation and understanding and flexibility. Chetan Bhagat's three novels 'Five point someone', 'One night @ the call centre' and 'Three mistakes of my life' shows the faulty exams system, to hear the inner call and socio-political of the Indian society. Kiran Desai's 'Inheritance of loss' tells the story of Jemubhai Popatlal Patel, judge living out a disenchanted retirement in Kalimpong, a hill station in the Himalayan foot hill and his relationship with his granddaughter Sai. Aravind Adiga presents the indianness in a very lucid manner. Adiga's 'The white Tiger' is a wonderful tale told by the white tiger himself. It seems to be the account of the ups and downs in the life of Balram Halwai's journey from the world of darkness and backwardness to the world of light and development.

Indianness is the key-feature of Indian writing in English. The modern Indian English writers also try to maintain the same in their creativity. Indian English novelists in the 21st century are more interested in the presentation of 'life beyond life'. Conflict, clash, cultural anarchy, loss of faith in morality, depression and bewilderment of the modern generation on the one hand and on the other hand, cultural plurality, human life in relation with globalization, commercialism and universalism etc., are some of the most important themes presented by the modern Indian English novelists like Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Upmanyu Chatterjee, Shashi Tharoor, Rohinton Mistry, Firdaus Kanga, Raj Kamal Jha, Pankaj Mishra, Arundhati Roy, Chetan Bhagat, Aravind Adiga.

REFERENCE

1. Pathak, R.S., Modern Indian Novel In English, New Delhi, Creative Books, 1999, p.10
2. Pathak, R.S., Modern Indian Novel In English, New Delhi, Creative Books, 1999, p.12
3. Man in Modern fiction, New York, Random House, 1958, p.3
4. Erikson, E.S., Identity and Life style, psychological issue, 1959, p.116
5. Singh Khushwant, The company of Women, New Delhi, Viking India Ltd., 1999
6. Jha Raj Kamal, The Blue Bedspread, Picador, 1999 p.1
7. Bhagat, Chetan, Five Point Someone, New Delhi, Rupa & Company 2005 p.3
8. Bhagat, Chetan, One Night @ the call center, New Delhi, Rupa and Company 2005.15
9. Aravind, Adiga, The White Tiger, Harper Collins New Delhi, 2008, p.25