

Social Aspects of Common People in Novels of R. K. Narayan

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Abstract:

Literature demonstrates the idealistic and realistic aspects of human society. Men and Society play contemporary roles simultaneously. Literatures reveal a ground through literature where they exert all perspectives of a nearby social environment. Like A Mirror R.K. Narayan describes the good and evil passion of human nature in an exact and lively mode without any distortion. In a true manner, he is a unique novelist who always represents the religious, cultural and modern aspects of common people's lives according to their circumstances. R. K. Narayan has contributed to the field of literary cosmos and gained world recognition for Indian literature on the platform of world literary history of fiction writers. Due to his remarkable contribution in Indo-Anglian literature, he has been honoured by national and international literary awards for his many famous novels, short stories and non-fiction works. Narayan's eccentric reputation lies in his distinct mode of storytelling, with the fusion of Indian traditions and values. This paper is humble attempt to acquaint the sane readers about R. K. Narayan, one of the famous artistic figures of 20th century, who draws Indian life and Indian people sentiments in artistic manner through his delusive town *Malgudi*. Narayan is a rare paradigm of pure and famous artist and as a script writer of ordinary people and ordinary circumstances.

Key Words:

Idealistic, Common people, Social aspect, Tradition, Sentiments.

Introduction:

Literature presents the shadow of human beings and their surrounding habitat. It is considered as a reliable mode to pour out one's ideas, thoughts, concept and imagination of a community. Through the Indian religious and traditional facts, Narayan successfully reveals Indian sensibility and its foundation via the characterization of lower middle class people and his imaginative town *Malgudi* in his works. Through the philosophy of traditionalism Narayan keeps the middle class, the flag bearer of Indian values and customs in front of the world literary stage. He represents the various facts of human nature and life interestingly and understandingly in his dreamy world of *Malgudi*. He keeps faith in the principle of art for the sake of art.

Explication of Novels:

The novels and short stories of R. K. Narayan exhibit a moral and social vision of common class which gives a strong base to his literary works. Narayan focuses on various social problems like poverty, gender discrimination and degradation of moral values of Indian social milieu in his compositions. Being a man of letters of a proper region, his protagonists possess ordinary abilities rather than extraordinary master-ship.

Being a wonderful delineator of characterization, Narayan illustrates the phenomena of ordinary people with their simple thoughts and indoctrinations. In his novel *Swami and Friends*, the depiction of childhood through child characters Swami, Rajam, Shankar and Mani proves Narayan as a child psychology writer. This is the story of an ingenious boy who always strives to absolute his dreams. Here, the novelist's intention is to focus on the contemporary education system and the children's dreamy world and their small desires related to daily life.

Chandran, *The Bachelor of Arts*, is a young boy whose life revolves around the notional world of his friendship and love incidents. The distortion of his life due to the failure in a love affair and his feelings sway him away from physical world resulting in his renunciation of the

world in the midst of the story. Lastly, he regained confidence and his life became settled and joined the path of continuity and flexibility. Narayan highlights the problem of common people which originated from their household environments and at last they get relief from their hurdles under the shelter of Hindu religion and its teachings.

Narayan always supports the instructions of *Bhagwat Geeta* and other religious folklores. Without recitation of Hindu religion and its sayings, his novels can't be imagined and this is the unbreakable essence of his literary works. The protagonists and anti-protagonists correspond to resemble ordinary people and his novels are compared with the identical picture of Indian social milieu. R. K. Narayan is like a genius and perfectionist painter whose painting is full of wonderful colours of human emotions. Pramod Kumar Singh in his book *Indian Fiction in English* observes:

...Narayan is the minute observer of society presenting most realistic pictures charged with gentle iron and light humour. His approach to the subject matter is always marked with intellectual inspirations and his artistic excellence lies in authentic exploration of social problems. (p. 3)

The illustration of Narayan's fictional world of his literary ground is the same as we dwell in the real world. Most of his novels themes are based on family phenomena. To illustrate the fact we find that in *The Vendor of Sweets* Narayan deals with the theme of father-son relationship, cultural friction and parental love. Jagan, the protagonist, believes in simple life and always worries about the future of his only son Mali, who is an ardent believer and follower of western culture. The father and son's temperaments do not match the after-effects; Jagan feels disillusionment from all worldly things and decides to take the way of renunciation with charkha and holy book Geeta in his hand. The novel ends with prodigious spiritual preaching. Jagan says-

.... I don't like the place, I will go away somewhere else. I am a free man. I have never felt more determined in my life.... everything can go on with or without me. The world doesn't collapse even when a great figure is assassinated or dies of heart failure.... (p. 190)

In this novel, Narayan alludes not to ensue other cultures blindly, which are not suitably connected to one's religion and society; it gives only confusion and exertion in one's life.

The protagonist of the novel, *The Financial Expert*, Margayya, is an avaricious person, always ready to earn money by fair and foul means at the cost of unity of family. Margayya states:

...Money alone is important in this world. Everything else will come to us naturally if we have money in our purse.....people did anything for money. Money was men's greatest need like air or food.... (p. 32, 40)

He ultimately meets his destruction by his over ambitious longings. In his novels, Narayan explores the mediocre public desires and their efforts to accomplish their dreams to struggle with the hardships of routine life. The role of women in the novels of Narayan is always not to reach a fully contentment zone. They appear only as puppets in the hands of a male dominated society. Their world is lonesome, confined only to household work; even though they have no power to make decision regarding their children. In *The Financial Expert*, Meenakshi, wife of Margayya, encounters the same dilemma regarding his son Balu, when Balu takes the path of immorality owing to the over pampering attributable to his father.

The women characters like Ambika (*The Vendors of Sweets*), Meenakshi, Brinda (both *The Financial Expert*), Rosie (*The Guide*), Savitri (*The Darkroom*) etc. are victimized of the society over-casted by male superiority. Female figures in the novels of Narayan get relief alone when their submission and devotion feelings approach bound to only their husbands. Narayan toils to give some space to a woman character in the novel *The Guide*. Rosie is a well educated and skilful artist in dancing. Like other female characters of Narayan's novels, she is also a perfectionist in household work. She also follows the tradition and values of Hindu society to a large extent. Unfortunately, it is the man (Marco) who compels her to move on the unethical ways of life and at last she is deceived by the other man (Raju). Between all these circumstances, she faces all troubles adventurously. It seems that man is only born to dictate on woman in every means. The

elementary intention of Narayan is to portray the position, situation and disruption of the life of *Malgudi* people in his literary world. S. R. Ramteke in his book *R. K. Narayan and His Social Perspective* observes:

Through the series of *Malgudi* novels, Narayan faithfully presents the social values, norms and mores which have been in existence and still continue to play a major role in shaping the lives of Hindu people. (p. 110)

Conclusion:

R. K. Narayan seems to be away from discussing openly the political or economic public issues distinctly in his works. Narayan acts as a social reformer but his intention to reform society is different to other novelists. He wants to take out the solution of all problems through the traditions and moral values of Hindu religion. This method is also very appropriate because it goes along the path of peace for human beings. R. K. Narayan makes an effort to prepare society to move on the road of traditions and values for flourishing human qualities.

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