

SOCIAL STANCE IN INDO-ANGLICAN FICTION

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Abstract:

A man is the by-product of his social conditions and so his creativity is the product of his responses to life. India has undergone social, political, economic, psychological and cultural turmoil till now. Indo-Anglican writers reacted to these in a literary manner and registered their responses in various literary forms. They put forward their literary protest in their writings against the prevalent social drawbacks like poverty, hunger, injustice, discrimination, inequality etc.

This article mainly studies the social stance in Indo-Anglican novels reflected specially in some select novels of R.K. Narayan, Kamala Markandaya and Bhabani Bhattacharya. The present paper discusses how various social evils in India have been dexterously brought on forefront by some talented novelists and how for them social reform was so indispensable before anything else. The ongoing study reveals that they have become absolutely successful in creating social awareness which was badly needed for the desired social change and the resultant growth.

At its very inception Indo-Anglican fiction has encountered social, political, cultural and economic changes in India. This was the time when India was under the British rule. Most of the Indians had taken the stance of revolt but the British government was cunning enough to resist all those insurrections. After their promulgation of 1858 India was again split on the basis of caste, creed and race. Indians were deprived of even the basic rights. Partition of Bengal, Hindu-Muslim segregation and suppression of patriotic fervor of Indians enhanced their trials and tribulations. As a result, the spirit of patriotism and nationalism grew and Indians started taking pride in their rich culture and extra ordinary civilization. Not only Indian but European scholars too started going through Indian ideology, its rich heritage, literature, philosophy and religion. This study eventually started reflecting in the contemporary fiction and non-fiction literature with high socio cultural consciousness. This was their effort to record their protest through literature, the mirror of society. The Indian-English novels at that time exposed the deterioration of morality, social values, shams and hypocrisies of contemporary life and society. It reveals that Indian novelist right

from the very beginning shifted their cognizance from political issues to the societal problems like inequality, child marriages and all types of exploitations in contemporary society. When the Indo-Anglican fiction attends its full growth, it depicted the pangs of individuals' personal life, unfulfilled aspirations, fantasies and priorities; it was at its total maturity when it portrayed the marginalization of women by the superior sex. It also went on to reveal the reluctance that Indian female put forward against the male- ordained patriarchal pressures. It gives an insight into the socio-economic, socio-cultural and psychological issues that have molded and affected Indian women from earlier times to colonial and post-colonial rules and the dilemma of tradition and modernity they were caught in. These two dead ends influence the resistance they put up because they are in difficulty at both ends. At one end tradition initiates fixed roles of endurance, humbleness, purity and responsibilities and on the other hand it impacts emerging from westernized modern India. It has also shown very well how these role shifts created chaos in Indian families. Indo-Anglican novel thus really flourished skillfully both at national and local levels. The social, cultural and political responsiveness unfurled in parallel with decolonization, is seen in Indian fiction. It is also found in contemporary poetry which is a powerful medium of dispersal of human consciousness. Benedict Anderson points out that "Nationalism has to be understood by aligning it not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which- as well as against which- it came into being".

The process of nationalism and post colonialism is uncertain and highly ambiguous too. The lines of differentiation are unclear. As Partha Chatterjee states, "Nationalism denied the alleged inferiority of the colonized people; it also asserted that a backward nation could "modernize "itself while retaining its cultural identity. It thus produced discourse in which, even as it challenged the colonial claim to political domination, it also accepted the very intellectual premises of "modernity "on which colonial domination was based. The social harsh realities in contemporary Indian life have been well brought out by Kamala

Markandaya, Bhabhani Bhattacharya, Vikram Chandra, Mulk Raj Anand etc. Raja Rao's "Kanthapura" offers the vivid description of a typical household in a stereotyped manner. But it reflects social ethos at that time at its best.

The world of Malgudi created by R. K. Narayan works on the Hindu concept of purity. In the novel the "Man-eater of Malgudi" R. K. Narayan allegorically brings out the conceit and self-condemnation of Bhismasura. He brings to the fore the casteism in India fighting against the dominating, so called modern values, unfair practices, modes and mannerisms. Kamala Markandaya's debut novel: *Nectar in a sieve* "deliberates on social issues in rural India. She is at her best when she depicts the commonplace issues in the lives of Indian farmers. The couple Nathan and Rukmini is representatives of contemporary Indian farming who suffer badly at the prevalent social system and poverty. The stark realities in rural India in contrast to the sophisticated Urbanity are ably pointed out by the author. In "A handful of rice" the character of Ravi perfectly resembles Rukmini in respect of misfortunes on account of social discrimination and injustice. Kamala Markandaya explores her own self and relates her own experiences to those of fictional characters in her novels. She is a humanist par excellence and put forth her resistance about the exploitation and division of the week against the strong, peace against war. She unveils the hypocrisy and domination in prevalent times and recreates her characters so that she could illuminate the Indian social ethos amidst the unavoidable darkness.

Writing for Bhabhani Bhattacharya has always a social perception. Doctor Alpesh quotes Leela Ray when she says, "As we read his writing, we hear the dialogue between man and his situation, between man and man, between man and ideas he lives by "He considers literature as a criticism of life and his novels as a documentary of social values, emotions and give and take. S. C. Harrex also says that," His own novels conscientiously reflects these views. Their subject matter and themes derive from modern Indian history and the problems of contemporary Indian society and they embody the programs free forms as well stinging social criticism". Bhabhani Bhattachaya's novels are prototype of Indian society, caught in cauldron of tradition of modernity. When he presents his opinions about the social backdrop of the society,

he strikes a proper balance between it. He establishes man in the center of his creation and firmly believes that without social purpose, any art is meaningless. His sensitive heart perceives the basic problems in society like hunger, disease and the trials and tribulations. The underprivileged go through in this painful process. There is no doubt that novelist like him have become considerably successful in creating social cognizance about the basic issues in Indian society. "So many hungers" is a heart touching novel of Bhabani Bhattacharya, on the man-made famine of Bengal in 1943. The novel delves into how the humans themselves were responsible for the famine in which their own species suffered so much. The novel is set in Bengal and it has the framework of nationalist moment and the Second World War. Bhattacharaya's delineation of political, social and economic problems in India is influential one. In the context of history, he expresses his intense indignation towards the cruelty in Indian social life. Thus is concluded that the trio writers Kamla Markandaya, R. K. Narayan and Bhabani Bhattacharya offer a vivid account of Indian ways of life, various customs, oddities and idiosyncrasies inevitable in Indian life. They all squarely do this without dwelling on the merits in Indian life. They are realistic novelists who depict the social reality of Indian society as it is. They do not glorify any good things in it. Rajesh Kumar Sharma quotes Shri Shrivastava "An artist should delineate contemporary reality rather than recreate the historical or legendary theme." He says that an artist should observe the situations in life and should present the underlying truth through his art so that the desired social growth could be achieved. He again quotes Wallace Steven who points out that: "reality is a cliché from which we escape by metaphor" From the ongoing discussion it seems that the social, political, economical or whatever stance the Indo-Anglican writers might have taken, it is certain that all these efforts or struggles have been portrayed in literature just to achieve an Indian identity, social change and the resultant growth. Iyenger observes that, "It is now aligning and evolving a literary genre, and is trying in the hands of its practitioners a fusion of form,

substance and expression that is recognizably Indian, yet also bearing the marks of Universality.”

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