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OPPRESSION OF PATRIARCHAL POWER IN BHAL CHANDRA NEMADE'S KOSLA

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Abstract :

The writing in Indian English Novel has witnessed the issues dealing with the synchronic and diachronic transformation. Needless to say that the space for women in it is also changing from time to time. The writers have tried their level best to grapple with the culture and context specific problem and issues related women. A notable development is the emergence of an entire school of women novelists in Indian Writing in English. Ruth Pravar Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai are the leading figures in Post- Independence period. The present paper focuses the most celebrated Marathi novel Kosla (1963) written by Bhalchandra Nemade, Janpeeth Awardee 2015. The first critic of a literary work is the writer himself who through his text issues some hits to the creative reader to meditate upon. It is perceptible in all works of literature and Bhalchandra Nemade's Kosla is no exception to it. The novelist has thrown away all the required norms of literary writing. The protagonist Pandurang Sangavikar, in fact represents the novelist himself throughout the plot. He is seen in a deep grief which affects him at the internal level of mind. In the present novel, the subversive tone is seen missing.

Key words: Patriarchal, sacrifice, revolt, Post- Independence, Kosla, Criticism, Vernacular, Death, Woman, Subversive

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Indian Fiction in English since its inception in the later half of the nineteenth century till date, along with the other issues has also been dealing with the changing place, position, role and problems of women in various relationships and areas. The values of sacrifice, submissiveness, excessive endurance, series of adjustment and self-effacement have been demanded and desired from them alone as the normal way of life.

The writers both male and female of almost all the countries and cultures, have been grappling with the culture and context specific problem and issues related women, the struggles undergone by them to retrieve their subjugated positions, the conflicts and traumas suffered by them in the process and self-assertions made by them to transform their circumstances. These writers have contributed a lot in raising consciousness of the readers about women's victimization in various forms thus making a plea for their redressal.





Indian English Literature especially the fiction witnessed the revolt of women in the pre and post independence period. In the history of Indian writing in English, the real beginnings were with the works of great Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94). His published efforts 'Rajmohan's Wife' (1864) was in English. It 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.

A notable development is the emergence of an entire school of women novelists in Indian Writing in English. Toru Dutt (1856-1877) is the great name in the Indian English Poetry and Novel. Both the novelist and the poet are in fact only two facets of Toru's aesthetic personality, two aspects of her genius which are mutually inclusive. Krupabai Sathianathan, Shevanthi Bai Nikambe, Swarnakumari Ghosal were another novelists who tried to strengthen their own cause and build up strong popular opinion in favour of women's education. Ruth Prawar Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai are the leading figure in Post- Independence period.

The wave of change about women is also felt by the male writers of Indian English. The issues like the secondary statues of women and human relationship are focused by Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan.

The present paper focus the most celebrated Marathi novel *Kosla* (1963) written by Bhalchandra Nemade. The extract dealing with the aforesaid theme entitled *Mani's Death* is translated into English language by Sudhakar Marathe (1994). The whole available translation of the novel is *Cocoon*, (English) which is published by Mcmillan Publishers India, Chennai (1997).

Bhalchandra Vanaji Nemade (born in 1938) is a Marathi writer, poet, critic and linguistic scholar form a small rural village Sangvi in Maharashtra. Beginning with the novel *Kosla*, Nemade brought new dimensions to the world of Marathi literature. He is a recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award as well as the Janapith Award 2015, the highest literary honor in India.

Every literature is followed by a criticism of it. Criticism is the interpretation of the text from different standpoint and it not only reveals the depth of the text but also adds something more to it. The first critic of a literary work is the writer himself who through his text issues some hits to the creative reader to meditate upon. It is perceptible in all works of literature and Bhalchandra Nemade's *Kosla* is no exception to it.

The novel is written in typical Marathi vernacular language spoken in North Maharashtra. At the same time, it is observed that the novelist has thrown away all the required norms of literary writing. The protagonist Pandurang Sangavikar, in fact represents the novelist himself throughout the plot. The novel put before us the years spent by a student first in the village Sangvi rural part of Maharashtra upto his high school then to very urban Pune to pursue his higher studies. The hero seems somehow cynical despite his age. The story deals the various themes such as marriage, the father-son relationship, education, politics, spirituality to which the protagonist boldly express. It also shows the novelist's views regarding women's place in the 1960s.

By using the flashback technique, the protagonist shares his experiences as a human being. At this time he seems not only a brother or son of a sister and mother respectively. The incident of the death of his dear sister Mani begins with the heart touching statements such as "Five is hardly an age to die. The whole point would be, why was a child born





in the first place if it was to die at five?"² The boy Pandurang Sangvikar could have been bear the death of his Grandma instead at the place of Mani. Such is the keen observation of a twenty year boy. He is seen in a deep grief which affects him at the internal level of mind. The other curtains of his memories are unfolded one after another with the same situation.

While studying at Pune he remains in contact with his family members through letters. The protagonist has four sisters in his family, a mother and a grandmother. He experiences the male-dominating attitude right from his own house. The statement is truly applicable here that, 'woman is always shown having her identity in relationship to man alone and Indian women have been expected to follow the role models of Sita, Savitri and Draupadi who always suffered and sacrificed for the comforts of their husbands and exhibited commendable forbearance.'³ The girls had to look after all the household activities as instructed or expected by the mother.

The novelist acutely present the contemporary Indian scenario. He says, "then sisters must do sisterly chores, brothers must educate brothers, older brothers should arrange to get their younger sisters married- this is monstrous."⁴ All it shows the weak mentality of the society towards female. With the same passion, the protagonist depicts the incident of Mani's birth and how she is nurtured by his mother and grandma.

The protagonist is an educated young boy who can analyze the very picture of the treatment given to his mother by his father and the grandma; and to his sister by his own mother with the other two. "Yet even Mother was not overly fond of Mani. When she was still in the womb, mother would feel – ija, bija, tija ..."⁵

The aforesaid lines suggest that a 'woman' is not understood by another 'woman'. The behavior of the grandma is again the example of the fact. The role of a woman was limited to the hearth and the child only and she was not allowed to look to the outer world. The patriarchal authority is seen continued. The father feel it necessary to renovate his old house when that year some children died of a terrible epidemic of smallpox. Mani suffer from the same disease. When the mother try to intervene the father, her voice is suppressed.

In the present novel, the subversive tone is seen missing. A mother is completely helpless and always under the pressure. The description of the bedridden Mani is very pathetic to hear and imagine. Unfortunately, the protagonist is far away from home. At last Mani take her last breath in bed in a tragic way. The death of the sister make the protagonist traumatize. He wanders like a madman on the streets of Pune day and night, He has the feeling of alien even among the crowd. Had Mani been treated properly or she been kept untouched by the orthodox views of the society towards women, had the mother have enough rights of taking decisions, Mani's life could have been saved at the right moment. At the end of the story, Pandurang Sangvikar leads the path to Ajanta in search of peace to his mind, where he seems to be quiet successful in gaining the spiritual knowledge.

It is observed that, as a writer, Bhalchandra Nemade does suffer from an obsession and love towards his mother and sister, but he also knows that to be authentic he has to write from within the Indian ethos and milieu. Though the plot of the novel appear overtly simple, it does have the psychological and socio-ethical richness in the light of feminism. Through the psychology of Pandurang Sangvikar, one can be acknowledged with the overall contemporary status of woman.


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