



## Rural life in Fiction

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### Abstract:

*Villages are the basket of our daily bread and rural life is the symbol of man's primitive urge to survive with nature. It is the store-house of men's archaic deeds; it is the emblem of primitive civilization, culture, community and language; it is inseparable part of every Literature of the world. Fiction all over the world is full of rural life. The sorrow, happiness and fun-filled moments of rural life broaden the horizon of literature and literature makes it memorable for next generation. The fiction based on rural life is called the 'rural literature'. 'rural literature' is the only place where one can smell the land, taste the emotion and drink the life drop by drop. The greenery and peace far away from the chaos and hustle bustle of city is the primary subtlet matter of rural literature. The calmness and serenity of the atmosphere depicted in this literature transports us into a world which is like Utopia. Fictions of India are, full of Rural theme. It is neither underestimated nor overestimated the rural life truly. It thoroughly depicts the problems of rural life and suggests the developmental thoughts to make the villages a backbone of India's developments. It shows the developed India need not abolish its villages. The cities and villages have to go hand in hand to achieve considerable progress. In the GDP growth where other sectors are scoring more is due to the fact that they have been stressed more and more amount of inputs are being diverted to these sectors. The present paper is the smallest effort to trace the rural life and the benefits of Literature in the development of rural life.*

**Key Words:** Village, Changelessness, Socio – Cultural Structure, Struggle, ill – rituals, Industrialisation, Education, Purpose.

### Introduction :

Fictions are the life savers in every age, time and situation. They serve as a good companion of long journey. They prove to be a good helper in a sleepless night and they become a good friend of a lazy day. A novel can be our companion in every condition because it touches the heart of human mood and ties the reader by giving the life- blood of a culture and community. They mirror of villages, they depict our simple thoughts. They not only entertain us, but give us education also, so that we can move on the path of progress. Sometimes they encourage us by giving the reinforcement; sometimes motivate us for breaking any ill- ritual in the society.

Many Elizabethan novels and Indian novels in English have used the village culture for their setting. These novels reflect the Indian culture in all their multifacetedness. They use every required element necessary for conveying the Indian sensibility. Apart from

the fact that the majority of India's population lives in villages, the Indian village spells a presence and a mood characteristic of the Indian scene of life. These fiction are interesting not for their village description but for representing a kind of stable society. It is not always a satisfactory society but a social structure in which the non-fulfilment of predictable expectations leads to tensions and even crises affecting the lives of the characters concerned. Furthermore, The village in Indian fiction in English is depicted in many different terms. Sometimes it is a documentary or romantic realism, sometimes account of suffering. Sometimes a great example of human civilization, sometimes it looks like a deep sigh on ill- rituals of villages.

More often than not, it is the changing aspect of the village, as against its changeless one, that is projected by the Indian writers in English, who are interested in showing the impact of industrialism and



commercialism, preferred to show the aspect of general social awakening and social reform through fiction in the villages. Dr. Rahi Masoom Raza's Novel *Aadha Ganv* is the good example of such depiction. It deals with the democratic and socialist ideologies in the rural India.

The three novels *Kanthapura*, *Nectar in a Sieve* and *The Village focus* are also the best example of depiction of rural life in fiction. They deal with the different facets of the Indian villages and show that the changes are the difficult challenges in Indian rural life. In Kamala Markandaya's novel, *Nectar in a Sieve* Rukmani, the narrator-heroine, stands for the traditional Indian rural value system and views with concern the setting up of a tannery in her village:

"The tannery that pollutes the vernal atmosphere of the village with its smells and glamour and corrodes the values of the people, is the main target of Rukmani's attack. She concedes that it brings in more money; but there are counter-balancing evils. Greater commercialisation, an alien population, labour unrest and the death of a son are some of its consequences" (Markandaya 15).

Significantly, the village is unnamed which suggests that the image of it projected in the novel is typical of what would be true of any other Indian village, since it brings out the epiphenomena of psychopathology of the average villager, as also the convulsions to which it is subjected as a result of the advent of industrialisation. Indeed, "One gets the impression that Kamala Markandaya's Westernisation of an Indian village instead of reaction to a specific village in India. The poverty of the villagers, along with their ignorance of modern agricultural techniques, is stressed in the long talk Rukmani, the village woman who is the narrator of the novel, has with Kenny, the English doctor, about the use and misuse of cow-dung, Rukmani details the various uses the cow-dung is put to in the village (which precludes its being used as a fertiliser, as Kenny

wants) and one feels that Markandaya is playing the tourist guide".

*Kanthapura*, by Raja Rao is different. Unlike *Nectar in a Sieve*, it focuses not on the clash of Eastern and Western value systems it focuses on the caste-system and other socio-cultural conflicts. This was beautifully paired with the background of the freedom movement. People of different castes are segregated in such a way that lanes are known by their castes. There is a Brahmin street, a potter's portion, a weaver's portion, a Sudra portion and a parish quarter. This graphical novel opens with a beautiful description of the village, which brings out its distinctive features related to the drama of existence projected in the novel. The lines describe the beauty of Ghat in the village by telling "high ting village" High on the Ghats is it high up the steep mountains that face the cool Arabian Seas up the Malabar coast is it up Mangalore and Puthur and many a centre of cardamom and coffee, rice and sugarcane, roads, narrow, dusty, rut covered roads, wind through the beautiful forests of teak and of jack, of sandal and of sal, and hanging over bellowing gorges and leaping over elephant-haunted valleys exposed, they turn now to the left and now to the right and bring you through the Alambe and Champa and Mena and Kola passed into the great granaries of trade. It is a beautiful account of natural beauty including air, water and forests, the blue waters, the author describes by saying, our carted cardamoms and coffee gets into the ships the Red men bring and so they say they go across the seven oceans into the countries where our rulers live.

The focus of the life led in the village is the shrine of the goddess of *Kanthapura*, Kenchemma. And it is to her that they look up for protection and relief from pain and distress which contrasts with what is proposed by Gandhiji's socio-political and economic reforms. The story is unfold through the narration of an old woman, who has lived through *Kanthapura's* troubled history. "The narrative is hardly very



straightforward; there are involutions and digressions. There are meaningful backward glances, there are rhythmic chains of proper names (Rachanna and Chandranna and Madanna; Sampanna and Vaidyanna; Satamma and Rangamma and Puttamma and Seethamma) there are poetic iridescences". The protagonist of the novel is Moorthy, a staunch follower of Gandhiji, who goes through life, as a noble, low, quiet, generous, serene, different and brahmanic, a very prince. and whose attempts at implementing Gandhian reforms programme create a crisis with which he is unable to cope. Beyond the village lies the Skeffington Coffee Estate symbolizing industrialisation of Kanthapura, which is sought to be resisted by the villagers. While Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* and the unnamed village in Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* are South Indian villages, that figuring as a setting in Mulk Raj Anand's *The Village* is North Indian, which, though manifesting the typical features of rural ethos, have each been used to project a different theme. The village, one of the Trilogy, the other two being *Across the Black Writers* and *The Sword and the Sickle*, which is fashioned as a chronicle of Indian peasant life, traces the revolt of Lal Singh, the youngest son of a peasant, Nihal Singh, of Nandpur against the injustices and social repression, which define the forces of tradition and with which the peasants have to contend. In defying the unjust social order, which characterises his ancestral village as it does many an Indian village, Lal Singh is virtually hounded out of the village. His career symbolises the struggle for the realisation of values, which makes man human, although he is unaware of his heroic role in it experiencing only the ritualistic fears of his community, which, filling him with grave forebodings about his future, make him desperate enough to decide to leave his village for good. Indeed, his action inscapes the incipient rebellion against those aspects of rural ethos in India, which have become suffocating for sensitive youth like Lal Singh, who fight a losing battle

against their legacy of a repressive immemorial order sustained by superstition, feudalism and petrified social structures.

The fictions by Mulk Raj Anand are incomparable classics in depicting the rural life. His novels evoke the typical atmosphere of an Indian village through a distillation of the experience of his protagonist, who, witnesses the prevalence of ignorance and deceit in his village, becomes rebellious. His uncontrolled anger drives him to do what is forbidden – eat in a Muslim shop and have his hair shorn at a hair-cutting saloon in defiance of his faith (Sikhism) for which act of sacrilege he gets his face blackened as a prelude to his being paraded in the streets on a donkey's back, which is a typical traditional way of branding a heretic and rebel.

#### Conclusion :

In our forgoing analysis we have discussed the fact that Indian Literature is the mirror of the rural life style, rural beauty, satisfaction and innocence of rural people and the account of rural economy which is highly marked as an underdeveloped economy. But this is not an adequate description the writers, many a time, acts as a philosopher and thinker. They give a long spell of stagnation with the beginning of new planning for new economic development. this fiction talks about the development on two basis the one is Quantative and the second is structural. sometimes the authors give new mottos to our five-year plans and in this way provide the ideas of spectacular progress in both senses in our economic system.

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