

Role of Language and Literature in Empowering Rural Women

Kuchekar Shailaja Baburao
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Anandrao Dhonde Alias Babaji Mahavidyalaya, Kada
Tal. Ashti, Dist. Beed.

Woman has been the 'subject-matter' of various social, political and religious issues in India. Especially, the Indian woman and more especially, Indian rural woman has been considered as a 'corrupt and burning issue'. May it be the matter of entering the core of the temple or the reservation for women. Indian woman has always been the matter of interest. India has been facing various problems regarding society, economy, politics and religion. Rural woman's development is among such social problems. Social workers and the government has been trying to demolish or at least reduce these problems. For that the government has been planning various schemes in order to develop the Indian society. Indian society has different aspects. Those aspects being rural Indian society, rural Indian woman, rural economy, religious factors and so on.

It is said that India is the country of villages. Much of the part of the country consists of rural area. Villages in India are not developed and so India also comes under the undeveloped countries. It is necessary to develop the rural area in order to develop the nation. Rural area has social, economic and religious problems. Indian farmer belongs to the rural area. He works hard but couldn't get a good life. There is no educational facilities in villages. So there is lack of education and consequently, unawareness about health. Woman has always given a secondary place in family, in religious ceremonies and in society. It was accepted by everyone. But some social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Jotiba Phule realized that the place of Indian woman should not be secondary, it should be as similar as men.

The unnecessary limitations for women were tried to be demolished by the reformers. They had to face a lot of wrath of the society. But they finally could succeed in changing society's mentality about woman. She could learn and make the family learn. But it was not that simple. The society never allows woman and the lower caste people to have the access of various facilities for the them. They always create hinderance in one or the other way. Some times religion, some times society and some times some political issues stop to take further steps.

Development of rural community depends on various factors. These factors include education, health as well as social reforms. And this is not possible for any one person to change the society and develop the villages.

People have to work in groups and change the mindset of the rustic people. It can be done with various means - language and literature are among them!

Language is the means of exchanging thoughts and expressions. With the help of language good thoughts can be exchanged and necessary changes are done. Language is the literature written in that particular language. So the literary works are also the means of exchanging thoughts and expressions. Various literary forms are the thoughts expressed about particular subject. The written work becomes literature if it has literary value. Newspapers have no literary value. So it is read only once. But the literary works have aesthetic as well as literary value. So it lasts long and has the power of social reform. The more effective is the writing the more effective is the social change. So language and literature are the tools of social change if used properly.

Literature includes dramas, novels and poetry. Through these literary pieces social reform is possible with its main aim that is - entertainment. Entertainment is one of the aims of the literature. It is one of the tools of the social change as well. Right from the times of independence Gandhiji and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru have used this tool of writing for social awareness. Patriotism was the feeling and sense which was to be arisen in the minds of people in those days. Gandhiji and Nehru could succeed in changing the mindsets in some extent. Even Sarojini Naidu, Swatantryaveer Sawarkar, Raja Rammohan Roy wrote to make people aware of their rights about independence.

Rural woman is one of the neglected factors of the Indian society. Woman is, in fact one of the major factors of the society. As the young generation is the future of the nation, woman is also important for the nation building. Woman's development is the nation's development. Rural woman is not allowed to go out of her house. She is kept away from education and economic stability. So it is difficult to make these ladies get connected with literature. Literature has the great power to change the world. But it should reach to the people first. Educated people who have the knowledge about literature have to pass on their knowledge to the people.

There are so many ways to pass on the literature to the society. Literary pieces should be selected which are entertaining as well as informative. Plays can be played on the stages. Subjects like gender equality, education, child labour, woman health should be handled through these plays. The fiction can also be discussed on the stage as a story. The story related to woman's position in society can be explained through the stories. Poetry is easy to present as a song. Music always attracts the people. Poems like *Night of The Scorpion* by Nissim Ezakiel, *Hunger* by Jayanta Mahapatra should be chosen to present before the people, specially the women in rural area. Each part of the society should be introduced to them. The fact that educated and working women are economically independent and are able to solve their problems on their own should be shown to the rural women.

One more hindrance in reaching the literary forms to the rural areas is that the language. English literature is great, but English language is not understood by the rural people. But the translation of these literary pieces in their native language can make these forms understood easily. Main themes of education, eradication of superstition, etc. should be chosen and should be conveyed to the rural society.

Literature helped freedom fighters to awake people and let the Britishers leave our country. Poetry is one of the literary forms which does not only give the aesthetic pleasure to the listener but also the sentimental attachment about the theme. Poets choose the proper theme and present the subject in such a way that it touches the readers' heart. Drama also plays the same purpose of entering the readers' heart with its dialogues and the characters. Novel, being a new literary form is also helpful to convey the message the novelist intended to. Thus, all the literary forms are tools of conveying the social messages to the society.

Rural areas can be developed through literature as it is one of the effective tools of social reform. Indian society has been facing various social problems. Eradication of these problems needs a well organised plan. Literature should be used initially as to introduce a social problem. Then it should be used as a promoter of that problem. Literature is the means of entertainment so it can be easily reached to and accepted by the common people.

Common man in a rural area has limited expectations and limited facilities. But sometimes they face problems like superstition, child labour, child marriage etc. These problems play a role of hindrance in any type of development. So these problems have to be removed. Through street plays such issues can be presented to the rural people and make them aware of the consequences these issues can be responsible for. Not only plays, poetry also has its role in the development of the rural area. Ballads are effective literary form through which people can be aware of the social issues and its effects on the society. Marathi novelist and poet Annabhau Sathé has composed ballads and tried to make low caste people aware of their rights.

Position of women in rural India is also one of the issues which affects the development of India. Rural women are not allowed to get education and be independent. They have so many limitations in personal as well as social life. Lack of education and influence of superstition makes them face health problems as well as economic problems. There are some novels depicting women's position and her inner conflict. Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haveli* presents a woman's loneliness and the journey towards the completeness as she overcomes the problem.

Not only social problems but the inner conflicts of human mind are also represented through literature. Right from Virginia Woolf and James Joyce the inner conflict of the human mind has been presented through literature. Anita Desai also concerns a loneliness of a woman in her novel *Cry the Peacock*.

The literary works help to put forth the problems the rustic people come across. People who have the ability to understand, think about the situation and they try to solve the problems on their levels. In fact, a problem presented through literature is the first step towards the problem solving. Rural areas are not given much importance for the development. Limitations for social, political, economical as well as cultural areas become hindrance in the development. So it becomes necessary to know about the hindrances. Literature plays an important role of making responsible people aware of the situation and take the proper step towards problem solving.

India's social, cultural, economical and political development is closely associated with the rural area. Development of rural area is the development of India. Poets and writers have tried to make people aware of their rights and their duties at various levels. So literature has great responsibility of shaping people's mindset as well as shape the society.

References:

- Chaube, Ramesh. (2003) *Status of Women in Rural Society*, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi.
- Iyengar, K. R. Srinivasa. (2006) *Indian Writing in English*, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi.
- Karne, Padmavathi. (2016) *Empowerment of Women In India*, Serial Publications Peivate Limited, New Delhi.
- Mishra, Shyam Kartik. (2012) *Women Status and Empowerment in India*, New Century Publications, New Delhi.
- Pandya, Rameshwary. Patel, Sarika. (2010) *Women in the Unorganized Sector of India*, New Century Publications, New Delhi.
- Singh, Katar. (1986) *Rural Development: Principles, Policies and Development*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
- Sonar, Gangadhar B. (2017) *Rural Community Development in India*, Lap Lambert Academic Publishing, India.