

Depiction Of The Women Characters In Kanthapura By Raja Rao

Afsar Nawaboddin Shaikh

Assistant Professor, Azad College, Ausa, (M.S.), India

Abstract

The present study is deals with Depiction of the Women Characters in Rao's novel Kanthapura. As the purpose of the novel was to depict a mass - movement and its impact, a highly individualized characterization would have deflected attention from such a depiction. Thus the characters in the novel are not sharply and distinctly individualized. The emphasis is more on themes and ideas rather than on people. Characterization takes a secondary place in Kanthapura yet it is not without significant and fine characterization. The women characters have been skillfully delineated by Raja Rao. There is a great variety of them in the novel. At the foremost we have Rangamma. She is one of the few educated women in the village. She reads the newspapers herself and thus keeps herself and other people in Kanthapura acquainted with the day to day developments elsewhere. She knows many things of general interest. She is never be fooled by Bhatta. She helps Moorthy literally, although, she does not seem to share his belief that Pariahs and Brahmins are all equal. After meeting Sankar, Rangamma develops into a fine leader and speaker. She is able to fill the void created by the death of her father, who used to expound the Vedantic texts at Harikatha.

Key Words- Kanthapura, impact, women characters, education.

Introduction

Ratna

Next woman character who deserves attention is Ratna. She is a child widow, who has been powerfully influenced by modern ideas and who does not regard being a woman as a matter of shame and inferiority. She is much criticized for her unconventional ways but she does not care for such criticism. She chooses her own path and sticks to it with firmness and determination. She takes keen interest in the Gandhian movement and is a source of inspiration and a great help to Moorthy. When Jayaramachar, the Harikatha - man, is arrested, she conducts the Harikathas. After Rangamma's death, she reads out the newspapers and other publicity material of the Congress for the benefit of the Kanthapurians. When Moorthy is arrested, Ratna carries on his work and serves as the leader. She organizes the women volunteer corps and imparts to the Sevikas the necessary training. She displays great courage and resourcefulness in the face of the government repression and police action. She is dishonored, beaten up and sent to jail as a consequence. She suffers all patiently and unflinchingly. When Mahatma Gandhi goes to England for the Round Table Conference, reaches a settlement with the Red - man's Government and the movement is withdrawn, Ratna is disappointed like countless other freedom fighters in India. She goes

over to Bombay and through her letters we learn of her great admiration for Nehru, "the equal distributionist".

Rangamma

She is one of the few educated women in the village. She reads the newspapers herself and thus keeps herself and others acquainted with the day to day developments elsewhere. Waterfall Venkamma is jealous of her and roars and rails against her day and night. It is from her railings that we learn much about her. She is a childless widow but she has a very big home, much larger than that of Venkamma herself. Her relatives are in the city and visit her frequently. She is of a great help to Moorthy in organizing the Congress work in the village. She is a lady of enlightened views actively involved in the freedom struggle.

Achakka

Achakka, the narrator, though she is never sharply individualized, is revealed by her manner of narration and her comments on persons and events. In the novel, her function is representative and her strength lies in being anonymous. She is just one of the many women of Kanthapura, who responded to the call of Mahatma Gandhi, conveyed through Moorthy. Her faith in the Goddess Kenchamma, her respect for the local scholar Rangamma, her unquestioned affection for Moorthy and her trust in him, all these feelings, she shares with other women of the village.

However, Achakka is a woman with a balanced mind, sound common sense and the gift of shrewd and intelligent observation. Her personality colors the whole non-cooperation movement, the brave resistance of the people and their consequent suffering.

Narsamma

One of the simplest women in the village is poor Narsamma, the mother of Moorthy. She cannot understand the ideals dear to her son but who only knows that she did nothing to deserve the calamity of excommunication of the society that befalls her family. She is the most pathetic character in the novel. Through the character of Waterfall Venkamma, Raja Rao brings out the pettiness, the jealousy, the triviality and the orthodoxy of the women folk. Venkamma is a woman of a petty and jealous nature. She cannot bear to see others prosperous or successful. The sight of the happiness of others arouses her wrath and she rails and rails against them. There is no end to her spite, jealousy and vindictiveness. She is jealous of Rangamma because she has a much larger house and constantly rails against her. She would like to put lizard poison into her food and thus cause her death.

Conclusion

In Kanthapura, Raja Rao presents women as various forms of Shakti. A typical Indian woman is coy, delicate and submissive and she is also as firm as a rock, great in suffering. Shakti rises in them and each of them is enthused at the proper time. Psychologically prepared for the titanic encounter, they got much inspiration from other examples. It is to be noted that in the last phase of peaceful resistance it is Ratna, a woman, who takes over from Moorthy and leads the Satyagrahis.

References

1. Karnad, Girish 2008 *Yayati*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
2. *Collected Plays*. Vol.I. New Delhi: Oxford University Press 2005.
3. Panday, Sudhakar and Barua, Freya. 1990. *Studies in Contemporary Indian Drama*. New Delhi: Prestige Books.
4. Wale, N.G. 2011. "The Use of Myth in Karnad's *Yayati*". *The Quest*. Volume 25, No.1.
5. Tripathi, Vanashree. *Three Plays Girish Karnad: a Study in Poetics and Culture*. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 2004.
6. Mukherjee Tutun, "A Conversation with Girish Karnad" in *Girish Karnad's Plays Performance and Critical Perspectives*. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2006.