



THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN R.K. NARAYAN'S NOVELS

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Abstract: IN The present study the main aim and purpose is to present various changing social status and role of a women in our society. With the help of R.K.Narayan's The Dark Room, Guide, and The English Teacher I am trying to find out that how women is changing day by day. It is happening just because she is getting education and its change her whole personality. She has become bold and knows her legal rights. Here in this study with the help three female characters Savitri, Rosie and Shushila i am trying to show their role in the novels of R.K.NARAYAN'. She is playing the different roles in her life for example she is a mother , daughter and a wife. With the help of these novels it will be clear to us the changing social status of a woman.

R.K.Narayan is one of the most prolific and appreciated novelist in indo-Anglican literature. He is not a writer with a purpose or a message. The life around him, however, makes its claims upon him and certain social and economic problems of his people find an expression through his novels and stories. Narayan's treatment of their problems are however artistic, and objective. He got Sahitya Academy award for his novel "The Guide" (1960) and has established his fame as a novelist not only in India but also in many foreign countries.

"women are the chain by which man is attached to the chariot of folly" said by Bhratihari in the 'Sringar Sataka.

In Narayan's novels women plays a very important part. If somebody read his novels, so he gets different shades of women. He has written so many novels in which 'The Guide' and 'The Dark Room'. We find Rosie and savitri. The two different type of female characters. In most of his novel he dedicated a typical south Indian social scene with the ironic and joyful detachment of a true artist. He portrays very vividly the complex texture of social and religious customs and traditional governing a Hindu family.

In his "The Dark Room" Narayan shows us a typical, simple and believing in traditions status in

his life . It is a tale of domestic disharmony .It's a story of the forfeited wife. In it Narayan draws the pigment picture of middle class south Indian domesticity run by an irritable and whimsical husband. It's a story of savitri, the devoted wife and her husband Ramani, an inconsiderate and heartless individual. Ramani is the office secretary of Engladia insurance company. He is very domineering and cynical in his ways and hence governs his house according to his own sweet will . savitri becomes accustomed to his daily bullying . As he is always irritable, the atmosphere in his house is generally very tense and his wife, children and servant always remain in a state of terror. She is a symbol of tradition Indian womanhood. She is not a butterfly type of woman as Rosie of 'The Guide'. She is very beautiful and very sincere towards her husband.

Her troubles start when her husband gets involved with an adventuress. There appears a lady SHANTA BAI who has deserted her husband and joined ENGLADIA INSURANCE COMPANY as an insurance canvasser. He is attracted towards her beauty and involved in an affair .This upsets the peace of the domestic life .unable to continue in this intolerable situation, she thinks to run away and commit suicide .she cannot returns to her father's house because after marriage there is no place for her in her father's house .Finally she goes to the bank of river SARAYU and flings herself into its depths. But MARI ,the blacksmith and burglar ,who ,while crossing the river sees her body and

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at once rescues her , saves her life . Persuaded by MARI'S wife Ponni ,she goes to their village and start working in at temple. But the man tries to take advantage of her. Savitri cannot bear this. Due to the feeling of home sickness ,she returns back to her husband's home, for the sake of her children's .This is the condition of Indian women who is treated as a man's gift, either for her father's or her husband.

The plot of the novel shows a marked development of technical accomplishment in NARAYAN'S novels. Like IBSEN'S famous drama 'A DOLLS HOUSE ' this novel also deals with the theme of a women's realization of her Owen position in domestic life and her revolt against it. For fifteen years savitri has been a doll wife living in a doll's house .But when she feels that she has no importance in her husband's life, at ones she becomes disillusioned. In 'The Dark Room' She says in despair- "Things? I don't possess anything in this world. What possession can a woman call her own except her body? Every - thing else that she has is her father's her husband's or her son's ".

SAVITRI also realises her dignity as a human being. While greatly excited by her husband's infidelity she says to him through her heavy breathings - 'I m a human being ---- you men will never grant that. For you are play things when you feel like hugging, and slaves at others times .don't think that you can fondle us when you like and kick us when you choose.'

After reading this novel, we realise the realism which governs

Narayan's approach to the problems of women's resurgence, finds its best expression in the faithful description of South INDIAN household in this novel. The picture is both delightful and informative .Though this novel Narayan shows us incident of human life - a mothers anxiety for the welfare of her children, an eccentric husband's ruthless caprices and autocratic ways, wife's fear of her husband and concern for his comforts, son's pretence of illness to escape classes, father's thrashing of children at their mischief's, quarrels between husband and wife and brother and sisters. We also have seen how helpless women express her anger against her husband by lying hungry in a dark room.

Once it was desired that the girl should know how to cook ,sing and dance, but now a day's young men prefer those girls who have a job. Thanks to the vast changes that have taken place in our time . 'Today, Indian women are trying to become economically self sufficient. And this is fit in the character of Rossie'in Guide. Our constitution has provided that our women shell have equal opportunities with men in the field of education employment and social, economic and political opportunities.After all society runs on two wheels, both the wheels must be equally strong to run fast and smoothly. Although legally and theoretically a woman is now recognised as the equal of man.

After reading the character of savitri, when I have read Rosie in "The Guide "I have come in this decision that she, in the real sense

be able to understand as the modern women, she is from that background where women is not allowed to come in front of the world. She gets married to Marco and he has given all right to her as his wife This quality Raju already notice when she has seen the cobra dance. In 'The Guide' she has reacted in this way, 'the man pulled down his gourd flute, and played on it shrilly, and the cobra raised itself and darted hither and swayed. After seeing this girl stretched out her arm slightly and swayed her whole body to the rhythm.' 68

She has shown herself as a new modern women , who is able to take her own decision with herself and that's why she has come in Raju's house without saying anything to her husband . He is surprised in 'The Guide' when he looked Rosie in front of him, 'there stood Rosie on the threshold, with a trunk at her feet and a bag under her arm.'

Now the trend has changed now women is able to solve her problem with herself. Once's Tennyson said 'women is made for hearth and man for field' but now its wrong because women has become so confident, self dependent ,she is able to know how to survive in this world. Empowering women wins to inspire with the courage to break free from the chains of limiting pattern and societal or religious conditioning that have traditionally kept women suppressed and unable to see their true beauty and power.

IN 'THE ENGLISH TEACHER' I have found a different image of a women . It's a love story . Krisna the



hero of the novel is a lecturer at Albert college in Malgudi . He married to Sushila . When the novel begins the heroine of the novel is in ancestral village .This novel describes how the sweet and happy life of a lecturer comes to a tragic and with the sudden and early death of his wife and this unfortunate calamity upsets his life completely .The earlier part of the novel provides us a glimpses of Krishna' teaching work .After few months Krishna and his family sets up his independent house on rent. His mother also comes from the village to guide his wife in her domestic work .When she has become perfect in her work she in her absence leaves for her village. Krishna and Sushila lead a happy life for several months. He leaves the college in the evening soon after the last period is over and reaches his house to find his wife and child waiting for him . He takes his fresh clothes and have a nice time with his family. In the night they talk about the college. On the first date of the month he give his salary in

the hands of his wife . His wife as an expert she keeps the account of every single pai and does not tolerate even the slight tempering with her management. Thus they go on living happily and smoothly for several month but his wife 's illness intervenes in their marital happiness and cuts it shorts. Susila falls a victim of typhoid and dies after a prolonged and tiring illness of several weeks .Krishna lives aimlessly his life, one day he meets a strange man who knows how to establish communion with spirits . Through his mysterious sitting by the side of pond he acquires for Krishna many true information from his dead wife .This new and strange type of contact with his wife introduced afresh oil in his life . This shows the new shade of a women . Through this study we have seen different types of women for examples Sushila, Savitri , Shanta, Rosie.Sushila has played a role of atypical hindu wife, Savitri to is very Novel.London;Methuen ,1961.

simple , meek , obedient, religious, and loving type of wife .Shanta Bai is a butterfly type of women. We always says that time has changed we are giving importance to women. They are living in the world of liberty and equality. They are turning back to vedic period .She is able to live freely getting education, scaling new heights .She has provide herself in different fields for example Kalpana Awesthi the dashing bureaucrat , Krian Badi the bold police officer, P T Usha,and Indira Gandhi our late Prime Minister of India etc .If we really wants to change the status of woman so we have to change our ignoble attitude towards them .

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