

CHAPTER – V

CONCLUSION

Introduction:

This chapter draws definite conclusions based on the present study. An attempt has been made to focus on the presentation of rural culture of India in satires, moral fables and fantasies; and mysteries and ghost stories of Manoj Das. His short fiction is studied from an Indian perspective. India is predominantly an agrarian country. Most of the regions in India are countryside. The rural region in India is bound to be different from the one in England or any other Western countries. It is predominantly villageous in its set-up, whereas in England it is a midway between a village and a city. Further the rural region in India is primarily agrarian and pastoral though in recent times some rural regions are being exploited by industries. Manoj Das is a keen observer of the pre and post Independent India. In his short fiction he depicts socio-cultural, economical, political and religious life of people living in the villages.

The following are the prominent features of ‘rural fiction’ which are traced in the present study.

- **Evocation of rural sensibility**

The action of the stories which are analysed for the present study takes place in a village or a rural region, or a small town. The evocation of village life is accomplished in these stories mainly through incidents, characters, customs, superstitions, topography, rustic speech and agrarian imagery. At the background of these stories there is a village or a rural region with its physical phenomena such as the land, the hills, the rivers,

the mountains and the flora and fauna which is organically connected with the life of people living in it.

- **Emergence of a living central figure, a hero or a heroine who is a representative figure from the village or rural region or a small town**

After the detailed analysis of the short fiction selected for the present study of Manoj Das, it is observed that in all the stories central character emerges from a village or a rural region or a small town, he/she is brought up in rural culture. He/she is a representative figure.

- **Effective use of rustic idioms and agrarian imagery**

Manoj Das uses the flora and the fauna in the similes and metaphors in his short fiction very skillfully. He uses rustic idioms, agrarian imagery and regional expressions to evoke rural sensibility in his stories. The words are English but the organization of the material is Indian. It is not an easy task to present Indian rural sensibility through English. But Manoj Das has done it very successfully and effectively. Images and metaphors are his natural modes of expression, and they happen to touch upon objects and experiences that are distinctively rural. He uses Indian words which do not have English equivalents especially words from register of religion and culture e.g. chelas, gurubhai, bhajans, darhsan, Haribol etc. These words evoke spiritual sensibility.

- **Prominent characteristics of Indian rural culture.**

The following are the prominent characteristics of Indian rural culture which are reflected in the short fiction of Manoj Das. His stories are categorized as i) satires ii) fables and fantasies iii) ghost stories and mysteries.

- **Exploration of the term ‘rural culture’ and its features**

The first chapter explores the nature of the terms ‘rural’ and culture in order to define the concept of ‘rural culture’ in order to define the concept of ‘rural culture’ The word rural stands for ‘agricultural’ or ‘pastoral’. It refers to the life on the farm or in the country as distinguished from life in the city. Its settlement system consists of villages or homesteads and there is a greater inter-dependence among people. In order to support this discussion, the words ‘country’ and ‘village’ are explained. The word ‘country’ means “land with farms and small towns, rural region as distinguished from city or town.” This again leads to the word ‘village’ which means “a group of houses (villas) in the country, larger than hamlet and smaller than a city or town.” Thus the ‘village’ and ‘agriculture’ are inseparably associated.

Then the term ‘culture’ is discussed. This chapter provides different definitions of culture in order to throw light on the nature of the term, culture. The theoretical discussion on the concept of culture explores meaning of the term as: culture is a way of life of humans covering way of thinking, feeling and acting which are transmitted from generation to generation. Thus culture consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, institutions, rituals, ceremonies etc.

Keeping in view theoretical discussion on the terms ‘rural’ and ‘culture’ the definition of ‘rural culture’ is built upon with following words:

A way of life of people living in a village/country/a rural region who spend their life on the farm or in the country as distinguished from life in the city, at the level of ideas and practices in the forms of values,

norms beliefs, attitudes, traditions, customs, religion, language, works of arts, institutions, tools, techniques etc.

Then the dominant features of 'rural culture' are discussed in order to trace these features in a vast variety of tales of Manoj Das selected for the present study.

- **Highlight on the term 'Rural Fiction'**

Further this chapter explores the term 'Rural Fiction' which is rarely used by English writers and critics. It is a sub-species of the Regional Literature which is realistic and concerns itself with life in rural areas or small towns rather than urban centres. "Local Colour' and 'atmosphere' are largely responsible for the creation of regional or local life. Keeping in view the discussion of literary theoreticians on the term 'rural fiction' as a sub-species of regional literature the dominant features of 'rural fiction' are drawn to study the present work.

- **Focus on changing phases in Indian rural culture**

Further this chapter throws light on the changing phases in Indian rural culture during the period of globalization in order to highlight short fiction of Manoj Das. There is growth of industrialization in India after the First World War. As a result there is a gradual change in the life of the rural community, in their economy and the structure of their social, religious and cultural relations. The study also provides observations and comments by the sociologists on the studies on rural culture under the studies on rural culture under the regime of globalization in India. These observations support the findings of the present research work. Further in order to place Manoj Das in the realm of short story the origin, brief history and development of short story as a literary genre is given. This

chapter also provides a brief survey of the presentation of rural culture in Indian English fiction in order to get a fairly good perspective for the present study.

Thus the theoretical framework development in the first chapter is utilized in the succeeding chapters for the analysis of the short fiction of Manoj Das. In order draw definite conclusions, a vast variety of short fiction of Manoj Das is categorized as i) satires ii) fables and fantasies iii) the ghost stories and the mysteries.

The second chapter throws light on the dominant features of rural culture in satires of Manoj Das. There is an element of subtle satire in all the stories of Manoj Das. The bulk of his satires is further classified into social rural life, socio-political rural life, socio-religious rural life, socio-economical rural life. This type of classification is not watertight division. They can overlap. This chapter also focuses on the nature and techniques of satires of Manoj Das and highlights the following features of rural culture in satires of Manoj Das.

- **A strong appeal for the preservation of Indian rural culture in the days of globalization**

Manoj Das was born and brought up in a quiet and serene village in India. He delineates his childhood experiences to present an authentic picture of rural culture of India in his vast variety of stories. He has drawn his characters and settings from rural India. His stories reflect different aspects of Indian village culture. In his stories he depicts clash between rural culture and urban culture. He shows a greater sympathy towards traditional rural values. He glorifies simplicity, innocence, straightforwardness, spiritual faith and humanistic attitude of the Indian people living in the villages. He condemns hypocrisy, artificiality false

pride, arrogance and pomposity of urban culture. The Indian village society is dominantly agrarian and the 'Mother Earth' is the dearest to the peasants. They are strongly attached to their soil and this sense of geopiety is depicted in the stories of Manoj Das. In his stories, the village is depicted in a routine manner with its placidity, greenery, sunlight and fresh air. In his short fiction, he highlights on how rural culture is superior to urban culture. He does not want to spoil the placidity and serenity of village culture in the process of industrialization/modernization. His stories seriously depict the rapid metamorphosis of village India during the era of globalization. There is nostalgic yearning for the preservation of Indian rural culture which is in the process of change. We notice his deep anguish for changing scenario of rural culture in which human values and lifestyles are changing. His stories depict his plea for the nourishment of rural culture. Manoj Das depicts this feeling in his stories like "The Submerged Valley", "The Tree", "The Bull of Babulpur", "Quest of Sunderdas", "Return of the Cat", "The jackals", "The Centenarian", "A Night in the Life of a Mayor", "The Rain", "Son and Father", "So Many Smiles", "The Gold Medal", "The Third Person" etc.

- **An authentic depiction of hypocrisy, artificiality, false pride and double-dealing nature of the politicians in the post-Independent rural India.**

Manoj Das throws light on socio-political life of rural people. He gives an account of how the new caste of patriots emerged after the Independence. He depicts very effectively the false pride and double dealing nature of the contemporary politicians who suppose themselves patriots. The poor rustics are ignorant of reality. The shrewd politicians take the disadvantage of this weakness of the simple villagers and try to deceive them and escape from their social responsibilities. They always

run after fame, name and money. Manoj Das criticizes the hypocrisy and artificial attitude of the politicians in his stories like “Mystery of the Missing Cap”, “The Tree”, “The Assault”, “The Centenarian”, “The Brothers”, “The Old Man and The Camel”, The Irrational “A Night in the Life of a Mayor”.

- **An authentic presentation of beliefs, customs, mores, rituals and superstitions of the rural people :**

Customs, beliefs, rituals and superstitions form an inextricable part of rural religious life. The old taboos and faith seem to have their firm grip on the minds of superstitious and gullible villagers. The astrologers and fortune tellers take disadvantage of this weakness and they exploit simple and innocent villagers. Even the fake Sadhus and Babas deceive the simple rustics. Manoj Das authentically depicts this socio-religious aspects of Indian rural life in his stories like “The Tree”, “The Crocodile’s Lady”, “The Owl”, “Prithviraj’s Horse”, “The Miracle”, “Choop Saitan”, “The Bride” etc.

- **An authentic depiction of economical inequality in the society and exploitation of the poor rural society by the feudal lords, the rich and the strong.**

Manoj Das’s stories are written out of a sense of social commitment. He uses gentle satire on contemporary social vices and individual follies. He is a close observer of pre and post-Independent India. There is an influence of Marxian socialism on the mind of Manoj Das. He supports a society without a caste, class and creed. In his stories he depicts clash between the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, the haves and the have-nots particularly in rural India. Poverty is a dominant feature of rural culture in India. Exploitation originates in poverty and illiteracy. The writer throws light on the exploitation of the

poor villagers by the rich zamindars. During the pre-Independent India, there was existence of a feudal system in the Indian society. The Rajas, Zamindars, Mahajans from the feudal system ruthlessly oppressed the poor people from rural India. The poor villagers have no choice but to serve the landlords from generation to generation. Manoj Das authentically depicts the pathetic and the desolate conditions of the poor villagers under the dictatorship of feudal lords, Sahukars, the rich and the strong in the stories like “The Murderer”, “The Kite”, “Laxshmi’s Adventure”, “The Hunger”, “Of Man and Monkey”, “The Strategy”, “The Concubine”, “The Naked” etc.

- **An authentic presentation of exploitation of women in rural India due to poverty and illiteracy:**

Manoj Das comments on ruthless exploitation of helpless and poor women from villages. They are sexually exploited by the Zamindars and the upper class people in the stories like “A Crack of the Thunder”, “The Hunger”, “The Poison Girl”. In the stories like “The Strategy”, “The Kuturi Nani” Manoj Das comments on the male dominated society for its exploitation and harassment of helpless women. On the other hand he glorifies the institution of the motherhood in the stories like “The Third Person”, “Laxshmi’s Adventure”, “The Concubine”.

- **An authentic presentation of fight for survival during the natural calamities:**

India is an agricultural country. Life of Indian peasant depends on the rainfall. He has to face natural calamities like drought, heavy rains, storms, changing courses of rivers etc. for his survival. This fight for survival of the Indian villagers is depicted in the stories like, “Catching a Thief”, “The Discovery”, “The Tree”.

- **An authentic presentation of beautiful snapshots of Nature**

Nature provides suitable setting to rural life which is depicted in the short fiction of Manoj Das. He gives an authentic account of the childhood experiences in his native village Sankari in Orissa. Geographically, Orissa is the most colourful regions of India. The vast blue ocean at its east and the mountainous ranges and the deep forests in the western and southern zones add the beauty of its landscape. Even between his house and the sea there were two natural lakes abounding lotuses and a vast ever-green meadow studded with palm trees. He grew up in the company of Nature and experienced its splendour and fury also. He depicts rural landscapes with its simplicity, charm, serene air and eco-friendly environment in his short fiction. He glorifies world of Nature. He centres his stories around the birds and animals like the owl, monkey, tiger, jackals, bull, cat and trees also. The flora and fauna represent village ecology. There is a strong bond of affinity between human and animal world presented in the short fiction of Manoj Das. These birds, animals and even trees are part and parcel of Indian village life and they are inseparable aspects of village ecology. In order to focus village ecology, Manoj Das uses technique of personification of trees and animals in his stories. He also focuses his attention on the rapidly changing rural India because of the advent of technology and rapid urbanization. We get glimpses of photographic presentation of nature at the setting of the villages which are changing in the course of the time in the stories like “Son and Father”, “Bhola Grandpa and The Tiger”, “The Tree”, “The Jackals”, “The Assault”, “The Rain”, “The Shadow”, “Birds at Twilight”.

The third chapter focuses the nature and techniques of fables and fantasies of Manoj Das. In this chapter an attempt is made to highlight notable characteristics of rural culture in select fables and fantasies of Manoj Das.

- **Depiction of social reality and human follies in fables and fantasies:**

There is an influence of Samadeva and Vishnu Sharma, the master storytellers of ancient India on the creative mind of Manoj Das. They build the vast heritage of Indian folklore.

Manoj Das is a keen observer of society. Fantasy as a form allows him to take advantage of freedom and flexibility to present observations on mice and men. He exposes the true nature of reality by using techniques of fables and fantasies. He throws light on human follies, ironies and contradictory situations which come across in the life of man. He uses hill tops, mountains, valleys, river banks in hamlets at the background of his fables and fantasies. He handles the superstitious villagers or primitive folks in his fables and fantasies. His fables and fantasies are deeply rooted in reality. They have concrete message relevant to our time. They are the creation of his literary genius. He throws light on the hidden reality, human follies in his fables and fantasies like “Man Who Lifted the Mountain”, “He Who Rode the Tiger”, “Old Folks of the Northern Valley”, “The Tiger and The Traveller”, “The Turtle from the Sky”, “Operation Bride”, “The Last Night”, “The Lady Who Died One and a Half Times”.

The fourth chapter focuses the nature and techniques of the ghost stories and mysteries of Manoj Das. This chapter throws light on the

prominent features of rural culture in the ghost stories and the mysteries of Manoj Das.

- **An authentic presentation of strong faith of rural people in the presence of ghosts, spirits and demons.**

Manoj Das depicts supernatural characters like ghosts, spirits and demons in his mystery stories and ghost stories. These stories have rural setting. He creates very powerful supernatural atmosphere with the help of moonlight and twilight, howling jackals, roaring tigers, blinding rain, hooting owl, burning corpses etc. The people living in the villages have strong faith in the presence of ghosts and spirits. They also believe in the phenomenon of the dead possessing the living. They perform different rituals with the help of tantriks or occultists to free the persons who are possessed by spirits. Manoj Das has handled this theme of supernatural and mystery very effectively in the stories like “Farewell to a Ghost”, “Friends and Strangers”, “Evenings at Nijanpur”, “The Dusky Horizon”, “Red Red Twilight”, “Interpoles”, “The Bride at the Moonlight”, “A Night in the Haunted House” etc.

- **An authentic presentation of the clash between spiritual world and materialistic world of science and technology.**

There is an influence of Sri Aurobindo’s vision of life on the writings of Manoj Das. He underwent a phase of crisis. He realized that the external conditions were not the sole cause of human suffering. His quest for meaning of life, for destiny of man, led him to Sri Aurobindo. He advocates importance of spiritual power which is the unique characteristics of Indian rural culture. In the world of science and technology man has made materialistic progress to provide comfort and luxury to man. Still man is not happy. But true happiness lies in recognition of spiritual power, inner satisfaction, inner transformation.

Manoj Das very effectively depicts the clash between spiritual world and materialistic world of science and technology in his stories. like “The Sage of Tarungiri and Seven Old Seekers”, “The Last I Heard of Them”, “The Tryst”, “The Shadow”, “Vengeance”.

Thus the author selected for the present research work is a significant milestone in the post-independent Indian English literature. He is one of the successful master story-tellers of India. He is recognized for his magnificent style and efficient use of words in his writings. His narrative techniques in his fiction are commendable. As he was born in a village before independence and lived through the period of transition, he has depicted authentic picture of Indian rural culture which is undergoing a phase of dreadful changes. The present research work highlights his deep anguish for the changing human values and ruination of ecology which is irreparable. In his short fiction, he expresses his deep urge for preservation of Indian rural culture.

Suggestion for further Research

The framework of the present research work may be useful to analyze the other genres of literature like novel, drama, autobiography, even poetry. Further there is a scope to study Manoj Das’s novels, children’s literature, essays, travelogue and his non-fictional work.