

BHALCHANDRA NEMADE'S FEMININE DISCOURSE: AN ANALYSIS OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN 'COCOON' AND THE 'CHANGDEV QUARTET'

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Abstract

Nemade's translated novels, 'Cocoon' and the 'Changdev Quartet' Nemade, a prolific figure in Indian literature, is known for his nativist approach and profound impact on Marathi literature. Despite the absence of prominent female protagonists in his works, this paper explores the indispensable roles and significance of female characters within Nemade's literary creations. Through textual analysis and comparison, the study examines how these female characters contribute to themes such as identity, culture, and social dynamics. In 'Cocoon' female characters occupy conventional roles in rural Maharashtra, providing emotional support and representing traditional gender norms. In contrast, the "Changdev Quartet" features complex characters like Paru, who challenges societal norms, and Rajeshwari, who embodies cultural traditions. By shedding light on these portrayals, this paper sheds insight into Nemade's nuanced perspective on women, their roles, and their impact on his narratives. It underscores the importance of understanding these characters in the context of his literary legacy. Furthermore, the paper identifies avenues for future research in this unexplored area of Nemade's works, providing a comprehensive view of the female characters in his novels.

Key Words: *Female Character, cultural traditions, literary legacy, gender norms, realism, identity, nativist approach etc.*

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Introduction:

Bhalchandra Nemade is a distinguished writer who has made significant contributions to Indian literature, particularly in the Marathi language. His impact on Marathi literature is unparalleled, and he is not only recognized as a novelist but also as a critic and poet. Nemade is a proponent of the nativist approach in literature. Nemade's view of women is profound and serious. The romantic portrayal of women in Marathi literature has been prevalent since ancient times, but such a romantic approach is absent in any of Nemade's novels. His attitude towards women is moral and respectful. "Nemade's conscientiousness and his method of evaluating a person objectively, by examining them from all angles, can also be observed in his portrayal of women's thoughts. The presentation of women's thoughts in his novels is restrained and objective. The women in his novels appear familiar and genuine, devoid of the traditional characteristics of fictional puppets." (Source: Sanap Kishor, "Bhalchandra Nemade Yanchi Kadambari: Ek Chikitsa," Pages 124-125) In 1963, he introduced a ground-breaking novel, 'Kosala,' which defied conventional norms of novel writing. This work employed unique techniques and tackled pressing themes such as alienation, realism, and existentialism, which were pertinent issues of the time. Nemade's influence extends to the realm of poetry, where he once stated that he considers himself a poet before a novelist. His remarkable work in linguistics further underscores his versatility. Bhalchandra Nemade is a multifaceted personality who not only transformed Marathi literature but also played a vital role in preserving native identity and addressing critical issues facing the post-independence generation. Bhalchandra Nemade's literary works encompass a range of profound themes. In his two novels, namely 'Cocoon,' he addresses

existentialism, alienation, identity crises, and al inequality, and employs a narrative style rooted in realism. On the other hand, his set of four novels, 'Bidhar,' 'Hool,' 'Jarila,' and 'Zool,' delve into themes like multiculturalism, cultural identity, and identity crises. The primary objective of this research paper is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the female characters featured in Bhalchandra Nemade's 'Cocoon' and the 'Changdev Quartet.' Through this analysis, we aim to elucidate the roles and significance of these female characters within the context envisioned by Nemade in his literary creations.

I have laid down the boundary that we should not go too far outside our experience. Therefore, from the beginning, I did not inculcate the idea of falsely creating female characters that I did not know and presenting different women's issues. I accept the limitations this brings" (Nemade Bhalchandra, "Tikaswayamvar" page 70)

Literature Review:

Bhalchandra Nemade's novels are studied for research by many researchers, but only limited areas are studied. Here is the great scope for the in details study of the female characters in Bhalchandra Nemade's 'Cocoon' and 'Changdev Quartet' with the perspectives of the novelist. There is further scope for the research as only English Translated novels are studied. It's essential to study female characters in Bhalchandra Nemade's Novels as all his novels are without major female characters. Though there are very few female characters in the novels of Bhalchandra Nemade, all of them are inseparable parts of the plot that help take the story ahead.

Methodology:

The textual analysis and the comparison are the research methodologies that suit the study of Female Characters in Bhalchandra Nemade's 'Cocoon' and 'Changdev Quartet'

Female Characters in 'Cocoon'

Even though it's said that the novels Bhalchandra Nemade are without a heroine the main protagonist is Pandurang Sangvikar. Few female characters are the inevitable part of the life of the protagonist. The main female

characters are Pandurang's mother, grandmother, and sisters and there is reference to some female characters.

Even though all the translated novels of Bhalchandra Nemade are without main female protagonist, the female characters are the inseparable part of the story of novel of Nemade. In the very first novel of Nemade 'Cocoon', the protagonist Pandurang Sangvikar is born and brought up in the joint family of a village with his mother, grandmother, sisters, and aunts, it created a holistic view for the women. That's the reason that he stayed away from the female characters even in Pune. When he goes to Pune for his higher education. In Pune he came in contact with some of the girls but he kept himself away from them. He alienates himself from the female characters. Alienation is one of the prominent themes of the novel and women contribute to the main themes of the novel. Though Pandurang kept himself away from female characters, he is equally affectionate towards his mother and sister. Death of his sister Mani shocked him. The death of Mani due to pandemic has great impact on Pandurang. He was ready to go against his father as he didn't take her to the doctor only because she was a girl. His mother was expecting a son at the time of her fourth daughter but as she was a girl, the mother didn't love her like other kids. She kept her away from her when she was suffering from chicken pox. Pandurang didn't like the social approach towards the girl child as it promotes gender discrimination giving more importance to the boy compared to girls. It affects the sensitive mind of Pandurang Sangvikar. The enjoyment of the family members in the wedding of his elder sister Sumi disturbs him as he remembered Mani, because she died just a few days ago.

"At this wedding, everyone in the house was dancing with joy. Even the mother. At one point, the mother laughed loudly.

While laughing with someone, I wanted to say to my mother that what about the death of Mani...?

Mother's love, Pandurang was close to his mother than his father. He feels pity for her as despite of being a lady from a well-to-do family she has to work hard at home as well as in the farm. Most often there had been typical mother-in-law and daughter-in-law rivalries between grandmother and mother. He felt great pity for his mother and all the women as they have to work hard. The life of any woman is not simple one, it's full of difficulties.

Hence, he developed the holistic approach towards the female characters in his life. Though all the female characters seem as only guest appearance in the novel but all of them are an inseparable part of the theme and plot as it enhances the plot of the story and contributes to one for the major themes of the novels.

Female Characters in “Changdev Quartet”:

Changdev Quartet has four novels Bidhar, Hool, Jarila’ and Zool’ but as it’s a sequel and has only one protagonist, we have considered it as single novel. Unlike Pandurang Sangvikar from 'Cocoon', Changdev Patil is matured and well experienced. Life of Pandurang is connected with the family and had a great impact of join family. Changdev Patil alienated himself from his family and rarely think about them.

Through there has been reference of many female characters, there are two dominant characters, Paru Savanur in Bidhar and Hool and Rajeshwari in Jarila and Zool. Changdev Patil feels sympathy for the lady who was raped on the streets.

Changdev also have holistic approach towards female characters as he never thing bad about the young ladies he came across. But Changdev also alienated himself from the female characters in his life.

When he calls Paru on his room all alone, she didn’t come which disappoints him and he decided to leave the town and settle in in new place.

Changdev Patil seems in dilemma as on one occasion he wanted the company of women. He was planning to get married with Paru Savanur and have a family life. In the same he loved the company of Rajeshwari. But at the same time when both didn’t meet the expectations, he decided to go away from them. Even though he wanted Paru to come to his room alone, he didn’t have any wrong intentions his approach to female characters in holy and pious and not lusty like other characters from the novel like Gaikwad, Boole, who has wrong intentions to the female characters.

In Changdev Quartet there has been many references of physical intercourse, as it’s an inevitable part of the life of unmarried youngsters. Nemade makes such narration but without losing the balance. He connected the physical intercourse with fertility and thus increase the value of female characters. Conclude the sensitive topic with superiority of women as she is

the mother of universe. Though there are only few female characters yet all of them are very crucial for the plot of the novel and contributes to the theme of the novel.

-Comparison of the female characters portrayal in “Changdev Quartet” with those in “Cocoon.”

In "Cocoon," these female characters are depicted within the context of rural Maharashtra, adhering to traditional roles of women in that society. They play significant but largely conventional roles as caretakers, homemakers, and providers of emotional support for the protagonist, Pandurang.

In Changdev Quartet the prominent female character Paru is a complex character who defies traditional gender roles. She is strong-willed and independent, challenging societal norms. She represents a modern, educated woman who seeks self-fulfilment and agency in her life, Rajeshwari is another significant character in “Changdev Quartet” who embodies traditional Marathi values and represents the cultural richness of the region. Unlike Paru, Rajeshwari adheres more closely to conventional gender roles, taking on responsibilities as a wife and mother.

Conclusion:

In exploring the portrayal of female characters in Bhalchandra Nemade’s novels, 'Cocoon' and the “Changdev Quartet,” we have embarked on a journey through the intricacies of his literary world. Nemade’s approach to women in his stories stands as a departure from the conventional romanticized depictions that have long permeated Marathi literature. Instead, he presents female characters with a unique and unorthodox lens, one rooted in moral respect and objectivity. Through our analysis, we’ve discovered that while Nemade’s novels might not feature central female protagonists, the women within them are far from peripheral. In 'Cocoon', they form an essential part of Pandurang Sangvikar’s life, playing roles that resonate deeply with themes of alienation and gender discrimination. In the “Changdev Quartet,” characters like Paru Savanur and Rajeshwari add complexity to the narrative, representing modernity and tradition, and influencing Changdev Patil’s journey. Comparatively, we’ve witnessed an evolution in Nemade’s portrayal of women. In “Cocoon,” female characters inhabit traditional roles, while in the “Changdev Quartet,” they embody a

spectrum of modern and traditional values, enriching the thematic depth of the novels. Throughout our exploration, we've uncovered how these female characters contribute significantly to the exploration of identity, culture, and social dynamics within Nemade's literary works. Their symbolic and thematic significance adds layers of depth to the narratives. In closing, this research illuminates the often-overlooked dimension of Bhalchandra Nemade's storytelling—the nuanced and respectful portrayal of female characters. It underscores Nemade's unique literary contributions, showcasing his ability to challenge norms and provide a more holistic representation of women in his narratives. By delving into this aspect of his work, we've gained a deeper appreciation for the intricacies and multi-dimensional nature of his storytelling, reaffirming Nemade's lasting impact on Marathi literature.

Future research on the portrayal of female characters in Bhalchandra Nemade's novels can explore several intriguing avenues to further enrich our understanding of his literary contributions. Here are some suggestions:

- Comparative Study: Compare Nemade's female characters with those of other regional writers.
- Influence of Real-Life Women: Investigate if Nemade's personal experiences influenced his character portrayals.
- Feminist Analysis: Examine his characters from feminist angles.
- Language Impact: Analyze how his language choices shape female characters.
- Cross-Cultural Comparison: Compare Nemade's characters with authors from different cultures.
- Psychoanalytical Approach: Use analysis to understand his characters' inner worlds.
- These brief research directions offer concise pathways for future studies on Nemade's female characters.

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