

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

Diary is a type of autobiographical writing even though it differs from autobiography proper. Diary is a day-to-day record of its author's life-experiences and observations of himself, the men and the world around him.¹ Diary is a documentary writing and more intimate record of events and thoughts of its writer. Men have been feeling a desire and need to keep diary for practical purposes at the same time for self expression. Naturally, it has been a long practice that travellers and men of social and political status kept diaries. In the recent times, there is greater fascination to people for maintaining diaries compared to the earlier ages. In the modern times diary has become a conscious literary form and it has become a fashion to write and publish diaries containing important daily events in the lives of ⁵ ~~statemen~~ political and social workers, ^{bureaucrat} beaurocrates as well as men of social position.

However, inspite of the popularity of the diary on the part of the writers and readers, it is seen that very marginal research work had been done so far in India on diary form and literary studies of the diaries in general and Indian political prisoners' diaries in particular. To my surprise, there



is not a single entry of doctoral dissertations in any Indian researcher's name in the bibliography published by Association of Indian Universities² nor it is listed in dissertations awarded M.Phil. in English in any University in Maharashtra including Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

With personal gradual growing interest in diary literature it was proposed by me in 2003 to carry out the research work in Indian English Diary Literature. On account of the paucity of research work done in Indian English Diary Literature, I selected my research topic i.e. *A Critical Study of Selected Political Prisoners' Diaries in Indian English Literature*. Before and after the Independence a sizable number of diaries were written in English by Indians as a direct result of English education they received from the rulers.

Some of the Indian diary writers in English are of the national and the international level but their diaries were ignored so far by the research scholars. That is why I felt every need to undertake a critical study of some of the selected Indian political prisoners' diaries. No concentrated efforts had been made before except perhaps a few critical articles here and there. A convenient selection is made for

this critical study. Thus this study confines itself to only two Indian Political prisoners' diaries viz. *Prison Days*³ (1942) by Vijaya Lakhshmi Pandit and *Prison-Diary – 1975*⁴ by Jayaprakash Narayan. It excludes the remaining Indian political prisoners' diaries.

The two authors of the aforesaid diaries were wellknown Indian politicians at the national and international level. Both were uncommon and influencing personalities holding significant positions in Indian political life. But their diaries belong to two distinct significant political phases in the country, i.e. colonial and post colonial periods. Vijaya Lakhshmi Pandit's diary belongs to the colonial period while Jay Prakash Narayan's diary belongs to the post colonial period. As such they are representative political diaries of their ages. *Prison Days* was written during the torrents of the national freedom movement under the foreign rule but *Prison Diary 1975* was written in 1975 in The Emergency declared by the self government. Both of them recorded the atrocities experienced by them at the hands of the political powers. Therefore, it is an interesting area of the comparative study of diaries written in two phases by authors belonging to two

genders. How far the gender of the writers decides difference in their sensibility as the political prisoners.

At the outset, one may feel that such study will display :

- 1) Intimate self-revelation of the diary writers' personalities.
- 2) Documentation of the contemporary social and political ethos.

It is intended here to study critically the two selected diaries on the acceptable parameters of diary as a literary form. Further, it is also intended to study the two writers' self-revelation and the light thrown on the contemporary ethos as diaries are supposed to record the social and political facts authentically. Like autobiography, the documentation in diaries is based on the first hand experience of the writers and like history it is not based on the second hand experiences or sources. So the documentation in the two diaries can be accepted as a better documentation than that is recorded in the historical books written on National Freedom Movement or on The Emergency of 1975.

Thus this will be a kind of critical generic study of the two selected diaries viz. *Prison Days* by Vijaya Lakhshmi Pandit and *Prison Days – 1975* by Jay Prakash Narayan. The



study adopts methodology of generic study i.e. applying the norms of the genre of diary to the two selected diaries; at the same time occasionally the comparative methodology will be used to compare these two diaries in handling of the genre by the two diary writers and their contents of self-revelation and documentation of the contemporary political phases. As such, this is mainly a generic study with a limited scope for comparative study also.

The present study adopts the following scheme of chapeterization.

Introduction

Chapter-I Theory of Diary

A] Origin and Development of Diary

B] Indian Diary Literature

C] Nature and Parameters of Diary

Chapter-II *Prison Days*

Chapter-III *Prison Diary – 1975*

Chapter-IV Conclusions

Introduction

References

- 1) M.H.Abrams, *A Glossory of Literary Terms*, (New York : Prism Books Pvt. Ltd., 1993) P.15.
- 2) *A Bibliography of Doctoral Dissertations* (1981-82) : Social Sciences and Humanities, New Delhi : AIU, 1985.
- 3) Vijaya Lakhshmi Pandit, *Prison Days*.
- 4) Jayaprakash Narayan, *Prison Diary-1975*, (Bombay : Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd., 1977).
