

CHAPTER - V

INDIAN WOMEN :

1. Indian Social Context:

The traditional Indian women has always been living in the suffocating atmosphere of deep physic repression, economic exploitation and the tyranny of obsolete conventions and ritual.

The evolution of the status of women in India has been a continuous process of ups and downs throughout history. Throughout classical literature on the status of women there is an almost consistent opinion among great scholars that during the age of the Vedas, a women's status was equivalent to that of a man. Women's globe of role relationship was not circumscribed by too many restrictions. At home, the mother was the mistress of the house, generally. She had her usual routine of cleaning the house, sweeping the house with cowdung, decorating the house with line powder, washing clothes cooking food, looking after children, serving food to others. First, welcoming and entertaining the guests. In Rigvedas, a daughter retained her right of inheritance and could substitute a son. Women were permitted to have separate property of their own which come to be designated in later smritis as Streedhana. Passages in the Vedas show that women had other careers open to them apart from a mere literary career. They entered fields of teaching, medicine,

business, military and administration. The wife enjoyed with her husband full religious rights and regularly participated in religious ceremonies. In fact, such ceremonies were invalid without the wife joining her husband.

The wife was always supposed to participate in religious ceremonies along with her husband. In fact, no religious rite was complete without her presence. She was called "Ardhangini" or the other half. Dandekar describes the significance of woman's participation in religious activities very aptly. "A man's religious life is considered to be essentially deficient without his wife's active participation in it----- without a wife ----- the psychological and moral personality of man remains imperfect. She is his constant companion in his religious life, preparing for him his sacred articles used in worship, accompanying him on pilgrims, present at all ceremonies---- and finally in her role as the mother, woman is regarded as divine, respected, many times more than the father and the teacher. She was called "Jaya" because one's own self is begotten in her.".¹

This indicates that a woman held a status equal to men and there were considerably less restrictions on her activities outside the home. The position of a daughter in the Hindu family during the Vedic period did not include much authoritative role. As Banerjee observes "Her socialization from childhood involved a high degree of modesty peculiar to Hindu cul-

ture." ² Her major behaviour training evolved in her tolerance, patience submission and identification of her personality with her husband. She in return received affection, consideration and regard. The Vedas include references to unmarried female like Apala and Aitreya and some of them received co-education though rare, which sometimes led to love marriage. Girls were regarded as objects of good women. Ramayana includes a detailed description of the reception of Rama after his long exile by the unmarried girls, first and later a religious bath at their hands. The grown-up daughters during the temporary absence of the parents managed household and received the guests. There were certain forms of recreation that was the privilege of only unmarried girls like "hide and seek", swimming game with a ball and "run and catch".

The daughter-in-law entered her husband's family as a stranger, because the other members had already acquired the traditions and customs of the family. The bride's major duty was to make efforts to merge her personality with that of her husband's in matters both worldly and spiritual and also to adapt herself to the traditions and sentiments of the family of which she had become a full fledged member. Her position was one of honourable subordination. She had to adjust herself to her mother-in-law, her husband's sisters and the wives of her husband's brothers. It was expected of her to show respect to and

obey all the elder members of the family. She had to help the mother-in-law in household duties such as cleaning, washing, drawing water, cooking, rearing children, tending cattle and nursing the sick and aged.

The Mahabharat declared "In truth, a householder's home even if crowded with sons, grandsons, daughter-in-laws and servants is virtually a lonely place for his life, if, there is no housewife. One's home is not the house made of brick and mortar, it is the wife who makes the home. A home without the wife is like a wilderness." ³ All this was related to the counterpart role in the husband's role system. A Sanskrit verse quoted by Altekar beautifully summarizes the ideal conduct of a housewife : "She has to be open hearted to her husband, respectful to his brother and sisters, devoted to his mother, affectionate towards his relations, considerate towards servants, smiling even to her cowives, courteous to her husband's friends and hateful to his enemies." ⁴

From about 1500 B.C. started the change in women's status due to various reasons, among which the most important was the denial of education. The role of the women conformed to the dictum laid down by Manu, the great law giver of second century that "a woman does not deserve freedom", and that her life should throughout be one of dependence on man. In this connec-

tion, Banerjee observes; "A woman should be subservient in all stages of her life..." in childhood to the father, in youth to the household and his elderly kins and to the sons when widowed". 5

The basic unit of Hindu Society is not the individual but the joint family. It is commonly agreed that the joint family along with the caste and the village forms one of the pillars of Hindu Society. Within the setting of joint family the social space of a woman's role relationships didnot exceed far beyond the kinship system. Among the traditional patriarchal Hindu families the fate of a woman, especially of the daughter-in-law, was always of subordination to all other members. With the attack of the Moghuls, seclusion of women became more rigorous as a result of the Muslim custom of 'purdah' (custom of wearing a veil outside the home) and the sense of fear arising from a lack of general security. The facilities of education which the Vedic period and the Buddhist provided vanished. Many Hindus could no longer make special arrangements for education of their daughters and thus the number of women who could read and write further became smaller. By the beginning of the British rule, female education completely disappeared.

Disowning of education produced far reaching effects on the status of women and consequently on the role of women in society. They became nothing more than chattels of men. As Abbe

Dubois remarks; "A women is made to obey at every stage of her existence. As daughter, it is to her father and mother she owes submission, as a wife, to her husband, to her father-in-law and to her mother-in-law, as widow, to her sons. At no period of her life can she consider herself her own mistress".⁶ Suttee-mindedness is an extreme form of the man-centered attitude of Hindus. The subordinate position of women remained an accepted cultural norm for the majority section of the population until the beginning of the 19th Century.

Woman's role began to change toward greater emancipation from the clutches of man's domination with the release of the principles of democracy and liberalism all over the world in the 18th Century. Consequently the role of wife-mother was affected by this new freedom. As Kuppuswamy says; " In India too, due to the efforts of a number of social reformers of the 18th Century and due to the legislations passed after independence in 1947, women were brought out of the confines of their home".⁷

A desire for social mobility is new in present times. Many parents want their children to have chances denied to them. The traditional attitude of resignation to conditions is gradually disappearing. One significant factor, that has brought about tremendous changes in the role of women is the accessibility to education and availability of increasing opportunity, enhanced by legal acts, induces the modern woman to accept an additional

role of a "supplemental earner". Teaching was one of the first professions open to women in the 19th Century. There is hardly any field today where women have not encroached upon. As Kuppuswamy remarks: "In modern world the role of woman goes much beyond the home... she is now adopting a career of her own and sharing equally with man the responsibility for the development of society in all its aspects." ⁸

The Image of 'Woman' in Anglo Indian, Indian and Indo-Anglian Fiction:

Common images of woman appear in various literatures of the world. Woman as mother and protector, woman as inspirer and cherisher, the motivating primal force Shakti protecting good and destroying evil- the chaste, suffering wife, woman as charmer or lurer are some of the facets familiar in literature. The Anglo-Indian fiction writers, Englishmen coming to India and writing about Indian life, looking at it through English eyes, mostly see the Indian woman as the charming evil type and the blonde English woman as the steady home-maker.

The image of woman in Anglo-Indian novel is complex and multifaceted. It is true that the very early, Anglo-Indian writers had not cared much to produce realistic or naturalistic fiction. These writers didnot know the languages of India well; nor did they see the Indian woman as close quarters, for there were many rigid customs that didn't allow an outsider to have

closer glimpses of the Indian woman hidden in her home of behind the purdah. The few Indian women, they came to know were either the rich, the westernised and the Christianised women or the servant-women, the ayahs and the native women taken up as mistresses. Beyond these their images were limited. This narrowness of vision which placed much of the Indian woman out of focus is a marked feature of the Anglo-Indian fiction in general. Flora Annie Steel's daughter in the preface to Indian Scene comments : "One special point should be noted. No man can know the intimate life of the Indian peoples. He cannot even enter the heart of India - the women's quarters - much less gain the confidence and affection of their inmates." ⁹ It was not possible for a man to penetrate the secluded world of the Indian women. Men were not admitted to the women's quarters.

The view about the Indian women is biased by racial and imperialistic prejudices. Equally unsatisfactory are the Indian women who seem to be there to prove the danger of mixed marriages. Apart from the didactic tone, the Indian women selected for this purpose are generally of the lowest order, lured by money, satisfying the white man's desires and bringing forth olive or Khaki coloured Children. These women are brought in to warn the (English) readers of the danger from the coloured women; for the Indian woman in Anglo-Indian novels generally

plays the part of an evil charmer. As Bhupal Singh comments: "Anglo-India Condemns mixed marriages in no uncertain terms." ¹⁰

Most of the writers did not bother to show the Indian woman in her home, there were a few significant exceptions. Meadows Taylor attempted to come out of the hill stations and clubs to understand Indian woman and her life. His aim was to fuse East and West. In this connection, Prof. G.S. Amur says: "Taylor was an idealist, and the main inspiration behind his creative work was a determination to forge new and lasting relationships, between his own people and the people of India."¹¹

In the eighteen seventies or eighties - Indian women were not educated enough to permit a comparison of the Eastern and Western cultures. But the very fact that Taylor took up the subject of the Hindu widow shows his preoccupations with the burning problem of the day. Mrs. Steel brought a variety of Indian womanhood on her canvas.

In E.M.Forster's 'A Passage to India' (1932), the women on the Indian side are drawn sketching, though within the limits they are authentic. Witness, for instance, the scene where an attempt at a breakthrough between the East and West is made: "The shorter and the taller ladies both adjusted their saris and smiled. There was a curious uncertainty about their gestures, as if they sought for a new formula which neither East nor West could provide." ¹² The Western woman is impatient,

even arrogantly feeling superior as can be seen in the comments of Mrs. Turton: "Oh, these purdah women!"¹³ Mrs. Turton, is like the woman in the English club, who thinks that: "All Indian ladies were in impenetrable purdah."¹⁴

2.1 Anglo-Indian Fiction :

Anglo-Indian Fiction was the inevitable outcome of the Indian exposure to Western culture and are forms like the novel. In the early novels, Indian as well as Indo-Anglian and Anglo-Indian, the women are too distant from reality, too crude, moralized or sentimentalized. But in the Indian languages the writers quickly turned towards reality and Anglo-Indian fiction was almost forgotten except for a few writers like Kipling. Indo-Anglian fiction, however went on giving romanticized images of women, and in general was unable to grapple with reality for quite a long time. Iyengar called it: "a 'singular offspring' and wondered whether this was legitimate or illegitimate, born when England and India had come together."¹⁵

The fact that the Indo-Anglian writers writing in an 'acquired' languages, faced the double difficulty of giving expression and transmuting the experience in English, is recognised by Dr. Meenakshi Mukherjee, who has called Indo-Anglian novel "The Twice-Born Fiction ."¹⁶ The problem became even more difficult when the writers tried to deal with the uneducated

Indian woman. The Indian woman reached to the western culture with eagerness, took up new ideas and forms, and absorbed them.

2.2 Indian Fiction :

Indian writers found Scott's historical romances suited to their purpose of obliquely expressing their patriotism, their religious and cultural views, without much political risk. But in the novels of Scott given to adventure and exploits woman was just an appendage or sub-ordinate part - a symbol of beauty, sweetness, purity, faithful love, as in the days of Chivalry that Scott recreated. As Indian writers followed his steps, they too turned to historical romance. The woman of their own times lay neglected. This was the case in the early novels with Indian fiction writers in the Indian languages also, though they came out of this stage earlier than the Indo-Anglian fiction writers did. Early novels like Padmini (1909) by S.K. Ghosh, Nur Jehan (1909) by Sir Jogendra Singh reflect the influence of Scott. Chatterjee in Bengali or Maisorcha Wagh (1890) by Hari Narayan Apte in Marathi are early examples of this trend towards historical romance. In Anand Math, for example Bankim Chandra created the symbol of the motherland and 'Vandemateram' was on the lips of all patriots throughout the freedom struggle.

But then the problems of real women could not for long be ignored, by these writers when reform was in the air. The reason for recurrence of the Hindu Widow in Indian fiction may be

observed in the changing social conditions. The Sati Custom had been abolished by law and reformers were trying to see that people followed the law. Men could remarry, but not women. The western rationalism and humanitarianism and the spirit of social reform prodded by patriotism turned the minds of the reformers and writers to the problem of the widow. The widow had appeared in some Anglo-Indian novels too. But the solution of remarriage and change of religion was obviously impracticable. Bankim Chandra highlights the problem and the suffering as well as the frustration of the Hindu widow in the context of Indian society. The demands or reality were pressing themselves on the writers. Ready-made solutions were rejected. Hari Narayan Apte's (who also turned from writing historical romance to novel with social problems) Pan Lakshat Kon Ghetu (Marathi, But Who Pays Attention) proves the point. The realistic portrayal of widow's misery in the character of Yamu opened the eyes of the Marathi readers to the fate of the widow.

The mother doesnot figure much in Anglo-Indian fiction, but she appears often in Indian as well as in Indo-Anglian fiction. In Tagore's Gora (1923) Anandmoyi's mother-love transcends caste and race when she adopts a white orphan. In many a novel the mothers influence on her children is seen as shaping, guiding and protecting them. Prem Chand's Sevasadan (1916) showed the reality of the Indian prostitute.

2.3 Indo-Anglian Fiction :

The same movement towards realism shows up in Indo-Anglian Fiction. With R.K.Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Kamala Markandaya etc., who turned their attention to the realistic problems of the poor people, as well as the treatment of the woman.

The typical woman appears in R.K.Narayan's novels. Narayan's novels are straightforward realistic pictures undisturbed by fantasy. His early book The Dark Room ends tragically with no regard to poetic justice, so dear to the novelists. Savitri whose husband Ramani was following another attractive lady leaves her home, tries to commit suicide and at last returns to look after her children while Ramani follows his usual amorous pursuits. In short, we find that in R. K. Narayan's typical novels, the woman is feeble and religious mindedness.

9 The woman's in R.K.Narayan's novels are typically Indian. 'Sushila in The English Teacher and Savitri in The Dark Room are drawn with the depth and subtlety that Narayan shows in the portrayal of his heroes. But is Rosie in The Guide, who is Guide unlike the meek and submissive sushila and Savitri, typical of Indian womanhood ? She is more modern than the others, she belongs to a class of temple dancers but marries out of her cast and class. She gets no sympathy from her husband and at the height of her revolve against him. Dancing is the be-all and

end-all of her existence. She adopts when Raju is arrested for forgery. She tells him : "I felt all along you were not doing right things. This is karma. What can we do?" Through this sentence we may point that Narayan presents modern, strong-minded woman in some of his novels.

Raja Rao shows his affirmation of the principle of womanhood in the Indian women characters in his novels. In his delineation of Little Mother, Saroja and Savitri, Raja Rao uses the traditional conception of Indian womanhood in varying degrees. Little mother with her devotion to the family, her husband, her husband's first three children and her own son follows a definite philosophy of life that is bound up with the duties of a woman to her family. Saroja is Ramaswamy's sister. While describing her as a girl that has come of age Raja Rao sees in her the embodiment of Indian womanhood. Savitri in her womanhood is designed as a contrast to Madeline. She like Saroja sacrifices her individual interests to the impersonal principle of marriage. Ramaswamy says : "I felt she was so truly indifferent, so completely resigned to her fate - like all Hindu women - that for her, life was like a bullock-cart wheel; it was round and so it had to move on right after night and day after day. Savitri too, though much more modern than Saroja and Little mother, has a strong sense of tradition, very much like them. Savitri even mythicize him as Krishna, the divine lover, and herself as

Radha, the beloved of Krishna. And she knows her lord her Krishna from 'janam to janam :

Raja Rao's portrayal of Indian woman in the novel is in marked contrast to his handling of their European Counter-parts. This is must evident in his delineation of Madeleine. Like the other Europeans she clings to her stock ideas about India and refuses to accompany Ramaswamy to India when opportunities arise. Her Buddhism only Strengthens her traditional belief in a subject-object dichotomy.

Kamala Markandaya; a noted woman novelist, deals the problems of women in he major novels. In this connection, M.K.Naik observes: " Depiction of the social scene has always been the strong suit of women novelists."¹⁷ As H.M.Williams, remarks that : "--like Anad, she is in the business of protest."¹⁸

The woman, in a traditional Indian family is always subordinate to the man, while the sons are considered as assets, the daughters are considered as a burden on the family. When the first born child was a daughter, Rukmini was very disappointed." For what woman wants a girl for her first-born ?" Rukmini thought that it was a punishment for her past sins. The life of a woman, who has no children at all, is more worse. Ira's husband deserts her because she is barren. Most of the woman characters in the novel, Nectar In A sieve are simple, ignorant and

traditional. Markandaya has portrayed Rukmini's character in Nectar In A Sieve very vividly and has bestowed her with all the treasures like knowledge, strength understanding, care & love. Kamala markandaya portrays, women have a habit of secretly keeping away money and foodgrains for use in emergency in the character of Rukmini. Markandaya portrays the fate of the prostitutes very realistically : But the man who finds a woman in the street, raises an eyebrow and snaps his Ringers so that she follows him, throws a few coins that he may possess her ----- what cares such a man for the woman who is his for a brief moment ?" (157-158). The novel, Nectar In A sieve ends with a fresh beginning of struggle for existence by Rukmini. Markandaya highlights on the image of the traditional Indian woman who submits to the will of her parents before marriage and later to the will of her husband after marriage.

As in Nectar In A Sieve, in the another novel 'A Hand of Rice, Markandaya highlights (on) the superiority of men and the subordination of women to them.

Kamala Markandaya is not a theorist to dwell upon caste and class problems only.. The woman in her fictional world is on a quest for autonomy. The woman is constantly bracketed with the poorest of the poor in her earlier novels namely Nectar in sieve and A Handful of Rice. Rukmini in Nectar in sieve, exemplifies the large mass of underprivileged women in rural

India. Through Rukmini the author indicates a harsh and unjust society which restricts and exploits woman hood. In Rukmini's story of one rural family's struggle against adversing and search for self respect and autonomy is mirrored the collective history of the rural women of India. Kamala Markandaya neatly women the prejudice against the woman into the fabric of daily life. In Rukmini and Nalini we find the degradations that a woman is subject, to mainly because of economic illls. Kamala Markandaya shows us, money alone is not sufficient to ensure the happiness, the well begin, of the women concerned. The women, Premala, Mira and Roshan in some Inner funny, prove Kamala Markandaya's theory that the women's suffering's stem not because of her but inherent imbalances in the social order. Roshan Symbolizes modern progressive womanhood, but Premala stands for the traditional concept of the Indian woman.

Kamala Markandaya's commitment to social issues makes her write. She writes as a woman who has attained a sexual equality which comes only when one is not obsessed by one's own sex. Through her fiction she gives fresh insights into the ambivalence of change in women and men, in human nature. The women in her earlier novels fights a ceaseless battle against poverty. Rukmini in the village and Nalini in the city can face all their problems to the lack of money.

In A Handful of Rice, Ravi's father thinks a man needs sons. In the Indian social context, a female child is considered to be a financial burden.

Kamala Markandaya points a woman character with all the colours of ideal and traditional Indian womanhood. Her women characters tolerate all sufferings without any protest. They are ever ready to forgive their erring husbands. Though they know the weaknesses of their husbands they are not ready to admit them openly but in turn they safeguard the interests of their husbands. Markandaya gives many aspects of the 'Sati Savitri' image of the Hindu woman. She portrays Sarojini, in A Silence of Desire, like any other traditional Hindu woman, worships tulasi as God.

Ruth Pravar Jhabvala, is a European who has married an Indian and is now settled in India. She too is prolific as a novelist, more prolific than Kamala Markandaya. In her first novel To Whom she will (1955) she has been writing about India, on Indian themes and settings. Her next novel, Nature of passion (1956), is the story of a family in society which is involved in a state of change from an orthodox to a modern mode of living. It is the family of Lala Narayan Dass Verma. Lalaji's wife is orthodox and she despise many of the new traits of modern civilization, she is also materialistic at heart. As V.S.Shahane observes "There is a genuine endeavour to expose the material

reality, the pretentiousness, the hollowness of a money. Civilisation, the emotional poverty of an affluent society."¹⁹ In her another novel Get Ready for the Battle, we find the character, Saira, who is a wife of Gulzarilal, who is neglected by her husband as well as by others. But she, with her idealism of ancient India as well as of Gandhi, has "reached a stage which is far beyond the bounds of worldiness and shackles of self interest. She is almost a saint who treats the pleasures and pains of this world alike and who is non-attached to the ephemeral gains or losses of this earthly paradise of the poor and the downtrodden to fight for their rights."²⁰

Anita Desai, a woman in her typical novels. Cry, the peacock (1963) is a portrait of a feminine mind, very sensitive and introspective traits intensified by her in his mental make-up. Maya, the central figure, reacts very sharply to varied experiences and consequently finds herself always impatient, restive. Her husband Gautama, has no sympathy for her in her suffering, which to him is imaginary and futile. This gives Maya a deep sense of loneliness and despair - the two maladies so typical of the modern man. Anita Desai's second novel, Voices in the City (1965), is also a novel of the same category. In this novel ~~Anita Desai~~ ^{She} has shown her concern for the society of the time. The character Monisha, in the superficial, tradition bound middle-class joint family of her husband in Calcutta, felling unhappy and suffocated there, and ultimately committing suicide.

Monisha's portrait has been drawn well, perhaps because of the ease with which Anita Desai could project herself into a woman character's mind. Her next novel, Where Shall We Go This Summer, is a telling novel about the loneliness of a woman who is well off materially but is unhappy in her domestic life where neither the husband nor even her own children, once they grow up, care for her as an individual. We see here the silent revolt of the soul of a woman. Sita, middle-aged wife of a wealthy industrialist, mother of four children and expecting the fifty, goes back to her father's house in an idyllic island of Bombay in her revolt against that she can neither be in that idyllic atmosphere for long, nor can she be ever happy away from her husband and children even though, they do not try to understand her. And she returns to her husband's house. The theme is certainly a significant one from the point of view of the plight of society where in spite of all the rights and privileges granted to women by the constitution, they still have little chance to realise themselves.

Most human societies are male-dominated and so woman is grudgingly given a secondary status, that is when she is not positively subjected to in human tyranny. It is said that "man is cruelty to woman."²¹ This is particularly true in our country in spite of the fact that our constitution provides equal rights to men and women.

The woman in M.R. Anand's work is in an important sense at the heart of its thematics since she becomes the focus of his predominant concerns such as deprivation, dis^possession, debasement, discrimination and exploitation which have dehumanised if not depersonalised man himself. In several novels of his, whether woman occupies the centre of the stage or not, her abject condition serves as a metaphor for suppression, sacrifice, enslavement and servility which inform the dramatic action.

The views Anand advocates in his novels were advanced for many men or women in 1947. He speaks out for economic independence of women as a means by which "the institution of marriage might become more honest". In ^{his} Anand's novels, ^{Anand} he shows how motherhood bestows a peculiar dignity on woman and he pays a glorious tribute to the matchless as in romantic conversion. Though woman is suppressed in India, Anand is aware of her dormant capacities which are seen in some of his women characters.

3. Mulk Raj Anand :

3.1 Untouchable :

In M.R. Anand's best known novel Untouchable we find that Anand's main concern is with the suffering of an untouchable boy growing into manhood in an orthodox and caste-ridden

society, but he provides valuable insight into the lives of girls as well. As K.R.S. Iyenagar remarks : "It was Anand's aim to stray lower still than even Sarat and Prem Chand."¹² In this novel Bakha, Sohini are honest, hard-working and graceful. Though Bakha is at the core of the novel and Shohini is viewed from the outside, she appears as meek, patient and courageous even more than her brother and she has a composed bearing in the midst of squalor and her father's carping. She has to suffer insults from morning till night. She listens silently to her father's carping at home as she lights the fire, sweeps, makes tea and cleans the hut.

One day when Sohini went to fetch the water, at the well Gulabo, the washer woman, the mother of Ram Chavan, her brother's friend, hated the very sight of her innocent, honest face, Gulabo said : "Go back home. There is no one to give you water here? There are so many of us ahead of you."²³ When Gulabo taunts her, abuses her, Sohini said 'please don't abuse me, I haven't said anything to you. At that time Gulabo insults her and insisted : "You annoy me with your silence. Eater of dung and drinker of urine! Bitch of a sweeper woman? I will show you how to insult one old enough to be your mother."²⁴

When Sohini goes to sweep the temple courtyard, a Priest molests her. But at her denial he starts shouting 'polluted, 'polluted' and soon several high-caste people gather there.

Bakha, who comes to her rescue is filled with anger. Tara Ali

Baig says : "Girls were trained from babyhood --- ."25

Sohini; is working woman from the lower class; that's why she suffered always in insults and taunts. This priest is no other than the one who had invited Shohini to clean his house. He has rushed to the temple to give an impression to his brethren that the sweeper girl had touched him and defiled him as she went to his house to clean it. The father asks him to tolerate all those passively for their own safety Bakha's father said : "They are our superiors --- ."26

M.R.Anand and R.K.Narayan also puts a boy at the centre and the girls are relegated to a secondary position. 'New education which was instrumental in bringing significant changes in the middle class life style. This change is to be observed slightly in the later novels of M.R.Anand. Sohini in Untouchable is meek but Gouri, in The Old Woman and the Cow show some spart of life. In his later novels there are some moments of joy in the girls lives but these are extinguished by poverty or orthodoxy or disharmony on the part of the elders making them subjects of unrelieved suffering. The middle-class educated girl caught up in the flux of new and old values becomes the staple figure in Indo Anglian novels. As Dorothy observers : "It would be worthwhile, I believe to make a study of the --- ."27

The early novels of Mulk Raj Anand amply illustrate the traditional image of the Pativrata in the silently suffering sacrificial role. Their courage lies in meek or at times cheerful way of facing poverty or calamity. In *Coolie Lakshmi*, the wife of Hari, a Coolie lives in sub human surroundings but she stands by her husband in the face of extreme poverty and hardship without questioning her lot. M.R. Anand says : "--- And whether she was still too innocent --- enhanced by the little gold point ---."28

It is a fact that M.R. Anand also puts a boy at the centre. But the concept of heroine is absent from Anand's novels. The Old Woman and Cow is the singular novel of Anand which figures a heroine. In *Untouchable* Sohini is only one female character. In *Coolie*, Mrs. Mainwaring, Parvati, Bibi Uttam Kaur etc. in the plot Mrs. Mainwaring, in *Coolie* an Anglo Indian lady, is abnormally conscious of her dusky hue and is obsessed with the longign to become pakka English. She flirts with the servant boy Munoo too. She wonders : "Why didn't the world understand --- ."29

Anand presents both devoted wives, docile as well as revolutionary women. He says : "The essence of the emergent women --- ."30

3.3 The Old Woman and The Cow

But in the later novel, *The old woman and the Cow* Anand shows the Ibsen's *Nora* in applying it to the Indian peasants wife, a wife who consciously rebels against the Sita-image, tire to free and live an idenpendent life.

The so called responsible men cover up their weaknesses and dare to judge the morality of women. Laxmi of *The old woman and the cow* rends the hypocrisy of the selfish men with her frank speech : "What do you know of the desire that consumes a woman ---." ³⁰

The novel opens with the elaborate description of Gouri's marriage ceremony. Gouri's entire life is a sad tale of suffering. She suffers under several oppressive forces. The crumpled atmosphere of the joint family does not make room for the free love between her and her husband. Kesari refuses to loose her hold on Panchi and continues to give Gouri the ill-treatment of the traditional mother-in-law. When Panchi, the robust young man of Chota piplan gauops to piplan kalan with all enthusiasm to 'our' Gouri, he said : "--- there was the prospect of the prize --- ." ³² Gouri's mother-in-law always dislikes her. She irriates to Panchi : "Control her if you can --- ." ³³

Later when the village is affected by drought, he believes that Gouri, has brought it to his door alone. Her mother-in-law

Kesara in insinuates that the draught was due to Gouries evil influence and tries to draw Gouri's husband away from her, when Gouri says to her husband about the seperation her mother-in-law abuses her : "Eater of her masters--- ."34

Gouri becomes furious and returns to her mother's house. In this connection, Riemenschneider observes : "All that she aspires for is ---."35

In the early days of her marriage gouri had quickly come to know her husband and was convinced that if she would only be patient and humble she would win Panchi away from his aunt : " Gouri, who believed in the worship of her lord"36 When Gouri returns to her mothers house there, her uncle sells her to a lecherous Sahukar at Hoshiarpur, whose name is Seth Jai Ram Das, in order to keep her land and her Cow. As Anand later said Gouri is betrayed by her mother, who "sells her daughter ---."37 Even under these circumstances though, Gouri maintains her integrity, first holding firm against the advances of the banker and then refusing to yield even to the violent demands of major Batra, a doctor in Colonel Mahindra's hospital where Gouri had become a nurse following her recovery from an illness. Through her strength of character, "the spirited girl that was Gouri, behind the outer facade of her gentleness had herself run away, "attracted the attention of Dr. Mahindra. Women there cannot feed their babies because they have not eaten for days, and have no milk in their breasts."38

The Old beliefs in Dharma and in the Priests, must give way. Mahindra says, "We must end the cycle of poverty ---."39 Gouri wanted desperately to be with Panchi again, and when the two are reunited, her husband is both charmed and bewildered. Her husband, Panchi became aware of the change that had come over her, during the time that she had been away : "No longer was she ---."40

Gouri is no longer the old meek creature to accept this sort of treatment. Her reaction is symbolic of modern woman "Acha I am a curse on you, I will go away ---."41 She is no longer the dumb cow that she was. She is capable of talking with reason : "We (Panchi is not foolish ---."42

As she leaves her husband's house, Muluk Raj Anand says that : "Her face shone from the pressure of her stricken heart, to that of a woman --- with a will of her own."43 In this connection. D.Reimenschneider remarks : "Gauri is moreover, a believable character, not a revolutionary woman ."44

The novel has a structure of seven chapters, except that the fifth one is rather light. The first chapter ends with Gouri leaving for her husband's place' in maider meditation, fanly free ---". At the end of the second chapter the rejected Gauri sets out to her mother's house in a helpless condition. At the end of the third chapter we find the defeated Gouri being taken on a house to seth jai Ram Das's house. The fourth chapter

comes to a close with the break up of the Hoshirapur hospital. Miss Clara young Leaves the place and Gouri awaits her turn. The sixth Chapter ends with Gouri's travel with laxmi and Adam sing to be reentered to her husband. The last chapter ends with Gauri's bold walk out with renewed hope. As M.K.Naik says : "The impact of modernity --- ."45 But Balaram Gupta observes : "The salvation rests not in passive obedience --- ."46

3.4 The Big Heart :

M.R.Anand has stressed the pitiable condition of the woman in his next novel 'The Big Heart'. It is true that Anand presents fewer women than men in his novels Janaki in the Big Heart was a widow, then Ananta's mistress. After the death of her elderly husband, the society expects her to be dead to all impulses and live only to worship the memory of him. It is said: "Her life would have remained a series of insults ---."47 Anata gives her a clear knowledge of famine, war and other kinds of human suffering. Later it is janki who urges him on the practical work - "there is no time to lose if these men are to be saved however unworthy they are."48

At the beginning of the novel we see Janki rooted to the Nawaribed as a T.B. patient almost on the verge of death. She described as wilting like a pale, white motiq flower the emaciated body' withering away day by day. But this illness doesnot stop her spirit. Janki quotes Ananta's pet phrase in a

mock heroic way "There is no talk of money ---."49 and teases him as a machine man.

When Ananta lives honourably with her, his devotion wins him notoriety instead of appreciation. As Janki had the audacity to live with Ananta as his mistress, the same vicious men who had mocked Ananta's relationship shamelessly prowl around her hoping that they could all share her. She cries pathetically-"He is dead --- Oh, he was such a noble ---."50

Though Janki is a widow and Ananta's keep, she is a nobler stuff. After Ananta's death, she finds the male dominated world taunting her. She cries out : "No one knows ---."51 Janaki is saved only because the kind man in the novel, the poet who advises her to help her down-trodden sisters in the temple and takes her to them, comes in time. But Janki murmurs : "Now is one to control one's kismet ---."52

Janki is impressed by the spiritual guide and mentor' Puran Singh's talk. She was calm and of a loving nature. K.N.Sinha rightly comments : "Her frailty has beneath it a reservoir of strength."53 After Ananta's death the poet infuses enthusiasm and courage into her : "What a great thing it would be --- ."54 The enormity of the wrongs she has suffered does not bow her down. As Krishna Rao remarks : "On the contrary, she emerges as a New Woman ---."55

M.R.Anand combines reality with the ideal he has in mind for a downtrodden woman. In Ananda's novels, woman is the victim of economic and oppressive forces. Because women did occupy a subordinate position in the society and the family.

3.5 Other Works :

Anand's another short story Boots (The Tractor and the Corn Goddess) is also successful story in which Anand describes the pathetic situation of a poor, helpless woman, caught in the grips of three hard hearted persons a money lender, a doctor and a middle woman all devoid of mercy.

Some of Anand's best stories have woman as their theme. Anand's vigorous style, his power of observation, and his ability to identify himself completely with his protagonists all these are revealed in Anand's next short story Birth (From The Tractor and the Corn Goddess) a touching and powerful story. It glorifies a pleasant woman, her courage and spirit of endurance. Anand present his powerful depiction of the feelings of a woman at the moment of giving birth to a child.

Anand's next short story on the Border (From The Barber's Trade Union and other stories) is an equally powerful story in which Anand gives a moving description of the poignant feelings of a mother who is faced with an accident from which

she struggles hard but fails to save her child. Faced with the abrupt situation of the violent fire caused by British bombardment, her sole thought is her child, and she tries to rescue it heroically, and single handed.

Lullaby, is another great story of Anand, with woman as its theme. Anand here describes a very poignant situation. Phalini, working in a jute factory, intones a lullaby to quieten her little, whining child. But a factory is no place for such soft things as songs and lullabies, and the machines keep up their shrill, monotonous roar. A moment later - The child's hand is hard and rigid, lying on the side. He is still. He is dead! The mother bursts forth into piteous cries. But the roaring machines roar on as if nothing has happened.

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