

## **The Women Empowerment: English Folk Literature**

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Prof Hari Mohan Jha is widely recognised as one of the most well known and reputed author of Maithili Literature in modern era. He was born on 18<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1908 in a remote Village- Kumar Bajitpur, Distt.-Vaishali, Bihar. His Father Pt. Janardan Jha “Janseedan” was an illustrious Maithili as well as Hindi author. He had his M. A. in Philosophy with gold medal. A Prof. in Patna University, Prof Jha has written many well known books including- Kanyadan and Dwiragman (Novels), Pranamy Devta, Rangshala, Charchari and Ekadashi (short story collections), Khattar Kakak Tarang (satire), Babak Sanskar (allegory), Jeevan Yatra (autobiography), and Hari Mohan Jha’s Rachnawali ( collection of poems). In 1999, A collection of short stories named Beechhal Katha compiled by Shri Raj Mohan Jha and Shri Subhash Chandra Yadav was published which was taken from his old collections along with a few unpublished till the date. In 1985, He was awarded with Sahitya Akademi award posthumously for his autobiography “Jeevan Yatra.”

He is credited with shaping the modern Maithili Prose in the same way as Vidyapati shaped the Maithili poetry in ancient times. He was gifted with a writing style full of mockery and satire to mock and expose the follies, frivolities, pomposity, superstitions and religious stereotypes. He has been hailed as a monarch of wit and comedy that has no match even in the world literature. In his foreword to Pranamy Devta (stories) by Prof. Hari Mohan Jha, Shri Ganganand Singh elucidates the wit and comedy inherent in his works-

*“If the comedy in the stories causes flatulence by laughter to the readers, I will request the publisher to provide sachets of digestive along with the book. At least the more paragraph they read the more packet they will need.”(Translated from Maithili)*

Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanswami better known as R. K. Narayan and born on 10 Oct. 1906 in Madras, India was a noted south Indian author credited with writing a dozen Novels and numerous short stories. He was a leading author of early Indian Literature in English accompanying Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. He got Sahitya Akademi award for his Magnum Opus The Guide (Novel) in 1951, and the same was adapted into a film winning Filmfare award for the best film. In a career spanning sixty years, Narayan received many other awards and honours including The AC Benson Medal from the Royal Society of Literature, the Padma Vibhushan, India’s second highest civilian awards. He was also nominated to The Rajya Sabha. His works are often compared with those of William Faulkner who created Yoknapatawpha, a fictional town, like his Malgudi and in the same way explored with humour and compassion, the energy of ordinary life. Narayan’s short stories are also compared with those of Guy De Maupassant due to his ability to compress narrative.

### **I. WOMEN IN THE WORKS OF PROF. HARI MOHAN JHA**

A multi-dimensional and versatile genius in Maithili Literature, Prof Hari Mohan jha has a significant place in his literary oeuvre for women. To him, the predicament of our society has a lot to do with the illiteracy and the marginalised state of our women. It is no secret now that his novels ‘Kanyadaan’ and ‘Dwiraagman’ have proven to be a prime motivator in Mithila region in terms of women education and awareness. The way he has delineated women characters in his works, he is remembered as a messenger of women empowerment and upliftment.

In his prelude to the selected works of Prof Hari Mohan Jha, Raj Mohan Jha writes, *“It is a matter worth noticeable in his works that a majority of his men characters are either a dunce or a simpleton and a target of his satire or mockery, like- Bhimendra Nath, Sahdeo, Madhukant Jha, Martandnath, Adityanath, Chulhai Jha, Maujelaal Jha, Jharkhandinath, Batukji, Alopınath, Musaii Mama, Naurangilaal etc. Whereas almost all his women characters- Badka Gaam Wali, Saraswati, Kamini, Manjula Devi, Karnpur Wali, Vimla Devi, Tittir Dai, Chanchala Devi and so on are epitomes of cultured, radiant and quick-witted women. Even in any of his stories, the husband may be a simpleton but the wife has been depicted to be intelligent and accomplished. (Translated from Maithili)*

Prof. Hari Mohan Jha has not only shown the predicament of women in our society, but also some glimpses of hope and strength that is coming out of it. He has fragile and weak as well as strong, defiant and rebellious women in his works. In his “Kanyak Jeevan” Two stages of a Mithila woman’s life have been depicted; One of childhood and the other after fourteen years. He shows quite realistically how a Mithila woman

has to be bound with certain rules and stereotypes of society. How the society of the time was shackled with prejudice and negligence towards a girl child, reliques of which still persist and are relevant even today. While the boys were allowed to study or do whatever they liked after a certain stage of his life, on the contrary, the girls were not allowed to do the same. Through Tittir Dai, the protagonist of the story, the author has successfully revealed the crisis that the women of this region have been facing. The story contains the pathos that is rare in literature. The story is undoubtedly one of the greatest in terms of expressing crisis of women. Maryadak Bhang, Gramsevika and Graduate Putohu glorify the empowerment and awakening of women. There is no justification by the author himself. The scenes in the stories themselves speak out and compare and contrast oriental and occidental values.

### **WOMEN IN THE WORKS OF R K NARAYAN**

Narayan's characters are predominantly men; women has secondary place in his works. When once asked by Onlooker in an interview regarding the same, he rectified by saying, "*I have no Heroes, only non-Heroes and of course no heroines.*" This is because Narayan's women are mostly typical south Indian women completely determined, self controlled and tolerant. Their life is controlled by set of rules and regulations and they are basically clear-headed, in the small town world of his novels and short stories. Narayan's women characters may broadly be categorized in two types; one in which we find them typical rural Indian women a shadow of their husband and the identity of whom are inextricably linked with their husband and his family. She is not recognised by her name but by the name of her husband or her native village or her children; those women who are purely traditional and deep-rooted in Hindu culture.

Chandran's mother in *The Bachelor of Arts*, Savitri and Janamma in *The Dark Room*, Srinivas's wife and Sampath's wife in *Mr. Sampath*, Margayya's wife in *The Financial Expert*, Raju's mother in *The Guide*, Nataraj's wife in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, Jagan's wife in *The Vendor of Sweets*, Sriram's Granny in *Waiting for the Mahatma*, the ascetic's wife in *A Tiger for Malgudi*, Raman's old aunt and the Bank Accountant's wife in *The Painter of Signs*, Nagaraj's wife Sita and his mother in *The World of Nagaraj*, Grandmother in *Grandmother's Tale* are all submissive, acquiescent, and conservative yet devoted and loyal women in his works. The powerful and realistic portrait of middle class indian women chasing her husband in all his needs and serving like yes-man throughout his life has been made. And interestingly they do not have any worry about their life, no complaints. They are the embodiments of patience and determination.

The other part of Narayan's women characters are Shanta Bai of *The Dark Room*, Shanti of *Mr. Sampath*, Bharti of *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Rosie of *The Guide*, Rangi of *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, Grace of *The Vendor of Sweets*, Daisy of *The Painter of Signs*, Roja of the *Talkative Man*. This class of the female characters is also present in almost all the novels of Narayan. This class of women are in fact rebellious in character. They just don't want to remain stuck in so called institutional and established norms. They are enamoured with the modern progress and they desire to go hand in hand. They have different attributes as compared to the conventional women of R K Narayan. Thus, through this, Narayan has tried to show us the two sides of the same coin. Also we get an impeccable idea of the historical traits of women of the time.

R. K. Narayan's heroine Rosie in his novel *The Guide* has many likings with British Literature. One of them is Elizabeth Bennet of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. Like Bennet, She, too, is concerned with raising her social status and thus marries Marco out of her inclination to shift to upper class of the society. She herself belongs to a lower caste and marries Marco not out of live but out of his position. Rosie seems to struggle with the situations that a majority of Indian women cope within their day to day life. She is a typical Indian woman in the sense that she remains in love and loyalty to her husband despite his lackadaisical and indifferent attitude towards her and also grateful to him for marrying a woman who belongs to a family of dancers devoted to temples.

## **II. CONCLUSION**

After analyzing all the aspects of depiction of women characters in the works of both of R K Narayan and Prof. Hari Mohan Jha, One thing is noticeable particularly and that is that both of them having born in the same decade and era R K Narayan in 1906, and Prof Hari Mohan Jha in 1908, have almost similar contemplation when the question of women comes. Both of them has not only successfully shown their sufferings and calamities along with the thinking of male-dominated society's partiality towards them but also proved themselves successful in bringing out some of the heroines, some of the drops of water from the desert.

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