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CULTURAL CONFLICT IN JAI NIMBKAR'S *COME RAIN*



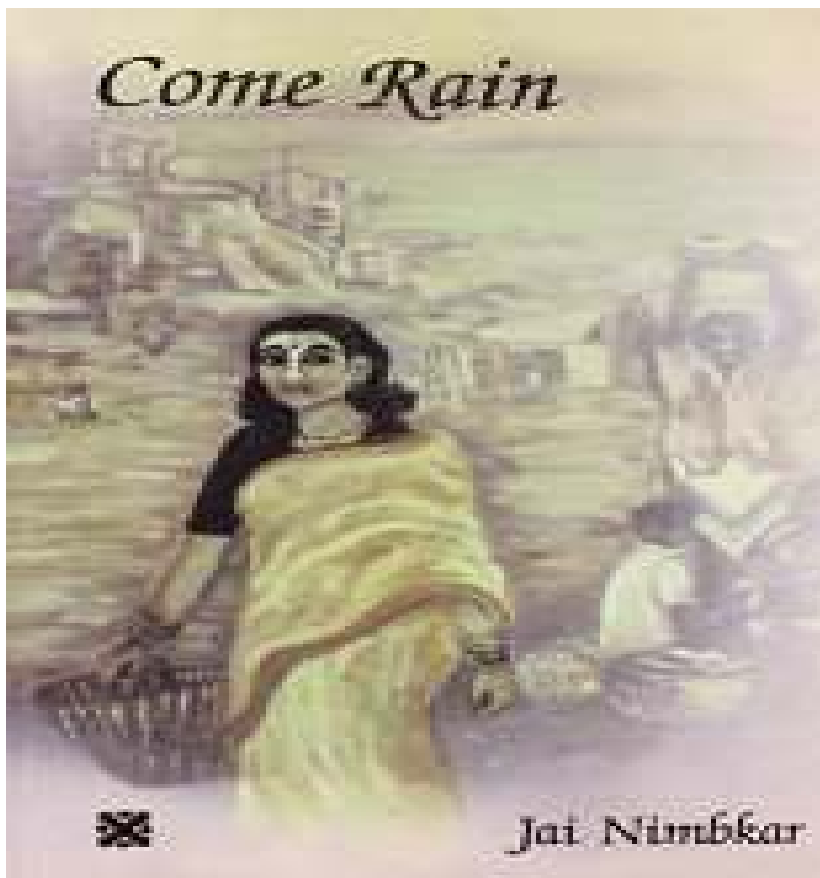
Anis K. Khatib
Research Scholar, Solapur University, Solapur.

Short Profile

Anis K. Khatib is a Research Scholar at Solapur University, Solapur. He has completed B.A., M.A., B.Ed., Ph.D.

Co-Author Details :

T. N. Kolekar
Dept. of English, D.B.F.Arts & Science College, Solapur.



ABSTRACT:

Jai Nimbkar's *Come Rain* is the novel of the American and Indian Ways of life in which the heroine, Ann comes to live in India after her marriage with an Indian boy, Ravi. So, the delineation of the diverse ways sometime creates the problem to the protagonist in a different cultural background. The present paper focuses on the culture of the two nations as well as the different social beliefs, behavioral pattern and the social relationship. It also studies the multi-coloured customs, languages, food, rituals of the two countries which create the problems to the protagonist of the novel to maintain the good and sound relationship.

KEYWORDS

Indian and American ways of life, Culture, Belief, Social Relationship, Behavioral Pattern, Language, Customs etc.

INTRODUCTION

Jai Nimbkar, a leading Indian novelist in English as well as Marathi language, is well-known for her collection of short-stories and her novels. Her first collection of short-stories is *The Lotus Leaves and Other Stories* (1971) and her novels are *Temporary Answers* (1974), *Joint Venture* (1988) and *Come Rain* (1993). Like her elder sister, Gauri Deshpande, she presents the reality which she experienced or seen in a society. Her present novel *Come Rain* speaks about the two nations namely, India and America. It describes the life where an Indian boy, Ravi goes to America for the higher education; he studies there and gets married with an American girl, Ann. By the time, both come to live in India. Primarily, it has become a struggle of the heroine, Ann to live her life in or against of her cultural background.

CULTURE:

The word *culture* has multiple meanings in a sense it occurs in the situation it belongs. It can be values, beliefs, social customs, rituals, way of the lives, behavioral patterns, the language, religion, ethnicity, or nationality, the socio-economic characteristics into social classes, etc of the region, society, and the part of the state or the nation. In a very general way, the culture may be defined as socially inherited, shared, and learned ways of living possessed by persons by virtue of their membership in social groups. The well-known German Sociologist Max Weber, "*Culture provides meaning and importance to our lives in an otherwise meaningless universe.*" It can also be the situation in which people behave according to the unwritten laws of the region in which they come.

The Oxford Online Dictionary defines the term as "*a situation in which people, groups or countries are involved in a serious disagreement or agreement.*" The similar definition has made by Toomey. She defines it as "*a learned meaning system that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms and symbols that are passed on from one generation to the next and are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a community.*" (p.10) Conflict refers the kind of friction, disagreement, or discord arises in a group when the beliefs, customs, values, norms or the action of an individual are done by unacceptable way to the culture around him/her. In India, socio-economic-cultural-religious, patriarchal, feudal and spiritual factors have major influences on the work ethics and attitudes towards conflict at work place.

The Term 'Cultural Conflict':

In a very broader sense, the term can be defined when different cultural values, belief, customs clash; it creates a conflict called Cultural Conflict. The term has been explained by the well-known writers. Jonathan H. Turner defines it by saying that - "*Differences in Cultural Values and beliefs that place people at odds with one another.*" When the person lives in a diverse cultural background and sticks to his own behavioral pattern, this becomes conflict in a new condition or the culture. The person's behavior might not be acceptable to the new environment. According to Alexander Grew, *this conflict as one that occurs when people's expectations of a certain behavior coming from their cultural backgrounds are not met, as others have different cultural backgrounds and different expectations.*

Different beliefs, behavioral patterns, backgrounds and expectations create the clashes or the conflicts. Samuel P. Huntington in 'The Clash of Civilization' proposes that *people's cultural and religious identities will be the primary source of conflict in the post-cold war world.* The influence of any culture becomes huge and it affects the name, frame, and perhaps it attempts to tame the conflicts. The conflict occurs among individuals or the social groups that actually separate the cultural boundaries are called

Cultural Conflict.

Cultural Conflict in the Novel:

Her famous novel *Come Rain*, published in 1993, is an account of the Indian and the American way of life. She has made the realistic picture of an Indian and American life, their similarity and the differences. The novel also contains numerous characters in which it is with the intention to show the diverse aspects of American and Indian life style, sometimes problems and the adverse situations. Ravi and Ann, the protagonists of the novel, belong to the two different nations respectively; India and the United States combined after the marriage and lived in India. Against the wishes or the norms of an orthodox Indian family, Ravi marries with a foreign girl and comes to live in India. Ravi and Ann marry against the convention of the social system of marriage in which Ravi and his Gogte family belongs. So it can be the study of the differences in Indian life style as compared to the American way of the life.

Ravi belongs to the Gogte family which is typical conservative, orthodox and holder of the traditional rituals and the customs. The family is typical Maharashtrian where there is a code of conduct to the behavioral pattern of living. There are various languages and castes and sub-castes in India. The family does not accept to marry their son or daughter from another caste. It has a patriarchal system. Every family lives in India according to unwritten social norms. The prestige and pride of the family have the prime importance.

Ann, the heroine of the novel, belongs from America. There are various references of the American way of the life. She lived a very frank over there. She had numerous friends. The food and the language she speaks are different from the Indian languages. Her behavior is very frank. She looks to be unconventional/ modern. She even makes many friends in India instead of her marriage with an Indian boy, Ravi. *Initially, Ann was not accepted as a daughter-in-law of the Gogte family in India. The family treated her to be a foreigner or an outsider.*

Ann, being a foreign girl, faces many problems like food, language, social system, etc in India. *There is also conflict seen through the food the Indians eat. It looks unsatisfactory to Ann. (p.5)* Ravi, her husband being a mature one, knows that Ann has to adjust herself in every walks of life in India. He makes her aware of the fact that the things do not work out in India as in America. *At one situation Ravi makes Ann aware about her question to enter into the wine shop. He knows that Ann's exuberance is natural but it has out of place in India. He wondered why she didn't see this. Each culture has its appropriate demeanour and behavior..." (p.10)).* By the time, Ravi does not like the job opportunities in India and expects to go to America for the job. He thinks about his native country that the Indian cities are crowded ones and are full of noises. It does not have its proper shape and features. Even, he condemns the behavioral pattern of the Indians.

Ann, being from American has English to be her language gets confused in an Indian language. Apart from her husband and father-in-law; no one speaks in English in the Gogte family. So she gets confused by the dinner talk with the rest of the family. Language has become the barrier to communicate Ann with rest of the Gogte family members. So she desires to learn Marathi language and expects to take one tutor. *Ann understood only the gist of the talk, from words she picked up. Sometimes Ravi translated for her benefit. (p.19)* Mrs. Gogte, her mother-in-law hardly speaks with Ann. Ann says sometime that- *Was it a strange and terrible thing for them to have an outsider, a foreigner become a member of their family?(p.4)*

Indian culture is the amalgamation of various things like customs, castes, religions, languages and even the food. The Gogte family belongs to typical orthodox Hindu religion and it plays very important element in their lives. The family could not compromise inter-caste marriage and the same is

happened with Ravi and Ann; Mohini, daughter of the family and Prem Shivdasani, her husband a Persian boy. On the contrary, in America individual decides his/her marriage, makes own decisions, away from their parents' permission.

Ravi's struggle for the job is another concern of the novel. He struggles for the existence in the modern world and leaves his wife, son, family and even nation. Once, Ravi scolds Ann for her question of earning. He says, "*Listen, things don't work here the way they do in America. In a joint family it doesn't matter who pays for what.*" (p.23) Michelle Le Baron-describes different cultures as "underground rivers that run through our lives and relationships, giving us messages that shape our perceptions, attributions, judgments and ideas of self and other." The adverse happens in the novel and he quarrels for the job- "*You had better get rid of some of your American ideas if you want to live happily in this country.*" (p.24) and Ravi leaves Ann and rest of the family for the sake of the job.

CONCLUSION

The novel *Come Rain*, thus, proves to be full of cultural conflicts in customs, values, ways of the life, language, food, region and religion, etc. The adverse way of life in another culture gets the heroine into the troubles. It makes the husband-wife relation more complicated. Ann's frank behavior in India makes her away from her husband. The different cultural protagonists Ann and Ravi prefer to live in each other's country instead of their native ones. The changing nature of the society sometimes makes these early changers into the doomed life. They have to face many cultural problems in order to live their lives in a happiest manner. They sacrifice their lives in the cross culture conflict which has later become the part of modern way of living the life. Jai Nimbkar, the writer, minutely observes and delineates the things in America and India and puts it in her writing.

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