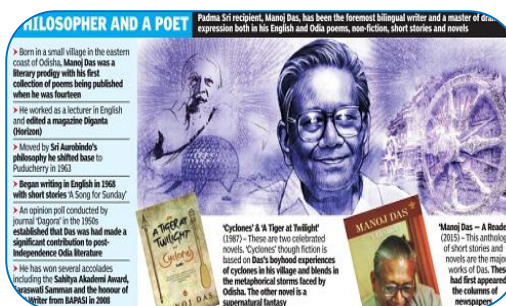




GLOBALIZATION AND CHANGING HUMAN VALUES IN THE SELECT SHORT STORIES OF MANOJ DAS

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ABSTRACT:

Rural India underwent several major transformations during the period of globalization. The traditional set up of the human community is shaken up in rural area. The human values and life styles of rural people are changing in process of urbanization/industrialization/globalization. The present paper focuses on an authentic presentation of changing human values and lifestyles of rural people in the select short stories of Manoj Das. He depicts various facets of human existence in his stories against the background of rural India and glorifies traditional rural values and condemns the vices of urban culture.

KEYWORDS: globalization, human values, Manoj Das, rural culture.

INTRODUCTION:

With the industrial revolution, there is change in rural region of India. The rural culture in India started changing rapidly. Rural India underwent several major transformations during the period of globalization. The traditional set up of the human community in rural India is shaken up and the usual social life is disrupted. The human values and lifestyles of the people living in the villages are changing in process of urbanization / industrialization / globalization.

Kameshwar Choudhari gives observations of Kulkarni (2011) on changing human values based on his personal understanding and as narrated to him by a villager. Kulkarni notes disappearance of *Sneh* (affection), *atmeeyata* (sense of closeness) and *Swabhimani* (self-pride) from the village life. Hearts of people have turned dry. 'Almost all people have become money-minded.' There is increase in disputes over property, both within and between families. The old system of dispute settlement by village elders has almost broken down. Respect for elders has declined within families and at the village level. The craze for money is on the increase. Honesty and scruples are disappearing. Corruption is rampant as is widely reported in the implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act Scheme. Educated and nouveau riche families are seen to be highly individualistic and least cooperative. There are motorcycles as well as mobile phones in large numbers. But civic sense has become weak. Kulkarni quotes the observation of a villager: 'In the past, our people [rural] were poorer but happier. Prosperity has come at the cost of our traditional ethos of cooperation, mutual care and tolerance' (300-301). With this discussion in mind, an attempt has been made in the present paper to focus on an authentic presentation of changing human values and lifestyles of rural people in India in the select short stories of Manoj Das.

Manoj Das is one of the foremost short story writers in post-independent India. He was born in a coastal village of Orissa in 1934. He grew up amidst nature's splendor. But he also experienced its fury. These experiences in his early life shaped his creative mind at its formative state. Manoj Das is influenced by Sri Aurobindo's vision of life and joined his quest for knowledge. He is settled as an

ashramite of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry since 1963. He depicts various facets of human existence in his stories against the background of rural India. He glorifies traditional rural values and condemns the vices of urban culture.

Manoj Das uses his childhood experiences and memories in his short stories. His child characters carry in them these experiences. In his "**Trespassers**" the narrator of the story draws his thirty years ago memories when he was a child. In the story the writer depicts the clash between simple and natural way of life of rural people and the structured and confined way of life of modern culture which is devoid of emotions and affection.

The story is centered on Roy Sahib and his two sons Baboo and Saboo. The poor children living in thatched houses are proud of Roy Sahib's double storeyed, cream-tinged, wonderful mansion. It is compounded by the wall and also guarded by a durwan. The neighborhood children and even their guardians cannot enter the house without the permission. Further the writer throws light on the natural and simple way of life of the poor village children in contrast with disciplined and artificial way of life of Roy Sahib's sons which is devoid of pure and natural pleasures. The writer depicts this contrast. He states it as:

Upon being caught in a quiet summer noon in the process of swimming in the river or climbing the date-palm tree or playing *do doo* and being dragged home, we heard our fathers or uncles commenting, "Pity, you blockheads learnt nothing from those Roy boys!". The practice of snubbing the elders had not grown widespread. Otherwise we could tell them to their faces what we knew for certain – that the Roy boys had no need for climbing trees for dates, that they could just enter a posh store and walk away with packets of sweetened dates or toffees putting their magic signatures to a scrap of paper. Further, they had radio and picture books galore to keep themselves away from the sun". (DHOS 63)

But the narrator has a great attraction for the Roy boys. Baboo was of the narrator's age and Saboo was younger. They wore gold-framed glasses. They were well-disciplined and neatly dressed. The writer comments on too much disciplined life of Roy boys. He puts it as: "In fact, I had an impression that they had come out of their mother's womb wearing their glasses and socks, and with faces as gentle as photographs." (DHOS 64) One day, the narrator decides to visit Roy Sahib's house to meet Baboo and Saboo. But durwan does not permit him to enter the house. But next day he crosses the compound and enters in the house in durwan's absence. He meets Roy Sahib in his shining gown and tells him that he is a friend of his sons. Roy Sahib asks him whether he has taken an appointment at this hour. The narrator turns to leave but Roy Sahib hurts him saying, "Listen boy. It is an offence to trespass like this, follow? Well, now you may go." (DHOS 65) In the evening the narrator comes to know the meaning of the word "Tresspass" from the dictionary and he suffers from the feeling of humiliation.

In the course of the time Roy boys grown up and achieved good jobs in faraway towns. Roy Sahib and his wife become old and sick. They decide to spend the rest of their lives with their elder son, Baboo. One day they leave with several trunk-loads of things. But a fortnight later they return with their trunks. Six months later they leave for Saboo's house, again to return in haste. Mr. and Mrs. Roy are driven out by their obedient and disciplined sons when they are in need of their love and affection in their old age. Mr. Roy suffers the effects of over-discipline. He confines his children in four walls and prevents them to play in fresh light and air with other children. Now more bigger and sophisticated buildings are built in the town. These buildings have thrown Roy sahib's house into a pale background. Now there is not a durwan to guard the house. Roy sahib enjoys his time playing with narrator's son with the ball. There is inner transformation in the character of Roy sahib. The rude and self-centered man becomes loving and enjoys playing with small children of the locality.

The writer shows greater sympathy towards rural values. He supports simplicity, innocence and simple way of life of rural people. He comments on changing human values and lifestyle of people under the impact of modernization. The story shows how rural culture is superior to urban culture.

. In "**The Centenarian**" Manoj Das comments on the socio-political life of the villagers. The writer presents contrast between the simple, innocent and straightforward life of the rustic centenarian Sahib Das and the pompous, hypocrite and opportunist political leaders like Bayahati Bhuyan and Mohapatra. The action of the story takes place in a special village, Paschimpur. The village has nurtured

the persons who have played important role in the life of contemporary humanity. For instance, the village grocer's son obtained a doctoral degree. Another young man visited United Kingdom for a brief training. A middle-aged widower married a Christian and a school teacher fell in love with the daughter of the wealthy money lender. Even, the former zamindar, Bayahati Bhuyan has been elected to the State Legislature. Thus the writer depicts the process of socio change in the life of the villagers.

But the only person who is not changed in the course of the time, in the village is Sahib Das. The story centers around the character of Sahib Das. Kishor Mahapatra, sub-editor of the daily and advisor to the M.L.A. introduces innovative idea of felicitation of a person who had lived for hundred years. When they are discussing this idea, Sahib Das arrives there. When asked about his age he confuses and cannot tell his exact age. He has lived before coming on Paschimpur. The person who has saved him from a floating log in the river had died. The younger generation has taken him granted as the river, the old banyan tree or the cremation ground.

The writer pens the daily life of Sahib Das with realism and precision. In the course of his life, Sahib Das has performed various tasks like shepherding the cattle, scaring away burglars, massaging the *Mahant's* legs and repairing the thatches of the *Muth*. There is no change in the daily routine of Sahib Das. While throwing light on the residence of Sahib Das, the writer states, "During the sixty years past, his small hut at an insignificant nook of the *Muth* campus had never needed for its repair or thatching the assistance of another hand beyond the pair of his own." (MOS 123-24) He wears old dhoti given by the previous Mahant. His name is also a gift of his earlier master. He is fair, so he is Sahib and Das suggesting that he is the servant of the Lord. He used to work in the zamindar's mansion.

Further, Mohapatra arranges the function of felicitation of the centenarian, Sahib Das. He persuades the Chief Minister to attend the occasion. They arrange the press conference. Sahib Das sits on chair for the first time in his life. Along with guest they offer him sandwiches, sweets and tea. But Sahib Das is unknown to all these formalities of upper class people. He tries to escape. After the press conference Sahib Das receives a large number of salutations. The villagers start to respect him. But he chooses total silence. There is no effect of this new status on his life.

The Chief Minister arrives for the meeting in the village. Some volunteers ushers Sahib Das onto the platform. The Chief Minister garlands Sahib Das. Mohapatra asks Sahib Das to stand up and to receive the ovation but he could not follow him. He stands up and departs from the stage. Next day, in the afternoon he was found lying dead with garland still on him, on the river bank. They bring his body to the *Muth* for cremation. After the cremation Mohapatra smiles and observes with a significant wink, "Had we been a day late in organizing celebration, well, well you know what I mean!" (MOS 127)

Thus, the writer comments on the hypocrisy and artificial attitude of the politicians and journalists. These people are always running after fame, name and money. On the other hand Sahib Das remains aloof from publicity and the pompous life. He leads very calm and un-disturbed life in a small hut at the corner of Muth. He is spiritually satisfied person and assumes servant of the Lord. Because of this spiritual power he is able to complete century of his life. He is a representative of Indian rural culture which is changing in the course of the time. In this context, it is appropriate to quote Manoj Das's views on changing rural India. In his preface to *Chasing the Rainbow* he states:

... Even though the city population had grown threefold in the twentieth century the villages are not likely to be deserted; the gap between the urban life and the rural is destined to become more and more narrow. Changes are inevitable as technology, development and education are spreading. But one truth which we are likely to forget before long is that the villager was illiterate, but not uneducated, if education was expected to help a person develop higher values, nobility, readiness to sacrifice, conscience, intelligence, and wisdom. A wonder would have been achieved if the villager's capacity to graduate spontaneously into that level of education was not arbitrarily replaced by today's conventional education which makes one suave, informed and clever, but is incapable of preventing one from becoming a super-fraud or an arch-hypocrite, if there could have been a imaginative synthesis. But that is a wistful thinking. The death of the silent process of education of the villager is one of the greatest tragedies of the era of transition, unlamented and often not realized. (xvi-viii)

CONCLUSION:

Manoj Das is a keen observer of the pre and post-independent India. In his short stories he depicts very effectively and skillfully a way of life of people living in villages, their values, beliefs, traditions and customs. He shows a greater sympathy towards traditional rural values. He glorifies simplicity, innocence, spiritual faith and humanistic attitude of the Indian rural people. He condemns hypocrisy, artificiality, false pride, arrogance and pomposity of urban culture.

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