



Societal issues in select works of Kiran Nagarkar

L.Vaishnavi

Dr. V.Suganthi

Ph.D. Research Scholar

Assistant Professor in English

PG & Research Department of English

PG & Research Department of English

Thiruvalluvar Government Arts College

Thiruvalluvar Government Arts College

Rasipuram

Rasipuram

Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu

Abstract:

Kiran Nagarkar is a contemporary Indian writer whose works empower the readers to understand the actual status of the nation. His works also evoke humanity in human beings and its necessity for the future generation. Seven Sixes are Forty Three, Ravan and Eddie, Cuckold, God's Little Soldier and Extras enflame the necessity of humanity in the society. Kiran Nagarkar captures the essence of the social reality of the contemporary society and at the same time, their ability to present the realities as critical commentaries. The Indian society is unique in its multifarious nature. It is unity in diversity. The social institution itself is an amalgamation of various culturally, religiously, and linguistically different groups of people. Kiran Nagarkar is well aware of the ignorance and poverty that plague the Indian society. He shows how Indians especially women suffer in their lives due to illiteracy. Kiran Nagarkar does not spare the society for its blatant negligence of issues like poverty, exploitation, and discrimination. His views are honest in presenting reality. The author makes an insightful observation in understanding the relationship between the society and religion. There is continuous discourse on the impact of religion on individuals and the society as a whole.

Key words: *Culture, feminism, humanity, poverty, religion, society.*

Literature has many genres and it enlightens the people by its moral values. Literature reflects the life of human beings. Right from ancient age to modern era it has many moderate terms and events to follow in life. It teaches how people should value another person by its ethical and evaluating stories. Kiran Nagarkar is one such eminent writer to cascade people by his commanding works. His works are ethical, historical, comical, sensible, and modern in term. It deals with the genuine and realistic events in society. His novels boost people's morale to overcome the society with courageous spirit.



Kiran Nagarkar is a noteworthy writer from Maharashtra, India who has made valuable contribution to Indian literature. He does not enjoy success or popular recognition but his works are considered as pioneering efforts for his times. His works are regarded as milestone achievements in both the regional literature of Marathi, and in Indian Writing in English. His works are often frank and honest narrations of social evils that prevail in the society. He does not shy away from pointing out how people are exploited in the name of various established social institutions. This paper aims at analyzing his select works in order to understand how he projects the realities of various aspects of the Indian society and culture.

Kiran Nagarkar captures the essence of the social reality of the contemporary society and at the same time, their ability to present the realities as critical commentaries. The Indian society is unique in its multifarious nature. It is unity in diversity. The social institution itself is an amalgamation of various culturally, religiously, and linguistically different groups of people.

Kiran Nagarkar observes both the sides of a coin. He not only comments on the attitude, behaviour, and the psyche of the oppressed people, but he also makes keen observations on the oppressor. He does not spare anyone in his scrutiny. He exposes the true intention of the colonisers who have subjugated Indians for centuries. The colonisers may have hidden their ulterior motives in the name of philanthropy and general good, but Kiran Nagarkar exposes their ulterior motive of exploiting the abundant Indian natural resources and the cheap Indian labour in order to boost their economy. Kiran Nagarkar describes the innocence of the subjugated people very aptly. He is of the opinion that subjugation has badly affected the psyche of the Indians such that they cannot imagine, nor begin to live a life without the oppressor. Their attitude has been irrevocably shaped in such a way that they are contented in being slaves. There is no ambition in the Indian mind to seek liberty. Slavery has become so permanent in the lives of the Indians, that they are unable to break the habit of being somebody else's slave. Even in the absence of the British, the Indians always look up for somebody's approval. This is one of the main reasons for the continued exploitation of poor Indians by other rich Indians. It is only a matter of replacement. The rich and greedy Indians have replaced the British. And, the exploitation continues as usual. Kiran Nagarkar is able to bring out this sociological condition in all his novels.



Kiran Nagarkar is well aware of the ignorance and poverty that plague the Indian society. He shows how Indians especially women suffer in their lives due to illiteracy. Kiran Nagarkar does not spare the society for its blatant negligence of issues like poverty, exploitation, and discrimination. His views are honest in presenting reality. He is sharp enough to present it accurately without leaving any minute details. The author is not only explores new avenues in literature but also accomplishes the feat effectively.

The author writes about truths which are not welcomed, and which are well hidden. Such truths are conveniently ignored by majority Indians who wish to live in a perceived world of comfort. Kiran Nagarkar captures the essence of such truths in his stories. His first novel, *Seven Sixes are Forty-Three* is one such story. The novel does not focus on a particular issue or event, but it covers everything in the Indian social setup. It is an ordinary record of human existence yet it captures the apogees and nadirs of human emotions viz. heartbreak, loss, elation, joy and sorrow. There is no one single story in the work, yet it captures human emotion too vividly. Kushank is the only character who ties up all ends. The other character who is consistent throughout the work is the reader. All other characters appear and disappear. Even though the work is a fiction, it depicts life more realistically. Kiran Nagarkar does not shy away from violence, horror, or anything that is prevalent in human life. Kiran Nagarkar shows the readers the wretchedness of poverty and disease when people would prefer not to see them. He captures the essence of Indian life in this novel.

Ravan and Eddie is another novel by Kiran Nagarkar which presents the life of Indians in the congested chawls of Mumbai. The novel is witty but it is realistic and enlightening in terms of human existence amidst everyday struggles. The novel presents the lives of lower middle class and lower class families. The novel weaves a gripping tale of struggle and endurance shown by families of over a dozen members living in two rooms, sharing a common toilet at the end of the corridor, and drawing water for drinking and bathing from a public tap. *Ravan and Eddie* is to be considered as an important literary work in the context of the multifarious nature of India and how it is exploited for various reasons including political, economical, and religious profits.

Cuckold is Kiran Nagarkar's next novel chosen for the study. It is a historical novel; it is about imaginary Rajput king named Kumar. The novel *Cuckold* critically examines the



social structure and behaviour defined by power hierarchy. The novel also looks at an individual social behaviour in terms of relationship between a man and a woman. The novel is a historical inquisition into the reasons behind some of the contemporary social environment that prevails in India. The novel closely examines human behaviour in relation to politics, economics, and relationships.

With the would-be King Kumar and his obsession to win over the heart of his wife, as the center of the plot, the author is able to weave a picturesque portrayal of life and society that prevailed in the past era of Indian monarchy. Human passion and its impact on controlling human behaviour form the core of the novel's subject matter. The author clearly shows how human passion governs all the actions of an individual in spite of his or her status in life. By propagating this idea through the character of the king, the author reiterates the point that nobody including the King can escape the clutches of human vagaries. The author presents the story with historical background, yet he renders it as universal. He renders it with a universal appeal and therefore allows the reader to associate the content of the novel with all times including the contemporary.

Kiran Nagarkar's next novel *God's Little Soldier* is a religious allegory. Kiran Nagarkar's character Zia Khan moves from Bombay to Cambridge, Afghanistan, and the USA, and from "good" liberal Muslim to Muslim terrorist to Christian ascetic to fundamentalist Christian fanatic, to tantric zealot as well. In each of these lives, he spreads death and destruction most effectively, but does not find satisfaction. Zia's brother Amanat remains a conventional liberal, modern Muslim concerned with good and evil, but even his actions are less effective and moral than he hopes.

The author makes an insightful observation in understanding the relationship between the society and religion. There is continuous discourse on the impact of religion on individuals as well as on the society as a whole. The author is able to skillfully project how human beings and religion complement each other. In some cases, religion guides human beings, which in turn ends up in human beings guiding religion. When such an interaction happens within a set boundary, all is well in the society. However, when the relationship between religion and an individual reaches a point at which both cease to exist separately, and when both become one, uncontrolled and unguided by tolerance and experience, the



combination turns out to be destructive. The author shows how such an entity can destroy indiscriminately. The author not only looks at how religious fanaticism operates within the social infrastructure but also delves deep into the process by which an individual becomes a fanatic. The novel, in spite of being forecast on religion and individuals, become relevant social document in terms of understanding the fringe elements that operate outside social law. The thorough inspection of these characters by the author enables the readers to understand that in spite of being animalistic nature, a terrorist is basically a human being driven by obsession. This is a significant contribution in the sense that the reader is allowed to understand how a terrorist is born and who is a terrorist. The author has clear and profound perception in all the issues that connect society, culture, religion and individual human beings.

Kiran Nagarkar's *The Extras* is the sequel to *Ravan and Eddie*. This novel is a social commentary on Mumbai and its social reality. The normal process of the life of lower middle class and lower class people who struggle to make a living in a busy city like Mumbai is the focus of the novel. The writer is once again able to bring out a detailed picture of the social reality that encompasses human beings in a place, which is overcrowded. Continuing the life story of the two boys Ravan and Eddie, the novel extrapolates their lives and their lifestyles, which are deeply influenced by their environment. The writer throws light on the hidden lives of Mumbaikars who are often pushed into the darker side of the city.

All these novels have different backgrounds and they deal with different stories are a part of the society. Kiran Nagarkar's view on society and human beings is a perfect picture of real status of the society in this modern era. Poverty has not been eradicated from the society right from ancient age to modern age. People who suffered and struggled are still suffering and struggling for their daily food. Though there are many constitutional laws to ban caste system still people are rejected by the name of caste. Honour killing has become a natural practice in the modern era. In ancient days girl children were killed by giving poisons soon as they are born. In the modern era the same girl is being killed in the name of honour killing. Equality has raised everywhere in the society but not every woman is treated equally.

Unemployment has become the biggest issue in the modern era. Money has gained power over everything else. Even education has lost its value in the face of money. Education



has become a business. Illtreatment of women, seducing infant girl baby, sexual harassment in work place, school, college, and in public places has become a commonplace happening in the world which has lost humanity and does not have any consideration for human values. Cultural disorder is the main drawback of the Indian society. Though people speak about equality to woman, that equality is still a dream for women and there arises cultural disorder. All these problems can be avoided only when people realize it themselves

Works Cited

Nagarkar, Kiran. *Seven Sixes are Forty Three*. New Delhi: Katha, 1974. Print.

.....*Ravan and Eddie*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1995. Print.

.....*Cuckold*. New Delhi:HarperCollins Publishers, 1997. Print.

.....*God's Little Soldier*. New Delhi:HarperCollins Publishers, 2006. Print.

.....*Extras*.New Delhi: Fourth Estate, 2012. Print.