

**IMPACT OF LITERATURE ON SOCIAL CHANGE****ASSISTANT PROFESSOR GAZALA BHOJE****G.M.MOMIN WOMENS COLLEGE****DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY*****Introduction***

Almost every day of our lives we are exposed to the media in at least one form or another.<sup>1</sup> **Media plays a significant role in our society.**<sup>2</sup> Over the last 500 years, the influence of mass media has grown exponentially with the advance of technology. First there were books, then newspapers, magazines, films, radio, television , internet

The degree of influence depends on the availability and pervasiveness of media. All of the traditional mass media still have great influence over our lives. Books once were supremely influential as they were the first way to communicate with the society.<sup>3</sup> Earlier books had many forms like stories, novels , folktales and many more. Further the project will deal with the influence of novel on the society, and the works of writers towards society.<sup>4</sup>

The novel is a modern form of literature. The novel first took firm root in England and France. Novel began to be written from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but flowered from the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup>

***The World of Novel And Social Change:***

More than other forms of writings novels are about other people. They do not focus on the lives of great people; instead they are about the everyday life of common people.<sup>6</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Europe entered the industrial age. Factories came up, business profits increased and economy grew. Cities expanded in an unregulated way and were filled with overworked and underpaid workers.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from :[http:// www.bradfortw.hubpages.com](http://www.bradfortw.hubpages.com) > ... > Human Societies-23<sup>rd</sup> December 2014

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from : <https://www.sites.google.com/site/fourththpillar/...of.../impact-of-media-> 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2014

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from :[http:// www.uncp.edu/.../Media& Society/MassMediaInfluenceOnSociety.html](http://www.uncp.edu/.../Media&Society/MassMediaInfluenceOnSociety.html)-23<sup>rd</sup> December 2014

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> National Council of Education Research and Training, 2007 (Publication Department by the Secretary, Sir Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016) Social Science- India and the Contemporary World - II

<sup>6</sup> Ibid (pg 180)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

## ❖ CHARLES DICKENS :

*“HARD TIMES” (It’s Impact on Appalling Condition of Urban Life Due To Industrialization)*

Charles Dickens was a Victorian sardonic<sup>8</sup> writer who wrote social criticism about Victorian England.<sup>9</sup> *Hard Times*, a social protest novel of nineteenth-century England, is aptly titled. Not only does the working class, known as the "Hands," have a "hard time" in this novel; so do the other classes as well. Dickens wrote of the conditions and the peoples of that times.<sup>10</sup>

Dickens's purpose in *Hard Times* was to satirize the utilitarian philosophy that recognized only the value of human reason, neglecting not only what Dickens calls in the novel "fancy" but also the values of the human heart. Dickens also wanted to highlight the harsh, monotonous lives of factory workers and to criticize the laissez-faire economic philosophy of the marketplace.<sup>11</sup>

Deeply critical of these developments, novelists, Charles Dickens wrote about the terrible effect of industrialization on people’s lives. His novel “Hard Times” (1854) describes Coke town, a fictitious industrial town, as a grim place full of machinery, smoking chimneys here worker are known as “Hands”. Dickens criticized not just the greed for profits but also the idea that reduced human beings into simple instruments of production. In other novels too, Dickens focused on the terrible conditions of the urban life under industrial capitalism<sup>12</sup>

The novel sets up a general comparison of three different kinds of home life

- ✚ Rich Middle Class Households of the Bounderby's and the Gradgrinds,
- ✚ Poor Home- Blackpools,
- ✚ Nomadic Community- Sleary’s Circus<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Sardonic-Ironic

<sup>9</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.markedbyteachers.com/university-degree/linguistics-classics-and-related-subjects/in-conclusion-one-of-dickens-purposes-of-writing-hard-times-was-to-make-a-social-comment-about-the-idea-of-utilitarianism-in-the-teaching-system.html> Date- 3rd January 2015

<sup>10</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/h/hard-times/about-hard-times#top> Date- 23rd December 2014

<sup>11</sup> Retrieved from : <http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-hardt/#gsc.tab=0> Date- 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2014

<sup>12</sup> National Council of Education Research and Training, 2007 (Publication Department by the Secretary, Sir Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016) Social Science- India and the Contemporary World - II

<sup>13</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.shmoop.com/hard-times-dickens/setting.html> Date-3rd January 2014

Charles Dickens was the greatest of the Victorian novelists.<sup>14</sup> Dickens' purposes of writing 'Hard Times' was to make a social comment about the idea of utilitarianism in the teaching system. And also deals with the conditions of the workers in the industrialized city which had exploited the condition of the workers.<sup>15</sup>

### *Women and Novel*

The most exciting element of the novel was the involvement of women. During 18<sup>th</sup> century middle classes were becoming more prosperous. And novels began exploring the world of women-their emotions and identities, their experiences and problems. Many women novelist explore their ideas and writing through the novels. Alike other, one of among them was Jane Austen. The novels of Jane Austen gives a glimpse of the world of women in gentled rural society in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain. They make us think about society which encouraged women to look for 'good' marriages and find wealthy or propertied husbands .<sup>16</sup>

But women novelist did not simply popularized the domestic role of women. Often their novels dealt with women who broke established norms of society. In Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Erye" 1847, Jane is shown as independent and assertive, while girls of her time were expected to be quite and well behaved.<sup>17</sup>

The novel which reflects the society's people and the norms of that time written by Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

### *Jane Austen*

#### *"Pride And Prejudice"(Potyral Of Stereotype Women)*

*Pride and Prejudice* by Austen novels, is written in gentle or Horatian satire<sup>18</sup>. The main object of Austen's satire in the novel is the mercenary and the ignorance of the people, a common criism of the 18th century. Austen's power of subtle discrimination and shrewd perceptiveness is reveled in pride and prejudice. The main subject in the novel is stated in the first sentence of novel : "it is the truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune , must be in a want of a wife ."This clearly states that the

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<sup>14</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/h/hard-times/about-hard-times#top>- Date- 23rd December 2014

<sup>15</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.markedbyteachers.com/university-degree/linguistics-classics-and-related-subjects/in-conclusion-one-of-dickens-purposes-of-writing-hard-times-was-to-make-a-social-comment-about-the-idea-of-utilitarianism-in-the-teaching-system.html> Date- 3rd January 2015

<sup>16</sup> National Council of Education Research and Training, 2007 (Publication Department by the Secretary, Sir Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016) Social Science- India and the Contemporary World - II

<sup>17</sup> Ibid-(pg 184)

<sup>18</sup> Horatian satire-, named for the Roman satirist Horace (65–8 BCE), playfully criticizes some social vice through gentle, mild, and light-hearted humour

novel deals with the courtship and marriages or a chase that is husband in search of a wife or a woman in pursuit of a husband. The first line also defines Austen's book as a piece of literature that connects itself to the 18<sup>th</sup> century period because of the emphasis on man in his social environment rather than in his individual conditions.<sup>19</sup>

The novel had seven different marriages presented. These marriages contribute to the theme that a happy and strong marriage takes time to build and must be based on mutual understanding, feeling and respect. In *Pride and Prejudice* Austen has denounced the elements of marriage and society that she found distasteful.<sup>20</sup>

The novel depicts a society in which a woman's reputation is of the utmost importance. A woman is expected to behave in a certain way. Stepping outside the social norms makes her vulnerable to ostracism. The theme of class is related to reputation in that it both reflects the strictly regimented nature of life for the middle and upper class. But Austen shows the power of love and happiness to overcome class boundaries and Prejudice.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Era of Indian Novel*

The modern novel developed in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as Indians became familiar with the western novel. Indian novels were earlier written in Bengali and Marathi. Colonial rulers regarded the contemporary culture of India as inferior. On the other hand Indian novelists wrote to develop a modern literature of the country that could produce a sense of national belonging and cultural equality with their colonial masters.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Retrieved from :<http://www.online-literature.com/austen/prideprejudice> Date -23<sup>rd</sup> December 2014

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Retrieved from :<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/pride/themes.html> Date - 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2014

<sup>22</sup> National Council of Education Research and Training, 2007 (Publication Department by the Secretary, Sir Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016) Social Science- India and the Contemporary World - II

## THE NOVELS IN SOUTH INDIA:

Novels began appearing in South Indian languages during the period of Colonial rule. O.Chandu Menon tried to translate an English novel called Henrietta Temple into Malayalam . Further the delightful novel called Indulekha in 1889 was the first modern novel in Malayalam .<sup>23</sup>

❖ *O.Chandu Menon*

*“Indulekha” (The Issues of Inheritance)*

Indulekha is the first complete novel written in Malayalam. Written towards the end of the 19th century, this book attempts to portray the weird social customs of Kerala during that time through the twists and turns in the lives of its protagonists Indulekha and Madhavan<sup>24</sup>

Indulekha is a very old, piece of literature. Written by O. Chandumenona who helped in bringing upon great changes in the old Nair style of matrilineal inheritance and also fought against the orthodoxy of the Kerala upper caste society to bring across education and literacy to the masses. The novel was written at a time when there was a emerging class of upper caste men (Nair). The novel highlights the lack of willingness of the Nambudiris to adapt the changes of times as well as the struggle by Nair women to break out of the old age principles .<sup>25</sup>

## Novels in Bengal

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the early Bengali novels lived in two worlds . One deals with the past their characters , events and love stories based on historical events . Another group depicted the inner world of domestic life in contemporary settings which deals with the social problems and romantic relation . Bankim , ‘ Durgeshnandini ’ (1865) his first novel to such a gathering of people who were stunned to realize that the Bengali novel had achieved excellence so quickly. <sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Ibid(pg 187)

<sup>24</sup> Retrieved from : [http:// books.google.co.in/books/about/Indulekha.html?id=M1dkAAAAMAAJ](http://books.google.co.in/books/about/Indulekha.html?id=M1dkAAAAMAAJ)

<sup>3rd</sup> January 2015

<sup>25</sup> Retrieved from : [https://smartindia.net.in/ask\\_a\\_teacher/question/16933/#.VJk\\_vADBU-](https://smartindia.net.in/ask_a_teacher/question/16933/#.VJk_vADBU-) Date: 23rd December 2014

<sup>26</sup> National Council of Education Research and Training, 2007 (Publication Department by the Secretary, Sir Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016) Social Science- India and the Contemporary World - II

### Novel in Hindi and Impact on Social Change ( The Concept of Child Marriage )

In the North Bharatendu Harishchandra the pioneer of modern Hindi literature encouraged many members of his circle to recreate and translate novels from other languages . Srinivas Das Pariksha Guru 1882 cautioned young men of well to do families against the dangerous influence of bad companies and consequent lose morals .It reflects the inner and out world of the newly emerging middle class .

It was with the writing of Premchand that the Hindi novel achieved excellence . He raises the social evils in his novels such as in “Sewasadan”<sup>27</sup> which mainly deals with the poor condition of women in society .It also tells about the issue like child marriages and dowry.<sup>28</sup>

### *Novel and Lower Caste and Minorities (Caste Practises)*

Novels like Indrabai and Indulekha were written by members of the upper caste and were primarily about upper caste characters . But not all novels were of this kind. Potheri Kunjambu, a “lower caste” writer from North Kerala wrote a novel called “Saraswativijayam” 1892 mounting a strong attack on caste oppression. This novel shows a young man from an “untouchable” caste leaving his village to escape the cruelty of his Brahmin landlords. He convert to Christianity, obtain modern education and return as the judge in the local court. Meanwhile the villagers thinking that the landlords men killed him, file a case. At the conclusion of the trail , the judge reveal his true identity and the Nambuthiri repents and reform his way. “Saraswativijayam” stresses the importance of education for the upliftment of the lower caste.<sup>29</sup>

Overtime, the medium of the novel made room for the experiences of communities that had not received much space in the literary scene earlier. Vaikkam Muhammad Basheer (1908-94) was one of the early Muslim writer to gain wide renown as a novelist in Malayalam. Basheer’s novels spoke about detail from the everyday life of Muslim households.

Unlike other novelist and their novels Premchand’s novels are filled with powerful characters drawn from all levels of society. His novels deals with aristocrats and landlords, middle-level peasants and landless laborers, middle-class professionals and people from the margins of society. The women characters are strong individual, especially those who come from the lower classes and are not modernized. Premchand’s characters create a community based on democratic values. The central character of his novel

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<sup>27</sup> SewaSadon-A Society is a not-for profit organisation, whose mission is to protect, educate and empower disadvantaged girls and women

<sup>28</sup> Ibid (pg189)

<sup>29</sup> Ibid (pg 196-197)

“Rangbhoomi”, Surdas, is a visually impaired beggar from a so-called ‘untouchable’ caste. The very act of choosing such a person as the hero of the novel is significant. It makes the lives of the most oppressed section of society as worthy of literary reflection.<sup>30</sup>

The Message of Reform:

Many early novels carried a clear message of reform. For example in “Indirabai” a Kannada novel written by Gulavadi Venkata Rao 1889, the heroine is give away in marriage at a very young age to an elderly man. But after the death of her husband she succeeds in completing her education and marries again.<sup>31</sup>

*The Present “Era” Novel (Globalization)*

The Modern Age in English Literature started from the beginning of the twentieth century, and it followed the Victorian Age. The most important characteristic of Modern Literature is that it is opposed to the general attitude to life and its problems adopted by the Victorian writers and the public, which may be termed ‘Victorian’. The young people during the first decade of the present century regarded the Victorian age as hypocritical, and the Victorian ideals as mean, superficial and stupid. The modern mind was outraged by the Victorian self-complacency. The social and religious reformers at first raised this complaint, and they were followed by men of letters, because they echo the voice around them. But there was felt the need of a change in the sphere of literature also because the idiom, the manner of presentment, the play of imagination, and the rhythm and structure of the verse, of the Victorian writers were becoming stale, and seemed gradually to be losing the old magic. Their words failed to evoke the spirit. Besides the modern reaction against the attitude of self-complacency of the Victorians, there was also failure or disintegration of values in the twentieth century. The young men who were being taught by their elders to prize ‘the things of the spirit’ above worldly prosperity, found in actual experience that nothing could be attained without money. Material prosperity had become the basis of social standing.

The Victorians believed in the sanctity of home life, but in the twentieth century the sentiments for the family circle declined. Young men and women who realised the prospect of financial independence refused to submit to parental authority, and considered domestic life as too narrow. Moreover, young

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid (pg 198)

<sup>31</sup> Ibid (pg 191)

people who began early to earn their living got greater opportunity of mixing with each other, and to them sex no longer remained a mystery. So love became much less of a romance and much more of an experience. These are some of the examples of the disintegration of values in the twentieth century. The result was that the modern writers could no longer write in the old manner. The modern writer had, therefore, to cultivate a fresh point of view, and also a fresh technique. The impact of scientific thought was mainly responsible for this attitude of interrogations and disintegration of old values<sup>32</sup>.

Another important factor which influenced modern literature was the large number of people of the poor classes who were educated by the State. In order to meet their demand for reading the publishers of the early twentieth century began whole series of cheaply reprinted classics. Thus among the twentieth century writers are sometimes found aggressive attempts to retain or revitalise old values in a new setting or, if it is not possible, to create new values to take their place. The twentieth century literature which is the product of this tension is, therefore, unique. It is extremely fascinating and, at the same time, very difficult to evaluate, because, to a certain extent, it is a record of uncoordinated efforts. It is not easy to divide it into school and types. It is full of adventures and experiments peculiar to the modern age which is an age of transition and discovery. But there is an undercurrent in it which runs parallel to the turbulent current of ideas which flows with great impetuosity. Though it started as a reaction against 'Victorianism' in the beginning of the twentieth century, it is closely bound up with the new ideas which are agitating the mind of the modern man<sup>33</sup>.

❖ *Chinua Achebe*

*"Things Fall Apart" (Criticism of Imperialism & Colonization)*

Things Fall Apart was first published, Achebe announced that one of his purposes was to present a complex, dynamic society to a Western audience who perceived African society as primitive, simple, and backward. Unless Africans could tell their side of their story, Achebe believed that the African experience would forever be "mistold," even by such well-meaning authors as Joyce Cary in *Mister Johnson*. Cary worked in Nigeria as a colonial administrator and was sympathetic to the Nigerian people. Yet Achebe feels that Cary, along with other Western writers such as Joseph Conrad, misunderstood Africa.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Retrieved from: <http://neoenglish.wordpress.com/2010/12/16/modern-literature-1900-1961> Date-1st January 2015

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> Retrieved from : <http://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/t/things-fall-apart/about-things-fall-apart> Date 1st January 2015



*Things Fall Apart* is a tragedy. It tells the story of an African clan being invaded by outsiders and falling to pieces. The novel also tells the story of Okonkwo, a man of wealth and status who nonetheless has a tragic flaw that is fear of being perceived as weak, which leads him to make many poor life decisions. Eventually sent into exile, the protagonist is not in his home village when the outsiders white missionaries arrived. Thus he is not able to save his people during the early stages of danger. In the end, because of he lacks the ability to save his tribe, Okonkwo kills himself. As stated by his best friend, Okonkwo's death is tragic because white men drove a good man to kill himself. Okonkwo's personal failings might also have had a hand in it.<sup>35</sup>

Though mostly fictional, Nigerian author Chinua Achebe claims that the book documents Africa's spiritual history – the civilized and rich life the Igbo lived before the arrival of Europeans and the ruinous social and cultural consequences that the arrival of European missionaries brought. Achebe wrote *Things Fall Apart* as a sharp criticism of imperialism, or the European colonization of countries outside of the European continent. The novel also critiques Joseph Conrad's famous novel, *Heart of Darkness*, which documented the African natives from an imperialist's point of view. Achebe followed *Things Fall Apart* with two other novels, *No Longer At Ease* and *Arrow of God*, both of which also depict the African experience with Europeans<sup>36</sup>.

#### SHASHI THAROOR

##### "India : The Future Is Now"

In Today's Political Scenario India : The Future Is Now is an inspiring vision of India, which provides analysis and an insight into India and its role in the world economy. This novel provides a perspective on a wide range of sectors that is from technology to infrastructure, health care, education to environmental issues. The writing suggests how even the biggest problems can be solved by exercising bold and ambitious measures. The novel India : The Future Is Now, gives the vision of India and its role in world economy and is a flag bearer of democracy and peace.<sup>37</sup>

#### Conclusion

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<sup>35</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.shmoop.com/things-fall-apart/genre.html> Date 1st January 2015

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.indiatimes.com/lifestyle/art-and-culture/shashi-tharoors-latest-the-future-is-now-84367.html> Date-14th January 2015

There is a strong co-relation between written text and changes which came up in the society. This can be highlighted by the changing status of women in the society as depicted in many of the novels of Premchand. Premchand novel dealt with women issues. The novel also helps in highlighting the lower castes and minorities, even throws light on caste practices. It creates the awareness regarding the education of women and lower caste people. Novels played a crucial role in society for shaping a modern view point of the people with regards to women and lower caste.

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