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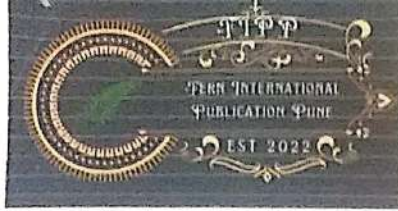
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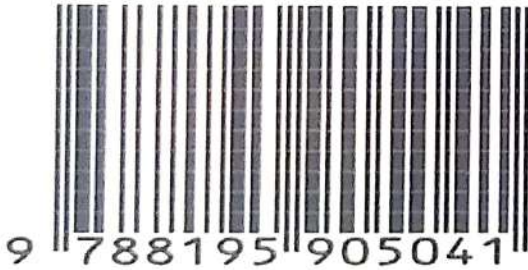
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**Dr. Shantaram G. Baviskar
Dr. Manisha S. Pawar**

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The Panorama of Agriculture and Peasant's life in Literature

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Abstract:

Agriculture and farmer have an intimate and unique relationship. Both depend on each other. They are known as the backbone of economy. India is an agricultural country. The history of Indian agriculture dates back to the civilization of Sindhu/ Indus valley. Almost one fourth of India is covered by agricultural land and most of the Indians depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Farmers are a very important element in the Indian social system. The farmer grows food by toiling day and night. A farmer works in the field. Therefore, economy works. Industries, livestock and human life depend on agriculture. Being the creator of the essentials of life, the farmer is called the Foster/Guardian (Poshinda) of the world. The panorama of Indian agriculture and peasant's life has been delineated many writers in their literary writings. Rural life and agrarian culture are depicted prominently in rural literature. Some literary writers like V S Kandhekar G L Thokal, R V Dighe, S N Pendse, V Madgudkal, Anand Yadav, Sadanad Deshmukh, Shrikant Deshmukh, Babarao Musale and Vithal Wagh, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Mulk Raj Anand, Sabitri Roy and Premchand etc., who realistically portray the plight of agricultural sector, farmers, peasants and folk-life in their literature seem to be originally connected with the soil. The seeds of rural literature and hardworking farmers appear for the first time in the writings of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule.

Keywords: Agriculture, industrialisation, socio-economic, guardian, peasant, rural/folk-life etc

India is an agricultural country. The history of Indian agriculture dates back to the civilization of Sindhu/ Indus valley. Almost one fourth of India is covered by agric-land and most of the Indians depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Agriculture and farmer have a unique relationship, the farmer who owns the farm, the farmer who cultivates the farm. The farmer is the backbone of the village system and the structure of agricultural society. The literary writer, TN Atre in his *Gaavgada* gives credit to the farmers for building the village and bringing the land/farming to the channel. According to him, playing means cultivator of the land whether he is the actual owner of the land or



clan, 'mirasdar' or 'bataidar'; the actual owner of the land is the farmer. The livelihood of the farmers depends on the yield of the crop and the harvest in the field. Indian economy is also related to agriculture industry. Farmers are a very important element in the Indian social system. The farmer grows food by toiling day and night. A farmer works in the field. Therefore, economy works. Industries, livestock and human life depend on agriculture. Because, the farmer is the creator of the essentials of life, the farmer is called the Foster/Guardian (Poshinda) of the world. Agriculture has been a business since ancient times. It originated from primitive thinking and women's cultivation techniques. India is called an agrarian country because most of the people in India do agriculture in rural areas. India and Maharashtra are known for agriculture.

Portrayal of Peasant life in Literature: Rural life and agrarian culture are depicted prominently in rural literature. The writers of the rural areas, i.e. the rural literati tried to open up the thoughts of farmers and rural life consciousness. Their life style was depicted through their stories, poems, novels and literature. Literature is the mirror of the society; a review of various important events happening in the rural areas and the actual situation were depicted in the literature. The umbilical cord of the writers who portray folk life in Marathi literature seems to be originally connected with the soil. The realistic portrayal of rural life and mechanization seems to be unveiled from the literature of many writers such as V S Kandhekar, G L Thokal, R V Dighe, S N Pendse, V Madgudkal, Anand Yadav, Sadanad Deshmukh, Shrikant Deshmukh, Babarao Musale and Vithal Wagh etc. Rural life, social life of farmers and their surroundings is the source of energy for rural literature. The entire Marathi literature produced in the second half of the 19th century seems to have been influenced by the thoughts of the then social reformers. India is a country of villages. We see the real life of hardworking farmers and peasants in the village itself. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule first portrayed the life of the hardworking farmers living in villages. It is an important focal point of rural life. By portraying how the farmers in this centre are exploited by Shetjis and Bhatjis and how the farmers get struck in the plight due to ignorance, he explained the need to make them feel self-esteem and identity. A thorough arrangement has been made. He has presented this idea in a bold manner. First of all, he has made a scholarly and thorough presentation in Marathi literature regarding how the government should help these farmers who are living an easy life. He has presented this idea in bold manner. Mahatma Phule has made scholarly writing in his book *Shetakrecha Asud*. The seeds of rural literature appear for the first time in his book. From the 1920s onwards, the outcry, sadness and pain of the fragmented agrarian consciousness began to emerge from literature. The Nobel Prize Winner, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore in his collection of poetry entitled *Gitanjali* also portrays the lives of suffering peasants who work hard day and night in cultivating and plugging the hard ground. The poet advises the priests to leave their chanting of mantras, singing and telling of beads in the worship of God in the dark lonely corner of the temple. God can not be found in such a way. God lives with the poor and suffering farmers and peasants working with them in sun and shower in their fields. While glorifying the lives of down-trodden tillers, Gurudev says,

“Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads!
 Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner
 of the a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and
 see thy God is not before thee!
 He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard
 ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones.
 He is with them in sun and in shower, and His
 garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy
 mantle and even like Him come down on the dusty soil!”¹

Mulk Raj Anand's *The Trilogy* comprises of three novels – *The Village*, *Across the Black Waters* and *The Sword and the Sickle*, which tell the story of a peasants in socio-political unrest set up of rural India. Finding the voice of the peasant, Jonathan Highfield aptly says,

“Anand's three novels seem to examine three different levels of oppression in colonial India. *The Village* deals primarily with the oppression of the Indian landholders over the peasants emphasizing the hanging of Sharm Singh, Lalu's brother, over the murder of a landlord that ruined Nihal Singh's family. *Across the Black Waters* begins Lalu's questioning of the English rule of India, as he discovers in the horrors of war that Indian and English goals are not the same. The final novel in the trilogy, *The Sword and the Sickle*, finds Lalu working with a revolutionary group and confronting prejudice against the poor within the group itself.”²

The Harvest Song sung in the form of a novel by Sabitri Roy unveils the panorama of rural Bengal. The novel is set during Tebhaga Movement of the 1940s when the peasants raised voice against unjust tax system of India. Munshi Premchand's *Godaan* (1936) has been translated into English in 1957 by Jai Ratan and Purushottama Lala as *The Gift of a Cow*. It exposes the socio-economic upheavals and oppression of a village peasant. The protagonist, Hori represents a typical peasant who is a victim of various circumstances with all his faults and qualities as an ordinary person. Like all other farmers and peasants of villages, he too incurs a huge debt and falls in a trap from where he can't escape until death. Though the novel was written and published before independence and translated in English after independence of India, it is still relevant and resembles with the heart rendering pathos and suffering of the farmers and peasants' lives not only found in the district known for 'white gold' i.e. Yavatmal of Vidarbha in Maharashtra but also the situation is quite similar in the entire India.

Conclusion:

The plight of agriculture and peasant's life has been drastically reflected through various genres of literature which makes the society aware about the circumstances and troubles of farmers' lives. On the one hand, India is known as an agricultural country which causes Indian's economic development, on the other hand a heart rendering picture of indebted and drought-stricken small farmers and peasants rises before us. Sometimes government's schemes cannot reach to them or sometimes nature/weather cannot support them in their harvesting. It is only literature which helps

to heal their woes and sufferings.

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