

Profound Manifestation of Indian Spirit in the Poetry of Sarojini Naidu

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Abstract

As a poet Sarojini Naidu has achieved a prominent place in Indo anglian Literature. It is only because of Sarojini that Indo Anglian gained certain standard and individuality of its own. She belongs to the main stream of Indo Anglian literature. Her poems are quite charming and full of Patriotism. Her poems instantiate cultural way of life of Indians. She proudly mentions how any lady in India is glorified by the people. Comparing woman's life stages with the various colors of bangles Indicates that sarojini strongly believed in Indian scriptures and culture. At the same time, she believed in mandatory embellishment of woman. She became a politician considering the need of politics but basically she is inborned patriotic poetess. Every Indian festival and fair is a subject of pride to her. Her poetry has profound Indianness and Indian spirit. She is proud of India's enriched culture and its rich heritage. 'Palaquin bearers', 'Bangle sellers', and 'India' are some poems which are composed on Indianness manifestating her rich heritage. Every Indian should be proud of her. Sarojini's poetic sense and Indian spirit in her writing is appreciating.

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Introduction

Sarojini Naidu is one of the leading poetesses of Indo-Anglian literature who have written in English and attained to an international status. She led a life of public engagement both as a poet and as a politician. She adroitly lifted politics to artistic sphere in which her life became a poem and a song. It is because of Sarojini Naidu that Indo-Anglian literature gained certain standard and individuality of its own. At present Indo-Anglian literature comes next only to the literature of England and America which poetry were made under adverse circumstances. Sarojini Naidu occupies a prominent place in the history of Indo-Anglian literature. She belongs to the main stream of Indo-Anglian literature. She has become almost a classic in Indian English Literature. She skillfully served the cause of Indo-Anglian poetry at the dawn of twentieth century. She composed charming lyrics by using her creative talents. Her patriotic sense has made her India's distinguished Indian author. Indo-Anglian poetry has become offshoot of Indo-Anglian literature because of Sarojini.

Sarojini was born on 13th February 1879 in a Bengali Brahmin family which has migrated from Brahmanagar, a village of East Bengal. She grew up in an atmosphere of

patriotic culture. Her mother was gentle, quiet and prudent efficient housewife. She was an accomplished cook and offered a lavish hospitality to the guests and visitors. She composed many lyrics and was a musician. Her father Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya was a unique combination of science and literature. He was the first Indian who obtained the degree of doctor of science in English having equal command of Sanskrit. Many languages were spoken in Chattopadhyaya's house. Sarojini's childhood was a happy one. She led a carefree life as her father allowed their children to nurture freely the varied influences to which they were exposed and encouraged them to develop their talent.

Sarojini was educated at Hyderabad and Madras. She passed her matriculation examination from Madras at the early age of twelve. She did constantly well in her studies but her ill health became a stumbling block in her education and she had to discontinue her studies from time to time. After that, she went back at Hyderabad where she spent her time in reading on varied subjects. Her vast reading in early age made her poetess when she composed poem on her fourteenth birthday. The following lines show her serious and matured thoughts. It brings the happiness of a girl spontaneously.

My birthday! O this day I am fourteen
 And childhood's years on golden wings have fled
 Right many a grateful blessing have I seen
 And purest joys on me their lustre shed
 As flew those years over my happy head
 My joys are not what joys to childhood seem
 Not on unthinking sports my soul was fed.
 But nursed it was on many a brighter theme
 And high ideas formed by radiant dream

But soon, Sarojini became aware about the transitoriness of life just after his brother's sad demise. The lines written on her brother's death are contemplative and compels to see correspondence between human life and the life of nature. She writes,

Thou cam's t to us two years ago
 In June when pink wild roses blow
 Beneath the golden skies
 When autumn winds made melody
 And yellow leaves fell from the tree
 God's angels set their seal on thee
 And closed thy lovely eyes.

From the age of thirteen to fifteen, she wrote a number of popular verses which are preserved in National Library Calcutta. Songs is a collection of her earliest poem and reveals her exemplary mind.

On 2nd of December 1898, Sarojini Naidu got married with Govindarajula when when was 19 years old. Govindarajulu was of lower caste and a widower and about ten years older than sarojini. But it is said that he was in every way, an eligible husband of Sarojini. After marriage, Sarojini settled down at Hyderabad and proved to be a good house wife and an ideal mother like her mother. In 1901, she gave birth to a child. Again in 1905, she turned towards literary world with her poetic power by publishing her first volume 'The Golden Threshold' and she continued to write poetry for the next twelve years with equal charm.

In 1912, her second volume of poetry 'The Bird of Time' was published and the 'Broken Wings' in 1917. These four volumes are adequate enough to establish her in the traditions of great woman writers.

Sarojini Naidu dedicated herself to the service of her motherland after the persuasion of Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Mahatma Gandhi became her permanent political teacher. She had inborn affection for the country. When she was studying in London and then Cambridge, she was brought in close contact with the well-known writer Arthur Symons and Edmund Gosse who encouraged her to write on India. She interlinked her love for country with her poetic self. She played an important role in India's freedom struggle. To her, India was not limited up-to the portion of the earth not it was a mere geographical entity. To her, India is a subject of neither a search nor a discovery. It was an ever present reality. It was everywhere: in the paddy-field of Bengal, in the valley of Ganga and Yamuna, in thoughts, feelings, passion, and skill of the people. It was in ancient temples and medieval Mosque. It was in school, palaces, jails and even in Bazaar. In 'In the Bazaar of Hyderabad' the poetess evokes the scene of a jostling bazaar in Hyderabad with exquisite skill and artistry. The readers get to know the intricate details in answers to questions.

What do you sell O ye merchant
 Richly years waves are displayed
 Turbans of crimson and silver
 Tu-mics of purple brocade
 Mirrors with panels of amber
 Daggers with handles of jade
 What do you grind, O ye maidens
 Sandalwood, henna and spice
 What do you call, O ye peddlers
 Chessmen and ivory dice
 What do yo make, O ye goldsmith
 Wrist-let and anklet and ring
 Bells for the feet of blue pigeons
 Frail as a dragon-fly's wing.

This poem is composed as a piece of Swadeshi movement during the British rule in India. Indians had asked to boycott foreign products in support of Indian products. Sarojini portrays a bazaar of Hyderabad where only traditional Indian products are sold. The poetess goes close to the vendors, maiden girls, peddlers, goldsmith, fruit seller and flower girls and appreciate Indian goods so that citizens of India would buy only Indian products. The bazaar shows a sense of rich Indian heritage. By and large, the poem is her protest against British rule. At the same time, the poem is a manifestation of India's enrichment in various products. Indians have no need of foreign products. They even don't have need of tyrannous British rule. We observe an ardent patriotism in the poem. In her poem 'India "we observe same feeling of patriotism. At the same time, poetess expects something from her motherland. First stanza is full of praise asserting vitality of India possessing the power to emerge out of dejection and regain her glory. She says,

O young through all thy immemorial years
 Rise, mother, rise regenerate from thy gloom
 And, like a bride high meted with the spheres
 Beget new glories from the ageless womb.

Then, poet expects that Indian should show, though difficult but not impossible, way of freedom to others slaved nations.

The nations that in fettered darkness weep
 Crave thee to lead them where great morning break
 Mother, O mother, wherefore dost thou sleep?
 Arise and answer, for thy children's sake.

In another poem "The Gift of India" the poetess brings out India's participation in the first world war and her capacity to sacrifice.

Is there aught you need that my hands with hold
 Rich gifts of raiment or grain or gold
 Lo! I have flung to the east and west
 Priceless treasures torn from my breast
 And yielded the sons of my stricken womb
 To the drum beats of duty, the sabres of doom

Here, India herself speaks of priceless gift she had offered to the world. She has lost her children who fought in the First World War. The children are priceless treasures of any country but India sacrificed them for the sake of world. "Palanquin bearers" is a poem which takes up back to ancient India when palanquin were a common sight in the Indian street. The bearers are singing melodious songs in rhythmic harmony with footsteps.

Lightly, O lightly, we bear her along
 She sways like a flower in the wind o our song
 She skims like a bird on the foam of a stream
 She floats like a laugh from the lips of dream
 Gaily, O gaily we glide and sing
 We bear her along like a pearl on a string.

The poem is the great manifestation of Indian spirit. It is an instantiation of cultural way of life o Indians. Songs of bearars indicates embellishment of India. Sarojini Naidu explores how the Indians glorify the lady as if she is a precious thing. Bearers are also happy and filled with joy for they are taking a noble lady. It is noticeable and enlightening that the burden of palki is not cumbersome to them. They sing gaily of the beauty of bride. The heavy palaquin is very light to them as it is an errand of pleasure and joy. It can be happened in India only where women are respected. The poetess compares the beauty of bride with that of beauty of pearl hanging from the string. The images inherent in singing, skimming, floating, hanging, springing and falling are apt kinetic and the poetess has manifested India huge cultural enrichment through these images.

“Bangle Sellers ‘ is such a poem exploring lives of Bangle sellers and Indian woman’s life in different stages like maiden, bride, middle age.

Bangle sellers are we who bear
 Our shining loads to the temple fair
 Who will buy these delicate, bright
 Rainbow tinted circles of light
 Lustrous tokens of radiant lives
 For happy daughtes and happy wives.

The poetess compares woman’s life stages with that of colors of bangles. The poem brings out the social, religious, spiritual and symbolic value of bangles in Indian culture. Bangles are mandatory embellishment of woman. It manifests happiness, peace, prosperity and satisfaction of the housewife who is supposed to be an incarnation of Mahalaxmi. The poem throws light on Indian culture and the people. It is set in Indian settings and depicts a fair where the bangle sellers sell their bangles. At the same time, it is appreciating that, it is a temple fair. The temples are having a prominent place in Indian culture and poetess does not forget India’s great heritage of temples.

Conclusion

Sarojini Naidu is a patriotic poet who is proudly wrote on Indian culture and its rich heritage. She led a life of public engagement both as a poet and as a politician. She utilized her poetic gift to arise the Indians from the sleep and to protest against the tyrannous British. She is less politician and the great social reformer who lifted politics to artistic sphere considering the need of nation. It is only her patriotic sense that has made her a distinguished author and politician. She willfully dedicated her poetry and even herself to the service of her mother land. She never thought India as merely the subject of research or discovery. It was not also a dream land to her. She was always ever present to her. Such type of partiotism is rarely found in Indian politics. Her poems are nothing but a manifestation of inborn Indian spirit. Her Indianness and tremendous Indian spirit is appreciating.

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