



Kanthapura and Malgudi as Fictional Backgrounds : A Comparative Study

Sapna Kumari*, Priyanka Kumari*, Sagaya Rani Lourdu Mary*, Shahla Rehana**

*B.A. III, 2007-2010, English Honours, Patna Women's College, Patna University, Patna

**Lecturer, Department of English, Patna Women's College, Patna University, Patna

The novels 'Kanthapura' and 'The Guide' are written by the Indian English writers namely Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan respectively. Kanthapura is totally a rural village of Pre-Independence India, as against Malgudi, a semi-urban town of Post-Independence India. Rao's intention through the novel is to reveal the woes and sufferings, social evils and idiosyncrasies, oddities and weaknesses of human character. The most striking point is that in spite of its setting, Raja Rao has tried to show how the freedom movement had reached the rural folk through Moorthy, the hero of the novel. They called this movement Gandhian movement. As Kanthapura is a typical Indian village, it has a wholly religious folk and it is through religion that the freedom struggle takes shape in Kanthapura. Gandhi is a legendary figure for the villagers and is the subject of bhajans and harikathas. Slowly and steadily religion awakens in them the need for freedom, the walls of orthodoxy are suddenly breached and the villagers start a mass movement for the freedom of India.

Malgudi in the novel 'The Guide' symbolizes a mini-India, an imaginary town developing from a rural looking conservative town into a Post-Independent modern town beset with complex realities. The male protagonist of the novel is a typical Indian character; scenes and symbols, and traits and manners are typically Indian. Kanthapura's form and narrative technique belong to a living Indian tradition. It focuses on the presentation and Raja Rao's intimate knowledge of the Indian village. The sanitized, untouched quality of Malgudi is shattered with the arrival of railways, new people, and new ideas within it. In fact, the novel transforms modes of living and social patterns of behaviours. Malgudi is a mini-India, it represents the pulse and motion of the country, which includes the coming in of the railways, snake charmers, dance shows, etc. Malgudi imbibes in itself the whole of India with its people, culture, superstition, beliefs and natural landscapes like caves, temples, trees etc. The adulterous relationship between Raju and Rosie is the fall out of modernity. Raju, the fraud, becomes the martyr of Mangala village, and it is the result of the need felt by the villagers for spiritual mooring.

Key words: Fictional background, gandhian movement, spiritual mooring.
