

Chapter: 6

Conclusion

Looking at various representations of regionality observed in both the novelists: Narayan and Pannalal have similar spirit. Both have attempted to depict the indigenous nature of a nation and its cultural heritage. They have preferred to draw the selected regions which symbolize and define the nation in general. The majority of their novels can be read as postcolonial texts. Postcoloniality in the literature showed its live appeal to construct and modify the indigenous nature of a nation and its regions. These literary artists have tried to locate native culture through their fabricated mythical plots to fortify the idea of nation and nationalism. Their representation of the region does not merely appreciate the indigenous virtues, but also define certain weaknesses located in it since past. Their effort is to remind its inhabitants, where do they stand and what the predetermined aims at shaping the ideal nation were. The thematic factors like colonial alienation, exploitation, injustice and revival of original culture, etc. interwoven by the novelists explore certain virtues and vices prevailing in its existing culture. The ultimate aim of these literary artists is to recover the value based culture.

The geographical sketches of Malgudi and Ishan regions respectively represent chiefly social and cultural scenario of contemporary phase. Theirs' is rather a sociological and a literary region rather than mere geographical one. Narayan's Malgudi delineates urban as well as rural image of India, while Pannalal's Ishan region offers its rural side. Narayan has confessed that his Malgudi is imaginative land and has no connection with any real place. Though, scholars and critics have tried to search this region and offer it various names like Lalgudi or Yadvagiri, but all such attempts proved futile in course of time. Narayan indirectly suggested once that he was fully familiar with South Indian people and its culture. Hence, Malgudi stands for a symbolic portrait of South India, although it cannot be viewed as a mere

meticulous graphical sketch of this region, but can be viewed through general impressions of whole India. Malgudi and its historic importance can be appropriated to many such places in India and its religious and cultural identity defines one common image of India. The chief tone reflected in Narayan's fictional world is mythical truth located in the Holy Scriptures. His favor for Brahminic culture has been criticized often, but with that he could succeed in depicting the contemporary status of Indianness. 'India is a land of jugglers and hypocrite monks and saints' is colonial belief which has been transformed by Narayan in its absolute reality by viewing that so called fraud saints can also serve humanity and perform sacrifices to save its people. The colonial dominance over English education is strictly responded by Narayan when he could view that it can produce mere mechanical man. Narayan shows that here people respect the traditions as tradition bound people feel safety and do not think of crossing certain boundaries established for centuries. Though not all, but certain traditions like marriage ceremony, performance of Yagna and Puja, offerings to Gods and Goddesses, celebration of religious festivals and following the religious norms, etc. support and manage community standards as well as strengthen the social harmony. Such traditions prevent certain nuisances which corrupt and damage its societal frame. On the contrary Narayan has also portrayed some rigid and evil traditions to highlight weak spots sited in Indian culture and civilization. Narayan shows his favor for Ayurvedic treatment guided by the great Indian Rishis. Through the preaching from the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, Narayan approaches the philosophical inquiry into culture to define the essence of the historic past and its significance. It does not mean that Narayan has attachment with only what went before. In fact, he has inserted the past's trail to manage the present. He has woven together the cultural set up of the East and the West to explain the influential state of global development. The Malgudi milieu merges the ancient with modern social and cultural scenario. Narayan emphasizes that colonial hegemony has restricted the

native progress to a greater extent. The indigenous people are conscious enough towards changing values of modernity, but they are not ready to leave the tradition aside. They sometimes show their compromising attitude to be adjusted with recent changes.

Pannalal's creativity offers the rural spirit of native land. What Gandhiji stressed 'true India resides in its villages' is fully manifested in Pannalal's fictional world. Pannalal's Ishan region represents an interior areas of north Gujarat, which visualizes the brave face of the community that suffers and survives under wretched predicament. The indigenous oppressions and natural disaster challenge their existence, but their confident willpower remains unshaken. Illiteracy is the major source of their pains and sufferings. Superstitions and orthodox traditions constantly suffocate their living yet they enjoy their earthly role. The prime focus of Pannalal is rural culture and his creativity favors only rustic aroma of native land. It seems that the innocence mentality and delicate hearts of rural people attract him much. Pannalal views his Ishan region detached from urban flow. The people portrayed in Pannalal's region generally represent the farmer community. Their whole life is full of drudgery. They grow grains to manage their livelihood. Bania and Shahukars in the form of native colonial loot and exploit them. The producer of grains remains hungry in the days of famine. They are forced to sell their valuable assets like land and buffaloes to riches. Those who cannot suffer hunger further, even sell their chastity to earn bread. A man like Kalu is not ready to beg as a farmer because his soul doesn't permit him to do so. To him begging is worse than hunger and how the farmer, the nourisher-preservers of the world can beg to live. The character like Bhagat seems selfless servant of humanity. It doesn't mean that Pannalal portrays only decency observed in this community, but certain evil characters belong to the same community like Mali, Ranchhod, Nano, etc. reminds one the wretched aspect of human nature. The whole region breathes under the dominance of native oppressors. The absence of even primary facilities like schools and hospitals has cut it off entirely from civilized culture.

Though colonial air has already spread and encircled the whole region, wherein the activity like religious transformation takes place. In fact, Pannalal represents the symbolic image of peasant and rural region of pre-independence phase when science and technology were not fully progressed. Even such concepts were too far to be visualized in interior areas. Except some metros and towns where the colonial power existed, the majority of the towns and villages remained aloof from common facilities. Life observed in Pannalal's region has natural movement. The sky and the earth, the rivers and the mountain, the fairs and the festivals, the farming and drudgery, etc. are their natural breathing. Modern technological innovations remain miraculous to these people. The writer shows the initial stage of development of the nation where people are not ready to be attuned with growing stage. During such transitional phase, they could neither leave off their age-old traditional mentality nor accept forthcoming changes entirely. The colonial gifts like: the train and tea, bring curiosity among them. When people see the vehicle like jeep somewhere they rush to see the wonder. *Goras* seem like a divine being to these innocent people. Their natural learning institutions are fair and farms, social gatherings and traditional norms in place of schools and academic institutions. They could sing, dance, narrate the folktales and define orally and perform various activities of bread earning with the help of natural resources. They prefer to be sheltered under strange superstitions. The societal frame has trapped them to think further. Though, some could challenge their orthodox frame. They do not have high expectations of acquiring power or earn too much money. They desire to live a very simple life in a limited frame of their region. The world outside their region remains unknown to these poor people. They hardly receive the chance to meet the contemporary movement of the surrounding universe. They receive the nourishment from Mother Nature, Hence, theirs is the natural world to grow, develop and ultimately die in the land where they were born.

Narayan and Pannalal both have attempted to awaken native spirit through their artistic intellect. As stated earlier in the thesis, both were the products of the first half of the 20th century, when colonial hegemony had its grip over the whole nation. Narayan remained a witness to colonial governance while Pannalal had experienced the dominance of colonial people in the form of native colonization. Hence, colonial abandonment and restructuring of original culture was their prime concern. The wind of change had left its influence over their creativity. To them the construction of the nation and the preservation of its age-old values remained the chief deliberation. They tried to revive the cultural scenario of native land. They depicted the regional culture, especially either of imagined or real land symbolizing the image of the nation in general. Regionality amalgamated into nationality ultimately represents the overall image of indigenous consciousness. During the transitional phase, Narayan and Pannalal remained social reformers without advocating any movement. Both have visualized Gandhian perspectives in their novels. Indianness has been woven in such a way to their novels that it defines the authentic model of country life. Both have been considered regional novelists for introducing the regionality of two different parts of the nation. In the states like Gujarat and Rajasthan people often use to say region as *Desh*, *Vatan* or *Mulak* which actually signifies the connotations as nation, native or motherland in general. Hence, 'Maro Mulak' (my region) not only claims the individual image of any single region or state, but the whole nation in general. Though, the imagined regions by both the novelists cannot be viewed as a full version or authentic image of India as a nation, but at least offer a recognizable image of Indianness. Both, *Malgudi*, the southern and *Ishan*, the north-east region have a variety of differences in context to their religious, political, social or educational set up. Even traditional and cultural trends differ somehow, but either in one way or the other, their connection seems quite natural, and they seem to match or mirroring each other. All the aspects of regionality have one common appeal of indigenous spirits of country

life. The life portrayed in it represents the colonial and post-colonial phase of indigenous land.

Both Narayan and Pannalal portray the domestic world of Indian life. Their major focus is familial ties which supports and unites them to survive the societal harmony. The various relationships like father-son, husband-wife, lover-beloved, mother-son, mother-daughter relationship, etc. have been depicted with a view to highlight family values and its significance. People have due reverence for domestic ties established since centuries. Some of them show their hatred and tried to resist the age-old traditions, but could not thrive. Societal frame has two folded aspects. Sometimes they weaken the progressing form or prove advantageous. They develop either positive or negative attitude in one way or the other. The following of traditional path without crossing its boundaries offers them safety and security. They of course are fully known with the fact that whatever applied or practiced ever since the past is not all good, but the absence of social support places them in a wretched predicament. The characters like Savitri, Chandran, Kalu, Kanji, Rupa, Dariyav, Rumal, and Himmat react towards certain evils, but apart from some, most of them could not succeed in their anticipated goal. Some of them are strained to compromise with the contemporary stage and return ultimately under the shelter of orthodox set-up. They could at least challenge the existed status of society and sow the seeds to initiate the reform in upcoming stage. Theirs' is the effort to retain the moral values, removal of social evils and superstitions, and rectifying the order of gender equality without disturbing the indigenous form of Indianness further.

While surveying certain primary biographical factors like the birth, family environment, educational status, ambiance or creative excellence, etc. in both Narayan and Pannalal are not fully identical, but the regional perspectives through their fictions viewed by both these novelists show overall similar kind of impression. They portray the nation in its harmonized state embodying the native culture and its inherent nature. Both aim at depicting

the realistic representation of the motherland. They have tried to characterize the norms and ideals preached and practiced in India since ages. In a comparative study, the researcher of this thesis would say that none of these two novelists, either Narayan or Pannalal are inferior or superior to each other, but both have individual talents as creators to show their excellent artistic style, language, and broad humanistic vision. Their appeal does not seem confined to only particular region, but seems to move towards universality. Their selection of the particular locale leads the reader to promote the status of our nation and its social panorama globally.

The researcher has analyzed various literary texts by the authors in question along with critical discourses about them to elaborately discuss the concepts and ideas. The first chapter lays out the various concept and the issues of the nation and region and its textual representation as discussed by various theorists and thinkers, while the second chapter scrutinizes the postcolonial aspects in the novels of Narayan and Pannalal. The third and fourth chapters are focused especially on representation of regional consciousness through a variety of angles to have better understanding of the issues involved. The fifth chapter is the comparative study of Narayan and Pannalal to locate certain similarities as well as differences to analyze the common thematic and stylistic dimensions of both the novelists further logically. The researcher has done detailed critical surveys of text. The plot summary of certain texts has been offered, but it has been conducted with a view to explore the key issues though the plots and stories themselves are auxiliary to the argument of the thesis. Read either as symbolic or realistic, the texts embody the wide range of representations of regional and national dimensions.

The rereading and reinterpreting of Narayan's novels with multiple approaches will certainly invite various issues to generate new knowledge. The reassessment of Narayan's fictional world will offer new perspectives in the realm of literary criticism. His creativity

cannot be restricted under a narrow phase. One can also observe the facet of timelessness already woven within his entire imaginative frame. As Roland Barthes rightly justifies the concept of text in *Image_Music-Text*: “A text is not a line of words releasing a single “theological” meaning, but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, bland and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture...” (146).

Without advocating ideals or movements, both Narayan and Pannalal have reflected upon and presented the symbolic representations of certain social and literary movements. The overall orientation of both the novelists seems to be towards an identical direction. Representing postcolonial perspectives in their fictional world, both Narayan and Pannalal have sought the various themes based on social reality and interpreted the social scenario realistically. Their fictional universe can also be studied in context to social and cultural movements conducted in India since past to present times.

R. K. Narayan remained one of the three leading figures of Indian writing in English, along with Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao while Pannalal Patel stood as an example of a man who in spite of scant formal schooling, rose to become one of the greatest of Gujarati writers. Pannalal seems to some extent different from his forerunners as without pursuing any political ideology overtly, he has depicted the true heart of human being in a humanitarian fashion. Narayan has portrayed the contemporary Indian life, traditions and culture in their vivid and realistic forms. In his fictitious Malgudi milieu, Narayan could favour the indigenous culture and disapprove certain limits enforced by colonial rule. He has also traced the socio-political changes of British and post-independent phase in his novels. Narayan, a true artist pursues the art for art's sake principle, yet the overall impression of his creativity indirectly confirms that he writes with a purpose. His prime concern is not to preach any philosophical code directly, yet remains successful in depicting certain life values through his

comic vision. Pannalal neither remains the reformer nor a preacher, but makes his reader realize the realities of life and reflects upon whatever he saw, experienced and lived. He doesn't seem to separate the desire for social welfare and creative writing. His approach confirms his humanitarianism.

While conducting the comparative study of these novelists, certain similarities as well as differences in their creative aspects, individual talents, etc. have been found. Looking at their family background, Narayan received the rich heritage of knowledge from every side either says from his father, uncle or grandmother, while to Pannalal his illiterate mother proved to some extent supportive and told him about the horrible famine called *chhapano* orally. Narayan was fortunate in gaining the wisdom and knowledge imparting from each direction since childhood. His' was the modern, educated and civilized family from where he would have sought out the essence to sharpen his pen. On the contrary, except the little parental support, Pannalal wasn't benefited much through family members. Pannalal symbolically represented the rural India, while, Narayan communicated urban India. Pannalal represented the northern while Narayan offered the southern impression of India. As a product of Indo-British culture, Narayan had received an English education since his early days while Pannalal had very little opportunity to receive even Gujarati secondary level education. Perhaps, absence of refined and stylistic language in Pannalal's fiction is due to his incomplete educational treatment. Both Pannalal and Narayan had suffered the traditional rigidity of social framework, but such orthodox frame shaped their brilliance and perception of life. The social scenarios observed in their writing point at such experiences in their lives. To Pannalal, survival was the major concern because he belonged to a poor family, whereas the financial condition of Narayan's family was much better. In promoting Pannalal's literary career, Umashankar and Sundaram were the major contributors whereas to Narayan, Graham Greene proved the sole patron. The local environment, the spiritual touch and Gandhiji's

indirect inspiration had provoked Pannalal's creativity, while in Narayan's case; writers like Marie Carelli and Alexander McCall Smith made a tremendous impact. However, whatever he wrote was the outcome of his exploration of the experienced world. Both, Narayan and Pannalal had a profound affection for their native land. Being a son of the farmer, Pannalal had deep emotional attachment to his land. He had often worked on the fields. Narayan too, developed an interest in agriculture while living alone in Mysore for some time, although it was not a regular profession for him. Both could receive favourable response except in some instances. Nevertheless, they could profitably expand the range of their readership extensively through their artistic excellence.

While portraying the socio-cultural and political set-up of their regions, both seem to contemplate over the traditional culture, incorporating various themes like the human relationship, religious conventions and superstitions, natural disaster, colonial suppression and social evils along with the Gandhian bearings. Both writers react and support the native and foreign aspects of their cultures in a comparable mode through their fictional universe. Narayan's is a fashionable, whereas Pannalal's is a rural world lacking the touch of the modern world, and seems separated from the society in the initial stage of the 20th century. The poetic sense of Pannalal seems typical in portraying the regional nature; whereas in rendering the regional world, Narayan renders an authentic impression through his command over simple and concrete language. Narayan pays more attention to intellect than emotion while for Pannalal emotions mean more than intellect. Pannalal has mainly concentrated on representing indigenous cultural identity, whereas Narayan focuses not just on local and national, but also on international cultural dimensions. Hence, Narayan's region in comparison moves from local to international, while Pannalal depicts chiefly the Indian villages of the first half of 20th century India. Both of them aim at depicting the symbolic form of India as a nation through widening the regional boundaries into a national one. Both

writers portray the region as a metaphor for India, and seem to engage with the postcolonial dimensions of the nation.

Narayan has shown his genuine concern for the nation by microcosmic explorations of individual feelings and experience in the form of a novel. The majority of his novels reveal his varied anxiety over national fate. This kind of the concern seems to be articulated with a political conflict. He has visualized Malgudi as the traditional image of India. To some of the contemporary readers, Narayan's approach often seems erroneous as an expression of an outdated upper-caste Hindu-centred version of Indianess particularly a Tamil Brahmin perspective and hence, cannot be accepted as a national metanarrative. Owing to such limitation it fails to address the multiplicity of discourses that have constituted India. Of course, Narayan's Malgudi cannot be a real replica of the nation, but at least it defines certain dimensions of the nation symbolically which cannot be denied. Malgudi is an episteme which incorporates various ways of perceiving India as mythological and spiritual, social and psychological which often seems to be matched together to formulate its typical cultural geography. This imaginative region seems far more than its physical setting. It remains a versatile and intermediary site. It becomes an interface between old and contemporary conceptions. Malgudi a semi-urban town has been portrayed from varying angles through which Narayan also suggests the alternative ways of reading places. Similarly, when one observes Pannalal's representation of the rural region and tries to compare it with the modern status of either region or nation, it becomes rather complicated to offer it an authentic image in general. Pannalal has depicted the rural culture of pre and post-independence phase, especially of border areas of north Gujarat. Though, colonial and native colonial ruling system, their exploitative nature, illiteracy, ignorance, rigid caste-system and superstitions, etc. have gradually decreased, even the majority of these features have no place in the modern status of the region. The spread of education and public awareness towards individual

rights has reduced the severity of these drawbacks in the present era. The economic status of farmers and labourers has been getting better due to the affordable price of grain, milk, etc. Similarly, use of modern technology in agriculture sector has reduced their physical labour to a greater extent and various government schemes have improved the quality of their livelihood. However, one cannot claim that the past scenario has completely been changed, it is equally true that the interior areas still suffers the rigid caste-structure, superstitions, female exploitation, insufficiency of required medical treatment, and scarcity of waters for agriculture.

Region represented by both these novelists offers the portrayal of social, religious, political scenario of the contemporary nation. Both these representations of region indicate that they are more literary and cultural ones than merely geographical areas. To uphold indigenous cultural identity, the betterment of societal, political and religious frame, the removal of inequality, evil conventions and superstitions, etc. seems their chief concern. Of course only literary representations of both these novelists do not capture the wide range of complexities and dimensions of region and nation, but offer a useful way of engaging with these multifaceted issues.

Works Cited:

Barthes, Roland. *Image_Music-Text* London: Fontana, 1977. Print.