



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN-SOCIAL SCIENCE: A ARTS & HUMANITIES - PSYCHOLOGY

Volume 16 Issue 7 Version 1.0 Year 2016

Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal

Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)

Online ISSN: 2249-460x & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Sarojini Naidu is a Wave of An Indian Ocean

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Abstract- The Nightingale of India, Sarojini Naidu was a prolific writer and poet. Her poems express the personal emotions and quality of life through rhyme. Her spontaneous overflow of emotions and Indian ethos is poured out in a lyrical style. This fusion of feelings, music and imagery in expressing Indian life has made her worthy to be called, "The Nightingale of India".

With this lyrical wealth, she has beautifully expressed the hearts and emotions of Indians. She attempted to write mostly short poems, each dealing with a single concept and emotion. She has dealt with various concepts like the life of Indian people, beauty of nature, philosophy of life, Indian women, and patriotism. She was given the name Bharat Kokila on account of the beautiful and rhythmic words of her poems that could be sung as well. "Mrs Naidu has not only enriched our language, but has enabled us to grow into intimate relation with the spirit, the emotions and glamour of the East."

GJHSS-A Classification: FOR Code: 950199



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I. INTRODUCTION

She was born in Hyderabad. Sarojini Chattopadhyay, later Naidu belonged to a Bengali family of Kulin Brahmins. But her father, settled in Hyderabad State. *Sarojini Naidu's* mother *Barada Sundari Devi* was a poetess *baji* and used to write poetry in Bengali. *Sarojini Naidu* was the eldest among the eight siblings. One of her brothers *Birendranath* was a revolutionary and her other brother *Harindranath* was a poet, dramatist, and actor.

Sarojini Naidu was a brilliant student. She was proficient in Urdu, Telugu, English, Bengali, and Persian. At the age of twelve, *Sarojini Naidu* attained national fame when she topped the matriculation examination at Madras University. Her father wanted her to become a mathematician or scientist but *Sarojini Naidu* was interested in poetry. Once she was working on an algebra problem, and when she couldn't find the solution she decided to take a break, and in the same book she wrote her first inspired poetry. She got so enthused by this that she wrote "The Lady of the Lake", a poem 1300 lines long. When her father saw that she was more interested in poetry than mathematics or science, he decided to encourage her. With her father's support, she wrote the play "*Maher Muneer*" in the Persian language. Dr. Chattopadhyaya distributed some copies among his friends and sent one copy to the *Nizam of Hyderabad*. Reading a beautiful play written by a young girl, the *Nizam* was very impressed. The college gave her a scholarship to study abroad. At the age of 16 she got admitted to King's College of England. At the age of 16, she traveled to England to study first at King's College London and later at Girton College,

Cambridge. During her stay in England, *Sarojini* met Dr. Govindarajulu Naidu, a non-Brahmin and a doctor by profession, and fell in love with him. After finishing her studies at the age of 19, she got married to him during the time when inter-caste marriages were not allowed. Her father was a progressive thinking person, and he did not care what others said. Her marriage was a very happy one.

a) *Sarojini naidu As A Nature Poetess*

Sarojini Naidu's conception of nature is longed with her innate best for romanticism. The colours, the sounds and lights, the scents and the touch of natural objects fascinated and thrilled her. Her poems reveal a spontaneous understanding and acceptance of the Indian point of view on the question of man's relationship with nature. This point of view is seen throughout the Indian literature and mythology from the Vedic hymns right up to the poetry of the modern age. In the Indian tradition man's superiority is not explained in terms of his unique ability to express creatively the harmony between his own life and the life of nature. Man and Nature enrich and complement each other. Their dependence is mutual. There is a common stream of life, a rhythmic power, which animates both nature and man. Her early English poetry is mostly imitative of English colours and odours of skylarks and nightingales and is reminiscent of the English poetry of *John Keats*, *P.B. Shelley* and *Alfred Lord Tennyson*, the poet Laureate of England. But to the great surprise of *Sarojini Naidu* it was Edmund Gosse who advised her to write about things, Indian. She immediately acted on his advice and began to write about Indian flowers and Indian seasons. Her poems in nature are rich in oriental colours and magnificence.

Sensuousness is the predominant quality in her nature poetry. Her poetic world is the ordinary world clarified and enriched by the sensitivity and delicacy of her imagination. The subject of her poetry is the simple, familiar and unpretentious world of natural feelings and emotions, simple joys and sorrows, vivid memories and reveries, poignant recognitions all characterized by the richness and poise of the Indian life and landscape. *Sarojini Naidu's* sympathy for nature is expressed more directly in her description of farms, orchards, groves and forests than in her poems about rivers or lakes. She took great delight in the renewal and change that earth undergoes from season to season. All her affection was concentrated on spring (Rituraj), the Monarch of the seasons— spring rather than the other seasons. *Sarojini*

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Naidu's love for self, love for the concrete as manifested in its various flowers, birds, seasons and fragrances .

II. INDIANNESS OF SAROJINI NAIDU

This prophetic advice was the biggest influence on *Sarojini Naidu*. Thus Indianness which implies Indian not only in the choice of subjects and sentiments but also in setting, imagery and diction becomes an important, if not the most important aspect of the poetry of Naidu. For the sake of systematic discussion the topic can be analysed under several heads, namely poems on Indian mysticism, poems expressing the patriotic note, poems projecting various facets of Islam and Muslim life, poems poetizing the nature of India, poems using mythical and legendary figures of India and poems on common Indian life.

Poems on Indian Mysticism: Naidu presents Indian mysticism in *Salutation to Eternal Peace*, *The Soul's Prayer* and, *To a Buddha Seated in a Lotus*. She has gone through gay and sad experiences in her life. So she longs to know the secret to life, death and love. In *The Soul's Prayer* she requests God:

"Give me to drink each joy and pain
Which thy eternal hand can meet.
For my insatiate soul would drain
Earth's utmost bitter, utmost sweet."

Naidu's poetry has emotional depth and intellectual vigour that leads to express the mystic experiences steeped in spirituality. Spirituality, according to most adherents, is an essential part of an individual's holistic health and well-being. "*Village Songs*" is a multidimensional poem with interplay of the real, mystical, spiritual and mythical. It expresses a maiden's fear in a long and lonely way which she has to cover after filling her pitchers from the *Jamuna*. On a deeper perception, it is a song of the soul craving for union with the divine. The soul is caught in the vicissitudes of this temporal world. On the mythical level, this is the archetypal love cry of *Radha* for the eternal flute player *Krishna*.

Sarojini Naidu's poetry on mysticism is not only based on Indian mythology but also on Islamic belief. In "The Imam Bara" Naidu described the *Imam Bara* of Lucknow which is a chapel of lamentation where Shiah community celebrates the tragic martyrdom of *Ali*, *Hassan*, and *Hussain* during the mournful month of *Moharram*.

III. POEMS ON COMMON INDIAN LIFE

With almost striking sensuousness Naidu has projected common Indian life in her poems. The anapaestic lines from *Palanquin Bearers*, the much anthologized first poem in *The Golden Threshold* conjure up the rhythmic movement of the men carrying palanquins:

"Lightly, Lightly, we bear her along
She sways like a flower in the wind of our song;
She skims like a bird on the foam of a stream,
She floats like a laugh from the lips of a dream"

In another popular poem *Bangle Sellers* each of the four stanzas describes bangles of different hues that will match the women wearing them: 'rainbow-tinted circles of light' for happy daughters and wives; 'silver and blue as the mountain mist' for a maiden; 'sunlit orn' and 'the flame of her marriage fire' for the bride; 'purple and gold-flecked gray' for the woman who has 'journeyed through life midway'. In her poetry one finds Indian weavers weaving in varying colours robe of a new born child, the marriage veils of a queen and a dead man's funeral shroud; Moreover various Indian festivals like *Raksha Bandhan*, *Diwali*, *Vasantpanchami* and *Nagapanchami* find a place in her poetry. The *Village Song*, based on a village woman's daily chore of fetching water from the *Jamuna* river, faithfully presents a vignette of life in the country side—a lonesome village girl carrying back home water-filled pitchers on her head, a lonely village path with dangers lurking around, especially at nightfall with darkness engulfing the neighbourhood. The magnitude of the difficulties and dangers is highlighted by the possibility of a storm breaking with menacing light, flashes with no safe shelter around. A similar humanistic meaning may be read into *Coromandel Fishers* written in the form of a clarion call given by the brave heroes of the deep to their vessels on the sea.

IV. SAROJINI NAIDU AS A FREEDOM FIGHTER

1. Sarojini Naidu will be always remembered for her notable contribution to the Indian Independence Movement. She joined the movement in 1905 and was totally committed to the cause ever since. While working for the Indian National Congress, she was introduced to many eminent personalities such as *Muhammad Ali Jinnah*, *Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, *Jawaharlal Nehru* and *Mahatma Gandhi* with whom she shared a special bond and a very good rapport.

During 1915-1918, she traveled across India, lecturing on social welfare, women empowerment, emancipation and nationalism. Inspired by *Jawaharlal Nehru*, she embarked on providing help and support for the indigo workers in *Champaran* who were being subjected to violence and oppression.

She was responsible for awakening the women of India. She re-established their self-esteem and often said, "When there is oppression, the only self-respecting thing is to rise and say this shall cease today, because justice is my right".

With the introduction of the *Rowlatt Act* in 1919, Sarojini joined the *Non-Cooperation Movement* organized and led by *Mahatma Gandhi*. In the same year, she was appointed the *Home Rule League's*

ambassador to England. In 1924, she became a delegate to the East African Indian Congress. In 1925, Naidu was appointed the President of the National Congress thus making her the first Indian woman to hold the post. With the Indian Independence in 1947, Sarojini Naidu was made the Governor of the Uttar Pradesh in the wake of her contribution to the movement.

Sarojini Naidu joined the Indian national movement in the wake of the Bengal Partition in 1905. In the year 1925, Sarojini Naidu presided over the annual session of Indian National Congress in Kanpur. In the year 1929, she presided over the East African Indian Congress in South Africa. She was honoured with the Kaiser-i-Hind medal by the British Government for her work during the plague epidemic in India. In the year 1930, Sarojini Naidu participated in the Round Table Conference with *Mahatma Gandhi* and *Madan Mohan Malaviya*. She also played a leading role during the Civil Disobedience Movement and was jailed along with *Gandhiji* and other leaders. In the year 1942, *Sarojini Naidu* was arrested during the Quit India Movement and jailed for 21 months with *Gandhiji*.

the period from 1917 to 1919 was the most dynamic phase of Sarojini's career. During this time, she campaigned for the Montagu Chelmsford Reforms, the Khilafat issue, the draconian Rowlett Act and the Satyagraha. When Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience Movement, she proved a faithful lieutenant. With great courage she quelled the rioters, sold proscribed literature, addressed frenzied meetings on the carnage at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. In 1930 when Mahatma Gandhi chose her to lead the Salt Satyagraha the stories of her courage became legion. After Gandhi's arrest she had prepared 2,000 volunteers under the scorching sun to raid the Dahrsana Salt Works, while the police faced them half a mile up the road with rifle, lathis (canes) and steel tipped clubs. The volunteers wildly cheered when she shook off the arm of the British police officer who came to arrest her and marched proudly to the barbed wire stockade where she was interned before being imprisoned. Freedom struggle was in full force and she came under the influence of Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Gandhi. Gokhale advised her to spare all her energy and talents for nation's cause. She gave up writing poetry and fully devoted herself to emancipation of women education.

V. CONCLUSION

On March 2 1949, she took her last breath and India lost her beloved child, "*Bulbul*". She died in her office at Lucknow at the age of seventy. Nevertheless, her name will be written in Gold in the history of India as an inspiring poet and a brave freedom fighter. She is commemorated through the naming of several institutions including the Sarojini Naidu College for

Women, Sarojini Naidu Medical College, Sarojini Devi Eye Hospital and Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad.

Aldous Huxley wrote "It has been our good fortune, while in Bombay, to meet Mrs. *Sarojini Naidu*, the newly elected President of the All-India Congress and a woman who combines in the most remarkable way great intellectual power with charm, sweetness with courageous energy, a wide culture with originality, and earnestness with humor. If all Indian politicians are like Mrs. Naidu, then the country is fortunate indeed."

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