



Q1. Explain the following :

(a) Social changes in Britain which led to an increase in women readers.

(b) What actions of Robinson Crusoe make us see him as a typical coloniser ? [CBSE Sept. 2011]

Or

“Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe made the readers feel that they were part of a superior community”. Support the statement. [CBSE 2013]

Or

What actions of Robinson Crusoe made him as a typical coloniser ? Explain. [CBSE 2013]

(c) After 1740, the readership of novels began to include poorer people.

(d) Novelists in colonial India wrote for a political cause.

Or

How does the novel Pariksha Guru reflect the inner and outer world of the newly emerging middle classes ? [CBSE Sept. 2010]

Answer: (a) (i) The most exciting element of the novels of the 18th century was the involvement of women. The eighteenth century saw the middle classes become more prosperous. Women got more leisure to read as well as write novels. And novels began exploring the world of women- their emotions and identities, their experiences and problems.

(ii) Many novels were about domestic life— a theme about which women were allowed to speak with authority. They drew upon from their experiences, wrote about family life, and earned public recognition.

(iii) The novels of Jane Austen give us a glimpse of the world of women in genteel rural society in early-nineteenth century Britain. They make us think about a society which encouraged women to look for ‘good’ marriages, and find wealthy or propertied husbands. The first sentence of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* states : ‘It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.’

(b) The hero of Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) is an adventurer and slave trader. Shipwrecked on an island, Crusoe treats coloured people not as human beings equal to him, but as inferior creatures. He rescues a ‘native’, and makes him his slave. He does not ask for his name but arrogantly gives him the name, Friday. But at times, Crusoe’s behaviour was not seen as unacceptable or odd, for most writers saw colonialism as natural. Colonised people were seen as primitive and barbaric, less than human; and colonial rule was considered necessary to civilize them, and make them fully human.

(c) Readership of novels began to include proper people after 1740 because :

(i) The circulation of novels increased with the introduction of circulating libraries.

(ii) Technological improvements in printing brought down the price of books and innovations in marketing led to expanded sales.

(iii) In France, publishers found that they could make super profits by hiring out novels by the hour. The novel was one of the first

mass produced items to be sold.

- (iv) The worlds created by the novels were absorbing and believable and they were seemingly real. Novels allowed individuals the pleasure of reading in private, as well as the joy of public reading or discussing stories with friends or relatives.
- (v) In rural areas, people would collect to hear one of them reading a novel aloud, often becoming deeply involved in the lives of the characters.

(d) (i) Pariksha Guru reflects the inner and outer world of the newly emerging middle classes. The characters in the novel are caught in the difficulty of adapting to colonised society, and at the same time, preserving their culture and traditions.

(ii) Premchand's Sewasadan deals mainly with the poor condition of women in society. Issues like child marriage and dowry are woven into the story of the novel. It also tells us about the ways in which the Indian upper classes used whatever little opportunities they got from colonial authorities to govern themselves.

(iii) Potheri Kunjambu, a 'lower-caste' writer from north Kerala, wrote a novel called Saraswativijayam in 1892, mounting a strong attack on caste oppression.

(iv) From the 1920s, in Bengal too, a new kind of novel emerged that depicted the lives of peasants and 'low' castes. Advaita Malla Burman's (1914-51) Titash Ekti Nadir Naam (1956) is an epic about the Mallas, a community of fisherfolk who live off Fishing in the river, Titash.

(v) In Bengal, many historical novels were about Marathas and Rajputs. These novels produced a sense of a pan- Indian belonging.

(vi) Bankim's Anandamath (1882) is a novel about a secret Hindu militia that fights Muslims to establish a Hindu kingdom. It was a novel that inspired many kinds of freedom fighters.

(vii) Premchand's novels, for instance, are filled with all kinds of powerful characters drawn from all levels of the society. In his novels we meet aristocrats and landlords, middle-level peasants and landless labourers, middle class professionals, and people from all the margins of the society.

Q2. Outline the changes in technology and society which led to an increase in the readers of the novel in the eighteenth century Europe. [CBSE Sept. 2013]

Answer: (i) The invention of the print in the 18th century led to the popularity of the novels because now it became quite easy to print novels in large numbers. In ancient times, manuscripts were handwritten, and hence, their availability was very limited.

(ii) The novels dealt with many social issues such as love and marriage, proper conduct for men and women, and so on. So common people were attracted towards them.

(iii) Novels appealed to all the sections of the society, both middle class people like the shopkeepers and the clerks, as well as the aristocratic and gentlemanly classes.

(iv) Novels not only attacked the ills of the society, but also suggested remedies. So they were much liked by one and all.

(v) The novels became a popular medium of entertainment among the middle class and women readers.

(vi) Most of the novelists used the vernacular, the language that is spoken by the common people.

Q3. Write a note on :

(a) Hie Oriya Novel

(b) Jane Austen's portrayal of women

(c) The picture of the new middle class which the novel Pariksha Guru portrays.

Answer: (a) The Oriya Novel: In 1877-78, Ramashankar Ray, a dramatist, began serialising the first Oriya novel Saudamani. But he could not complete it. Within thirty years, however, Odisha produced a major novelist in Fakir Mohon Senapati (1843- 1918).

The title of his novel Chaa Maria Atha Guntha (1902) portrays six acres and thirty- two decimals of land. It announces a new kind of novel that will deal with the question of land and its possession. It is the story of Ramchandra Mangaraj, a landlord's manager, who cheats his idle and drunken master, and then eyes the plot of fertile land owned by Bhagia and Shariya, a childless " weaver couple. Mangaraj fools this couple, and puts them into his debt so that he can take over their land. This pathbreaking work showed that the novel could make rural issues an important part of urban Ans. preoccupations. In writing this, Fakir Mohon anticipated a host of writers .in Bengal and elsewhere.

(b) Jane Austen was an English novelist who gives us a glimpse of the world of women in the general rural society in the early 19th century. Her novels make us think about a society which encouraged women to look for 'good' marriages, and find wealthy or propertied husbands. The first sentence of Jane Austen's (1775-1817) Pride and Prejudice states : 'It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.' This observation allows us to see the behaviour of the protagonists, who are preoccupied with marriage and money, as typifying Austen's society.

(c) Pariksha Guru reflects the inner and outer world of the newly emerging middle classes.

The characters in the novel are caught in the difficulty of adapting to colonised society and at the same time, preserving their own cultural identity. The world of colonial modernity seems to be both frightening and irresistible to the characters. The novel clearly intends to teach the reader the 'right way' to live, and expects all 'sensible men' to be worldly-wise and practical, to remain rooted in the values of their own traditions and culture, and to live with, dignity and honour.

In the novel, we see the characters attempting to bridge two different worlds through their actions: they take to new agricultural technology, modernise trading practices, change the use of Indian language, making them capable to transmitting both Western sciences and Indian wisdom.

The young are urged to cultivate the 'healthy habit' of reading the newspapers. But the novel emphasises that all this must be achieved without sacrificing the traditional values of the middle-class household. With all its good intentions, Pariksha Guru could not win many readers, as it was perhaps too moralising in its style.

Q4. Discuss some of the social changes in the nineteenth century Britain which Thomas Hardy and Charles Dickens wrote about.

Answer: Charles Dickens was the foremost English novelist of the Victorian era. He wrote about the terrible effects of industrialisation on people's lives and characters. His novels Hard Times and Oliver Twist became world famous,

(i) Hard Times: His novel Hard Times (1854) describes Coketown, a fictitious industrial town, as a grim place full of machinery, smoking chimneys, rivers polluted purple and buildings that all looked the same. Here workers are known as 'hands', as if they had no identity other than as operators of machines. Dickens criticised not just the greed for profits but also the ideas that reduced human beings into simple instruments of production.

(ii) Oliver Twist: In other novels too, Dickens focused on the terrible conditions of urban . life under industrial capitalism. His Oliver Twist (1838) is the tale of a poor orphan who lived in a world of petty criminals and beggars. Brought up in a cruel workhouse, Oliver was finally adopted by a wealthy man and lived happily ever after.

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