

1. 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?
- (c) After 1740, the readership of novels began to include poorer people.
- (d) Novelists in colonial India wrote for a political cause.

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

- (i) 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 their experience, wrote about family life and earned public recognition.

**(b) What actions of Robinson Crusoe make us see him as a typical colonizer?**

- (i) The hero of Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719) is an adventurer and slave trader, His Shipwrecked on an island.
- (ii) Crusoe treats coloured people not as human beings equal to him, but as inferior creatures.
- (iii) 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 the time.
- (iv) Crusoe's behaviour was not seen as unacceptable or odd, for most writers saw colonialism as natural.
- (v) Colonised people were seen as primitive and barbaric, less than human; and 6nial rule was considered necessary to civilize them, to make them fully human.

**(c) After 1740, the readership of novels began to include poorer people.** Soon, circulation increased with the introduction of circulating libraries in 1740. Technological improvements in printing brought down the price of books and innovations in marketing led to expanded sales.

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 lobe sold.

There were several reasons for its popularity.

- (i) The worlds created by novels was absorbing and believable, they were seemingly real.
  - (ii) While reading novels, the reader was transported to other person's world, and began looking at life as it was experienced by the Meters of the novel.
  - (iii) Besides, novels allowed individuals the pleasure of reading in private, as well as the joy of publicly reading or discussing stories with friends or relatives.
  - (iv) 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) Novelists in colonial India wrote for a political cause.** Colonial administrators found 'vernacular' novels a valuable source of information native life and customs.
- (i) Through various vernacular news papers they criticized the British policies. They glorified India's past.
  - (ii) Many historical were written about Marathas and Rajputs. These novels produced a sense of a pan-Indian belonging.
  - (iii) The imagined nation of novel was so powerful that it could inspire actual political movements.
  - (iv) Many of these novels also reveal the problems of thinking about the nation.
2. Outline the changes in technology and society which led to an increase in readers of the novel in eighteenth century Europe.
- Ans.**
- (i) As elsewhere in the world, in India too, the novel became a popular medium of entertainment among the middle class.
  - (ii) The circulation of printed books allowed people to amuse themselves in new ways.
  - (iii) Picture books, translations from other languages, popular songs sometimes composed on contemporary events, stories in newspapers and magazines-all these offered new forms of entertainment. Within this new culture of print, novels soon became immensely popular.
3. Write a note on :
- (a) The Oriya novel
  - (b) Jane Austen's portrayal of Women.

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

**Ans. (a) The Oriya novel**

- (i) In 1877-78, Ramashankar Ray, a dramatist, began serialising the first Oriya novel Soudamani.
- (ii) Within thirty years, however, Orissa produced a major novelist in Fakir Mohon Senapati (1843-1918). The title of his novel Chaa Mana Atka Guntha (1902) translates as 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.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) Mangaraj fools this couple and puts them into his debt so that he can take over their land.
- (v) This pathbreaking work showed that could make rural issues an important part of urban preoccupations. In writing this Fakirmohon anticipated a host of writers in Bengal and elsewhere.

**(b) Jane Austen's portrayal of Women.**

- (i) The novels of Jane Austen give us a glimpse of the world of women in genteel rural society in early nineteenth century Britain.
- (ii) They make us think about a society which encouraged women to look for 'good' marriages and find wealthy or propertied husbands.
- (iii) 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 good fortune, must be in want of a wife'.
- (iv) This observation allows us to see the behaviour of the protagonists, who are preoccupied with marriage and money, as typifying Austen's society.

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

- (i) In the novel we see the characters attempting to bridge

two different worlds through their actions: they take to new agricultural technology, modernize trading practices, change the use of Indian languages, making them capable of transmitting both western sciences and Indian wisdom.

- (ii) The young are urged to cultivate the ‘healthy habit’ of reading the newspapers.
- (iii) 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.

4. Discuss some of the social changes in the 19th century Britain which Thomas Hardy and Charles Dickens wrote about.

- Ans.**
- (i) Many of Hardy’s novels describe a way of life that was fast vanishing in the countryside.
  - (ii) In ‘Far From the Madding Crowd’ for instance, the setting is a village, a place where mechanization and industrialization have not yet taken over.
  - (iii) The novel opens with the appearance of Gabriel Oak, whose name suggests a link with the eternal rich soil beneath his farmer’s boots.
  - (iv) He is in harmony with nature and lives by its natural laws.
  - (v) His steadfastness symbolizes the old ways, a culture in which loyalty, integrity, modest ambitions and decency are respected values.
  - (vi) Hardy mourns the loss of this world, although he recognizes the advantages of the new world that was emerging at the time.
  - (vii) His novels created a sense understanding of the rural world and the communities who lived within it.
  - (viii) In 1836 a notable event took place when Charles Dicken’s Pickwick Papers was serialised in a magazine. Magazines were attractive since they were illustrated and cheap.
  - (ix) Serialisation allowed readers to relish the suspense, discuss the characters of a novel and live for weeks with their stories-like viewers of television soaps today.
5. Summarise the concern in both nineteenth century Europe and India a women reading novels. What does this suggest about how women were viewed?
- Ans.**
- (i) Many women novelists did not simply popularise the domestic role of women. Often novels would deal with women who broke established norms of society before adjusting to them.

- (ii) Such stories allowed women readers to sympathise with rebellious actions. In Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, published in 1874, young Jane is shown as independent and assertive. While girls of her time were expected to be quiet and well behaved, Jane at the age of ten protests against the hypocrisy of her elders with startling bluntness.
  - (iii) She tells her Aunt who is always unkind to Jane: 'People think you a good woman, but you are bad ... You are deceitful I will never call you aunt as long as I live'.
  - (iv) It is not surprising that many men were suspicious of women writing novels or reading them.
  - (v) This suspicion cut across communities. Hannah Mullens, a Christian missionary and the author of *Karuna o Phulmonir Bibaran* (1852), reputedly the first novel in Bengali, tells her readers that she wrote in secret.
  - (vi) In the twentieth century, Sailabala Ghosh Jaya, a popular novelist, could only write because her husband protected her.
  - (vii) As we have seen in the case of the south, women and girls were often discouraged from reading novels.
6. In what ways was the novel in Colonial India useful for both the colonizers as well as the nationalists?

**Ans.** Novel was useful for colonizer in many ways :

- (i) Colonial administrators found 'vernacular' novels a valuable source of information on native life and customs. Such information was useful for them in governing Indian society, with its large variety of communities and castes.
- (ii) As outsiders, the British knew little about life inside Indian households. The new novels in Indian languages often had descriptions of domestic life. It gave description of Indian custom.

Novel was useful for Indians in many ways :

- (i) Novels also helped in establishing a relationship with the past. Many of them told thrilling stories of adventures and intrigues set in the past. Novels glorified India's part and helped in creating a sense of national pride.
- (ii) Indians used the novel as a powerful medium to criticize what they considered defects in their society and to suggest remedies. Writers like Viresalingam used the novel mainly to propagate their ideas about society among a wider readership.

(iii) At the same time, people from all walks of life could read novels so long as they shared a common language. This helped in creating a sense of collective belonging on the basis of one's language.

7. Describe how the issue of caste was included in novels in India. By referring to any two novels, discuss the ways in which they tried to make readers think about existing social issues.

**Ans.** (i) Potheri Kunjambu, a 'lower' caste writer from north Kerala, wrote a novel called *Saraswativijayam* in 1892, mounting a strong attack on caste oppression. This novel shows a young man from an 'untouchable' caste, leaving his village to escape the cruelty of his Brahmin landlord. He converts to Christianity, obtains modern education, and returns as the judge in the local court.

Meanwhile, the villagers, thinking that the landlord's men had killed him, file a case.

- (i) At the conclusion of the trial, the judge reveals his true identity, and the Nambuthiri repents and reforms his ways. *Saraswativijayam* stresses the importance of education for the upliftment of the lower castes.
- (ii) From the 1920s in Bengal too a new kind of novel emerged that depicted the lives of peasants and low castes.
- (iii) Advaita Malla Barman's (1914-1951) *Titash Ekti Nadir Naam* (1956) is an epic about the Mallas, a community of fisherfolk who live off fishing in the river Titash. The novel is about three generations of the Mallas, about their recurring tragedies and the story of Ananta, a child born of parents who were tragically apart after their wedding night.