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### **Abstract**

*Omnipotent has imparted different colors to birds, animals, flowers, plants, and mountains but to human beings He endowed different talents, ambitions, feelings and attitudes. Raja Roy in his novel Kanthapura presents the real picture of men and women. The present research paper points out only of the women characters of kanthapura. Women characters of kanthapura prove their responsibility, love and devotion towards their family, society and their country. Both types of women - educated and uneducated play their role in the novel. Raja Roy's characters in Kanthapura have a variety of attitudes and acts. Some women characters follow their traditions while some are not traditional and do anything according to their will. Some have a roaring and quarrelling nature while some are soft-natured. The characters have their own virtues and vices. In this way the goal of the present research paper is to bring the variety of women characters in light.*

### **Keywords**

*Women, love, power, sacrifice, boldness, untouchability traditions.*

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“Twentieth century is known for individualism, stream of consciousness to read against power and religion, science fiction, short stories about class distinction about workers etc.”(<https://www.ucg.ac.me>>06) R.K.Narayan, Mulkraj Anand, and Raja Roy’s contribution and popularity cannot forget in Indian English literature in this century. These three Indian novelists are often referred to as the three “greats” of Indian literature in English. It can say about Raja Roy-

“He is an ardent lover of Sanskrit poetry and he feels that the greatest wisdom is contained in the Vedas and the Upanishads”.(NARAYAN’S-17) He is impressed by W.B. Yeats, R.M. Rilke, Gorky, Kafka, Thoreau and Walt Whitman. He has an interest in, French, Hindi and Urdu as well as in English. The works of Shakespeare- Tempest, King Lear, Hamlet, Galib’s poetry, Mahatma Gandhi, and the French writers such as Paul Valery and Andrew Gide influenced him very much. A close study of the work of Raja Roy tells that besides the many stories he has written three novels in English and one in French: namely Kanthapura,

The Serpent and the Rope, The Cat and Shakespeare and Comrade Kirillov. The year 1938 opened the gate of success for Raja Roy with the publication of Kanthapura. This novel is the simplest and most satisfying imaginative work of Raja Roy. The novel is based on the Gandhian struggle for India’s freedom in a village in south India in 1930. Raja Roy is a perfect novelist to create the living characters.

Raja Roy is a great Indo-Anglian novelist who observed the power and talent of women. He has talked about the power and wisdom of women in the Kanthapura. “Kanthapura is a great village novel and an epic of India’s freedom movement”.(Narayan-37) The novel depicts about the freedom struggle and self-sacrifice of the villagers for their motherland. Raja Roy presents the Indian sensibility in the novel in a variety of ways.”

(<https://www.slideshare.net>>slideshow

This research paper particularly describes about the power and wisdom of the women which Raja Roy gave through the role of women in Kanthapura. “Raja Roy has drawn a number of very interesting characters in the novel. In fact, Kanthapura has been called a portrait gallery.”(Narayan’s – 125) Present research paper is a tiny effort to prove that the women characters of the present novel play the different types of roles. The following lines are appropriate as a proof about the novel- “Shakti- Worship runs through the novel. The women of Kanthapura are

inspired by different aspects of Shakti at different times. Women as the eternal devotees are seen in the Bhajans, kirtans and kathas at the temple. The indomitable spirit of Shakti possesses them when they face the lathis and boots of the police with a smile on their lips.”(Narain’s-127) The Twenty-first century is focussing on women’s empowerment and Shakti –mission but Raja Roy recognized the power of women in the twentieth century through the novel Kanthapura—

“Different forms of shakti are manifested through the women of kanthapura. Shakti’s indomitable spirit possesses them in their Satyagraha (non-violent struggle) against the British Government when the police ill-treat them with their sticks and boots, the women think, move and act as one, for they are distinct and pervasive in the devotional aspect”.(Narain’s-134)

“Raja Roy’s Achakka the narrator of Kanthapura, does, in fact, seem to stand for such a feminine creative energy, thereby making the tale a mighty “ Purana of discovery “of Mahatma’s India through a living village”(Narain’s -140-141) The women characters of Kanthapura have a different type of responsibility and sensibility towards their family and their motherland. Women have been painted as an important and significant role. Women of Kanthapura played an important role in the Indian fight for independence against British rule. Even the narrator of the story of the novel is woman-Achakka “the old lady narrator of the novel who inspires other women through her revolutionary speeches and help with the Savika Sangh.”(<https://www.licharts.com>lit>ac...>) Achakka belongs to a Brahmin family by birth but later she” joined the Gandhian movement and plays an active role in promoting in Kanthapura village. She believes in joining Hindu traditions with modern political philosophies”(<https://www.enotes.com>topics>) Achakka has been living in Kanthapura for a long time. The old habitant of Kanthapura, Achakka narrates in her own gossipy manner the impact of the movement of freedom. She is telling the story of Kanthapura to his grandson in a flashback. Her son Seenu is the chief follower of Moorthy in the Gandhian movement.

The characters of the novel are the imagination of Raja Roy but they seem living. The present research paper focuses only on female characters not on males. The female characters of Kanthapura are- Achakka, Kamamma, Rangamma, Ratna Kenchamma, Nanjamma, Narsamma, Puttamma, Rachi, Ramanna, Venkamma, Satamma, Subbamma, Chinnamma, Ranga and Lingamma. Kamamma was

mother of Ratna while Kamamma and Rangamma were sisters.

Rangamma: Rangamma is presented as a bold and broad-minded widow by the writer. She does not believe in untouchability and orthodox views. When Bhatta talks about Pariahs that they will begin to come to the temple door and will take the place of Brahmins. "Rangamma lifts her head a little and whispers respectfully, 'I don't think we need fear that, Bhattare? The Pariahs could always come as far as the temple door, couldn't they / and across the Mysore border, in Belure, they can even enter the temple once a year....'"(HPB -42)

Rangamma is an example of woman empowerment. She is a revolutionary woman and organizer of "Savika Sangh". She is an inspiration for other women. She has a spirit of devotion towards her country. She helps the people of India by publishing the weekly political pamphlets and sponsors. She actively participated in meetings and discussed on nationalist movement Gandhi's views. As Roy depicts-

"she was a rich, childless widow of Kanthpura. She was a Brahmin lady but did not hold orthodox views regarding untouchability. She became Moorthy's main supporter after his mother's death. Her house became a center of Congress activities. After Moorthy's arrest she did a lot of Congress work. "(Narayan's 53) Sankar and Rangamma both are worried about Moorthy as they talk-"When Sankar saw Rangamma he said, 'aunt, it is a long time since I saw you- how are things with you?' and Rangama answered, 'everything is safe- but I have come to speak about Moorthy, ' and Sankar said, ' I love him like brother, 'and I have found no better Gandhist,\* and Rangamma said, why, he is the saint of our village, 'and Sankar said, ' someday he will do holy deeds "(HPB-134)

Ratna who was a child widow. She is the daughter of Kamamma. She was married at the age of ten years. She does not live like traditional widow. To wear the bangles and colored dresses is restricted for widows in Indian culture but she does not care about that kind of thing and she wears bangles and colored dresses and even puts kumkum on her forehead. Her attitude was so bold that nobody dared to oppose her. In the freedom movement in India she accompanies with Moorthy as a co-worker. She has the qualities of a good leader and leads the movement after arresting the Moorthy. The twentieth century is the signature of the woman empowerment when we find that Ratna, being a widow takes actively part

in the movement and is arrested.”After her release she goes to Bombay and comes to Kathapura to tell the others about their prison’s experiences and the changed views of Moorthy”(Narayan’s-53) .” Ratna was powerfully influenced by modern India. She does not regard being a woman as a” matter of shame and inferiority”(slideshare.net)

The next women character of the novel ‘Kanthapura’ is Venkamma, who is also a widow and sister-in-law of Rangamma. Her thinking is quite different from Rangamma’s. She always speaks against Rangamma as well as Moorthy.” She and Bhatta are the main opponents of Moorthy ‘s Gandhian movement in Kanthapura”(Narayan’s-54)

Venkamma has a different kind of attitude. It is clear that she does not like Moorthy as well as his mother Narsamma. Moorthy organized the Gandhian Movement in his village and “ he ended untouchability in Kanthapura . It is not acceptable for Venkamma because of a Brahmin “. (Narayan’s-52)” She is nicknamed ‘Waterfall Venkamma’ because of her habit of roaring at others.”(Narayan’s-54) Moorthy did not accept the proposal of marriage to her younger daughter so she went straight to Narsamma and roared about the matter of marriage of Moorthy and her daughter.”Narsamma, I have come to ask you something. You know you said you did not want my daughter for your son. I am glad of it now and I say to myself, thank heavens I did not tie my daughter to the neck of a Pariah mixer.”(HPB-55)

The quite different women character of the novel is Kenchamma who is the presiding deity of Kanthapura. Spirit has an important place in Anglo-Indian literature. Raja Roy’s kanthapura is not the untouched presence of the deity Kenchamma. People consider her as their deity. In the words of people-”Kanchamma is our goddess. Great and bounteous is she. She killed a demon ages, ages ago, a demon that had come to ask our young sons as food and our young women as wives. Kanchamma came from the Heaven.”(HPB-7) People of Kanthapura have believe in the deity Kanchamma and offer to her their first rice, and bodice cloth for every birth and marriage and festival. Through the harvest night they dance before her, they sing to please I Kenchamma-

“ Kenchamma ,Kenchamma  
Goddess benign and bounteous,  
Mother of earth,blood of life.

Harvest –queue rain crowned  
Kenchamma, Kenchamma,  
Goddess, benign and bounteous .”(HPB-9)

One of the women characters is Nanjamma. Her nickname is “Nose-scratching Nanjamma”. She also belongs to a Brahmin family and enthusiastically joins Moorthy’s campaign for spinning for charkha. When Moorthy talks to Nanjamma-”Free spinning – wheels in the name of the Mahatma!’ and it was Moorthy who came to the Brahmin street. Sister, the Congress is giving away free spinning wheels. Will you spin, sister? You see, you have nothing to do in the afternoons after the vessels are washed and the water is drawn, and if you spin just one hour a day, you can have a bodice cloth of any color or breadth you like, one bodice –cloth per month, and a sari every six months. And during the first month, the cotton is given free.”(HPB-27) But Nanjamma is not ready to do spinning because it is not respectable for her as a Brahmin. For this profession weavers are in her village.

Puttamma is also a woman character of Kanthapura. She is actively takes part in the no-tax campaign. A policeman raped her. She has the quality of singing. Women –venkamma, Nanjamma, Ratna, Satamma, Putta, subbamma, Chinnamma, and Kammamma are in a jolly mood and talk about the marriage of Ranga, daughter of Venkamma. Putta is insisted by women to sing a song. Akkamma says, ‘My Putta will sing: “For what deed in my past life have you sought me in this, my lord?” ‘- and Satamma says, ‘ Your Putta sings it so well, sister ‘- and Putta feels so pleased that she begins to hum the song to herself, twisting the wet sari, and everybody says, ‘Go on, Putta, go on! ‘and she begins it,” (HPB-114)

Lingamma is a minor character of the noble who has the spirit of inferiority because she belongs to a Pariah family. Her husband Rachanna supports Moorthy in his confrontation with the authorities. Moorthy is a Brahmin. Lingamma thinks that if Moorthy will accept something in her house by her hand it will be fortune for her. So she offers the milk to Moorthy to feel some superior .” She wants to remove the difference of caste to offering the glass of milk to Moorthy. Firstly Moorthy hesitates to take the milk but finally sips the milk”.(Narayan’s-52) As Raja Roy writes-” but Rachanna’s wife has come back with a little milk in a shining brass tumbler, and placing it on the floor with stretching hands, she says, k Accept this poor hussy! And slips back behind the corn bins; and Moorthy says, ‘ I have just taken coffee, Lingamma....\* but she interrupts him and says I touch it, Moorthappa,

touch it only as though it were offered (HPB-104)

Women were taking an active part in the freedom Movement police constable Bade Khan hit Moorthy with his lathi, Rachanna, and Madonna and the women all fell on Bade Khan and tore away the lathi. Raja Roy gives an example of bold and courageous women-

“And the maistri comes to pull them off and whips them, and the women fall on the maistri and tear his hair, while Moorthy cried out, 'No beating, sisters, No beatings, in the name of Mahatma\*, but the women are fierce and they will tear the bore from Bade Khan's face.'”(HPB-87)

Though Raja Roy's novel Kanthapura depicts the political, social and religious tradition of India and how Gandhi's message of non-violence influenced the villagers. However the goal of the present research paper is to examine the women's world of Kanthapura. The efforts of the researcher seem to be fruitful. She throws the flashlight on the all-women characters with the description of their active role in the novel. They have a feeling of responsibility towards their society, love for their family and devotion towards their country. Raja Roy proves through the novel Kanthapura that people have different attitudes, talents and opportunities and behave accordingly. The narrative technique of the novel is based on the traditional method. All the women characters follow the traditions except Ratna.

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