

# Artists in Voices in the City

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In the field of Indian fiction writing novelists like Ruth Prawar Jhabwala, Kamla Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Bharati Mukherjee, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, and Khuswant Singh have made a significant contribution. These writers have been elaborating the situation authentically, emotionally and intellectually. All these writers have been able to bring out the narrowness of people and provide them with the real touch in readers mind.

Anita Desai has great achievements in writing novels and literary books. She has written novels in different ways and images which represent the new dimensions to Indo-Anglican fiction. She has noted that India is a land of Raja-Maharajas as well as the land of snake-charmers. She also have highlighted the brutal and brutalising caste-system, superstitions, communal tensions and bigotry in the life of Indian people. She is a very distinguished Indo-Anglican novelist who has been able to find out "a marvellous elasticity and expressiveness."<sup>1</sup>

She imposes the idealistic life in real sense and principle including common characters of confusing Indian society with authentic picture. India is a land of villages where true India lives. Her purpose of writing is to discover the truth authentically, as "Plunging below the surface and plumbing

the depth's then illuminating those depths till they become a more lucid, brilliant and explicable reflection of the visible world."<sup>2</sup> Anita Desai has more interest in characters than creating the environment which is generally used to define characters.

"Voices in the city" is one of the best novels written by her which comprises different characters with negative prospects. In the novel there is conflict in the psyche of the characters resulting in frustration. Due to sensitiveness their personal relationship becomes worse and for which they seek neurotic solutions in their problems.<sup>3</sup> The characters move away from the ordinary life because of their unhealthy introspection. The writer has tried to lay out the social and cultural issues artistically and systematically and depicts the natural character sensitive enough to their life.

The purpose of the research article is to highlight on the situations and circumstances all around us. These circumstances pour its direct effect on the psyche of the people. The people in general receives the motives near his surrounding. The three major characters in the novel are the sufferers in their life. The way of grasping the recent practical life is different from others; it is because of their attitudinal discomfort which repels them to move in the

negative prospects of their life. It is only of their undue wit which unable them to settle their life permanently. The three characters lead their life in total harrassment and unconsciousness. Their life becomes panic and no colours in their life and suffers in every aspect. The characters are totally upset and always try to blame the present condition of their life and wants to escape from the city which is not in favour of them. The writer has well tried to bring out the realities of life generally in low category family. In the words of M. Rajeshwar 'It is a psychological truth that neurotic characters are cast usually in three distinct modes. The most common of this is that the character is shown as healing himself of his ailment on becoming aware of certain hither to hidden facts about himself. Alternatively he may also be shown as seeking refuge in sublimation or succumbing to his illness.'<sup>4</sup> In other sense a man has to understand various ups and downs which happen in life practically. No one can get rid of it everyone has to face it, as it is a part of life, while in general life "a man has to grapple with at least three important sources of sufferings that is from his body, from the enternal world and from human relationship."<sup>5</sup>

The three main characters in 'Voices in the city' are Nirode, Monisha and Amla. The writer has analysed the changing attitudes of the three mazor characters. The minor characters in the novel are painter Dharma, Irishman David and Jit Nair, the hauters of the coffee house. The three main characters of the novel rebel at the disputes of life, their attitudinal sense symbolises the reality of life to which they can not accept and feels it irritating and challenging and remain suffering with the vulgarity of everyday life.

Nirode is very upset and feels phychic pressure in the city which is full of

suffocation and threat. He is afraid of the darkness of Calcutta which scars him mortally. It's moist and warmth temperature and the foul adours of open gutters irritate him deeply. He identifies the city of Calcutta the city of Kali, as the Goddess of Death. He reacts against the 'thinginess' of things and fleshiness of the flesh in the city and consider the city as a "symbol of disintigration."<sup>6</sup>

The novel 'Voices in the City' is the predicament of various artists leading their own life with different sense of humour. They struggle hard for the better life but its their negative sensitivity which unable them to reach at the proper destination. It is because of they were cut off from the society i.e. unable to accomplish real touch with the people in the city. Nirode is too concious towards self respect. His attitude of self respect and self reliance truns him most independent and he threatens his personal relitiship. Nirode is unhappy with his friends, as they farced upon him which unables him to get suitable platform in life and finally he becomes "misfit hero."<sup>7</sup> His life becomes confronted and depressed without any creative opportunity in life. His friends and relatives goaded and prodded him to do comething against his will but he didn't do that. He wants to escape from the city of Calcutta which has smell of open gutters, ugly sights all over and horrible nights. He wants to fly from the world "to drink of Hippocrene, to leave the world unseen and to fade away far and dissolve into dim forest."<sup>8</sup>

Nirode's sense of humour represents the negativity which threatens himself to do the right thing in life. His entire negative attitude makes him unpractical and visionary. He leads a life of semi starvation though he has the essential requirements of daily life, but his main view is to escape

from the city though he does not know about the right destination of his life. His temperament is full of "revulsion, distaste, and horror."<sup>9</sup> He work in different fields but failed again and again. He says that "There is no difference to love or to hate, or to resist or to compromise."<sup>10</sup> After Monisha's death he turns himself towards a new relationship with life and when the city and his mother merge into a single symbol, he seems the city as Goddess Kali and his own mother. He notices that "She is not merely good, she is not merely evil-she is good and she is evil. She is our knowledge and our ignorance. I know why I'm living, at last I know where I'm going, towards her, towards her, she is waiting can't you see."<sup>11</sup> This shows that some of the emotions and attitude are very unconvincing. Finally after hearing so much criticism of new artists, he comes to defense of his own art, saying that all the artists have not become materialistic. "There are still artists who will perform for exclusive audiences."<sup>12</sup> This positive attitude turns his life towards the people in real sense of his life.

Monisha likes loneliness and because of that she reacts with her relatives in Calcutta. She feels that she has been trapped in her husband's house. She feels intensely worry and often cry because of the develish, dull, vacant and hopeless face of the city. She feels herself like a trapped animal to whom no one offers neither respect nor love. Everything in her life is bare, naked and there is no privacy at all. She notices that the haunting warbling and murmuring sounds are enough to make her mad. There is no way to go away from all these disturbances. She irritates towards her child by saying- "you are not preparing for an exam, you are preparing for the devil - a black, dead devil."<sup>13</sup> She feels that there is

nothing left in her life and becomes totally frustrated and absurd. According to her Calcutta city has become poisoned and no progress can be made possible. She never really succeeds in establishing herself as a living character because of her pessimistic tendency. Monisha thinks that Nirode is a very sensitive person and unable to prosper in life. She says that Nirode is nothing but just like an "unshelled snail."<sup>14</sup> and his sensitive nature makes him divert from the meaningful life.

Amla is the youngest who is unable to proof against the infection of the city. Calcutta is like a monster for her, she feels that her brother and sister are gobbled by the city monster."<sup>15</sup> The city frightened her because of the fall of "rain wet chameleon."<sup>16</sup> In the rainy season. She becomes a commercial artist and moves from revolt to confirmity. She learns the frightening glimpses from the death of her elder sister Monisha. While modelling for Dharma she feels a great change in her life. "In stead of being a commercial artist, she becomes another Amla, a flowering Amla, translucent with joy and overflowing with a sense of love and reward."<sup>17</sup>

Dharma is an artist of different attitude; he feels the real sense of life and lives happily. He never tries to go away from the society. He created his own words "animated nature which to escape."<sup>18</sup> When Amla begin to work as model for Dharma, she changes his attitude and he moves back from nature to human beings, he realises that "human touch is very essential to make art alive and meaningful."<sup>19</sup>

Jit Nair is the minor character in the novel, he live correctly and never tries to "Shape into anything at all. There was no despair on the face, no agony of doubt and will, but merely an uncontrollable vaccum,

ablank.<sup>20</sup> on his face appearance, David is the man of positive aspects, he never disturbs others like Nirode, and he knows better art of life and feels satisfaction.

The novel shows the clash between the city and the people living in it. She has been able to show the struggling life of the characters. They struggle with life and finally reach to their destination. The city becomes mother for Nirode when his own mother merges in it, it shows the image of spiritual destination. It is the correct presentation of a satire and caricature which is displayed rightly and in correct sequence. Monisha's suicide is a sort of confession of failure. The other characters travel through suffering and finally stumble their way to get solution. The lash of satire touches everyone in different ways.

## NOTES

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