MYTH AND FOLKLORE USED BY THE LITERATURE INTELLECTUALS TO PORTRAY REAL LIFE SITUATIONS

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Abstract- Myth exists from the beginning of the humanity. The whole world stands on belief system because nothing is certain in this world. Anything can happen any time without any valid reason. Myth is spread through the folklore in form of stories. There are occasions when a particular lesson or subject cannot be explained through direct references of people. Hence, stories were created by our ancestors to tell the reality to the people without hurting the sentiments of those characters, who really possess the features as explained in the folklores. For example, if a ruler is cruel and bad mannered, the writer cannot directly name the king and write a story on his behaviour. This will hurt the feelings of the ruler and in return, he may punish the writer. Similarly, there are also other qualities of human being consisting of humour, sadness, poverty, richness etc. which are inherited in the folklores in form of fictional characters. The people indirectly understand the lesson of the story as well as about the character portrayed in it. The lessons taught in the folklores are a part of the subject of moral science, which defines the way of living. It consists of both the good and evil characters, who educate the readers about the future of both the characters. Jataka tales, Panchatantra etc. are the creations of Indian intellectual writers of the past, similarly the modern writers like Githa Hariharan, Arvind Adiga, and Amitav Ghosh etc. have also portrayed folklores and myth in several of their novels. Myth gives courage and strength to people, who are facing difficult times and do not oversee any practical solution immediately. Belief is the only source of strength during that kind of period. Myth does not belong to any single religion. There are folklores in every religion, who portray the lessons through myth. The myth has gone to such an extent that it has become a part of strong belief in human beings. Questioning about the myth of God and Goddess of different religions is not considered as good in the society. Hence, the study of myth is attempted to reveal its importance through the writings of various Indian intellectual writers.

Key words- Myth, Folklore, Epic, Folk tales, Culture, Tradition, History, Mythology, Religion, Science, Fiction, Linguistic cultural analysis, Society, Community.

1.   Introduction

Myth is considered to be a story of imagination, which does not contain any reality, but a fascinating narration of event that has never occurred. The questions arises here that whatever is seen and felt around is marked in the mind and people's ideologies are the mixture of information gathered; then how come that a person can think and write about something, which does not exist. In future, people have termed it as fiction, which means that events have really occurred, but are portrayed through different names and places. This is done to avoid direct conflict with people. The gap in the contradiction of myth and reality is very wide. There are certain category of people, who consider the folk lore of our ancestors as imagination only. But,

there are other category of people who follow the rules described in the folk lore and lead their life according to those principles. They find it very helpful in their way of living. Epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata, folk tales like Panchatantra, Jataka Tales etc. inherits many lessons, which are adopted and followed by people of religious feelings.

Belief and faith is the result of all the myth in the folk lore. The Indian literature explorers have written their novels based on these myths and folk lore and used them as a reference in their characters in various plots. The actions done by the characters in the novels are justified through the mythological stories. Githa Hariharan has mostly used epic like Ramayana and Mahabharata to justify the roles of her characters in *The Thousand Faces of Night*. Amitav Ghosh has used folk lore to

justify his scientific fiction in *The Calcutta Chromosome*. The reader goes through a dilemma when a character in a story is in a struggling phase, where there is no means to a solution. To solve the problem of the reader, the writer gives experience of mythological characters where even the God and Goddess had to pass through difficulties in life despite being so resourceful and powerful. Hence, fate cannot be evicted by the poor or rich; everyone has to face their part of struggle. This gives hope and determination to the readers and they go on with their life when they face the kind of situation they have read in the novels.

Myth and Folk lore go hand in hand and few people take it in the direction of superstition also. Science is a very vast subject which cannot be understood properly unless it is proven. There are many technologies which have been made from the references of Myth and Folk lore. Without the belief of myth and half-baked knowledge in folk lore, it is difficult for a scientist to go ahead with new experimentation. Every practical has a theory and our ancestors have given us traces of learnings to explore and make them better and user oriented. Now-a-days, people are smart enough to utilise the knowledge of myth for their benefit instead of blindly believing them as a superstition.

2.   Myth in *The Thousand Faces of Night* by Githa Hariharan

In the novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* the writer has given a shape of god and goddess to her main characters. Her protagonist's actions were compared to the actions of mythological characters and are justified as correct, even though it was against the rule or functioning of the society. Devi, the protagonist of the story was very influenced by the brave mythological stories narrated by her grandmother. And one day her grandmother left home in the search of God by being influenced by the belief of Myth. Today also it can be seen that there are thousands of sages who believe in mythology and are living the life of a *sanyasi* in the search of *nirvana* and divinity.

India is a treasury for mythological stories that involves a tremendous assortment of stories from rich old India. The way of life and custom of Indian folklore have been passed down from ages and subsequently guardians should pass down these legacy to safeguard our way of life. A large portion of the fanciful storybooks depend on various Divine beings and Goddesses and different occasions connected with them. Indian folklore teaches great qualities and morals in kids containing accounts of boldness, experience, empathy, love. Hindu folklore incorporates stories from *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, and the *Bhagavad Gita* that make sense of what is the logical explanation for praising celebrations and different events. The *Ramayana* is the image of social, social, strict and philosophical driving forces of Indian culture. The Ramayana has gone about as a vehicle to convey the cultural change over the two centuries that the story has existed.

The greater part of individuals have moved away from their native language, Sanskrit and draw no motivation from the story. These sort of fanciful models are given by the writer Githa Hariharan in her books which causes individuals to recollect about their folklore. When contrasted with the real world, it appears to be that bunches of changes are unrealistic, however it has occurred because of the mental fortitude and support ladies get from these very chivalrous characters of folklore.

Mythology was the education, which were conveyed to children by their mother, grandmas and grandmothers. This is the very thing that they have learnt in the course of their life and they apply them in their life. The give it to their kids and grandkids and feel pride by conveying their traditional information to them. This mythological stories move from one generation to the other. The stories of ruler and princess entrance kids, add a simple approach to acquiring training in them. They find themselves in individuals of folklore and dream themselves to be a piece of one conveying chivalrous demonstrations in theirs fantasies.

As a part of Myth and Reality, the normal truth is that a Man and a Woman together is a need for life to be empowered and a tradition to advance. Men are considered for their chivalrous demonstrations in the folklore though ladies as likewise are given a higher value of a *Devi*. Githa Hariharan has compared the plight of Devi's mother to the fate of Gandhari in the mythology. Devi's mother was very keen in playing *veena* in the morning time. But her father-in-law insulted her for continuing her hobby even after marriage and ordered her to take care of her family instead of wasting her time. After that Devi's mother, Sita, tore the strings of the instrument and quit playing *veena* for her entire life. This oath was compared to Gandhari in *Mahabharata* who tied her eyes of anger, when she came to know that her husband chosen for her was blind.

3.   Folklore and Fiction in *The Calcutta Chromosome* by Amitav Ghosh

Science of today has connections with traditional folk lore. Many of the saints of India were very knowledgeable, who had idea of many scientific methodologies. They used to represent it in a very simple way in form of folk lore. As there was very less awareness about the term of "Science" in the old days, many people treated the scientific statements of the sages as myth. One segment of people believed them and the other did not. The folk lore has helped the scientists of today in research from the palm inscriptions etc. left over by the traditional intellectuals. In the novel *The Calcutta Chromosome* the writer Amitav Ghosh has portrayed the mixture of science and folk lore. This novel talks about a disease and the quest of a scientist to get the cure of the disease which is now known as *Malaria*. The folk lore stated that few people existed who experimented about the copy and paste of memory from one person to another in the name of curing a disease. Experiments were done with pigeons and poor people who were in the last stage of malaria.

Folklore and fiction is mixed in the novel to make the people understand the journey of superstition to half-baked scientific experiments done by some illiterate people who tend to be smart by observing the functions of a Doctor. The illiterate woman in this novel learns certain medical operating practices from a doctor and interprets her knowledge to get something which is very risky. Many people died in her experiments and were later shown as death due to illness. Folk lore is seriously taken by research people of today and the logic of each and every statement is examined.

In today's arena, there are many modernizations and developments that were termed as a magic or day dream in the earlier days. Technology like ATM, Internet Banking, E-mail etc. emerged into the era with the help of technical people and proved to the society that in the world of today, nothing is impossible.

Hence, when the new concept of passing the memory of one person to another through a mosquito was narrated in the novel, it takes every reader by surprise. But, when the logical description was given that if a mosquito can carry a disease from one person to another, it can carry memory too. Pigeons were also considered as carriers in the story, as people know from history that pigeon were used for passing messages from one place to another. The scientists try to prove that there was a chromosome in this insect and mosquito which helps in transfer of bacteria from one person to another.

This story is written in form of a science fiction by giving examples of Scientists, Doctors, Laboratory testing etc. It was a hidden concept and plan by scientist Ronald Ross, who tried to invent by experimenting on people. The twist in the story came when the character Mangala was introduced, who with her analytical skills came to learn about the technical process of Medical science by observing Doctor Ronald Ross. She was trying to develop the process of transferring mind from one person to another and remain immortal forever using different body of other human beings. She used to cheat people with the offer of giving treatment to a disease "Syphilis" and experimenting the soul transfer through their bodies.

Although, this seemed very unnatural and unrealistic, but in a few dark societies of countries like India, people still believe in black magic and superstition. There are problems and diseases in the society, which is not curable or which requires high cost medication for cure. People are not able to afford it, so they search for cheap means of remedy for their pain and fall into the clutches of these women like Mangala who use them for their benefit. Postmodernism has given wings to people to experiment on their own and confront with the results by taking risks. Today, most of the people here and there, are experimenting to discover and invent new things. And a result of which, some of them achieve success and most of them fail.

In a book by Richard M. Dorson, he has considered Folklore as a Fakelore, which is a statement adverse to the belief of people of places who follow and believe their Folklore. Each and every person have their own freedom of expression and explore about the proof in the statements claimed in any document including the mythology. Some people bluntly call these stories as baseless and imaginary stories, whereas writers like Vandana Goyal has termed myth as a male conspiracy to dominate over the woman. She states that men have made several rules on woman as a part of tradition and culture which humiliates them and denies their right of freedom and living in an open society.

4.   Conclusion

Myth and Folklore is a part of the society and it cannot be separated from the mind of people. They have inherited the roots in the tradition and way of living of society. The influence of mythology is seen in most of the aspects of the functions of the society and people take reference from it. Folklore is passed on from one generation to another as a precious piece of information. This is the simplest way of teaching the new generation about the difficult learnings of life in a fascinating way. The feeling of love, hatred, happiness, sorrow, struggle, desperation, anger, humility, guilt etc. are emotions of every human being and controlling them to lead a disciplined life is most important. But people sometimes become too excited or too depressed about the feelings and take extreme steps which ruins their life in the future. In these cases, the learnings from the Myth and Folklore are very important for the society to maintain balance in life.

Science has taken over most of the disbeliefs in the mythology. Due to science, people have started to drop the traditions and patterns which are harmful to some category of people like women, out-caste system etc. Only the positive and advantageous beliefs are followed and the scientific part of every belief is explored. This has helped in betterment of the society and the living standard of people have increased. The scientists are able to make leap and bound developments because our ancestors have laid a solid foundation of humanity through the myth and folklores. They have given the hint of various mixtures of innovations in their own way. There were huge constructions of *mahals, pyramids* etc. even before the invention of big machineries. Our ancestors were not only innocent artists, but also a possessor of extreme intelligence, who calculated major problems through their own technique.

It is the knowledge of myth itself which led to the construction of huge temples and the architecture of India is admired of even today. People from all around the world come to India to see the art and architecture and gain knowledge from our myth and folklore. India is a country of various tradition and culture which is spread in a vast area in the four corners of the country. Different states include different language, life style, tradition and culture and each have their own story to tell about their myth and folklore.

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