REGIONALISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF THOMAS HARDY AND G. N. DANDEKAR: A COMPAREATIVE STUDY

SYNOPSIS

Introduction

Novel is one of the major forms of literature. It can be classified into various types such as psychological, sociological, political, historical, regional, etc. So many experiments have been made with regard to theme, structure, language and narrative technique of the novel. ‘Regional novel’ is an important and popular form. Regional novels are written in various languages all over the world. Marathi and English have significant traditions of regional novels. The present interdisciplinary, comparative study is an effort to study regionalism the selected novels of Thomas Hardy and G. N. Dandekar.

Regional Novel

A regional novel is one of the important genres of modern novel. It is a type of novel in which a writer concentrates on a particular area and the people who inhabit it as the basis for his or her novel. Among the earliest regional novelists in English was Maria Edgeworth, an Anglo Irish woman novelist whose first notable novel “Castle Rackrent” was published in 1800. In the nineteenth century, Emily Bronte, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy wrote the regional novels. Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) gave permanent status to the regional novels in English. He was born at Higher Bockhampton in Dorchester or it is called in Hardy’s fictional geography, ‘South Wessex’. Thomas Hardy was a renowned novelist, a short story writer and a poet. He wrote twenty novels. Among his celebrated works are –
Under the Greenwood Tree(1872), Far from the Madding Crowd(1874), The Return of the Native(1878), The Mayor of Casterbridge(1886), The Woodlanders(1887), Tess of the D’Urbervilles(1891) and Jude the Obscure(1896).

Hardy was an interpreter of nature. In almost all of his novels he depicts the heaths and pastures of “Wessex”. However the present study focuses only on his four selected novels viz. Far from the Madding Crowd, Return of the Native, Tess of the D’Urbervilles, and “The Woodlanders” which are important regional novels in English.

Compared to the regional novel in English, the regional novel in Marathi is recent development. R. V. Dighe is considered to be the first regional novelist in Marathi. His novels were published in the period of mid twentieth century. He was followed by S. N. Pendase, G. N. Dandekar, V. Madgulkar, C. T. Khanolkar, Annabhau Sathe, B. Raghunath, R. R. Borade, Anand Yadav etc.


Dandekar travelled extensively all over Maharashtra. He had first hand information and knowledge about the regions and the cultures which he has depicted in his regional novels. He has written about regions like Konkan, Varhad and Maval Prant in Maharashtra. His four important regional novels viz. Shitu,
Padaghavali, Machivarla Budha and Ranbhuli are selected for the present study. All of these four novels depict the geographical area, life and culture of Konkan.

**Objectives:**

1. To have a comparative study of the regionalism in the selected novels of Hardy and Dandekar.
2. To have a broad perspective of the significance and the place of regionalism in fiction.
3. To understand how regionalism has contributed to shape the vision of life of these two novelists.
4. To understand life in the light of universal and particular.

**Hypothesis:**

1. Nature does not serve only as background but plays major role in the novels of Hardy and Dandekar.
2. Both Hardy and Dandekar depict the rural life in realistic manner and regret the loss of old values as a result of industrial revolution and urbanization.
3. Regionalism has contributed a great deal to shape the vision of life of Hardy and Dandekar.
4. Both Hardy and Dandekar have been successful in transforming local life into life of the world at large.
Methodology:

Comparative Method

Comparison is a necessary tool to improve our understanding of literature. In English regional novel is an established form of literature; in Marathi it is relatively new one. The present study is designed to compare the selected novels of Thomas Hardy, the English novelist and G. N. Dandekar, the Marathi novelist by concentrating on the specific aspect of regionalism. An attempt will be made to compare these two novels keeping in mind the regional elements such as geography, nature, life, culture, religious and social customs, manners, dialects, history, economics and politics of the particular region depicted by the writers with the help of their experiences and observations. Hardy and Dandekar are two great writers from England and India respectively. They belong to two different cultures and languages. Both of them make their respective regions alive by means of the characteristics of nature and the people. The comparative study of their selected novels will bring out the similarities and dissimilarities in them which will be helpful to enhance our understanding of their vision of life and to broaden the perspective of regional literature.

Scope and Limitations:

Thomas Hardy and G.N Dandekar belong to two different ages, cultures, traditions, regions, and languages. Both are prolific writers. Hardy is known as a novelist, a poet and a short story writer and Dandekar has also written novels, short stories, plays and travelogues.

However, the present study will focus only on the selected novels of Hardy and Dandekar. Hardy’s Far from the Madding Crowd, Return of the Native, Tess of
the D’urbervilles and The Woodlanders and G. N. Dandekar’s Shitu, Padaghavali, Machivarla Budha and Ranbhuli are selected for the purpose. The present study is thus limited to the regionalism in the selected novels only. In other words, it is not a study of the entire literary works of either Thomas Hardy or G. N. Dandekar. Moreover, G.N. Dandekar did not restrict his regionalism to Konkan only. He has explored the other regions of Maharashtra like Maval prant and Varhad. The present study does not include the study of other regions in his novels. Thus the scope of the present study is limited and clearly defined.

**Utility:**

Since the publication of the regional novels of Thomas Hardy many critics have studied the regional aspect of them. The eminent critics like David Cecil, Lionel Johnson, Lascelles Abercrombie, H.C. Duffin have expressed different opinions about regionalism in his novels. David Cecil says, “Hardy illuminates Wessex but in a light which comes from beyond stars. The scale of his drama is as vast as its setting.” (Hardy the Novelist: An Essay in Criticism).

Dandekar’s regional novels have also been studied by many critics like M.S. Patil, Dada Gore, Chandrakant Bandivadekar, etc. However the present study is a comparative study of the regionalism in the novels of Hardy and Dandekar. It will be a modest and significant contribution to the critical pool of English literature. Regional novel is a comparatively fresh offshoot of modern literary dimension around the globe. The present study will further expand the horizons of literature where by a comparative study of the regional novels of the same country or other country is executed by the critics or literary enthusiasts. It will surely help to understand Hardy and Dandekar as literary writers and their vision of life.