

The Portrayal of the Energetic Working-Class Workers in the Select Poems of Sarojini Naidu

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Abstract:

Known as the 'Nightingale of India' and a captivating poet, Sarojini Naidu served as a proud symbol of India on the world stage during the early twentieth century. She served as a guiding light for women poets in India and not only inspired her contemporaries but continues to motivate literary lovers across the world. With a multi-faceted life that includes roles as a distinguished poet, a zealous freedom fighter, and an effective leader, Sarojini Naidu remains an unforgettable figure in Indian political and literary history. Her poetry, deeply rooted in Indian themes, clearly captures the essence of the Indian language and society of her time with unwavering passion. Sarojini Naidu's poems are known for their powerful lyrics that brilliantly depict the Indian spirit. Her poetry has a natural, gentle and lively quality, ensuring it a permanent place in the annals of Indian poetic history. Naidu's selected poems such as, "*Palanquin Bearers*", "*The Bangle Sellers*", "*Indian Weavers*" and "*Coromandel Fishers*", Sarojini Naidu skillfully gives voice to the simple yet positive, bright and spirited thoughts of individuals engaged in traditional livelihoods. These poems highlight the feelings of ordinary people who live lives characterized by customary practices. This paper highlights Naidu's depiction of the representation of an energetic working class and the constructive traits of those ordinary workers, whether they were happily carrying doilies, selling vibrant bangles, weaving fabrics for various purposes, or engaging in the early morning activities of the fishing community.

Keywords: Bangle Sellers, Coromandel Fishers, Women, Weavers, Working Class Workers

Poems in a Glance:

The poem "*Palanquin Bearers*" intricately captures the emotions surrounding Indian brides and the cultural nuances of Indian marriages. Using vivid imagery, the poem skillfully conveys the mixture of joy and sadness inherent in these marital ceremonies. Despite the bride's obvious happiness, there is a lingering tone of poignancy as she bids farewell Her family and friends. The poem, "*Palanquin Bearers*", depicted in a melodic light, contribute to the overall atmosphere of the poem. Their singing is not just a means of transportation; It becomes a harmonious journey, as they delicately carry the bride, like a precious pearl on a string. The bride, in turn, is not a burden to them, but a graceful entity, swaying like a flower in the wind of their song, and gliding like a bird on

the foam of the river. Through these comparisons with nature, Sarojini Naidu effectively captures the ethereal and tender nature of the Indian bride, making the poem a poignant exploration of the complex emotional landscape associated with weddings in Indian culture.

“Indian Weavers”

"In the poignant verses of *“Indian Weavers”*, Sarojini Naidu eloquently expresses the various stages of human life, summarizing the themes of birth, marriage and death. As dawn breaks, the weavers embark on the exhilarating task of crafting a blue story. Clothes, symbolizing innocence and new beginnings associated with the arrival of a baby New. As day turns to night, the weavers' looms hum with purpose as they create vibrant purple and green garments reminiscent of the plumes of a peacock. These garments are dedicated to the Queen, adorning her on her auspicious wedding day.

However, the poem takes a poignant turn in the third stanza, where the cheerful atmosphere gives way to melancholy. The once joyful weavers become “sober and calm” as they meticulously weave a white garment, a funeral shroud for the deceased, under the cold moonlight. The closing lines resonate with a mournful tone, focusing on the weavers making the deceased's clothing. At its core, *“Indian Weavers”* is a poetic depiction of the human life cycle, subtly delving into the feelings and musings of the weavers as they navigate a complex tapestry of birth, marriage and ultimately death.

“The Bangle Sellers”

"The poem, *“The Bangle Sellers”*, Sarojini Naidu brilliantly combines the vibrant images of bright and colorful bangles with the joyful life of India’s *‘happy daughters and happy wives.’* The poet imbues these bangles with not only physical beauty but spirituality and spirituality as well of symbolic significance, describing it as “shiny”, “flushed”, “bright” and “luminous”.

Through an array of vivid images, Naidu elevates the poem to a celebratory level of brilliance and ecstasy. Expressions such as “rainbow-colored circles of light,” “silver and blue like mountain mist,” “like sunlit cornfields,” and “gray speckled with purple and gold” not only depict the visual splendor of the bracelets but also convey the enthusiasm of the bangle sellers. Each lyric becomes a brushstroke on a vibrant canvas, depicting the vibrant beauty and exuberance that accompanies selling and wearing these ornate adornments. At its core, *“The Bangle Sellers”* emerges as an ode not only to the physical appeal of bangles but also to the lively spirit of the sellers, capturing the essence of the cultural richness and festive vitality associated with these radiant accessories.

“Coromandel Fishers”

Sarojini Naidu’s poem, “*Coromandel Fishers*”, stands out as an exceptional piece of music that skillfully fuses melody and rhythm to echo the life of fishermen. As Chavan opined notes, *‘folk songs elicit a distinct emotional response from the poet’s lyrical sensibility.’* The poet has to develop repetitive rhythmic patterns with the help of repetitive musical images and sounds.

Naidu also extended an invitation to fishermen in the early hours of the morning, urging them to embark on a sea voyage to capture the abundant treasures that the tide has to offer. Through eloquent comparisons, the sea is likened to a mother, clouds to brothers, and waves to friends, imbuing the verses with a rich tapestry of familial and friendly connections. The poem rises to a spiritual climax as Naidu invokes the sea god's protective benevolence over the lives of fishermen. This spiritual dimension adds depth to the narrative, elevating the hunters' profession into a profound relationship with nature and the divine. At its core, “*Coromandel Fishers*”, not only depicts the daily lives of fishermen with its music, but also delves into the spiritual world, seamlessly weaving together the rhythmic patterns, repetitive images and lyrical sounds that characterize Naidu’s distinctive poetic style.

“What though we toss at the fall of the sun where the hand of the sea-god drives? He who holds the storm by the hair, will hide in his breast our lives.” (Second Stanza, Line no 3 & 4, Coromandel Fishers)

Here Sarojini Naidu issues a compelling invitation to fishermen, encouraging them to venture out to sea to embrace the turbulent waters and enjoy the dance of the wild waves. This poetic work is a lively prayer for fishermen, urging them to begin their work with joy and enthusiasm.

Naidu’s ideas in her Poems:

Sarojini Naidu’s reflections are characterized by simplicity and deep relevance to the lives of ordinary people. In works like “*The Bangle Sellers*”, she eloquently captures the perspectives of simple individuals engaged in the trade of “bright tokens”—bangles intended to delight Indian daughters and wives. Through vivid imagery and lyrical genius, Naidu paints a colorful picture of the lifestyle and careers of humble bangle sellers, offering readers a glimpse into the joy and bliss experienced by women adorned with their radiant creations. Likewise, in “*The Palanquin Bearers*”, Naidu uses simple, unaffected language to convey the feelings of the palanquin bearers as they carry the bride, who sways “*like a flower in the wind.*” The poet’s wonderful use of comparisons, such as comparing the bride to a flower, a bird, a pearl, and a star, adds amazing vitality to the verses. This poem displays Naidu’s artistic quality, vividly depicting the deep feelings of its bearers with imaginative flair.

In “*Indian Weavers*”, Naidu uses clear language to explain the lifestyle and thought processes of the weavers. Whether they are making clothes for the joyous occasion of a new baby or weaving intricate patterns for a queen’s wedding veil, weavers approach their work with simple ideas rooted in happiness. However, when the white shroud of a dead man's funeral is woven, the tone shifts to one of melancholy and calm, effectively expressing the journey from life to death. Through her simple, powerful language and vivid imagery, Sarojini Naidu crafts poems that resonate with the essence of everyday life, and celebrate the beauty found in joyful and poignant moments.

Naidu’s thoughts:

In Sarojini Naidu's poems, especially in “*Coromandel Fishers*”, there is a marked emphasis on the positive reflections and vibrant spirit of the working class. According to Prashant Mohan and Pragya Gupta, the poem not only conveys the fishermen's deep connection with the sea and their community, but also embodies a popular sense of order and discipline that remains untouched by modern technologies and development. The poem begins with optimistic phrases such as “*Arise, brothers, arise,*” which sets a tone of encouragement and enthusiasm. Naidu motivates the fishermen to immediately set out to sea, urging them to heed the call of the sea gull. This initial call to action creates a sense of urgency and purpose, keeping hunters in a positive, hard-working mindset.

The positive implications of Naidu’s portrayal of the working class go beyond mere encouragement. The poem embodies the popular profession of fishermen, portraying it as a source of pride and identity. The absence of modern complexities and adherence to traditional values contribute to the overall positive image of the working class in its pursuit of making a living, with an emphasis on connection to nature, community and a disciplined lifestyle.

“Come, let us gather our nets from the shore and set our catamarans free,
To capture the leaping wealth of the tide, for we are the kings of the sea!”

(Lines 3 and 4, *Coromandel Fishers*)

Here Naidu skillfully transforms the seemingly ordinary profession of fishing into a source of hope, ambition, and even greatness. By depicting the process of sailing as a means of obtaining the riches of the sea, it adds a layer of importance and purpose to the fishermen's daily endeavors. The eloquent description of ordinary fishermen as “sea kings” is particularly striking, as it not only raises the standard of their profession, but also instils a sense of pride and ownership in their role. This poetic choice enhances their activity and adds an exceptional atmosphere of professional enjoyment to their work. Naidu’s ability to craft the poem in such a beautiful way not only reflects the economic aspect of their livelihood but also adds a touch of poetry and dignity

to their daily lives. The positive vibrations that resonate in Naidu's verses have a transformative effect on the readers, elevating them to an energized state of mind. This upbeat, lively atmosphere extends far beyond the specific context of early 20th century hunters, making it a universal and timeless appeal.

Naidu's Brilliance in *The Bangle Sellers*:

Sarojini Naidu's poetic brilliance, especially in the poem, "*The Bangle Sellers*". Naidu's portrayal of the working class, in this case, the simple bangle sellers, is truly marked by bright ideas that not only amaze the readers but also stimulate their imagination. In "*The Bangle Sellers*", Naidu displays remarkable control over vivid images. The dealings of ordinary bangle sellers of her era are revived with extravagant colors and luster. The description of the bracelets, which feature different shades, is crafted with intense lyrical excellence. This indicates the highly artistic quality of the poet, who skillfully uses language to paint a rich and vivid picture of the bracelets and the lives of those who sell them. Through this poem, Naidu showcases her ability to bring extraordinary beauty to ordinary scenes, transforming everyday life into a kaleidoscope of color and texture. Intricate details and use of vibrant imagery elevate the simple act of selling bracelets into a poetic celebration of life. Naidu's luminous musings, as evident in this poem, resonate with readers, leaving a lasting impression and inviting them into a world of heightened sensory experience and artistic appreciation.

"Some are flushed like the buds that dream on the tranquil brow of a woodland stream"
(9 and 10, *The Bangle Sellers*)

The above lines describe the bracelets as glowing pink buds dreaming on the still edge of a forest stream. These expressions are vocabulary full of power, which takes readers into a world of ecstasy and bliss. The poem explains that the profession of bangle sellers is not an ordinary profession but a livelihood that brings the "sunlit corn" (bangles) "*to meet the bride on her wedding morning.*" "*The Bangle Sellers*" points out that even an ordinary job can become colorful when with the right attitude towards the profession. Radiant and glowing bracelets not only describe flashy bracelets, but also describe the vivid thought process of bracelet sellers. Sarojini Naidu reveals that occupation is not just a regular routine but a commitment that can be enjoyed to the fullest.

Discussion

Sarojini Naidu's depiction of the vibrant working class in her poem's highlights, the workers in Naidu's verses, whether they are bangle sellers, weavers, palanquin bearers, or Coromandel fishermen, embody qualities such as vigor, optimism, enthusiasm, and strength. They convey a powerful message of finding joy and fulfillment in their work. The focus on happiness and fulfillment while performing their tasks is a timeless message that resonates even in today's technology-driven workforce.

In the contemporary business landscape, where many individuals are immersed in the complexities of technology and may feel disconnected from the joy of their work, Naidu's depiction of the working class in the early twentieth century becomes particularly relevant. The call to approach our calling with a positive attitude and carry it out with joy and accomplishment remains a crucial and timely reminder. Naidu's vibrant working-class is an inspiration to 21st-century readers and professionals, offering a timeless lesson about the importance of finding joy and fulfillment in the daily pursuit of one's work.

Conclusion:

Sarojini Naidu's poetic works are characterized by a rich texture of color, vibrancy and dynamism. Through her powerful lyrical and melodic excellence, Naidu brings to life the way of life of simple workers, depicting their experiences with profound beauty and artistic expression. As Priyankar Datta has noted, Naidu's poems are a testimony to her ability to enrich the English language, offering readers a window into the soul, emotions and magic of the East. The Yorkshire Post's honor also attests to Naidu's significant contribution to literature, as she is recognized not only as a linguistic enrichment but also as a channel for promoting intimate contact with the cultural richness of the East. Sarojini Naidu's legacy lives on through her vibrant and evocative poetry, which continues to resonate with readers, transcending temporal and cultural boundaries. Her poetic brilliance serves as an enduring bridge, inviting readers to explore and appreciate the nuances of life, culture, and the human experience through the lens of her eloquent and captivating words.

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