

---

**The Vibrant Tapestry of Indian Life: An Exploration of Sarojini Naidu's Depiction of the Masses in Select Poems**

---

**Sunil Dattatraya Alone**, Assistant Professor Of English, Shri Lemdeo Patil Mahavidyalaya, Mandhal, District: Nagpur, Maharashtra, Rashtasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University, Nagpur, Maharashtra, 441210, India

---

**Article Received:** 27/09/2024

**Article Accepted:** 29/10/2024

**Published Online:** 30/10/2024

**DOI:**10.47311/IJOES.2024.6.10.119

---

**Abstract**

Sarojini Naidu often hailed as the 'Nightingale of India,' possesses an extraordinary ability to capture the pulse of Indian life, culture, and traditions in her poetry. In poems like *Indian Weavers*, *The Bangle Sellers*, *Coromandel Fishers*, and *In the Bazaars of Hyderabad*, Naidu paints vivid and evocative portraits of the Indian masses, portraying their daily struggles, joys, and occupations with lyricism and empathy. This paper delves into the representation of ordinary Indian lives in these selected poems, exploring themes of labor, tradition, nature, and commerce. By combining vivid imagery with a celebration of Indian culture, Naidu offers an idealized yet deeply intimate portrayal of India's common people, celebrating their resilience, spirituality, and sense of community. This paper will explore how Naidu's poetic depictions of the Indian masses serve not only as artistic expressions but also as cultural documents that reflect the spirit of pre-independence India, offering both critique and reverence for the nation's traditional ways of life.

**Keywords:** Indian Weavers, Bangle Sellers, Coromandel Fishers, Indian life, masses, Indian tradition

**Introduction:**

Sarojini Naidu's poetry is renowned for its vivid celebration of Indian culture, heritage, and everyday life. Thus, Indianness, which implies Indian not only in the choice of subjects and sentiments but also in setting, imagery, and diction, becomes an important, if not the most important, aspect of the poetry of Naidu (Shrivastava). Emerging as one of India's prominent figures during the struggle for independence, Naidu combined her political activism with her poetic craft to offer a unique lens through which to view the lives of India's people. Her poems are more than just lyric expressions; they serve as windows into the lives of the Indian masses, focusing on their occupations, rituals, and connection with nature. Her spontaneous overflow of emotions and Indian ethos is poured out in a lyrical style (Shrivastava).

This paper investigates Naidu's depiction of Indian life through her poems *Indian Weavers*, *The Bangle Sellers*, *Coromandel Fishers*, and *In the Bazaars of Hyderabad*. Each of these poems portrays different facets of Indian society, from labor and craft to commerce and the natural environment, while also capturing the enduring spirit of the people.

**Indian Weavers:**

Naidu's *Indian Weavers* celebrates the everyday laborers of Indian society by focusing on the work of the weavers. Through its structure of three stanzas, each symbolizing a different stage of life—birth, marriage, and death—Naidu highlights the cyclical nature of life that is intertwined with the labor of the weavers. The vivid imagery of “Blue as the wing of a halcyon wild” and “the plumes of a peacock, purple and green” emphasizes the connection between the work of the weavers and the natural world, positioning their craft as part of a larger, cosmic order. The weavers are depicted not merely as laborers but as creators of the fabric of life itself, both literally and metaphorically.

In addition to celebrating the labor of the weavers, Naidu's poem can also be read as a reflection on the cultural significance of their craft. Weaving, an ancient tradition in India, becomes a symbol of continuity and heritage. The weavers are not just workers but custodians of tradition, and their creations mark key moments in life, such as the birth of a child, a wedding, and a funeral. Through the metaphor of weaving, Naidu suggests that the lives of the Indian masses are similarly woven together through shared traditions, rituals, and experiences. The poem's structure, paralleling the stages of life, serves as a reminder of the continuity of Indian cultural practices despite the modern changes sweeping across the nation.

**The Bangle Sellers:**

*The Bangle Sellers* portrays the vibrancy of Indian marketplaces and the cultural role of women within society. The bangle sellers are shown as bearers of both tradition and femininity, providing bangles that symbolize various stages of a woman's life, from maidenhood to marriage. The lines “Some are flushed like the buds that dream / On the tranquil brow of a woodland stream” illustrate the symbolic link between the bangles and natural beauty. Naidu's choice to focus on the bangle sellers reflects her deep engagement with the symbolism of femininity and tradition, underscoring how commerce in India often involves the preservation of cultural identity.

Naidu's poem not only examines the symbolism of bangles but also underscores the importance of commerce in Indian life. The bangle sellers' trade is inextricably linked to the spiritual and ritualistic lives of Indian women and, by extension, the entire community. The poem elevates the act of buying and selling bangles beyond mere commerce; it becomes a form of participation in the cyclical stages of life. Naidu's portrayal of the bangle sellers demonstrates that trade and commerce in India are often imbued with deep cultural and spiritual significance, reflecting the interconnectedness of everyday labor with cultural practices.

**Coromandel Fishers:**

In *Coromandel Fishers*, Naidu captures the symbiotic relationship between the fishermen and the natural world, evoking a sense of reverence for the sea and the life it provides. The phrases like “the wakening skies pray to the morning light” and “in the track of the seagull’s call” emphasize the fishermen’s close connection to nature. Naidu personifies the sea as both a mother and a provider, essential to the livelihood of the fishermen. This relationship suggests that the Indian masses, represented by the fishermen, live in harmony with the natural elements, depending on them for survival yet respecting their power.

Though *Coromandel Fishers* is primarily a celebration of the fishermen’s lives and their relationship with nature, it can also be read as a nationalist poem that invokes the idea of a united, free India. The imagery of the “leaping wealth of the tide” and “the kiss of the spray” conjures the freedom of the sea, perhaps serving as a metaphor for the political freedom that Naidu and her contemporaries sought for India. The poem can thus be interpreted as both an ode to the fishermen’s connection with nature and a call for India’s own liberation from colonial rule.

**In the Bazaars of Hyderabad:**

Naidu’s poem *In the Bazaars of Hyderabad* is a vivid depiction of a traditional Indian marketplace, teeming with energy, color, and life. The poem’s catalogue-like structure, with its rhythmic listing of sights and sounds, captures the sensory overload of the bazaar. From “Saffron and lentil and rice” to “tassels of azure and red,” the market offers a microcosm of Indian life. The poem portrays the bazaar not just as a place of commerce but as a cultural hub where various facets of Indian life converge, from food and clothing to crafts and jewelry.

The marketplace in *the Bazaars of Hyderabad* serves as a meeting point of tradition and commerce. The items being sold—bangles, saffron, spices, and flowers—are not just everyday commodities but are deeply rooted in Indian culture and rituals. The repetition of the question-and-answer structure in the poem mirrors the transactional nature of the bazaar while also emphasizing the cultural significance of the items being exchanged. The market becomes a symbol of India’s rich cultural heritage, where commerce is not merely an economic activity but a celebration of life and tradition.

**The Role of Women in Naidu’s Poems:**

Sarojini Naidu’s poems often portray women as strong, independent, and resilient individuals, challenging traditional patriarchal norms and societal expectations. Through her poetry, she celebrates women’s agency, creativity, and emotional depth. The pained passive woman in her poetry, however, is in radical contrast to Naidu’s own life: she was a close friend of Gandhi’s and active in the National movement, suffering imprisonment numerous times (Alexander). However, across all four poems, Naidu places a particular emphasis on the roles of women, both as participants in and subjects of the cultural and economic life of India. In *The Bangle Sellers*, women are portrayed as the central figures in the rituals and traditions

---

that sustain cultural continuity. Similarly, in *the Bazaars of Hyderabad*, women are both buyers and sellers, central to the life of the marketplace. Naidu's depictions of women are marked by a sense of respect for their roles within both the domestic and public spheres, highlighting their importance in maintaining cultural traditions.

**Conclusion:**

Sarojini Naidu's poetry offers a rich and vivid portrayal of Indian life, focusing on the lives of the masses and their connection with nature, tradition, and commerce. As a folk poet, Sarojini Naidu presents a colorful pageant of the life of the Indian masses and of their diverse occupations, customs, traditions, and beliefs (Tilak). Through poems like *Indian Weavers*, *The Bangle Sellers*, *Coromandel Fishers*, and *In the Bazaars of Hyderabad*, Naidu celebrates the resilience, creativity, and spirituality of the Indian people. Her poems provide not just an artistic depiction of Indian life but also a cultural document that captures the essence of a nation on the brink of change. Naidu's work serves as a reminder of the beauty and strength of Indian traditions, even as they exist within a rapidly modernizing world. By focusing on the lives of ordinary Indians, Naidu elevates their everyday experiences to the realm of poetry, offering both reverence and critique in her celebration of Indian culture.

**References:**

- Alexander, Meena. "Sarojini Naidu Romanticism and Resistance." *Economic and Political Weekly* 20.43 (1985). 7 9 2024. Dabir, Urmila, Wanjari, Priya , and Dalela, Renu, ed. *A Novel Beginning*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan Private Limited, 2020. Textbook.
- Jachak, Ajit, ed. *Alluring Aroma*. Chennai: Macmillan Education India Private Limited, 2022. Textbook.
- Naidu, Sarojini. "Coromandel Fishers." *The Golden Threshold*. Project Gutenberg, 1905.
- Naidu, Sarojini. "Indian Weavers." *The Golden Threshold*. Project Gutenberg, 1905.
- Naidu, Sarojini. "The Bangle Sellers." *The Golden Threshold*. Project Gutenberg, 1905.
- Shrivastava, Vandana. "Sarojini Naidu is a Wave of an Indian Ocean." *Global Journal of Human-Social Science Research* 16.7 (2017). 7 9 2024.
- Tilak, Dr. Raghukul. *Sarojini Naidu: Selected Poems*. Fifteenth. Delhi: Rama Brothers PVT. LTD., 2014. Reference.