

## UNIT-7

### THE BANGLE SELLERS

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#### 7.0 Introducing the Author

##### ***Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949)***

Sarojini Naidu is also known as the nightingale of India. She played an active role in the Indian Independence struggle and also in the formation of the Indian constitution. In 1985, she travelled to England to study at King's College London and Girton College Cambridge respectively. She was the first Indian woman to become the President of the Indian National Congress and the Governor of the United Provinces From 1947 to 1949. She was the first woman to become Governor of an Indian state. Naidu played a major role in the Indian Independence movement after coming in contact with Gopal Krishan Gokhale, Rabindranath Tagore, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Anny Besant, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1931, she participated in the Round Table Conference with Gandhi and Madan Mohan Malaviya. She played a leading role during the Civil Disobedience Movement and was jailed along with Gandhi and other leaders. In 1942, she was arrested during the Quit India Movement.

Naidu began writing at the age of thirteen. Her major themes are nature, love, life and death, folk life, patriotism and mysticism. Her first collection of poems named *The Golden Threshold* was published in 1905. *The Bard of Time* was published in 1912, *The Broken Wing* came out in 1917, *The Sceptred Flute* in 1943. Her work *The Father of the Dawn* was edited and published posthumously in 1961 by her daughter Padamja. The poem "Bangle Sellers" was first published in the year 1912 by Sarojini Naidu in her collection of poems called "The Bird of Time." The speaker makes strong connections between the bangles and their role in providing "happy daughters and happy wives."

#### 7.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the imagery associated with bangles and the implications for women's roles in a traditionalist Indian social setting.

- Appreciate the figures of speech employed to describe the celebration of Indian womanhood.
- Understand the auspiciousness and symbolic value of the custom of wearing bangles.

## 7.2 The Poem

The Bangle sellers

7.2.1 Bangle sellers are we who bear

Our shining loads to the temple fair...

Who will buy these delicate, bright

Rainbow-tinted circles of light?

Lustrous tokens of radiant lives,

For happy daughters and happy wives.

**Explanation:** Naidu's poem explores the feelings associated with bangles and the implications for women's roles in a traditionalist Indian social setting. Bangle sellers take their load of bangles to the temple fair to sell them. The bangles are termed as "lustrous tokens of radiant lives" which mean that they are symbols of love in people's lives. They are trying to convince the purchasing public of the spiritual and symbolic importance of these bangles. In this process, the speaker makes strong connections between the bangles and their role in providing "happy daughters and happy wives."

### Check Your Progress

1. What kind of poem is The Bangle Sellers?
2. What do bangle sellers carry and where?

7.2.2 Some are meet for a maiden's wrist,

Silver and blue as the mountain mist,

Some are flushed like the buds that dream

On the tranquil brow of a woodland stream,

Some are aglow with the bloom that cleaves

To the limpid glory of new born leaves

### Explanation:

The poet says that some of the bangles are made for the unmarried women and they are of silver and blue in color. They also choose reddish colour bangles 'flushed like the buds.' Some maidens also prefer green colour which is like the colour of newborn leaves.

### Check Your Progress

1. What colour of bangles are more suitable for a maiden's wrist?
2. Which colour do some other maidens prefer and why?

7.2 .3 Some are like fields of sunlit corn,  
 Meet for a bride on her bridal morn,  
 Some, like the flame of her marriage fire,  
 Or, rich with the hue of her heart's desire,  
 Tinkling, luminous, tender, and clear,  
 Like her bridal laughter and bridal tear.

**Explanation:**

The other bangles made for the bride glow like the fields of corn during morning. Those bangles glow like the bride's marriage flame and rich in her heart's desires. The bangles are tinkling with 'luminous' colors like the bride's laughter or tears.

**Check Your Progress**

1. How do the bangles made for the brides glow?
2. Explain the comparison of bangles with "the bride's laughter or tears."

7.2 .4 Some are purple and gold flecked grey  
 For she who has journeyed through life midway,  
 Whose hands have cherished, whose love has blest,  
 And cradled fair sons on her faithful breast,  
 And serves her household in fruitful pride,  
 And worships the gods at her husband's side.

**Explanation:**

Some bangles are made for the elderly women who have journeyed through half of their life. The purple and gray flecked bangle is meant to symbolize a woman who "serves her household in fruitful pride,/ And worships the gods at her husband's side."

**Check Your Progress**

1. Who chooses purple and gold flecked grey bangles and what do they symbolize?
2. What is onomatopoeia? Explain giving an example.

Mothers who have passed half of their life choose purple and gold flecked grey colour bangles, which symbolizes their love for their sons and their humble prayers to Gods while sitting with their husbands.

**7.3 Summary:**

Bangle sellers take their load of bangles to the temple fair to sell them. The bangles are termed as "lustrous tokens of radiant lives" which mean that they are symbols of love in people's lives. The bangles are made for happy daughters and wives. The poet says that some of the bangles are made for the unmarried women and they are of silver and blue in colour. The other bangles made for the bride

glow like the fields of corn during morning. Those bangles glow like the bride's marriage flame and rich in her heart's desires. The bangles are tinkling with 'luminous' colours like the bride's laughter or tears. Some bangles are made for the elderly women who have journeyed through half of their life. These bangles are purple in colour with gold fleckers. These women have served their household well, cradled their sons and have worshipped the household gods with their husbands beside them. The subsequent stanzas describe through lush and natural imagery the beauty of the bangles and their representation of these ideals help to increase their precious value. Some of these descriptions invoke the passion of "marriage's fire" and, in the last stanza, help to bring to light the socially accepted role of women in this setting.

The poem employs colorful imagery liberally and is an epitome of the typical Indian scene. Onomatopoeia is one of the figures of speech used to describe the sounds of the bangles, which gives a musical flow to the poem. The rhyme scheme of the poem is aa-bb-cc.

#### 7.4 Key Terms

Rainbow tinted	: rainbow colored
Lustrous	: shining
Meet	: suitable
Tranquil Brow	: Calm and quiet bank of a river, lake, pond etc
Limpid	: clear
Hue	: colour
Luminous	: glowing

#### 7.5 Answers to check your progress

1. The Bangle Sellers is a poem that deals with folk theme, folk characters and their vocations. She invests the folk theme with richness of allegory and symbolism, with bangles symbolizing love and happiness in people's lives.
2. The bangle sellers carry their load of bangles to the temple fair in order to sell them.
3. The bangles more suitable for a maiden's wrist are of silver and blue in colour like the mountain mist.
4. Some other maidens also prefer green colour which is like the colour of newborn leaves.
5. The bangles made for the bride glow like the fields of corn during morning. They appear like the bride's marriage flame and rich in her heart's desires.
6. The bangles worn by the bride reflect the burning desires of her heart and hence tinkle with luminous colours like the bride's laughter or tears.
7. Mothers who have passed half of their life choose purple and gold flecked grey colour bangles, which symbolize their love for their sons and their humble prayers to Gods while sitting with their husbands.
8. Onomatopoeia is a figure of speech used to describe the sounds of the bangles, which gives a musical flow to the poem. It is defined as a word, which imitates the natural sounds of a particular thing, creating a musical sound effect that mimics the thing that is being described. For instance:

“Tinkling, luminous, tender, and clear,  
Like her bridal laughter and bridal tear.”

## 7.6 Questions and Exercises:

### Short Answer Questions

**1. Who are bangle sellers?**

Ans: The bangle sellers are a group of people on its way to the temple fair to sell their bangles of different colours.

**2. How are the bangles described by the poet?**

Ans: The bangles are described as “lustrous tokens of radiant lives” by the poet and there are different bangles for different women.

**3. What are some of the different colours of bangles?**

Ans: There are rainbow-tinted bangles for daughters and wives, silver and blue ones for the maidens, rich hues for the brides, and purple flecked for older women.

**4. What is the figure of speech prominently used in the poem?**

Ans: Onomatopoeia is the figures of speech prominently used in the poem to describe the sounds of the bangles, which gives a musical flow to the poem.

**5. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?**

Ans: The rhyme scheme of the poem is aa-bb-cc, which means line one rhyming with line 2, line three rhyming with line 4 and line 5 rhyming with line 6.

### Long-Answer Questions

**1. What is the significance of bangles for various categories of women?**

Ans: Some of the bangles are made for the unmarried women and they are of silver and blue in colour. The other bangles made for the bride glow like the fields of corn during morning. These bangles are tinkle with ‘luminous’ colours like the bride’s laughter or tears. While some other bangles, purple in colour with gold fleckers, are made for the elderly women who have journeyed through half of their life.

**2. How does this poem celebrate womanhood?**

Ans: The poem celebrates womanhood by vividly describing the different stages of a woman’s life like maidenhood, marriage, middle age through the use of varied colours, feelings and emotions. Women in various stages of their lives tend to express their love, happiness and heart’s desires by wearing different sets of bangles- different shades and lustre for the unmarried young teen; different colours and patterns for a woman about to be married and more sedate ones for the woman who is now a mother and hence is older and more settled and content.

**3. Discuss the use of imagery and symbols in the poem**

Ans: The bangles termed as “lustrous tokens of radiant lives” symbolize love and radiance in people’s lives and are made for happy daughters and wives. Her images of bangles of various colours are

visual, vivid and graphic. While some bangles are described as “delicate, bright rainbow-tinted circles of light”, others are “silver and blue as the mountain mist,” while “some are flushed like the buds that dream on the tranquil brow of a woodland stream.”

### Essay type question

#### 1. How does the title and the theme of the poem depict Indian scene and sensibility?

Ans: The very title “The Bangle Sellers” sets the Indian scene in the sense that a group of bangle sellers is on its way to the temple fair to sell their bangles and one of them is the narrator of the poem. The use of different kinds of bangles for different ages and stages of Indian women further consolidates Indian setting and characterization. The poet says that some of the bangles are made for the unmarried women and they are of silver and blue in colour. The other bangles made for the bride glow like the fields of corn during morning. Those bangles glow like the bride’s marriage flame and rich in her heart’s desires. The bangles are tinkling with ‘luminous’ colours like the bride’s laughter or tears. Some bangles are made for the elderly women who have journeyed through half of their life. These bangles are purple in colour with gold fleckers. These women have served their household well, cradled their sons and have worshipped the household gods with their husbands beside them. The poem describes through lush and natural imagery the beauty of the bangles and how their representation of these ideals help to increase their precious value for Indian women of different ages. Some of these descriptions invoke the passion of "marriage's fire" and, in the last stanza, help to bring to light the socially accepted role of women in this setting.

### 7.7 Language Practice:

#### 1. List some of the

#### 2. Use the words ‘lustrous’ and ‘tranquil’ in a sentence of your own.

Ans: Lustrous: Her dark, deep-set and lustrous eyes impressed one and all.

Tranquil: Everyone is a great admirer of his tranquil state of mind.

#### 3. Use the word ‘journey’ as a verb and as a noun in sentences of your own.

Ans: **Noun:** Life is an endless journey.

**Verb:** I salute those who have journeyed so well through the twists and turns of life.

#### 4. List examples of a metaphor and a simile from the above poem.

Ans: **Metaphor:** Rainbow-tinted circles of light?

**Simile:** Silver and blue as the mountain mist,

#### 5. Find out a few examples of onomatopoeia from the above poem.

Ans: Or, rich with the hue of her heart's desire,

Tinkling, luminous, tender, and clear,