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## Editorial

Welcome to the **July 2018** issue (Volumes 4 & 5) of *Academia: Journal of C. M. College*. This issue is yet another acknowledgement of Academia's unflagging commitment to nurturing a plurality of research issues and interests that underpin our practices in the teaching of English/Hindi/Maithili Language and Literature, Social Sciences, Economics, Commerce, and Management. The papers presented in this issue signpost our authors' bold attempts to propose and disseminate new concepts of realization that are in keeping with *Academia's* declared mission of promoting locally appropriate, culturally sensitive and socially aligned methodologies and materials (texts) in teaching and research. It is our fond belief that such on-going endeavours and exercises would add significantly to the available knowledge not only in the field of language and literature but also in the other areas of pursuits. To meet this goal, this issue of *Academia* has published papers not only of authors of repute from India but also of authors from the different parts of globe, such as, England (though currently the author is working in City University of Hong Kong), Republic of Yemen, Sultanate of Oman, and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Besides, as all papers are research-oriented, innovations, novelty, and experimentations are the hall marks of these papers.

A fair evaluation of published papers speaks volumes about the significant amount of innovations coupled with a fair degree of boldness in our authors' writings. D. Thakur discusses the origin and early history of Gayatri, reviews all available English translations of Gayatri, gives his own translation, and then argues in favour of his translation having an edge over the available translations and finally highlights the elegance of its style and the sublimity of its ideational structure. Lauren Clark examines Shailja Patel and Rafeef Ziadah comparatively to persuade that their writings are not merely politicized but they represent a form of hermetic, apolitical, and artistic protest. V. S. Thakur, in his paper, elaborates the idea of exploiting the neglected resource of cartoons/caricatures to provide a stimulating learning experience to the students in ESL/EFL classrooms. Syed Sarwar Hussain examines the various influences on the poets of Nineteen Thirties which mould the contours of their poetic art. B. B. Mohanty examines the divine aspect of Indian theatre, its distinctiveness, its narrative aspect, and its magnificently elaborate costumes using the concept of unity in diversity. Asha Choubey tries to read the olfactory representations in the novels of some women writers to explore the social, cultural and moral connotations of the olfactory/gustatory aspect. Anuradha Bhattacharya presents, in the lines of the French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, a psychoanalytic study of the play 1964 Marat/Sade mainly focusing on the character of Marat. Poornima K.B. investigates the factors responsible for causing a recognizable shift from Trauma to Triumph in feminist literature in general and in Namita Gokhale's *Mountain Echo* in particular. S.S. Sarma, in his paper labelled, "In Search of a Name", attempts to record the academic adventures in naming Indian Writings in English giving justification for different nomenclatures given to it. Amrendra Sharma's paper attempts to discover the importance of pre-writing and explains how it might be developed well

and contributes to the overall writing process. Sanket K. Jha, in his paper on Alice Munro, discusses and illustrates the unique narrative technique used in Munro's short stories and their effects on the narratives he creates. S.S. Sarma, in his paper entitled, "Omission of Om in the Last Line of *The Waste Land*", elaborates upon the possible reasons for omitting OM which precedes 'Shanthi, Shanthi, Shanthi' in T.S. Eliot's *Waste Land*. Krishna Nand Mishra evaluates the problems of marital discord and its moral implications as depicted in R. K. Narayan's famous novel, *The Guide*. Sanket K. Jha, in his paper entitled, "Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*: A Tale of Shedding Identities in Quest of the Real Self", tries to discover Mukherjee's delineation of the real quest of self-identity in her protagonist, Jasmine. Yugeshwar Sah emphasizes how Gandhian religious teaching can be made more effective if implemented in our daily practice and how this philosophy may lead to peace and universal brotherhood on the earth.

Diwakar Jha proposes to evaluate the circumstances and the degree of readiness of Indian Higher Education for Foreign Direct Investment in the globally connected environment. Ashish Kumar aims at showcasing the need of Direct Benefit Transfer as opposed to cash transfer. Mohan Mishra illustrates the circumstances under which the foreign policy of Nepal has come a long way (from its policy of age-old relations with India) to maintain a policy of equi-distance with its neighbours. Kamlanand Jha evaluates Usha Kiran Khan's novel entitled, *Sirjanhaar* and examines the poet laureate Vidyapati in his totality, such as his life-history, struggles, and majestic creativity. Shankar Kumar, along with Dr. Surendra Choudhary, investigates the freshness and diversity of Renu's stories and experiences an ecstatic joy by discovering the various issues, tones, moods, and colours of his stories. Hariom Kumar analyzes the stories of Swayam Prakash and finds his stories replete with his clear vision and philosophy of life and they help the author to achieve peace and universal brotherhood. Narayan Jha threadbares Babu Saheb Choudhary's plays and finds his plays attacking several social ills, like polygamy, child marriage, and dowry system. Ashok Kumar Mehta depicts how the plays of Manipadma have been used as a vehicle of social reforms extensively. Ragini Ranjan discusses the great contributions of Hari Mohan Jha as a dramatist. Suresh Paswan traces the genesis of the art of drawing and tattooing in the ancient India and also explains the medicinal value of tattooing. Narayan Jha and Ajay Kumar Mishra explore the glorious history of Darbhanga, express their concern about the present day deteriorating condition of education but hope that Darbhanga will restore its lost glory of the past soon.

In conclusion, we wish to applaud the courage and clarity with which the contributing authors have showcased their beliefs and thoughts in line with a healthy tradition of research. Further, we fervently believe that the agenda and insights discussed in this issue would serve as a lamp to all of us to march ahead with an added confidence and enlightenment.

**Parmanand Jha**  
**Amrendra Sharma**  
(Executive Editors)

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# Gayatri: A Sociolinguistic Classic

Dr. D. Thakur

## ABSTRACT

*This article has four parts. In the first part, the author discusses the origin and early history of Gayatri and points out that its first occurrence is to be found in sukta [section] number 62 of the third mandal [chapter] of the Rigveda and the rishi to whom this verse is said to have been revealed was Vishwamitra. In that early form it began with the words तत् सवितुर्वरेण्यम् ! Later in the Yajurveda the three words भूः, भुवः and स्वः, now known as vyahriti, were prefixed to it. According to its definition gayatri has to have three parts in it and each of the three parts has to have eight syllables [aksharas]. In its early form the first part of Gayatri had only seven syllables. Later the word वरेण्यम् was changed into वरेणीयम्, to ensure that the first part, too, had eight syllables as required.*

*In the second part, the author reviews all available English translations of Gayatri, gives his own translation, and then argues in favour of his translation having an edge over the available translations.*

*Gayatri is a hymn of prayer to Savitur, the sun, and so in this part of the article the author mentions the peculiarities of sun worship in different parts of the world and then discusses Gayatri in the context of that sun worship.*

*In the concluding part, the author highlights the elegance of its style and the sublimity of its ideational structure.*

## Introductory Observations

Gayatri is a highly revered Vedic hymn. Its earliest occurrence is to be found in the Rig Veda (3.62.10). Like brihati, jagati, pankti, trishtubh, and anushtubh, gayatri is the name of a metrical form used in Sanskrit poetry, ancient Vedic poetry in particular. It is a metrical form that consists of three pādas of eight syllables each.<sup>1</sup> The way language operates, in many cases, the word used for a certain idea or object starts getting used for an associated idea or object, and this is what has happened in the case of the word "gayatri". "Gayatri", the name of the verse form used in this hymn, started getting used more for the content, and for many people now the word refers only to the content.

Every hymn of the Rig Veda is known for three of its descriptive details: (i) the name of the rishi to whom the hymn is believed to have been revealed, (ii) the name of the

deity to whom the hymn is addressed and (iii) the name of the verse form in which the hymn was composed. The name of the rishi in this case is Vishvamitra and the god to whom the hymn is addressed is Savita. "Savita" is a word used as a synonym for the word "sun". Thus, one of the ways in which this hymn can be understood is in the context of sun worship in the ancient Indian tradition and more widely in the larger context of sun worship in different parts of the world.

A clear understanding of the ideational content of Gayatri needs a clear understanding of two of the rhetorical devices used in literature. These two devices are metonymy and personification.

### **The Use of Metonymy**

As has been pointed out earlier, Gayatri is the name of a metrical form used in Sanskrit poetry. Verse Number 3.62.10 in the Rig Veda is in the gayatri meter, Metonymy which is a rhetorical device because of which an object is described and understood as another object closely associated with it. Statements like "the pen is mightier than the sword" ['Pen' refers to written words and 'sword' to military force] and "The White House ['White House' refers to the American administration] has decided to support this proposal" are good examples of this rhetorical device. Because of the use of metonymy, the word 'gayatri', which was originally the name of a metrical form, started being used for the ideational content expressed in that metrical form in the Rig Veda. So when someone says that Gayatri can help us to meditate on the mystery of this universe, he refers to the content and not merely to the metrical form of this Vedic hymn.

### **The Use of Personification**

Deifying an abstract idea, i.e., conceptualizing an abstract idea as a divine entity in a human or near human form having human passions and emotions like kindness, helpfulness and protectiveness has been one of the innate tendencies of the human mind. Mythologies are nothing but complex networks of the act of deification. Sex, for example, is an idea based on a biological phenomenon but in Indian mythology it has been presented as a superhuman figure known as Kamadeva trying to arouse in his victims a desire for sexual union. Material affluence has been deified as goddess Laxmi and knowledge, wisdom, and excellence in fine arts have been deified as goddess Sarasvati. The idea of cosmic creation has been deified as Brahma, the idea of sustenance of the universe as Vishnu and the idea of cosmic destruction as Shiva. Gayatri needs to be understood in this context of the human tendency for deification. Sometimes Gayatri is portrayed as a goddess seated on a red lotus, having five heads, ten eyes, ten arms equipped with all weapons.

As is evident from the following icon, in certain other cases Goddess Gayatri is portrayed as a human being with only two arms sitting on a swan.



### Some Laudatory Comments on Gayatri

In the Gita (10. 35) Sri Krishna praises gayatri for its excellence as a metrical form and Lord Buddha also praised it as the foremost metre.<sup>2</sup> But it has been praised more for its spiritual content. Just as honey is the essence of flowers, and butter is the essence of milk, Gayatri is considered by many scholars to be the essence of all the Vedas. There are others who think that Gayatri can lead to self-knowledge and self-realization. Manusmṛiti (2. 83) says that there is nothing greater than the Gayatri Mantra. Jagadguru Sankaracharya was of the view that it can lead to enlightenment leading to self-realisation.<sup>3</sup> Maharshi Raman said that it "gives the devotees spiritual as well as material benefits".<sup>4</sup> In 1827 Raja Ram Mohan Roy published a dissertation on the Gayatri mantra that analysed it in the context of various Upanishads<sup>5</sup>. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya said that it can purify the mind.<sup>6</sup> Acharya Sharma felt certain that it will have "an unequalled, unparalleled and extraordinary" impact on "the moral and ethical renaissance of this new scientific-intellectual age".<sup>7</sup>

By way of elaborating the message of Gayatri, Sanskrit poets wrote a number of Sanskrit texts with sublime-sounding titles like Gayatri Ramayan, Gayatri Gita, Gayatri Upanishad, Gayatri Samhita, Gayatri Sahashranam and Gayatri Chalisa, and Gayatri became so immensely popular that devotional poets started writing a gayatri addressed to almost every god in the Indian mythology. A total of thirty-eight gayatris are known and in future this number will certainly increase. These thirty-eight gayatris include Ganesh Gayatri, Brahma Gayatri, Vishnu Gayatri, Laxmi Gayatri, Shiva Gayatri, Durga Gayatri, Ram Gayatri, Hanuman Gayatri, Krishna Gayatri, Radha Gayatri and Yama Gayatri.<sup>8</sup>

The Bloomfield Concordance lists over thirty cross-references to other Vedic texts. Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanyanya Tilak, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Rabindranath Tagore, Maharshi Raman, and Dr Radhakrishnan are some of those numerous eminent people during the last one hundred years who have used words of high praise for this hymn from the Rig Veda.<sup>9</sup>

Deva Premal's father, Wolfgang, sang the mantra to his unborn daughter throughout the nine months she was in her mother's womb, and welcomed his baby into the world with the holy sounds of the Gayatri Mantra. As time went on, the prayer became the German-born singer's bedtime song, which she chanted every evening throughout her childhood. Thirty-five years after being welcomed by it at her birth, Deva Premal (1970 - ), famous for her meditative spiritual music, completed the circle by chanting Gayatri to her father on his deathbed, sending him on his spiritual journey with Gayatri as the last auditory experience of his life

There are people who have taken the importance of Gayatri a little too far and have

attributed supra-rational curative and other magical properties to it. Some have gone to the extent of attributing to it miracles stunning to the extent of being almost unbelievable.<sup>10</sup>

In this paper I am not concerned with whether or not Gayatri can enable someone to develop superhuman powers and whether its devoted repetition can, as some people have claimed, take a person miraculously out of his misery. I consider Gayatri to be an inspired hymn written in praise of the ultimate cosmic power evident in one of its gorgeous manifestations, the splendid effulgence of the sun. I consider it to be a hymn with an admirable auditory, lexical, grammatical and semantic structure which we have to understand if we want to comprehend it in its complex totality.

### **Its Translations**

The following are eight of the easily accessible English translations of Gayatri:

(i) Let us meditate on that excellent glory of the divine vivifying Sun, May he enlighten our understanding.<sup>11</sup> (Monier Williams)

(ii) May we attain that excellent glory of Savitur, the god: So may he stimulate our prayers.<sup>12</sup> (Ralf Griffith)

(iii) Unveil, O Thou who givest sustenance to the Universe, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, that face of the True Sun now hidden by a vase of golden light, that we may see the truth and do our whole duty on our journey to thy sacred seat.<sup>13</sup> (William Judge Quan)

(iv) Let us adore the supremacy of that divine sun, the god-head who illuminates all, who recreates all, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, whom we invoke to direct our understandings aright in our progress toward his holy sea<sup>14</sup> (Sir William Jones)

(v) Let us meditate on the desirable light of the divine Sun, may he rouse our minds<sup>15</sup>. (Edward Burnett Tylor)

(vi) We meditate on who has created the earth, the nether world and the heavens (i.e. the universe), and who directs our understanding<sup>16</sup> (Sivanath Sastri)

(vii) We meditate on the effulgent glory of the divine Light; may he inspire our understanding.<sup>17</sup> (Radhakrishnan)

(viii) We meditate on the adorable glory of the radiant sun; may he inspire our intelligence.<sup>18</sup> (Radhakrishnan)

### **(i) Translation of the Invocatory Particle OM**

The hymn of Gayatri begins with the invocatory particle, OM. This particle is not exclusive to Gayatri, however. It is that sacred invocatory particle in the spiritual tradition

of India with which the recitation of all hymns and mantras are supposed to begin. Because of its enormously mysterious connotation, it is nearly impossible to translate this invocatory particle in English. Indian learners with the background of their mystical and philosophical tradition "understand" this particle though they cannot explain it to others. Om, this particle, cannot be translated but there are situations in which we need to give to those who are not familiar with the Indian tradition of mysticism some idea of what this invocatory particle is all about. I propose that for such aliens Om can be described as the primordial sonic consciousness, an auditory symbol of the cause that caused itself, the auditory symbol of the booming commotion of existence that rolled in the bosom of the beyond when there was nothing, not even nothingness. It is the sound of silence, the music of our inner being, the music of existence. It is the subtle vibration that emerges when our body, mind and soul are in deep togetherness, when the visible and the invisible, the manifest and the un-manifest, the inner and the outer, the One and the many, the relative and the absolute, are in a state of interwoven totality.

## **(ii) Translation of the Vyahritis**

*Bhoo*, *bhuvah* and *svah*, the first three words of Gayatri, the three words that come immediately after the invocatory particle OM, do not make a complete sentence. Nor are they, grammatically speaking, an integral part of the sentence that follows. They are in the form a list and not in the form of a grammatical structure. But notionally they are an integral part of the prayer and the world view for which this hymn has been so widely and so admirably known for thousands of years. Just as the prelude in a Greek play provides the ideational background for what happens in the play and prepares the readers mentally for a perceptive interpretation of the play, these three words create the perspective in which Gayatri can be properly understood and interpreted. Because of their ideational importance they are known as *vyahritis*, terms of superb spiritual importance.

It has been said that the Upanishads are the quintessence of the Vedas, the Gayatri is the quintessence of the Upanishads and the three words that come at the beginning are the quintessence of Gayatri. But there is very little unanimity about the translation of these *vyahritis*. Sam Veda interprets the three *vyahritis* as the names of three worlds: *bhoo*: the terrestrial, *svah*: celestial and *bhuvah*: the world connecting terrestrial to celestial. It also adds that from a meditational point of view, *bhoo*, *bhuvah*, *svah* can be mystically interpreted as the three degrees/levels of depths of meditation: Conscious, Semi-conscious and the Unconscious. In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad ( 5.5.3-4), which is an Upanishad of Yajur Veda, *bhoo* (earth) has been described as the feet, *bhuvah* (sky) as the hands and *svah* (heaven) as the head of the Purush, the Self. In Taittiriya Upanishad (1.5.1), another

Upanishad of Yajur Veda, it has been said that bhooh is this world, bhuvah is the intermediate space and svah is the other world. In the immediately following paragraph (1.5.2) of this Upanishad, bhooh has been described as the Rig Veda, bhuvah as the Sama Veda and svah as the Yajur Veda. And then in the third paragraph, it has been said that bhooh is prana, bhuvah is apana, and svah is vyana.<sup>19</sup> In this very Upanishad a little later (1.6.1) it has been said that bhooh is fire, bhuvah is air and svah is the sun. Following Taittiriya Upanishad, Sivanath Sastri (1847-1919), a noted scholar, religious reformer, educator, writer and historian, also translates these three vyahritis as "the earth, the nether world and the heavens". According to Nigam, however, Bhooh, Bhuvah and Svah were the names of three provinces in North India.

It needs to be pointed out here that the verb BE can have an existential as well as a metaphorical meaning. In sentences like "The earth is a planet", the verb "is" has an existential meaning, but in a sentence like "The earth is the feet and heaven is the head of the Purush, the Self", the verb "is" has a metaphorical meaning; the verb "is" in this sentence means "is like". The view taken in this paper is that in descriptions of the vyahritis in the Upanishads, the verb BE has a metaphorical and not an existential meaning. So, when the Taittiriya Upanishad says that bhooh is fire, bhuvah is the air and svah is the sun, it only means that bhooh is [important] like fire, bhuvah is [important] like the air and svah is [important] like the sun. It would be wrong to assume that the Sanskrit word bhooh can be translated as fire, bhuvah as air and svah as the sun. So, how best can we translate the vyahritis into English?

I propose that bhooh should be translated as Being, bhuvah as Becoming and svah as the Existence Absolute. The three vyahritis in their totality, I propose, should be translated as:

O, Thou, Being, Becoming and Existence Absolute !

The two words *bhooh* and *bhuvah* are derived from the root "bhu-", which means "being, becoming, arising"<sup>20</sup>. Thus, the translation proposed here has an edge over many other translations in the sense that it is etymologically supported.

### (iii) Translation of the Key Phrases

As has been pointed out earlier, there are as many as 38 widely known gayatris now. What is linguistically significant is the fact that although each of these gayatris uses its own vocabulary specially suited to the god or the goddess to whom it is addressed, two of the lexical items remain unchanged. These two lexical items are: (i) धीमहि [dhîmahî] and (ii) प्रचोदयात् [prachodáyât]. It would be in order here, therefore, to discuss the meaning of these two words.

**धीमहि [Dhîmahî]**

*Dhîmahî* comes from the transitive verbal root 'dhî'. This verbal root means "to think about (something/somebody), to meditate upon (something/somebody)". Thus, *dhîmahî* means "Let us meditate upon (something/ somebody)". As will be evident from some of the translations quoted below, nearly all translators seem to be unanimous in translating this vocabulary item. Differences appear in the translation of "प्रचोदयात् [prachodáyât], the other lexical item common to all the thirty-eight gayatris

**धियोयोनः प्रचोदयात् [dhiyoyonah prachodáyât]**

Monier-Williams translates it as "may he enlighten our understanding". Ralf Griffith translates it as "may he stimulate our prayers". Tylor translates it as "may he rouse our minds". Radhakrishnan translates it as (i) "may he inspire our understanding" and as (ii) "may he inspire our intelligence."

Prachodáyât comes from the verbal root "cud", which means "to move in a specific direction". "Cod" is the causative stem of that verbal root "cud". It means "to move (something/ somebody) in a specific direction". "Pra-" is the prefix which means "forth, forward". It is the same prefix that we find at the beginning of Sanskrit words like *pragati*, *pravah* and *prajanan*. "Pracud-", therefore, means "to move forward and upward. "-ât" is a third person singular parasmaipada (active) precativ ending. Prachodáyât, therefore, means "may it move (something/somebody) forward and upward". I propose that in the context of Gayatri, it should be translated as "May it energize our intellect, enabling us thereby to go forward and upward in life".

**धियः [dhiyah] in धियोयोनः प्रचोदयात् [dhiyoyonah prachodáyât]**

This word is a plural noun [in its accusative form]. A look at Gayatri's translations listed above will show that:

(I) As expected, Griffith and Tylor have translated it as a plural word. Griffith has translated it as "prayers" and Tylor has translated it as "minds".

(ii) Monier-Williams, Sivanath Sastri and Radhakrishnan have translated this plural Sanskrit noun as a singular English noun. Monier-Williams and Sivanath Sastri have translated it as "understanding". In one of his translations of Gayatri, Radhakrishnan has translated this word as the singular noun "understanding" and in his other one he has translated it as the singular noun "intelligence". The view taken here is that there is no linguistic or contextual compulsion for this plural word in Sanskrit to be translated as a singular word in English and that this plural Sanskrit word should better be translated as a plural noun or noun phrase. I propose that this word should here be translated as "innate abilities". The word "innate" suggests that the abilities being discussed are already there; they only need to

be energized, aroused and stimulated. The meaning of "innate" has an aura of easy compatibility with the meaning of the verb प्रचोदयत [prachodáyât] and herein lies the suitability of this word.

### भर्गः [bhargah]

*Bhargah* is derived from the root *bhrij*, which has two meanings: (i) to be luminous, to shine, to illumine and (ii) to fry, to roast, to burn. Thus, the word *bhargah* has two meanings; it means "the splendour, the effulgence, the radiance", and the other meaning is: "frying, roasting, burning". In translations of Gayatri, one of its two meanings [roasting, frying, burning] seems to have been willfully neglected by all the translators.. Radhakrishnan has translated this word as "glory"

(i) We meditate on the effulgent **glory** of the divine Light; may he inspire our understanding.

(ii) We meditate on the adorable **glory** of the radiant sun; may he inspire our intelligence.

Ralph Griffith has also translated this word as "**glory**".

May we attain that excellent glory of Savitar the god: So may he stimulate our prayers.

William Jones has translated it as "**supremacy**":

Let us adore the **supremacy** of that divine sun. . .

Tylor has translated it as "light":

Let us meditate on the desirable light of the divine Sun, may he rouse our minds<sup>21</sup>.  
(Edward Burnett Tylor)

I propose that in translations of Gayatri, "*bhargah*" should be translated as "effulgence". The view taken here is that in the context of this hymn, "the effulgence of the sun" would be more appropriate than "the glory of the sun", "the supremacy of the sun" or "the light of the sun"..

### वरेण्यं [vareṇyam]

Adjectives occupy a very important place in the semantic structure of a sentence. वरेण्यं [vareṇyam] is the only adjective in Gayatri. But translators do not seem to agree about how best this adjective can be translated into English. Every translator has his own translation.

Ralph T. H. Griffith has translated it as "excellent":

May we attain that excellent glory of Savitar the god: So may he stimulate our prayers.

William Judge Quan has translated it as "golden":

Unveil, O Thou who givest sustenance to the Universe, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, that face of the true Sun now hidden by a vase of golden light, that we may see the truth and do our whole duty on our journey to thy sacred seat

Radhakrishnan has translated it as "effulgent", "divine", "adorable", and "radiant":

(i) We meditate on the **effulgent** glory of the **divine** Light; may he inspire our understanding

(ii) We meditate on the **adorable** glory of the **radiant** sun; may he inspire our intelligence.

Tylor has translated it as "desirable":

Let us meditate on the **desirable** light of the divine Sun, may he rouse our minds

In Gayatri there is only one adjective, the adjective वरेण्यं [vareṇyam], but, as is clear from his two translations quoted here, Dr Radhakrishnan has elaborated that one adjective into four. His translation, therefore, reads more like an explanation than like a translation. I propose that the adjective in this context should be translated as "adorable".

#### (iv) Syntactic Structure of Translations Listed Above

The translations significant from the point of view of their syntactic structure are the following:

(i) We meditate on the **effulgent glory** of the divine Light; // may he inspire our understanding. (Radhakrishnan)

(ii) We meditate on the **adorable glory** of the radiant sun; // may he inspire our intelligence. (Radhakrishnan)

(iii) Unveil, O Thou who givest sustenance to the Universe, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, that face of the true Sun now hidden by a vase of golden light, that we may see the truth and do our whole duty on our journey to thy sacred seat. (William Quan)

(iv) Let us adore the supremacy of that divine sun, the god-head who illuminates all, who recreates all, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, whom we invoke to direct our understandings aright in our progress toward his holy sea. (Sir William Jones)

(v) We meditate on who has created the earth, the nether world and the heavens (i.e. the universe), and who directs our understanding (Sivanath Sastri)

A careful look at these translations will show the following:

(i) Sivanth Sastri drops the adjective वरेण्यं [vareṇyam] out from his translation. As

has already been pointed out earlier, this adjective is not an irrelevant, superfluous adjective; it is an integral part of the ideational structure of Gayatri.

(ii) William Quan, Sir William Jones and Sivanath Sastri translate this hymn with the vyahritis included as an essential part of the sentence. Griffith and Radhakrishnan do not include the translation of the vyahritis in that sentence, the implication being that vyahritis, though very important in their own rights, stand apart and are not, ideationally speaking, an integral part of the main verse.

(iii) Griffith's translation and similarly Radhakrishnan's translation are in the form of a single sentence having a co-ordinate structure. The translation done by William Quan, by Sir William Jones and Sivanath Sastri are in the form of a complex sentence.

(iv) Vyahritis are in the form of a list of words but William Quan, William Jones and Sivanath Sastri have translated them in the form of subordinate clauses. William Quan has translated them as:

(a) who givest sustenance to the Universe, (b) from whom all proceed, (c) to whom all must return.

William Jones has translated them as:

(a) who illuminates all, who recreates all, (b) from whom all proceed, (c) to whom all must return,. . .

Sivanth Sastri has translated them in the form of a single relative clause:

. . . who has created the earth, the nether world and the heavens

The view taken here in this paper is that as the Vyahritis are in the form of a list of words and not in the form of a relative clause or a togetherness of two or more relative clauses, they should ideally be translated in the form of a list of words as they are in the original text.

(v) William Jones, William Judge Quan and Sivanath Sastri translate it in such a way that the vyahritis and what follows the vyahritis become part of a single sentence. The view taken here is that though vyahritis are an integral part of the hymn known as Gayatri, they constitute a separate entity within this hymn, and so they need to be translated as a separate unit and not a part of a single sentence including everything.

(vi) In this hymn there is only one adjective and that adjective is वरेण्यं [vareṇyam]. But there seems to be no unanimity regarding what the headword of this adjective is. The way William Jones and William Judge Quan have translated this hymn makes it clear that in their opinion this adjective refers to the noun सवितुः [savituḥ]. Ralph T. H. Griffith's translation shows that in his opinion this adjective modifies the word भर्गः [bhargah] and not the noun



सवितुः [savituḥ]. Interestingly, Dr Radhakrishnan translates this one Sanskrit adjective into two adjectives in English, one referring to the noun सवितुः [savituḥ] and the other referring to the noun भर्गः [bhargah]. What is more interesting from a linguistic point of view is that in two of his writings he gives two slightly different translations of this hymn and in one translation he uses one set of two adjectives and in the other he uses another two adjectives:

(a) We meditate on the **effulgent glory** of the **divine Light**; may he inspire our understanding.

(b) We meditate on the **adorable glory** of the **radiant** sun; may he inspire our intelligence.

### Translation Proposed Here

After this brief review of some of the widely known translations, I propose the following translation of Gayatri.

O, Thou ! Being, Becoming, and Existence Absolute! We meditate upon Thee manifested in the adorable effulgence of god Savitur, the sun. May our innate abilities be energized and invigorated by Thee and may we march forward in the journey of our life.

### Why This Translation?

If a number of translations of Gayatri, translations done by reputed scholars, are already available, why should we have another new translation? And if another new translation is produced, why should anyone accept a new translation in preference to those already available? My answers to these questions are as follows:

(i) Translation is inevitably linked with interpretation. It would be naïve to say that a translator translates a text exactly as it is. He can translate it only as he understands it. In his poems "Song of Myself" Walt Whitman says:

I celebrate myself and sing myself.

I would be an exaggeration to say that just as when writing a lyric, a song, a poet like Walt Whitman sings himself and celebrates himself, in translating a text a translator really translates himself. It would be, however, an exaggeration of something which is essentially true. This paper is an attempt to provide a new interpretation of Gayatri and a new interpretation demands a new translation.

(ii) Unlike English, Sanskrit is an etymologically-oriented language in the sense that the etymology of a word in English can be very misleading if we want to ascertain the meaning of a word in a modern English text, the etymology of a word like "salt", "February", "candid", "diploma", or "cunning", for example, But because of etymology always being an

important part of Sanskrit education and for various other related reasons, the etymology of a Sanskrit word nearly always helps in understanding the meaning of that word in a Sanskrit text. So, everything else being the same, if a word, a phrase, a sentence, a hymn in Sanskrit has two or more possible meanings, the meaning which is etymologically supported should be preferred. In view of the etymological analysis of the keywords and phrases in Gayatri attempted here, it can be legitimately argued that the translation of Gayatri proposed here is etymologically valid.

(iii) If a word or a phrase in a hymn, in a poem or any other text has two possible meanings, the meaning which is in harmony with the holistic meaning of that hymn, that poem, that text, should be preferred in the interpretation of that hymn, that poem, that text.

The translation of Gayatri proposed here is an attempt to dive deep into the etymology of its constituent words and to highlight thereby the idea that has not received in the English translations attempted so far the attention that it deserves. As has been pointed out later in this discussion, Gayatri is not a prayer to have, It is a prayer to be, to be energized and invigorated enough to go upward and forward in life.

The Vedic world view is essentially a world view of life being an endless journey, a journey for man to exceed himself and become himself more entirely and profoundly than he is. To be is to become. To exist is to move forward and upward. This message of being essentially destined for an endless becoming can be seen scattered all over Vedic literature, not only in the form of explicit statements but even in the etymology of words. Brahma and atma are two of the defining words of Vedic philosophy in the sense that if we exclude the concepts conveyed by these two words, the Vedic world view would be incomplete and incomprehensible. Both these words imply a forward movement. The word atma is derived from the root "at-", which means "steadily to go ahead". The word brahma is derived from the root "brih-", which means "expand, enlarge". The Gita described a sattvik person as someone who goes upward and forward in the journey of life and a tamasik person as someone who goes backward and downward. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (1.3.28) exhorted people to march forward in the journey from darkness to light, from falsehood to truth and from death to immortality. In the Kathopanishad (1.3.3; 1.3.4) the idea of life being a journey has been conveyed through the metaphor of a chariot and it has been said that the body is the chariot, sense organs are the horses, the intellect is the charioteer and the self is the master of the chariot. The slogan of charaiveti charaiveti in the Rig Veda gives us the inspiring message that life is an endless journey and we have to keep moving on and on.<sup>22</sup> As the translation proposed here highlights the idea of a forward movement, it is in ideational harmony with the Vedic world view.

### The Addition of Vyahrities

As has been mentioned earlier, it is in the Rig Veda (3.62.10 ) that Gayatri occurs for the first time. There it is without vyahrities. When it occurs in the Yajur Veda (36.3), it has vyahrities added to it. Om, the sacred icon of spirituality which is prefixed to all mantras, was also added to it. As a hymn, Gayatri, as it occurs in the Rig Veda, is complete in itself, both ideationally and syntactically. What was then the ontological necessity for adding vyahrities to it? Are the Vyahrities an unwanted addition or do they form an integral part of an ideational whole with the Gayatri in its original form as the main constituent of that ideational whole? Vyahrities have already been briefly mentioned earlier in this discussion. To get an answer to these questions we need to understand vyahrities better in terms of what has been mentioned below:

The word *bhoo*, which I have translated as 'being', suggests that we do exist and that our existence is not an illusion but an ontological reality. Life, it suggests, is not a misfortune to be worried about; it is an opportunity for us to be a doer, a winner, an accomplisher and to live our life to its fullest potential. Our life is an opportunity for us to make the world better than what we found it. Life confronts us with difficulties no doubt but we have to be an optimist who can find an opportunity hiding behind every difficulty and avoid being a pessimist who sees a difficulty hiding behind every opportunity.

The word *bhuvah*, which I have translated as becoming, tells us that becoming, i.e. growth, augmentation, animation and extension are the principal hankering of our being. In Nature, to be is to be moving all the time. A piece of wood, a piece of coal or a piece of stone may look all fixed, stable and unmoving but the particles inside it are constantly moving. The planets, the stars, the galaxies, are all moving all the time. Just as movement is the defining characteristic of all particles in inert looking material objects, both in the microcosm and in the macrocosm, being has to be understood in terms of an urge for becoming. This urge of being is to move towards becoming. Life can metaphorically be described as a journey. As Barbara De Angelis 1951- ), an American author and spiritualist, said, "The journey between what you once were and who you are now becoming is where the dance of life really takes place"

The word *svah*, which I have translated as "self", refers to the essence of our existence. This is what gives us our identity and makes us unique, different from everyone else. For the self to go on the journey of life is to explore existence. This journey is not a journey in outer space; it is a journey in the inner world of one's psyche. It is to attain greater and still greater height of excellence, greater and still greater height of enlightenment... As Maharshi Aurobindo once said, man has the capacity for exceeding himself, for becoming himself more entirely and profoundly than he is. So the journey of life is the journey of self-

discovery. As Sree Sree Thakur once said,

Investigate, discover  
and realize  
yourself in you  
then be selfish honestly..(Message Vol. V, p. 191.)

Someone defined yoga as a journey of the self through the self to the self This may or may not be an appropriate description of yoga but this is certainly an appropriate description of the journey of life. The following exhortation in the Rig Veda refers to this journey of life;

चरै वेति चरै वेति  
carai veti carai veti  
Go on and on and on. ( charai veti suktam, Aitereya Brahmin, 7.15.7)

In short, the vyahrities tell us what life is, what the basic primordial urge of our existence is and how we can live our life to its full potential. Gayatri, as it in the Rig Veda, is a prayer. This prayer acquires its full meaning in the context of the vyahrities. In its original form Gayatri is ideationally complete no doubt but in the context of the vyahrities this meaning acquires a higher degree of completeness. The sky has its meaning complete itself but it acquires a richer, wider and deeper meaning when we consider it in the background of the earth. So, metaphorically speaking, we can say that vyahrities are to Gayatri what the earth is to the sky, what the sky is to its beautiful rainbow and what the luxuriant green branches of a flower plant are to the beautiful flowers on those branches.

### **Gayatri in Mohammad Iqbal's Translation**

Gayatri mantra has been admired by intellectuals and spiritualists in different parts of the world. For example, Mohammad Iqbal, the famous Urdu poet who later moved to Pakistan and became a supporter of the philosophy that led to the creation of Pakistan, was enamoured by the sublimity of Gayatri and he presented an elaborate transcreation of this famous hymn:

Ae Aftab! Rooh-o-Rawan-e-Jahan Hai Tu  
Shiraza Band-e-Daftar-e-Kaun-o-Makan Hai Tu  
O Sun! The world's essence and motivator you are  
The organizer of the book of the world you are  
Baees Hai Tu Wujood-o-Adam Ki Namood Ka  
Hai Sabz Tere Dam Se Chaman Hast-o-Bood Ka

The splendor of existence has been created by you  
The verdure of the garden of existence depends on you  
Har Shay Ko Teri Jalwagari Se Sabat Hai  
Tera Ye Souz-o-Saaz Sarapa Hayat Hai  
Your appearance confers stability on everything  
Your illumination and concord is completion of life  
Woh Aftab Jis Se Zamane Mein Noor Hai  
Dil Hai, Khird Hai, Rooh-e-Rawan Hai, Shaur Hai  
You are the sun which establishes light in the world  
Which establishes heart, intellect, essence and wisdom  
Ae Aftab! Hum Ko Zia-e-Shaur De  
Chashm-e-Khird Ko Apni Tajalli Se Noor De  
O Sun! Bestow on us the light of wisdom  
Bestow your luster's light on the intellect's eye  
Hai Mehfil-e-Wujood Ka Saman Taraz Tu  
Yazdan-e-Sakinan-e-Nashaib-o-Faraz Tu  
You are the decorator of necessities of existence' assemblage  
You are the Yazdan of the denizens of the high and the low  
Tera Kamal Hasti-e-Har Jandar Mein  
Teri Namood Silsila-e-Kohsar Mein  
Your excellence is reflected from every living thing  
The mountain range also shows your elegance  
Har Cheez Ki Hayat Ka Parwardigar Tu  
Zaeedgan-e-Noor Ka Hai Tajdar Tu  
You are the sustainer of the life of all  
You are the king of the light's children  
Ne Ibtida Koi Na Koi Intiha Teri  
Azad-e-Qaid-e-Awwal-o-Akhir Zia Teri  
There is no beginning and no end of yours  
Free of limits of time is the light of yours

The words and phrases used in this transcreated text clearly show that though Iqbal had no knowledge of Sanskrit and had perhaps only a casual familiarity with the Vedic system of spirituality, he understood very clearly the central meaning of this Vedic hymn.

"There is no beginning and no end of yours" makes it clear that Iqbal very clearly understood that Gayatri is not a prayer addressed to the sun, a huge mass of fire; it is a prayer addressed to the mighty power that created the sun, the moon and the stars, in fact the whole universe. By the use of his phrase "the world's motivator" makes it clear that Iqbal understood that the prayer was for the supplicant being motivated, inspired and energized, it was not a prayer for material possession. The following lines make it evident that the prayer of Gayatri is in Iqbal's understanding a prayer for wisdom, for the intellect to be sharpened and invigorated and not for material prosperity.

O Sun! Bestow on us the light of wisdom

Bestow your luster's light on the intellect's eye

Iqbal needs to be complimented that with no knowledge of Sanskrit and with only a casual understanding of the attitudinal orientation of the Vedic world view, he managed to have such a deep understanding of the central meaning of Gayatri.

### **Some Unique Features of Gayatri**

#### **(i) Who is the Prayer Addressed to?**

The sages and seers during the early Vedic period, during the samhita period, for example, tended to understand the creator of the universe in terms of Nature, his creation. They wanted to appreciate the infinite splendour and grandeur of the creator in the grandeur and splendour of the objects around them. Gods like Indra [the god of rain], Agni [fire], Varun [the god of sea], and Savitur [the sun god] reminded them of the infinitude of the ultimate power. Nature for them was not God but certainly a fascinating manifestation of God. God was not only beyond and behind but also in all these grand objects of Nature. The following hymns from the Vedas are typical illustrations of this attitude:

(i) त्वं समुद्रो असि...

तव ज्योतिषि पवमान सूर्यः ॥

tvam samudro asi . . .

tava jyotiṣi pavamâna sūryaḥ ॥

Thou art the sea. . . .

Thine are the lights and Thine the sun.<sup>23</sup>

(ii) तद् एवाग्निस् तद् आदित्यस्

तद् वायुस् तद् उ चन्द्रमा ।

tad evâgnis tad âdityas

tad vâyus tad u candramâ ।

Agni [fire] is That, Aditya [the sun] is That,  
Vayu [the air] is That, Chandrama [the moon] is That,<sup>24\</sup>

Time brings changes in everything. It changes people's attitudes. It changes their perceptions. It changes their way of looking at things. This is what happened in this case. During the Upanishadic period the sages and seers realized that ontologically there was no difference between what was outside and what was inside them; the inner and the outer were all the same, the same cosmic power, the same eternal energy, the same never-ending beauty and grandeur. So, they made pronouncements like:

(a) I am Brahma. I am Shiva. I am essentially divine<sup>25</sup>. (b) You are also the same, manifestation of the same divinity; the two of us are not different<sup>26</sup>, and (c) Every one of us, every object in the world, is a manifestation of the same divinity, the same cosmic energy<sup>27</sup>. Essentially, we are all one.

They had this realization during the early Vedic period also but during that period the predominant attitude was to see divinity in outward objects. So, Gayatri is not a hymn of prayer to the sun; it is a hymn of prayer to the ultimate power of the universe manifesting itself in the adorable effulgence of the sun. It is a prayer to what is in and beyond and behind all planets and stars; it is a prayer to Existence Supreme, the cause that caused itself and is at the root of all creation.

The sublimity of this hymn will be evident if we take into account what some people in the past did in the name of sun worship in different parts of the world. The Mexicans during the ancient days made sacrificial offerings of the "bleeding hearts of men and animals" to the sun, thinking that with the help of those sacrificial offerings they would be assisting the sun to retain his vigour necessary for his course in the sky. To please the sun, those Mexicans made human sacrifices. Describing these sacrifices as "the most monstrous on record", Sir James Frazer in his famous book, *The Golden Bough*, says:

The constant demand for human victims to feed the solar fire was made by waging war every year in the neighbourhood tribes and bringing back troops of captives to be sacrificed on the altar<sup>28</sup>.

Something equally abominable was done in ancient Greece, the place of origin of Western culture and civilization. Many Greeks believed that the sun drove in a chariot across the sky and after a year's work the old and worn out chariot and horses had to be replaced. So, every year they flung a new chariot and four young horses into the sea by way of making a sacrificial offering to the sun.<sup>29</sup>

Gayatri never had such brutal and barbaric offerings associated with it, the sun worship in Mexico and ancient Greece, their mode of worship mentioned above, had their roots deep down in superstition. Gayatri, however, was the result of a supra-rational

understanding of the Infinite expressing itself in the finite, the Almighty manifesting itself in its mighty creations.

**(ii) Function of the Adjective वरेण्यं [vareṇyam]**

The sun is a great energizer and also a great killer. Its ultraviolet rays are necessary for our body to produce vitamin D, a substance that helps strengthen bones and safeguards against diseases such as rickets. Some scientists have shown that Vitamin D lowers the risk of getting some kinds of internal cancer, like colon cancer. It produces chlorophyll in plants. It has a number of advantages for the animal world as well. Certain animals can actually see ultraviolet light and can use it to their advantage. Ultraviolet rays are also used in various commercial functions. In fact the sun helps in innumeral ways, and the most important thing is that life on earth will not be possible without the sun.

But the sun also kills. In India, hundreds die every year from summer heat waves. More than 2500 people died of heat waves in India in the year 2015. During the same year 2000 people died of heat waves in Pakistan. Even in Europe, a cold place, the extreme 2003 heat wave caused tens of thousands of deaths. Whether or not the Vedic sages and seers had all these in mind or not, but they did intuit the basic fact that the sun's rays are not only a source of life but also a powerful cause of death. They did realize that the sun is in effect two different suns: the sun that energizes and invigorates and the sun that kills. In the context of Gayatri, the sun seems to have been understood as a togetherness of two opposites: the sun that energizes and the sun that kills. The adjective वरेण्यं [vareṇyam], which means "adorable, praiseworthy," has a definite function to perform; it tells us that the prayer in Gayatri is addressed to the sun that gives life and vigour and not to the sun that kills.

**(iii) Choice of the Noun bhargah**

During the early Vedic period, the sages and seers of India had the tendency to feel the presence of the creator of the universe in the beauty and grandeur of his creations. The sun for them was not just an enormously huge mass of fire emanating light and heat all around; it was for them a manifestation of the root of all creation. Fire, for them, was not just a powerful entity that could burn anything and everything to ashes; it was a finite but a grand representation of the cosmic power that pervaded the entire universe. Later during the Upanishadic period there was a change in their attitude. They turned their attention inward and wanted to feel the source of creation inside their own being. Gayatri, as we know, came into existence during the period of the Rig Veda, the earliest of the four Vedas and the earliest known scriptural classic of the world. So, Gayatri is not a hymn of prayer to the sun; it is a hymn of prayer to the ultimate power of the universe manifesting itself in the adorable effulgence of the sun.

The sages and seers during the Vedic period had a sharp understanding of how language functions and they put a great emphasis on the choice of the most appropriate



word. They were of the view that, when speaking, one must filter out the inappropriate words in the same way in which a person filters flour in a sieve.

सक्तुमिव तित उना पुनन्तो यत्र धीरा मनसा वाचमकृत ।

saktumiva tita unâ punanto yatra dhîrâ manasâ vâcamakṛta ।<sup>30</sup>

Just as people shift *sattu* in a sieve before eating it, wise people carefully consider their words before using them.

The noun "*bhargah*" in Gayatri is the result of such a wise choice of the most appropriate noun out of numerous nouns of more or less the same meaning.. The Sanskrit noun "*tejas*" [meaning "radiance", "luminosity"], the noun "*jyoti*" for example, has more or less the same meaning. Like *bhargah* it has only two syllables in it and so in the metrical pattern of Gayatri it will fit in very well. But *tejas* does not have the duality of meaning that the word *bhargah* has. *Bhargah* is derived from the verbal root "*bhrij*", which has two meanings (a) to illumine and (b) to roast, to burn. *Bhargah* tells us that the sun can energise and invigorate but it can also burn, it can also kill. The wise choice of this noun reminds us of the following lines by John Henry Newman:

Prune thou thy words, the thoughts control  
That o'er thee swell and throng,  
They will condense within thy soul,  
And change to purpose strong.

#### (iv) Choice of the Word *Savita*

The etymological meaning of *Savita* as a stimulator, a vivifier, reminds us of certain very highly significant presuppositions. One of the pre-suppositions is about the inner reality of man. Darwin and his associates said that man had descended from animals, and though the process of evolution had made man better than animals, he was still essentially an animal in the sense that the inmost core of his being was still the core of animality. The Vedic sages and seers said assertively that man was essentially divine and that every one of us has a spark of divine splendour inside us. All we need is an energizer, a stimulator, a vivifier.

The other pre-supposition here is that everyone is unique. As human beings we share an enormously large number of attributes but still no two persons are exactly identical. Every one of us is cut out in his or her own way and needs to develop in accordance with his or her specific attitudes, innate preferences and predilections. The sun's rays help the carrot and the radish to grow and develop in accordance with their own unique identity. The sun's rays work only as a stimulator, as a vivifier. Some people have the ability and a deep instinctive

preference to be a poet, there are others who have a deep desire to be a painter, and there are still others who want to be an athlete. A society is in its best and most progressive state when everyone gets a chance to develop in accordance with his own inborn ability, his own deep-seated predilections. When uniformity is aimed, mediocrity is the result; when excellence is aimed, differences need to be recognized. Stephen Covey, an American author and key-note speaker, said:

"Strength lies in differences, not in similarities".<sup>31</sup>

#### **(v) Plurality of the Supplicant**

Prayers are of two broad kinds. There are prayers in which an individual makes a supplication to his or her deity as an individual. In such prayers the individual can pray for something exclusively for himself or herself with no one else intended to be the beneficiary of that prayer.

The second type of prayers are prayers made collectively, pronouns like "we", "our", "us" and "ours" being the characteristic pronouns to be used in such prayers. In such collective prayers the supplication is nearly always for the whole humanity, many of them for all living beings on earth. In many of such prayers the first person plural pronouns are explicitly used, in many cases the plurality of the supplicants is implicit but undoubtedly clear from the overall context of that prayer. Gayatri is a prayer of this type. No first person plural pronouns have been used in this hymn but the form of the verb "dhîmahî" makes it clear that the subject of the sentence is the first person plural pronoun "we". The pronoun *nah* meaning "our" in धियो यो नः [dhíyo yó nah] reinforces that notion of plurality. This is an important aspect of the sublimity of this hymn: it is not a narrow-minded prayer made by a selfish individual for himself; it is a collective prayer, everyone on earth intended to be the beneficiary of the prayer.

#### **(v) Prayer to Be, not a Prayer to Have**

From another point of view, prayers can again be divided into two broad types. There are prayers for having something, prayers for something to be added to one's possessions. A large number of prayers in different cultures of the world, perhaps the majority of them, are prayers of this type. A number of hymns in the Vedas<sup>32</sup>, in Atharva Veda in particular, can also be understood as prayers for material possessions.

The other type of prayers are prayers for being exalted, energized and elevated, for being transformed into a greater personality, for the ability to be a better doer, a greater accomplisher, for the ability to go ahead in life with greater confidence and enthusiasm. ].<sup>33</sup> Material possessions can be given and taken back. But qualities of character like efficiency, alertness, spiritual vigour and heroic power can only grow out of the inner sources of one's

being. It is a question of the tiny seed hiding under the deeper layers of one's being to be allowed to have a luxuriant growth and a beautiful blossom spreading its fragrance all round in the environment. It's a question of the inner spark of a person being allowed to have its maximum illumination, to achieve the maximum degree of its brightness. What the Divine can do is to be to be an Ideal, a saint. A sage, a prophet, a great guru and to stimulate, enliven, energize and invigorate that tiny seed, that inner spark. The greatness of the Gayatri as a prayer lies in the fact that it is not a prayer for wealth or any other material possession; it is for the innate abilities to be energized and exalted. It is, in other words, a prayer to be and not a prayer to have. This is evident from the etymological meaning of the noun Savita, the god to whom the prayer is addressed. The Sanskrit word *Savita* is etymologically derived from the verb root "soo", which means "to set in motion, to impel, to instigate, to stimulate". Thus, the word *savita* means "a stimulator, a rouser, a vivifier."<sup>34</sup> Gayatri, a prayer to Savita, is not a prayer to a giver; it is a prayer to a stimulator, an inspirer. Worship should add to our worthship. A prayer in its right spirit should make us active, efficient, agile, responsible, alert and tactful. It is in this perspective that the prayer in the form of Gayatri can best be appreciated. The crowd of typical devotees that we find outside a temple, a mosque, a church or any other place of worship is the crowd of beggars, singing hymns of praise and expecting the divine inside that temple, church or mosque to give as charity all that they want. Gayatri is a prayer with a difference.

It needs to be pointed out here that in Vedic literature Gayatri is not the only verse devoted to the prayer to be, as opposed to a prayer to have. Vedic literature abounds in such prayers. In Rig Veda itself there is a prayer for being adorably efficient [daksha]<sup>35</sup>, a prayer for wisdom [medha]<sup>36</sup>, a prayer for a high-level intelligence<sup>37</sup>, a prayer for heroic power<sup>38</sup> [virya], a prayer for strength<sup>39</sup> [bala], a prayer for fearlessness<sup>40</sup>, a prayer for being a mighty thinker<sup>41</sup> and a prayer for being a sage, a seer<sup>42</sup>. In Yajur Veda there is a prayer for the ability to win<sup>43</sup> and in Sama Veda there is a prayer for a high level intelligence [dhi]<sup>44</sup>. The superb merit of Gayatri lies in its being one of the powerful forerunners, a powerful trendsetter for such prayers in the Indian tradition of worship being a prayer for worthship as opposed to a prayer for worldly possessions.

#### **(vi) Mystic Aura of Threeness**

Number three seems to have a mysterious link with the deep layers of human psyche and throughout history man has been trying to comprehend reality in terms of three. For example, the ultimate reality in Hindu mythology was conceptualized in terms of three: Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver and sustainer, and Shiva, the destroyer. In its female form, this ultimate reality was conceptualized again in terms of three: Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, Sarasvati, the goddess of wisdom and Durga, the goddess of physical

force and military might. Shiva was imagined to have three eyes and his weapon was a *trishool*, a trident with three spear-like projections pointing upward. The following famous Upanishadic prayer is in three parts:

Lead me from falsehood to truth.  
Lead me from darkness to light.  
Lead me from death to immortality.

(Brihadaranyak Upanishad 1.3.28)

The word *shantih* has been used three times at the end of every Upanishad. The Gita mentions three types of personality (14.18; 18.26, 27, 28) and, correspondingly, three types of food (17.8-10): sattwik, rajasi, and tamasi. It mentions lust, anger, and greed as the triple gates of hell. According to the indigenous herbal system of medicines in India, there are three doshas (sources of maladies): cough (*kafa*), bile (*pitta*), and wind (*vayu*), and diseases are caused by the imbalance of these three sources of maladies. It was after three horrifying experiences caused by his encounter with (i) an old man, (ii) with a sickly person about to die, and (iii) with a dead body being carried to the funeral pyre that Prince Siddhartha was disenchanted with his earthly pleasures and embarked on his spiritual journey to the realization of his inner self. And as is evident from the following triplet, Buddhism is intended to be embraced in terms of three vows:

Buddham sharanam gachhami  
Dhammam sharanam gachhami  
Sangham sharanam gachhami

(I hereby commit myself to Buddha, his philosophy and his preachings.)

When Jesus Christ was born, three wise men from the East went to Bethlehem to give three gifts to him. Christ was crucified not alone but with two thieves, one on each of his two sides. Christianity is understood in terms of three: Jesus Christ, the church and the Holy Ghost

Reality is one, but Greek philosophers divided it into three: truth, goodness and beauty. Hegel described his philosophy in terms of three: thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Pythagoras thought of the idea of fusion into a harmonic whole of monarchy, oligarchy and democracy. Karl Marx discussed his communist philosophy in terms of three isms: communism, socialism, and capitalism. Abraham Lincoln described democracy as "of the people, by the people, and for the people." Gandhi liked the three-monkey philosophy stated in terms of "hear no evil, see no evil, and speak no evil".

Time is one continuous entity but we have divided it into three, the present, the past

and the future. In grammar, three persons (i.e., first person, second person and third person) express and include all the relationships of mankind. There are three degrees of comparison: the positive, the comparative and the superlative.<sup>45</sup> Affixes are of three types, prefixes, suffixes and infixes. There are three terminal marks of punctuation: the full stop, the question mark and the mark of exclamation and there are three medial marks of punctuation: the comma, the semicolon and the colon.

Because of this mysterious link with a deep layer of our psychic being, number three spontaneously suggests itself to us in our creative and contemplative moments. It is because of this that two does not seem to be enough and four seems to be too many.<sup>46</sup> It is because of its profound mysterious effect that a great poet like Tulsidas and a great dramatist like Shakespeare have made a profuse use of this number.<sup>47</sup>

Gayatri, too, is remarkable for its mystic aura of threeness. It has three clear parts: (i) the invocatory particle OM, (ii) the *vyahritis* and (iii) the sentence as the main constituent. Each of these three parts has three parts. The Invocatory particle OM consists of अ [a ], उ [ u ], and म् [m] . The *vyahritis* are three in number: *bhooh*, *bhuvah* and *svah*. From the point of view of its metrical structure, the main constituent also has three parts known as three *padas*: These three parts are: (i) तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं [tát savitúr váreṇ(i)yam], (ii) भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि [bhárgo devásya dhîmahī] and (iii) धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् [dhíyo yó naḥ prachodáyât]. It would be naïve to argue that the recurring use of threeness here is a matter of chance coincidence; the notion of threeness with its mystic connotations is an integral part of this hymn.

As was pointed out earlier in this discussion, Gayatri has been very highly praised for its moral and spiritual impact. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, for example, said that it can purify our mind, and Acharya Sharma, who started a spiritual revolution with Gayatri at its centre, was of the firm view that "its impact on the moral and ethical renaissance of this new scientific-intellectual age will be unequalled, unparalleled and extraordinary." The moral, ethical and spiritual impact of this Vedic hymn is beyond the purview of this monograph. On the basis of the facts stated above, it can be confidently said, nevertheless, that this Vedic hymn is a splendid piece of poetry remarkable for its elegance and sublimity.

#### Endnotes :

1. All these metrical forms have been mentioned in Atharva Veda,
2. Samyutta Nikaya 111, Majjhima Nikaya 92. Mentioned in Shults, Brett (May 2014). "On the Buddha's Use of Some Brahmanical Motifs in Pali Texts". *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies* 6: 119
3. <https://dhruti.wordpress.com/2007/07/11/gayatri-mantra-quotes/>
4. Ibid.

5. Rammohun Roy (1832). *Translation of Several Principal Books, Passages and Texts of the Vedas*, and of *Some Controversial Works on Brahmanical Theology*: and of some controversial works on Brahmanical theology. Parbury, Allen, & co.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. [http://www.hindupedia.com/en/Gayatri\\_mantras\\_of\\_Several\\_Gods](http://www.hindupedia.com/en/Gayatri_mantras_of_Several_Gods)
9. For all these references, readers are advised to read (i) Kavibhushan Nagyogi, *Mahagayatri Samhita* (Delhi: Manoj Publications, 2011), and (ii) Shree Ram Sharma Acharya, *Gayatri Mahavigyan* [The Supra-science of Gayatri], (Mathura: Yug Nirman Yojana Press, 2014)
10. Kavibhushan Nagyogi, *Mahagayatri Samhita* (Delhi: Manoj Publications, 2011),
11. Sir Monier Monier-Williams (1882). *The Place which the Zig-veda ies in the Sandhyâ, and Other Daily Religious Services of the Hindus*. Berlin: A. Asher & Company. p. 164.
12. Ralf Griffith, *The Hymns of the Rig Veda*, Book III, p.198.
13. William Judge Quan, (January 1893). "A Commentary on the Gayatri". *The Path.*; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gayatri\\_Mantra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gayatri_Mantra)
14. William Jones, (1807). *The Works of Sir William Jones* 13. J. Stockdale and J. Walker. p. 367.
15. Edward Burnett Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture*. Vol II(New York:Harper &Brothers,1958), pp. 378-79.
16. The word Savitr in the original Sanskrit may be interpreted in two ways, first as the sun, secondly as the "originator or creator". Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Maharshi Debendranath Tagore used that word in the second sense. Interpreted in their way the whole formula may be thus rendered. Appendix "C", Sivanath Sastri, *History of the Brahmo Samaj*, 1911/1912 1st edn. page XVI, publ. Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, 211s
17. S. Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society*. (1947). p. 135.
18. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads*, (1953), p. 299
19. These three Sanskrit words are three technical terms taken from the ancient yoga system of India. Prana Vayu according that system is situated in the head and is centred around the third eye. Its energy pervades the chest region. Apana Vayu is centred around the pelvic floor and its energy pervades the lower abdomen. Vyana Vayu is situated in the heart and the lungs and its energy flows throughout the entire body.
20. Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, page 760.
21. Edward Burnett Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture*. Vol II (New York:Harper S&Brothers,1958), pp378-79.
22. Aitereya Brahman, 7.15.
23. Rig Veda, 9.86.29.
24. Yajur Veda, 32.1.
25. Aham Brahmasmi [I am brahma] Brihadaranyak Upanishad, 1.4.10.

26. Tat tvamasi [you are also the same] Chandhyogya Upanishad, 6.8.7.
27. Sarvam khalvidam brahma [Every entity in the universe is a manifestation of the same cosmic reality] Chandhyogya Upanishad, 3.14.1.
28. Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London: Wordsworth, 1993), p.79. quoted in S.N Prasad, "Philip Larkin and Worship of the Sun" *About Larkin*, No., 28. Pp. 34-36.
29. Ibid.,
30. Rig Veda, 10.71.2.
31. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/differences.html>
32. Ataharva Veda, 6.47.1, 6.63.4, 7.50.8, 10.1010, 16.9.4,
33. R.6.44.9.
34. Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit English Dictionary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1889).
35. Rig Veda, 6.44.9.
36. Ibid, 9.9.9.
37. Ibid. ,10.42.3.
38. Ibid, 9.110.60.
39. Ibid, 3.53.18.
40. Ibid, 8.4.7.
41. Ibid, 10.128.9.
42. Ibid, 3.43.5.
43. Yajur Veda, VS, 19.9.
44. Sam Veda, 1462.
45. For a detailed discussion of the mysterious impact of threeness, readers may refer to this author's forthcoming article "Why Three?"
46. For a detailed discussion of the mysterious impact of number three on us, readers are advised to read this author's forthcoming article "Why Three?"
47. Refer to this author's forthcoming articles "The Use of Threeness in Shakespeare's Tragedies" and "The Use of Threeness in Tulsidas's Ramcharitmanas."
48. <https://dhriti.wordpress.com/2007/07/11/gayatri-mantra-quotes>.



# Shailja Patel and Rafeef Ziadah's Performance Poetry and Activism: Theorising Praxis

Dr Lauren Clark

## ABSTRACT:

*Rafeef Ziadah (a Palestinian-Canadian) and Shailja Patel (a Kenyan of Indian ancestry) are critically neglected contemporary female performance poets. From the standpoint of personal experience, both poets comment on the impact that migration has upon art. Theorising the body of Patel's work as a "meditation" on post colonialism and Ziadah's as a form of creative resistance provides acute literary analyses, and yet it neglects a comparative analysis of the praxis of performance poetry itself. This paper shall examine both poets in the context of comparative studies to argue that such activist content is not merely politicalized but a form of hermetic, apolitical, artistic protest. It shall be argued that Ziadah and Patel's enterprises, informed by migration, colonialism and politics, at the same time offer up a reinterpretation of what the role of a performance poet consists of amidst migration. The sound bites, foreign languages and merging of spoken word poetry with theatre make Patel and Ziadah's work an innovative merging of different genres. Further too, it shall be argued that both spoken word poets, in their self-professed capacities as migrants, utilize this status as a kind of totem to disperse and tour their poetry across all five continents.*

**Keywords:** Shailja Patel; Rafeef Ziadah; Performance Poetry; Postcolonialism; Palestine; Kenya; Gender

Considering the postcolonial Indian novel in English, Arnab Chakladar argues that English Language Indian fiction is troubled by, "[t]he cultural capital that circulates around the figures of the internationally marketable writers" which "has a much higher exchange rate than that of the "home market" writers, and at the same time it is true of the divergent value ascribed to international awards."<sup>1</sup> Since Chakladar's article was published some six years have passed, and two female performance poets have emerged from different continents to question the very applicability of a postcolonial critique to the praxis of performance poetry. These poets are Shailja Patel and Rafeef Ziadah. While the medium is different, many of the same binaries correspond from Chakladar's original analysis today. There is indeed a bolstering of the capital of marketable performance poets to submerge local poets. An orientalist hangover from the literary theory wars of the 1980s has provoked the active enrichment of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural literary studies today. As a consequence,



some argue that this results in a compensatory elevation of such “home market” writers. Out with the confines of binary paradigms however are exiled poets, writers and artists less readily identifiable by the demarcations of nationality and place. Recent critiques by Al Deek and emerging Displacement Studies programmes and non-profit organizations, suggest that exilic displacement can operate as a comparative critical prism.<sup>2</sup> This is then used across cultures to facilitate understanding of the migratory aspect of writing as a “cultural capital.”

For example, Kulbaga cites “the entanglement of neoliberalisms (values prioritizing market-based logics and solutions) and feminisms (values prioritizing gender equality and women’s rights)” as a key rhetorical feature of contemporary human rights discourse and business.<sup>3</sup> Her marketing and human rights based article addresses Shailja Patel’s poetry to offer insight into human rights discourses from the perspective of nonwestern migrants or, indeed, the horse’s mouth. Kulbaga begins with an analysis of how the women of the Maasai tribe were depicted as entrepreneurs and placed in Mama Hope’s marketing campaign to redress the exoticisation of the Maasai. According to Kulbaga, this tribe had fast been exhausted of autonomous signification in other forms of marketing and cultural studies. In the same way, the author argues that Patel’s audiences by extension must acknowledge the savage nature of empire through performance poetry and theatre before being presented with the “exotic” saris that she uses as tools at the end of her spoken word performances. Indeed, a comparison of Rafeef Ziadah and Shailja Patel’s work can illuminate these evolving junctures arrived at between performance poetry, politics and praxis in a post-the-postcolonial and postmodern world. Some critiques might hone in on a comparison between the languages each poet uses, their identities and genres they inhabit amidst empire. This is not the purpose of my paper. This paper concerns itself with an entirely innovative praxis amidst migration: that of performance poetry.

Shailja Patel is a Kenyan performance poet of Indian ancestry who has lived in the United Kingdom, United States and Kenya. She coined the term “Migritude” to refer to “migrants with attitude” and it alludes to Aimé Césaire’s famously coined term, “négritude.” Her performance poetry and theatre act share the same name. *Migritude* (2008) is composed around fragments of poetic performances each corresponding to a story about being a second-generation migrant in a postcolonial world and illustrated by opening and using a suitcase of saris that Patel’s mother gave her.<sup>4</sup> As each sari is revealed on stage, Patel recites poetry and provides what Piccolo describes as “a meditation about processes of colonialism and post colonialism, especially as they unfolded in Kenya, her native land.”<sup>5</sup> Rafeef Ziadah is both an academic and a poet. She is currently a postdoctoral research fellow and specialist in comparative politics of the Middle East at the University of London, SOAS. She is also

a Palestinian-Canadian performance poet who received acclaim for her activist, 8 track, spoken word album *Hadeel* (2009) which she produced with a grant from the Ontario Arts Council.<sup>6</sup> In her performance poetry, she critiques racism and sexism and describes her Palestinian refugees' experiences over a backdrop of bass lines, tabla and the sound of the Arabian oud. Ziadah's poetry has been complimented for its "use of art as a political practice."<sup>7</sup> Theorising the body of Patel's work as a "meditation" on post colonialism and Ziadah's as a form of creative resistance provides acute literary analyses. On the other hand, it overlooks comparative analysis of the praxis of performance poetry itself. This paper shall examine both poets in the context of comparative studies to argue that such activist content is not merely politicalized but a form of hermetic, if apolitical, artistic protest. It shall be argued that Ziadah and Patel's enterprises are informed by migration, colonialism and politics. At the same time this body of work offers up a reinterpretation of what the role of a performance poet consists of *amidst* migration. The sound bites, foreign languages and merging of spoken word poetry with theatre make Patel and Ziadah's work an innovative merging of different genres. Further too, it shall be argued that both spoken word poets, in their self-professed capacities as migrants, utilize this status as a kind of totem to disperse and tour their poetry across all five continents.

### **What role does a performance poet fulfill amidst migration? What is poetic activism?**

Homi Bhabha's concept of "nation and narration"<sup>8</sup> is seldom aligned with newer forms of literature and merged genres, such as spoken word poetry and theatre that have appeared over the past decade in the academy. It is challenging to apply one such hypothesis to the writing of second or third generation migrant writers whose impetus barely relates to a constructed idea of "nation" or home for they feel out of place in both locales. Neither does can this be analyzed within the confines of a restrictive academy where migratory performance poetry occupies as marginalized a post as its purveyors.<sup>9</sup> Anti-academic sentiment is palpable in the history of the spoken word form. It can be noted from the time of its inception during the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s to present day critiques of spoken word in *The Paris Review*. Literary critics and theory behemoths such as Harold Bloom have inveighed against slam performance poetry as "the death of art".<sup>10</sup> By contrast, performance poetry editions such as Eleveld's *The Spoken Word Revolution* and Moore's *Listen Up!* have responded aggressively to this elitist stance.<sup>11</sup> If poetry is to be performed, they argue, it must fulfill a democratizing stance. By extension, much of the attraction that this genre brings lies in its honesty, spontaneity and sincerity.

When we consider the respective histories of Kenya and Palestine and their relationships with colonialism, it is curious to note that in modern art forms, the role of the

storyteller has reemerged as a tactic to avoid cultural displacement. Major humanitarian organizations and research facilities are placing greater emphasis on maintaining the distinct cultural heritage of the oral tradition and oral histories of local people. The 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage put oral history at the helm of a series of policies to maintain and research “intangible history” such as singing, story telling, local legends and unwritten history in many countries on the African continent. I would suggest that resurgence in these poets’ performance poetry has emerged as a contemporary means of safeguarding from cultural displacement. Perhaps it is for this reason that Patel chooses to give testimony to the Tanzanian Taraab singer Bi Kidude (Kiswahili for “Little Granny”), whose prophetic oral history she valorizes in spoken word:

Woman who at ninety/  
has walked more miles/than most of us have driven./  
Claimed a lineage/  
of music rooted/  
in the lives of the powerless/  
stories unfurled in the language of street and market/  
poetry buried in the bodies of women.<sup>12</sup>

This language of the “street and market” is brought to the fore through oral history and its present day renditions in Patel’s spoken word praxis. Indeed, Palestine has had a very active recent history in documenting oral history. In the 1998 the University of Gaza founded its Oral History Centre to collect histories from those who were displaced during the Nabka period. Indeed, oral testimonies had been documented in the camps in Lebanon since the late 1970s by researchers such as Rosemary Sayigh to reveal the cultural value of this kind of spoken material.<sup>13</sup> Considering the oral traditions that both Kenyan and Palestinian cultures have historically and recently embraced, one might argue that Patel and Ziadah’s performances are a harkening back to the roots of the art form itself.

### **Performance Poetry and Activism in Comparative studies**

In terms of comparative studies, Pascale Cassanova argues that inequalities and the subterfuge of repressed minority groups’ writings can account for a complex system of World Literatures as we acknowledge it today. This complexity is based upon the literary capital of certain historically renowned texts as they over-shadow those emerging authors from minority groups.<sup>14</sup> Ziadah and Patel’s enterprises as performance poets amidst migration are thus part of a formative exchange between cultures in a world forum. In order to address both poets’ radical transformations of poetic performances, the role that a performance

poet fulfills amidst migration should be analyzed. Secondly, how this informs a new genre of poetic activism that second and third generation artists have fulfilled is essential to consider.

Spoken word poetry is renowned for the intimacy it establishes between the performer-poet and their audience. Whether this is denigrated as “confessional” or complimented as “honest” is dependent upon the listener. Ultimately, the spoken-word audience is held as captive as a theatre audience is amidst performance. What stimulates an audience amidst performance is drastically different to what keeps the reader of poetry turning the page however. There is a physical transaction in performance that goes beyond the notion of “poems primarily produced for consumption through silent, individual, readings-on-the page.”<sup>15</sup>

Shailja Patel’s *Migritude* is a four-part postcolonial performance poetry project, which was originally performed in 2004. Her collection assembles personal accounts of her migrant status coming to terms with the clutches that identity has upon those in between cultures. Of her own status as a third generation Indian-Kenyan she is unhesitatingly definitive: “I learn/ Like a stone in my gut/ That third-generation Asian Kenyan/ Will never/ Be Kenyan enough.”<sup>16</sup> Patel describes the stories and histories of women who have been challenged with the notion of being migrants on the periphery of a nation state. The poet also expresses how they are seemingly peripheral to received interpretations of colonial history. She has boldly likened the unfurling of saris in her work to the unfurling of the voices of women living in the “boot print of Empire.”<sup>17</sup> This work has been translated into six languages and toured across the USA, Europe and Africa to reveal the discrimination that migrants face in empire and voices of the “unhomeliness of Asians, best couched in the Gujarati proverb: the night is short and our garments change.”<sup>18</sup> The expulsion of Asians from Uganda under Idi Amin in 1972 is the historic starting point for this collection, framing Patel’s narratives of migrants in neighboring Kenya. At this time many migrants reevaluated their safety and status and fled Kenya for fear of suffering the same fate. It is also true of Patel’s personal plight as she was sent by her mother to the UK and USA as a young woman to receive education, an act that she resents as permitting colonially inherited notions of “acceptable femininity” but one which has nevertheless flavored her project. As *Migritude Part I* unfolds, we see Patel using a suitcase of saris that her mother gave her to illustrate tense mother/daughter relations, expectations and the physical covering and uncovering of aspects of femininity and migrant assimilation. In a brief extract from a San Francisco Bay Area KQED Arts documentary, the poet is shown preparing for a performance in San Francisco. During the performance segment she dons, dances and displays saris on stage to coincide with the performance of her poetry. It is clear from these scenes that not only is

her performance poetry a literary medium but an artistic one involving aspects of dance and theatre. She narrates over excerpts from her performance:

“At the beginning of this process, the idea was just to find a way to use the saris so they didn’t sit in a suitcase. “The only thing I ever heard was “you have to be careful in the sari because you are exposing the body. Don’t let the sari slip under the breast- that’s obscene.” And as part of that, what I had to do was to learn how to wear them and become comfortable performing in them and I came up against all my own fears, and resistances around perceptions of women in saris, my own fears about being immobilised or weak or exoticised when I was wearing a sari.”<sup>19</sup>

This extract shows the evolution of Patel’s role as an award winning slam poet to a theatrical poet.<sup>20</sup> She delivers apoetry and uses the saris together with dance and comedy to insist on its performance. In light of Patel’s use of the sari, Priya Srinivasan, has examined the history Indian dancing as performance and a form of labour. She cannily notes that for many scholars, Indian dancers “have become transnational labourers on a global stage where they are often “relegated to the aesthetic realm and deemed to have no sociopolitical relevance.”<sup>21</sup> So not only in artistic performance but also in history, the impact of dance as a signifier of greater sociopolitical issues such as migration has been overlooked. The poet herself has stated that “[a]rt is a migrant: it travels from the vision of the artist to the eye, ear, mind and heart of the listener.”<sup>22</sup> However, her role as a performer amidst migration has yet to receive critical attention. The *Migritude* project has impressed academics “amazed at her ability to rework and expand this single project across such a variety of media and locations.”<sup>23</sup> Yet, it is the very migratory nature of her work as it is staged and relocated across continents that make it emblematic of the very thesis it wishes to expound. The praxis of performance poetry has thus far been neglected in critiques of Patel’s work, which fail to consider her a new wave of performance poet amidst migration rather than the performer of an isolated collection of colonially critical poems. *Migritude*’s genre-hybridity has undoubtedly led to some confusion as to what to label it in the academy. Indeed, the scant critiques of Patel’s performance, that appear seem to criticize the very nature of her delivery as being too academic and thus incompatible with her choice of literary genre and performative medium. In an unpublished thesis, Liam McAlpine claims that the real life speaker of Patel’s poem “Eater of Death”, an Afghan woman whose family was killed by US airstrikes on Kabul in 2001, is done disservice by “the performance of this voice on stage [that] problematizes [her] feelings.”<sup>24</sup> Hegelsson, in a complimentary review of *Migritude*, nevertheless remarks the “lyric [is] juxtaposed with [her] academic style of delivery.”<sup>25</sup> Such discord between emotive performance, academic delivery and the lyric style unveils a highly problematic area in comparative studies where theory and praxis are

concerned. Here we have a touring migratory poetry project declaimed for its delivery being “too academic” for the purposes it wishes to serve. Patel’s writing can be considered creative resistance or artistic protest in this regard. It is struggling to occupy an artistic space because of its multiple occupations of forms and locations in a quest for its survival. That *Migritude* should experience this mis-theorisation of praxis, considering its concern with migration is concerning and deeply ironic. There is an anthropologic theoretical scope here to liken the poet and migrant’s status to liminality here. However, this is out with the scope of this paper, which seeks to shed light on the problematic praxis of performance poetry amidst migration.

### **Rafeef Ziadah’s Migratory Poetic Activism**

Ziadah’s poetic activism and persistent artistic and academic commitment to the Palestinian cause she modestly terms “cultural work” in interviews has been her main focus since she was a university student.<sup>26</sup> As a second generation Palestinian migrant who has never lived in her homeland, the poet is committed to capturing memories of Palestine in an artistic format so as her generation does not feel displaced by it. She was part of a wave of first generation Palestinians to have moved out from Lebanon to the United States. Ziadah argues that because she was not physically rooted in a refugee camp, as opposed to being in a liminal space, holding on to Palestinian culture was much harder.<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, the process of personal memory making is fundamental in Ziadah’s praxis while it also has the double bind of unveiling histories and discourses hidden from mainstream political and media discourses about Palestine. She delivers this from the perspective of an “Arab woman of colour [who] comes in all shades of anger.”<sup>28</sup> This self-definition from the poet’s spoken word piece “Shades of Colour” is a both a form of poetic protest and a warning to whom the poem is dedicated: an Israeli soldier who kicked her in the stomach during a university direct action and stated that she “deserve[d] to be raped before [she] had [her] terrorist children!”<sup>29</sup> The poet seems to reflect on traumatic and politicized incidents she experiences first-hand and sometimes imagines and then pens verse describing her responses to them in retrospect. On the surface of things, anger and high emotional stakes appear in tune with the “indignant” nature of most spoken word poetry. For Ziadah’s praxis though, this is far from typical. Like Patel’s, Ziadah’s activism is not solely “political” but artistic but this is where the similarities in their practice end. Ziadah’s praxis negates a commonly applied theorization of the role of the performance poet in a manner quite unlike Patel’s. Despite being a fluent English speaker who has studied in Canada, Ziadah performs and writes mainly in her mother tongue, Arabic. *Hadeel*’s tracks can be found in translation and some of her most popular and famed performances

are delivered in English. Her words are often read over a bass line or backing track that is punctuated by a variety of sounds both Arabian and military with blasts of gunfire and the warfare she describes.

Of the few poems that are available in English in her audio-only collection *Hadeel*, her piece “We Teach Life, Sir” makes a deliberate use of the English language, repetition and the praxis of poetic activism to reorient its performance for political-poetical output. This piece is based on an interview between the poet and an international news reporter. The reporter continually tries to skew and reorient the discussion in order to sensationalize reportage about Palestine. At one point the poet is asked if she thought that things would be easier if “you stopped teaching your children to hate.” This attempt to modify and politicize Ziadah’s account was in vain. In this short extract of the culmination of “We Teach Life Sir”, which she wrote about the interview, the poet’s praxis is startlingly innovative and defiant on a stylistic and performative level.

Today, my body was a TV’d massacre  
 And let me just tell you; there’s nothing your UN resolutions have ever done about this.  
 And no sound-bite, no sound-bite I come up with, no matter how good my English gets, no sound-bite, no sound-bite, no sound-bite, no sound-bite will bring them back to life.  
 No sound-bite will fix this.  
 We teach life, sir.  
 We teach life, sir.  
 We Palestinians wake up every morning to teach the rest of the world life, sir.<sup>30</sup>

Ziadah reiterates this “sound-bite” she struggles to utter in English over and over, in the painfully uncompromising terms that her reporter demands. Her body, described as a “TV’d massacre”, likened to those of the Palestinian dead, is repeated to visually and aurally awaken an audience. As such, the audience can savour through multiple senses the mismatch and misrepresentation that mainstream journalism evokes. There is a clear disparity painted between watching televised news reports about Gaza and Ziadah’s repeated “sound-bites” which, like the stuttering of a traumatized person, serves no practical purpose to provide an accurate report. The information conveyed in such reports is partial. Ziadah on the other hand uses the soundbite as a refrain in a piece of performance poetry to provide artistic activist. This poem is one of her most revered and celebrated works for its emotive nature. It also saw her chosen to represent Palestine at the South Bank center Poets Olympiad in 2012. In terms of praxis, her position as a second generation migrant attempting to



recover a past in a process of media-induced de-politicization is revolutionary. In her soundbites, Ziadah appeals to a media illiterate generation fast becoming attuned to the repetition of sound- and image-scapes, which constitute reporting.

Ken Loach's high praise of Ziadah as a performance poet is an appropriate final point for this paper. Loach states "Rafeef's poetry demands to be heard. She is powerful, emotional and political. Please read her work and see her perform. You cannot then be indifferent to the Palestinian cause."<sup>31</sup> I would argue that similar high praise is also deserving of Shailja Patel's work but not only for the work's political aims. In seeing the performances of these activist poets one witnesses not only politicized output and bravery, but the overturning of performance poetry theory in praxis. Ziadah and Patel, amidst migration and displacement, seek out new forms of artistic expression in their performance poetry to overhaul the restrictive boundaries and binaries from which they have been geographically and artistically exiled.

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10. As per an interview: Harold Bloom, *The Paris Review*, Spring 2000.  
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18. James Ocita, *Diasporic Imaginaries: Memory and negotiation of belonging in East African and South Asian Indian Narratives*, PhD thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2013. 156.
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# **Humour and Fun in ESL/EFL Classrooms : Exploiting a Neglected Resource of Editorial Cartoons**

**Dr. Vijay Singh Thakur**

## *ABSTRACT*

*The use of humour and fun makes the class atmosphere more pleasant, motivates learners, increases student-teacher interaction, makes learning enjoyable and meaningful, and most of all, pleases the students. Editorial cartoons and caricatures could be a rich source of all this and a lot more if used in an imaginative, creative and innovative manner.*

*This paper, motivated by such pedagogical concerns, examines the idea of exploiting the neglected resource of cartoons/caricatures and interactive approaches to language teaching. It aims at demonstrating as to how it will work and provide a stimulating learning experience to the students in ESL/EFL classrooms.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is significant to mark the way learning takes place. An American study (Thakur, 2004:38) reports that we learn 1% by taste; 1.5% by touch; 3.5% by smell; 11% by hearing; and the maximum 83% by seeing. Thus, visuals seem to be playing a great role in learning. Keeping this in mind, the visual teaching needs to be explored and exploited considerably.

By common consensus, pictures are the best visual aid. A Chinese maxim, highlighting this fact, says that one picture is better than a thousand words. Every picture tells a story and children are visual by nature. Put an editorial cartoon and a newspaper article in front of them- which one will they pick? Children gravitate more willingly toward cartoons. Why not take advantage of that natural attraction to cartoons in our classrooms? The format of cartoons and caricatures is often richer in political, economic, and social impact. We can bring the power of editorial cartoons, i.e. the strength of their images and the potency of their messages into the classrooms. Editorial cartoons cover a lot of high-level concepts of metaphor, simile, hyperbole, satire, irony, etc.- things that are harder to convey in text. Language isn't a barrier. It is all right there in the visuals. Thus, cartoons and caricatures can be a rich resource for a variety of purposes in language teaching.

## **WHY CARTOONS?**

There are several qualities for which cartoons can be used for language teaching.

They have a broad coverage on international affairs, population, pollution, love, adventure, war, corruption, nepotism, favouritism, scandals, personal and social life, etc., which evokes readers' general knowledge. They are easy to understand and the features of originality, freshness, unusualness, and spontaneous delight and refresh the readers. They provide realistic, truthful, authentic, and relevant information in a revealing manner. The information is presented indirectly and in a context. There may be, often, an opinion gap, i.e. the reader and the cartoonist may not agree on a certain issue, which renders a scope for the reader to put out his argument or opinion. Patil (1996:17) calls it the cartoonist's vantage point. For these qualities cartoons can be recommended as suitable teaching material. But, they are not tailor-made as the cartoonists, perhaps, never draw them with the approaches and methods of ELT and the rules of word order and contextual meaning in mind. Hence, they need to be planned, prepared, and sometimes adapted for the purposes of language teaching.

### **HOW TO USE CARTOONS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING**

Cartoons are very suitable for pair work and group work. They can be used for brainstorming and negotiation. While working in a pair or a group the students have to put their heads together to relate the cartoon to its social or political context and also they have to negotiate the meaning and message in the cartoon in consultation with each other. The exercise tends to become involving to work on cartoons because the effort makes them think hard, and it also activates their shared knowledge and experience of the world. As Patil (1996:17) suggests, the students may be made to discuss the semantic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic meanings of a cartoon and report their interpretations to the class. Cartoons can also be used for written composition and interdisciplinary thinking. When a group works on a cartoon, they read it and also listen to others' opinions and ideas. When the group leader reports their interpretation to the class, he speaks and others listen to him. When groups write their composition on a cartoon, they make use of others' ideas gathered from the discussion. Thus the use of cartoons promotes cooperative learning. The four skills of reading, speaking, listening, and writing can be integrated very easily with the help of a cartoon.

Cartoons can be helpful in many other ways also. They can be used to develop and test students' ability to read between and even beyond the lines. Like literature, the cartoons make special uses of language. The captions in them are hypersemanticized, which could be used to enrich their language. They can be taught as to how a lot of meaning can be packed into a small presentation. Through cartoons we can teach our students the ways of saying the unsayable effectively. They can also be used to show how to be indirect in order to sensitize the students to the ways of being euphemistic. We can teach them how the meanings are context-bound and context-sensitive. We can also show them how a tragic event has a

comic lining and vice-versa. By using the cartoons the past and present happenings, for example elections, may be taught. And, being value-oriented, we can use them for value education too.

Above all, the teaching through cartoons can enliven the classes, especially when they become monotonous and dull and the students then feel uninterested and bored in learning. Through cartoons they can have fun and relaxation. As Smith (1993:58) comments, there will be something in every cartoon to please even the most cynical student at the back of the class.

The possibilities and scope for the use of cartoons and caricatures in teaching English are inexhaustible.

### **TASKS THAT CAN BE SET ON CARTOONS: SOME EXAMPLES**

A number of tasks can be set on cartoons. Let us explore some possibilities:

1. Here we have four cartoons that draw our attention to the phenomenon called polysemy. The meaning of a word depends on the context in which it is used. There is no such thing as the meaning of a word in isolation. And the success of communication depends upon relating the word to its right context. When a particular sense of the word in one situation is wrongly substituted for another situation then the problem of wrong contextual support arises and the communicative situation turns out to be funny and jocular. This is exactly what is happening in the following cartoons, i.e. figures 1-4.



*'I just asked the candidate to draw a chair and sit down.'*

Fig. 1



*'Can you see the sign of the college? I have the right to know the college and I am not going to be a student in the college.'*

Fig.2



cartoons. Each group will have one cartoon and will be required to supply clues, in instalments, to the other groups and they will have to guess the person(s) and the situation depicted in the cartoon. The target groups may be allowed to ask some choice questions to identify the person and the event portrayed in it. The game may go on till the group succeeds.

Only a few possibilities are suggested here. Several other things could also be done with such pictorial presentations. Let us examine some more cartoons, which are different in nature and theme and could be used for language teaching.

2. Such cartoons, as the one in Fig. 5, can be utilized to make the students aware of connotation of words.



Fig. 5

In this cartoon the students may be asked to investigate the connotational value of the two key words, 'fasting' and 'starving' which contrasts with each other in the pictorial context of the cartoon and bring in satirical overtones in it. They may also be asked to find out as to which connotation the two words are latched on to. As an extension activity, the students may be asked to look for cartoons where such pairs of words are contrasted and to discriminate them on the basis of their connotation. For this they will have to scan a number of cartoons from the library and also have to refer to a dictionary for discriminating the words by their connotation. As a result, it will help develop their skills of reading for specific purposes. The students may also be asked to think of some synonyms like obstacle/hurdle, rare/scarcely, considerate/thoughtful, careful/cautious etc. and discriminate them on the basis of their connotation as a brainstorming activity.

3. Let us look at another cartoon, Fig.6, which draws our attention towards the chameleon nature of words.



Fig. 6

As Patil (1996:19) suggests, this cartoon can be used to show how a phrase becomes a sentence, to illustrate how meanings depend on word order, and to explain how semantic meaning differs from pragmatic meaning. The situation in the cartoon displays a lady dancer who has agreed to give her dance performance for charity purposes. The organizers of the show advertize it. But, instead of advertising it as 'Charity show', they advertize it as 'Show charity'. On the day of the performance the dancer looks at the banner, which makes her angry.

This cartoon can easily demonstrate the importance of sequencing. There is a contrast between the two sequences, i.e., 'Charity show' in the caption but 'Show charity' in the pictorial content. In the first sequence 'Charity' is an adjective and 'show' is a noun. But the same words in the other sequence obtain different grammatical form- 'charity' becomes a noun and 'Show', a verb. There is another difference. The first sequence is a phrase whereas the latter is a sentence. One more dissimilarity is there and that is the crucial one, which makes the performer angry. The sentence 'Show charity' has a derogatory meaning being an adverse comment on the dancer's performing abilities. It implies an appeal to the spectators to bear with her.

Students may be asked to uncover these differences and interpret the cartoon in their own language. They may also be asked to generate examples of similar contrastive sequences and discuss the difference in their structure and meaning. Some of the example sequences could be school day / day school, people concerned / concerned people, income tax / Tax income, process description / description process, Sentences involved / involved



sentences, training workshop / workshop training, fast colour / Colour fast, literature study / Study literature, etc.

4. The next two cartoons, under consideration, are very suitable for teaching reading between and also beyond the lines.



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

The unexpected contrast present in the cartoons can be used to activate the readers' sensitivity, awareness, and concern towards the issues brought up through them. Both the cartoons are packed with abundant meaning. The issues of 'poverty and homelessness' and 'arms race' have been raised by contrasting animals and human beings in fig. 7, in terms of their respective living conditions, and aliens from the other planet and human beings on earth in fig. 8, in the context of arms race. As the presentations are highly suggestive in nature, they offer a lot of scope for the readers to put their ideas and arguments out. We can use such cartoons for group work and ask the students to discuss and record their observations and reflections and write a detailed analysis.

We can give them the following tasks: Analyze the cartoons. Your discussions should answer the following questions-- (a) What is the central idea of the cartoons? (b) Is the idea presented in an effective manner? (c) How can the same idea be presented differently, i.e. by using other situation? Discuss.

5. Among various other possibilities, the two caricatures in Fig. 9 and 10 can be used to summarize the ideas and thoughts that the two pictures display.



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

Here the students can be asked to write a catchy title like 'Money to burn ...', 'Common man's burden ...' etc. They may also be asked to write small captions for the pictures. It is also possible to give them topics such as 'Smoking-- how good and bad?', 'Common man's life' and ask them to write small essays using the two pictures.

6. Let us examine another cartoon for a critical analysis of various aspects involved in it.

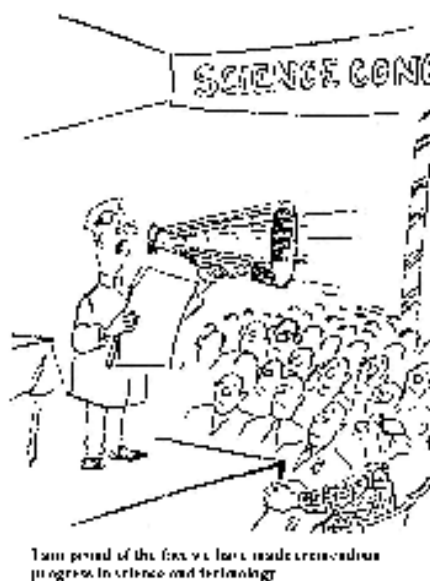


Fig.11

This cartoon is on science in which a political leader is addressing a gathering of scientists and is talking about his being proud of the scientific and technological advancement of his country. The punchline of the satire lies in the obvious disparity between the verbal and pictorial aspects of the cartoon.

Here are some tasks (adapted from Patil, 1996: 21-22) that could be set on this cartoon.

- (i) Study the cartoon and write down your observations.
- (ii) Identify who is the speaker and who are hearers in the picture.
- (iii) Complete the theme on the banner by using the word(s) that begin(s) with 'Con\_\_\_\_\_'. Do not use the word 'Congress'. Science Con\_\_\_\_\_.
- (iv) Explain the contradiction between the picture and its caption and discuss as to which part negates the speaker's statement and which heightens this effect.
- (v) Do you think that the speaker and the hearers in the cartoon are aware of the irony of the situation? What makes you think so?
- (vi) Suggest some changes in the picture and the caption, which can destroy the present effect of irony in the cartoon. (Some of the possible changes could be (a) A cordless or collar mike in place of a plain amplifier in the picture; (b) 'unhappy' in place of 'proud' and 'a little' in place of 'tremendous' in the caption)
- (vii) Could you suggest some other captions for this cartoon? How effective would be the following- "We have miles to go before we sleep. And miles to go before we sleep" and "The wrong man in the right place." Discuss.
- (viii) Imagine that you are a press reporter and you are asked to cover the function depicted in the cartoon. Write a small news report with a catchy title.

7. And finally, two more cartoons to reflect upon the cartoonist's vantage point:



Fig.12



Fig. 13

Here, we can ask the students to work in groups, discuss, prepare opinions / arguments/ points of view and present to the rest of the class: (a) Study the vantage point adopted by the two cartoonists in their pictorial presentation. (b) Point out the humorous as well as serious aspects in the cartoons. (c) How much is true and how much exaggerated in the two pictures? (d) Is the exaggeration justified? Examine critically.

The list, of course, is not exhaustive. Many more other tasks and activities can be designed on these cartoons.

## CONCLUSIONS

Cartoons and caricatures can be fruitfully used for a variety of purposes in language teaching. Our natural attraction towards visuals can be considerably exploited through the use of cartoons in the language classrooms. With the help of carefully selected suitable cartoons every aspect of language can be taught. Thus, good cartoonists have so much to offer for English language teaching and English language teachers and learners have so much to learn from them.

As cartoons and caricatures are an inexhaustible resource of humour and fun, the learner would enjoy working on them, and it will ensure better learner motivation and participation. An innovative and resourceful teacher can yield meaningful results in not only developing students' language skills but also promoting their higher order critical, lateral, and reflective thinking skills with the help of good cartoons. Hence, it is suggested and recommended here that a judicious set of good cartoons, along with several learner-friendly tasks, should be incorporated in the curriculum of language teaching.

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# **The Blood Drawn from Ageless Springs: Formative Influences on English Poets of the Thirties**

**Dr. Syed Sarwar Hussain**

*“What is precious is never to forget  
The essential Delight of the blood  
Drawn from Ageless Springs...”*

- (Spender, 1965)

## **ABSTRACT**

*The paper is a longitudinal study on the English poets of nineteen-thirties. It explores the influences that shaped their poetry, and the concerns that override much of their literary output. The purpose of this paper is to assert the fact that the poetry of the thirties in England accepts and assimilates the historic forces moving through it, and reflects the conflicts, the spirit, the currents and cross currents of the thoughts, the themes, and the poetic occupation with style and ideas that have been running through ages. In doing this, the researcher is not oblivious of the fact that the poetry of the thirties had its own share of unique creativity in style and content, and this aspect of the poetical output of the time is presented and illustrated with appropriate references throughout the paper. It is upon this corpus that the present study liberally draws a rounded picture of the English poets of the thirties as poets and thinkers. The influences on the poets of the thirties have been many and exceptional, and this paper examines and explains those influences in the light of various studies and investigates the tone and tenor that mould the contours of their poetic art.*

The study of the formative influences shaping the sensibility of a poet, which is subject of this paper, is undoubtedly a treacherous and unsafe enterprise. Let us examine the major literary influences and ideological perspectives that have shaped the poetry and thought of the most dynamic group of poets in the first half of the twentieth century England – the poets of the thirties. To understand how the literary spirit runs through generations we may take, as example, a poem which one could find in any typical collection of modern poetry:

*“And what is love? It is doll dress’d up  
For idleness to cosset, nurse, and dandle;*

*A thing of soft misnomers, so divine  
 That silly youth doth think to make itself  
 Divine by loving, and so goes on  
 Yawning and doting a whole summer long,  
 Till Miss's comb is made a pearl tiara,  
 And common Wellingtons turn Romeo boots;  
 Then Cleopatra lives at number seven,  
 And Anthony resides in Brunswick Square  
 Fools! if some passions high have warm'd the world,  
 If Queens and Soldiers have play'd deep for hearts,  
 It is no reason why such agonies  
 Should be more common than the growth of weeds.  
 Fools! make me whole again that weighty peal  
 The Queen of Egypt melted, and I'll say  
 That ye may love in spite of beaver hats."*(Keats, 1994)

The poem above was written by John Keats, a romantic and not a modern poet, more than a century ago. Even so, regardless of its remoteness, the poem has an amazing modern sound and semblance. Its treatment of love no more than a doll "dress'd up" for indulgence in "idleness". It's pretty yet worthless. The subject matter and treatment would soon suggest a modern poet, a Rupert Brooke than John Keats as its author. Sarcastic and humorous as it is, the poem has nothing of Keats's sensuous treatment of Nature and Romance. The poet ridicules love as a mere doll, an idle toy, an object that fools us to build sentimental castles. Keats ridicules people who are in love just because they like the idea of it. They are in love with the appearance of it. Keats's poem still makes sense in our world today

The poem is not, a celebration of love. It is a mockery of love. Quite unlike the romantic temper, Keats lets loose his scorn and makes a direct attack on sentimental love, and purposely places romantic agonies next to mundane weeds. He refers to the love stories in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, and contrasts these with the romantic expectations of common people, and suggests that modern love relationships do not require the same level of sentimental feelings of wretchedness. The poem's message is still relevant today.

Rupert Brooke's poem, *Love*, echoes the spirit of the Modern, in its denunciation of slushy, sentimental love story.

*Love is a breach in the walls, a broken gate,  
 Where that comes in that shall not go again;  
 Love sells the proud heart's citadel to Fate.  
 They have known shame, who love unloved. Even then,  
 When two mouths, thirsty each for each, find slaking,  
 And agony's forgot, and hushed the crying  
 Of credulous hearts, in heaven — such are but taking  
 Their own poor dreams within their arms, and lying  
 Each in his lonely night, each with a ghost.  
 Some share that night. But they know love grows colder,  
 Grows false and dull, that was sweet lies at most.  
 Astonishment is no more in hand or shoulder,  
 But darkens, and dies out from kiss to kiss.  
 All this is love; and all love is but this.*

(Brooke, 1918)

The first two lines of the poem sound like saying that you can only love once, but the rest appear to express that love itself is a deception, a complete nonsense. When two people fall first in love, they enter a stage of lust, and their intimate relationship ends up in agony, so much so that they no longer feel that initial unquenchable thirst for one another. It becomes like an old hat and is annoying. Love like dream dies when it is realized. Brooke sees love as a dangerous force, destructive enough to require a wall to block it. Once fallen into love a person becomes vulnerable to its disparaging strokes. And this is how, much of the most post war generation of poets and writers started treating the subject of romantic love in their literary works.

The shifting of these formative influences is a dangerous way of approach to discuss the influences of the preceding generations of poets on the English poets of the 1930s, a literary kind which was altogether new and unique. But it is a fruitful approach, especially when one attempts to study the moderns. We shall examine here how certain traditions, movements and authors have moulded the modern poetic sensibility, and influenced the ideas of the poets of the 'thirties, fondly called the Auden generation, and lent individuality and distinction to their poetic art.

In the poetry of today the reader can easily discover many points of contact with the old. For instance, the charm and beauty of the medieval balladry have been re-created in the poetry of Kipling, Housman, Davidson, Walter de la Mare, Yeats and Padraic Colum.

Webster and the post-Elizabethan dramatists so fascinated Rupert Brooke that he admired their mundane vigour and coarseness (Scully, 1966). The flexibility and looseness of their blank verse finds its echo in the practice of free verse writers. Speaking of the *vers libre* of Laforgue, T.S. Eliot (1928) observes:

“... free verse in much the same way that the later verse of Shakespeare, Webster, Tourneur, is free verse: that is to say, it stretches, contracts, and distorts the traditional French measure as later Elizabethan and Jacobean poetry stretches, contract, and distorts the blank verse measure.” (p. viii)

The modern attempt to rehabilitate Donne and other metaphysical poets which began with Grierson and found an excellent patron in Eliot, reveals, among other things, the kinship of the modern with the seventeenth century poets. It reflects more than ever the distinctive literary qualities of the seventeenth century metaphysical poets.

The metaphysical poets studied contrasts, loved striking effects, revelled in surprising and shocking the reader by using farfetched metaphors and conceits. Remote similarities, paradoxes and mixed metaphors, ideas telescoped into conceits by remote allusions, were the common features of this school. Today we find the same ingenuity in the use of images derived from out-of-way sources. Lines like these occur frequently in Spender's (1954) poems:

“Only the world changes, and time its tense  
Against the creeping inches of whose moons  
He launches his rigid continual present.” (p. 101)

When we examine the poetry of Auden and the thirties, of Spender and C. Day Lewis, we find a shift and a difference in the nature and the influences. The difference between W. B. Yeats and W.H. Auden, for example, lies in the profound political coloration of Auden's sense of reality, his acute sense of the living nations and of the barriers of hatred between them. In his *Selected Poems* (2003), in a poem entitled ‘*In memory of W. B. Yeats*’, he writes:

“In the nightmare of the dark  
All the dogs of Europe bark,  
And the living nations wait,  
Each sequestered in its hate:  
Intellectual disgrace  
Stares from every human face,



*And the seas of pity lie  
Locked and frozen in each eye.” (p. 798)*

Here Auden describes the dying poet's involvement with the world in which he lived, and then addresses the dead poet directly on the subject of himself and of poetry. In the two stanzas quoted above, Auden describes what Yeats' *'The Second Coming'* has prophesied nineteen years earlier: the end of an era in the paralysis of will towards the spiritual and humane, the drowning of the best values in a *'blood-dimmed tide'*. This is not to suggest that Auden is Yeats' equal as a poet. He is too much an improviser, and lacks the character to push a poem through to its aesthetic limits. Three representative poems, *'1929'*, *'Spain 1937'*, and *'September 1, 1939'*, are obviously political in their content, and taken as a group, reveal not only Auden's development but that of his whole literary generation. *'1929'* opens like *The Waste Land*, but soon afterwards moves in a different direction. Whereas Eliot's *"April is the cruelest month"* leads quickly to other voices than those of the poet's and to a hurried concentration of allusion, images and emotions, Auden keeps to the same one voice throughout and to an obvious logical sequence.

C. Day Lewis's *'Two Songs'* (1935), brings out the dreariness and sadness that took hold of the youth of England of the time:

*There was laughter and loving in the lanes at evening;  
Handsome were the boys then, and girls were gay.  
But lost in Flanders by medalled commanders  
The lads of the village are vanished away. (p. 195)*

*Care on thy maiden brow shall put  
A wreath of wrinkles, and thy foot  
Be shod with pain: not silken dress  
But toil shall tire thy loveliness. (p. 196)*

The cry of frustration and despair arising out of an uncertain situation is heard in the following poem of Spender:

*Return, return, you warn! We do. There is  
Your city, with railways, money, words, words, words.  
Meals, papers, exchanges, debates,  
Cinema, wireless: then there is Marriage.  
I cannot sleep. At night I watch  
A clear voice speak with words like drawing.  
(*'Polar Exploration'*, p. 69)*

A deep sense of gloom and helplessness is a characteristic feature of the poetry of the thirties, the gloom being more often tragic than defeatist. Day Lewis's 'A Carol' (A Time to Dance) is a pathetic lullaby, focusing on the intense suffering of the victims of the economic depression of the thirties:

Oh hush thee, my baby,  
Thy cradle's in pawn:  
No blankets to cover thee  
Cold and forlorn.  
The stars in the bright sky  
Look down and are dumb  
At the heir of the ages  
Asleep in a slum.  
The hooters are blowing.  
No heed let him take;  
When baby is hungry  
'Tis best not to wake.  
Thy mother is crying,  
Thy dad's on the dole:  
Two shillings a week is  
The price of a soul. (p. 196)

It is with poems like this, simple yet poignant, that the reader gets the feel of the thirties, of the miserable plight of thousands reeling under the exploits of capitalism.

Another influence felt by the Auden group, especially by Spender, in addition to that of communism, is the influence and appeal of Anglo-Saxon poetry, in theme as well as form. This appeal is obvious in Auden who is obviously the most deeply inspired, as he is clearly the least ingratiating author. His interest in the form and spirit of medieval literature began early in his career.

Christopher Isherwood (1937) has pointed out that Auden's first play, '*Paid on Both Sides*', was written under the influence of Norse sagas. Reverberations of the Anglo-Saxon flair are particularly discovered in the choral passages, where there is a notable absence of punctuation and infrequent and unusual capitalization demonstrating the medial pauses, as in the poems of antiquity,

*Shot answered shot Bullets screamed  
Guns shook Hot in the hand*

*Fighters lay Groaning on ground*  
*Gave up life Edward fell*  
*Shot through the chest First on the lot*  
*My no means refused fight Stephen was good*  
*His first encounter showed no fear*  
*Wounded many (p. 18)*

In its construction and theme the poem follows the old English, closely resembling the anonymous fragment *Battle of Maldon*, an epic poem of uncertain date celebrating the real *Battle of Maldon* of 991, at which the Anglo-Saxons failed to prevent a *Viking* invasion (Jones, 2006).

Auden has used the old Anglo-Saxon verse forms instead of writing in the French-Italian tradition which had dominated English poetry since the time of Chaucer. The hardness of the diction, the austerity of expression, the compressed, compact quality of it, appeals to the younger generation of English poets who are striving to express complicated and intellectual thoughts in the best possible manner. It should also be noted here that the Metaphysical poets who were faced with similar conditions of complexity and intellectualism expressed themselves sometimes in the same type of verse.

That Spender, in matters of language and structure, draws extensively from the Anglo-Saxon poetry is hardly a matter of surprise since his mentor Auden has often appeared as something of an authority on Middle English poetry. This is obvious from his

*“History has tongues*  
*Has angels has guns*  
*has saved has praised*  
*Her lives-in-exile death-returned*  
*for whom her printed page*  
*Is heaven on which their wills write worlds*  
*See how her dead like standards*  
*Planted by Victory in Today*  
*Are capped and cupped by waves!” (p. 77)*

Middle English poetry seemed to serve best the poetic purposes of the poets of the thirties generation. The young creative aspirants discovered so many affinities in social aim and aesthetic attitude between the two ages removed from one another by a distance of four centuries. If therefore, they retreated to Chaucer and Langland, it was because English literature from Langland down to Skelton abounded in satires on the times. It afforded a

congenial source of inspiration for the young poets of the *thirties*, a source on which they could generously draw without any let or hindrance. Two quotations, one from Langland, and the other from Spender, will help to show the colloquial style and verse structure as it appears in a fourteenth-century and a twentieth century poet. The first is from Langland's 'Incipit Liber de Petro Plowman':

*"Of alle manner of men, the mene and the rich,  
Worchyng and wandryng as the world asketh.  
Some putten hem to the plow, played ful selde,  
In setting and in sowyng swonken ful hards,  
And wonnen that wastours with glotonye destruyeth!"* (p. 15)

Coghill's version of this passage in modern English is as follows:

*"Of all manner of men, the meaner and the richer,  
Working and wandering, as the world asks of them,  
Some were putting out to plough, had litter play-time,  
In setting seed and sowing, sweated at their labour.  
And won that which wasteful men destroy in gluttony."* (p. 16)

These lines serve to illustrate the essential characteristics of the alliterative, metrical instrument. It is a four-beat line, commonly alliterating in three out of the four stressed words, and employing a medial pause- not as John Lawlor has observed, - "*a caesura, but a distinct break.*" (p. 190). The half-line is the essential unit of the verse, and this half-line is not an arbitrary division but a unit of speech, a clause complete in itself. Lawlor has rightly maintained that "*such an instrument, while requiring varying degrees of pause at the line-end, lends itself very readily to the 'run-on' of sense and to parallelism of statement. But the chief characteristic is the entire absence of any tension between the demands of speech (and thus sense) on the one hand, and a theoretically unvarying metrical pattern on the other.*" (p. 190). Now let us have a look at the following lines from one of Stephen Spender's poems:

*"Simple for delight, their one compulsion  
Not teaching us love, yet soothing our gaze,  
Not saving me from death, yet loosening me for speech."* (p. 38)

What is striking here is the employment of the medial pause as a distinct break in the line, making the half-line essential unit of the verse, as it were. The alliteration is gone but other characteristics – music and movement – are retained. Moreover, the extract shows what Lawlor calls "*the entire absence of any tension between the demands of speech (and*

*thus sense) on the one hand and theoretically unvarying metrical pattern on the other.”*(p. 191). This formal resemblance between the Middle English passage and the modern, though clear, does not imply that Spender based his passage on any single passage in Langland, but merely that his general knowledge of Middle English might materially have helped him in writing as he did, and in expressing his thoughts as clearly and artistically as he wanted.

The influence of Langland and the alliterative tradition is also obvious in Auden’s *The Exiles*, where Auden follows the Middle English structure of four-stress line alliterating on all except the final stress,

*Picnics are promised and planned for July  
To the wood with the waterfall, walks to find  
Traces of birds  
A mole, a rivet  
In factory yards  
Make strictly private. (p. 55)*

That the influence of one colloquial poem upon another is often indubitable yet hard to ascertain as is evident in the literary relationship between Spender and his associates with the Middle English writers. There is no negating the truth that they do not, in any literal sense, borrow from them; and perhaps foreseeing the allegation they consciously concealed how much they owed to their medieval predecessors. The poets who actually stand closest to Middle English poetry today in style as well as social outlook are unquestionably the radicals and even the communists.

The most important influence, however, on the young poets of the thirties was that of Auden who had accepted him and also his work early in his career as a poet. Not that they were alike in creative accomplishments or critical perceptiveness. One notable difference, of which they were prepared never to challenge Auden, was in Auden’s possession of superior brilliance of gifts. The difference of their mind was apparent from Auden’s criticism of Spender’s attitudes, though the latter did not realize until later that the difference between them was not just of cleverness and Spender’s ignorance.

When the English poets of the thirties were young, their excitement about the idea of poetry often created a poem beyond the words themselves. Consequently, words which conveyed nothing to them came to be surrounded by the aura of what others had found in them. When they read some of the sonnets of Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Keats, they seemed to know them at once as though he had known them before: and yet they had not done so. This fact is very subtly laid down by Stephen Spender (1977), a prominent poet of the Auden Group, in his autobiography *World Within World*,

*“The inevitability of the words in the poetry had such force that it created in my mind an allusion of its own past history there”.(p. 10)*

Though most of them except Louis MacNeice, were repelled by Milton’s ‘*L’Allegro*’ and ‘*Il Penseroso*’, Gray’s ‘*Elegy*’, Wordsworth’s ‘*Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*’ and Dryden’s ‘*Odes*’, and considered them as just great architectural constructions, they felt the ravishing beauty of the poems of de la Mare, and they thought his virtue lay in a dream-like atmosphere which he shared with other writers. Spender admits in his autobiography, that his generation of poets was attracted

*“by the will to make a thing of beauty which betrays itself in some poems by the excessive use of words such as ‘beauty’ itself”. (p. 11)*

In common with James Joyce and Eliot, the poets of the thirties began to accept the inclusion of materials, seemingly ugly, anti-poetic and inhuman, within new forms as a legitimate act of the modern poet. This was evident from Joyce’s practice of transforming the sordid scenes and life of the Dublin of Stephen Daedalus and Bloom in his poetic novel, *Ulysses*, and from Eliot’s practice of juxtaposing scenes of European decline with those recalling the greatest glories of the past tradition in *The Waste Land*. It was Joyce and Eliot in fact who taught these poets to use modern life as material for art.

The English poets of the thirties realized that the poet need not set himself apart from his time, and poetry, good and enduring, could be created out of an acceptance of it. They began to be drawn towards Virginia Wolfe, Robert Graves, Earnest Hemingway, Osbert, Edith and Sacheverell Sitwell, Ezra Pound, Henry Greene, Herbert Read, etc. They found their hard clear imagery admirable and praised the way they experimented with and searched for means of expressing complicated states of consciousness and acute sensibility. The influence of most of these major writers is seen in Auden and Spender’s reference to gasworks, factories and slums and in those works where they try to express several levels of consciousness going on at the same time. Joyce, Virginia Wolfe and Hemingway revealed to the poets of the thirties generation new areas of sensibility of which they were never before conscious. Lawrence opened their eyes to a world that was just not potential literature. We can here present a pertinent example of Spender, in his poem, *Epilogue To A Human Drama*, drawing from his contemporaries the hard bare images that run through real lives of people, and juxtaposing them against the chaotic existence of the war ridden traumatic years of the thirties,

*“When pavements were blown up, exposing nerves,  
And the gas mains burned blue and gold,  
And stucco and brick were pulverized to a cloud*

*Pungent with smells of mice, dust, garlic, anxiety:  
 When the reverberant emptied facades  
 Of the West End palaces of commerce  
 Isolated in a vacuum of silence, suddenly  
 Cracked and blazed and fell, with the seven-maned  
 Lions of Wrath licking the stony fragments-  
 Then the one voice through deserted streets  
 Was the Cassandra bell which rang and rang and ran  
 Released at last by Time  
 To seek those fires that burst through many walls-  
 Prophetic doom laid bare under the nostrils,  
 Blood and fire streaming from the stones.” (p. 145)*

The image of doom hastened by warfare and internecine struggles is starkly evident from the above quoted lines. The interesting thing to note here is the introduction of a very physical graphic imagery, its immediacy of appeal unblemished by any recourse to abstract or surreal symbolism. It is this aspect of Spender's poetry, his obvious modernism which signifies his association with the writers of his generation, and to his sense of belonging.

The most significant influence, enormously potent and subtle, was exercised by Auden whose presence can be detected in some of the images and in the tone of certain lines in Spender's poetry. It would be an exercise in futility to labour this point and endeavour to reproduce all that Spender has said so beautifully on this issue in his autobiography. One would like to conclude with Spender's own observation that within modern conditions the greatest influence the poet can feel must be that of politics. Spender believed in the inevitability of the connection between politics and literature. The reason which he gives is plausible:

*“... Sensitive minds must be conscious, in one way or another, of the general political fate in which almost everyone today is involved. I used the word ‘political’ in a very wide sense to cover a fatality which I felt to be overtaking our civilization and which influenced our writing more explicitly than was generally realized. Or, to put this in another way, a kind of literary material which our predecessors had not thought of as political had obvious political implications for us today: for example, there had always been in Henry James's novels a sense of social decay of Europe. The peculiarity of the 1930's was not that the subject or transforming it had arisen, combined with the positive necessity of withstanding tyrannies.”(WWW, p.249)*

Spender once complained that Auden sometimes overloaded his material. Lest this same charge be leveled against us we would not overload this paper with references to people and places under whose spell the thirties poets came to compose their verses and to possess the vitality, the explosive vitality that left their contemporaries dazed. All we can say here is that English poetry of the thirties embodies concepts from countless sources, but it is strong enough to carry suggestions and sometimes essential ideas, from writers as diverse as Eliot, D.H. Lawrence James Joyce, Ezra Pound, Virginia Wolfe, Robert Graves, Earnest Hemingway, Herbert Read, Edith and Sacheverell Sitwell etc.

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# Indian Theatre : A Study

**Dr. Bharat Bhusan Mohanty**

## ABSTRACT

*The paper brings into fore the essential components of Indian Theatre and looks into the genealogical, structural, dramaturgical, performance oriented affinities and differences in multifarious theatre traditions, especially folk theatre traditions, prevailing across the diverse cultural, linguistic, and geopolitical boundaries of India. The paper examines the divine origin of Indian theatre, its narrative aspect, categorization, distinctiveness, treatment of time, elaborate costumes, and the concept of unity and multiplicity.*

The decline of Sanskrit drama saw the emergence of folk theatre in various regional languages from the 14th and through the 19th century. Folk theatre as a typical theatre form gradually emerged as a regional form of drama based on the attributes of local religion, legends, art, vernacular, history and mythology. Along with that illustrations from Purans, epics, myths, biographies, historical myths, etc. became the popular source of the theatre form. But the very basic rudiments of folk theatre as an art form are essentially ingrained in the mores, heritage and tradition of India. The rural society which is usually regarded as the custodian of folk theatre practices a number of rituals which serve the rudiments of drama. The varied facets of rituals and their colossal impact on Indian culture and life form the base of folk theatre in India. Folk theatre is truly a repository of the rich history of Indian folk culture that dates back to the age - old antiquity.

Folk theatre in India, despite its folk-oriented associations, has a distinct divine origin. It is believed that Lord Shiva discovered dance in order to provide entertainment to the ordinary folk. Shiva is considered to be a God of the masses and some critics consider him as the God of the non-Aryans. The dance forms that he discovered subsequently became folk dance and in due course of time they were brought under classical principles. Dharendra Nath Pattanayak in his introduction to Nandikeswara's Abhinaya Darpan has narrated myths relating to the origin of folk theatre. When Shiva killed the demon called Tripura he became so happy that he started dancing in joy. Thus, dance came into being. Brahma, mixing the blood of Tripura with earth, made a Mridanga (drum) and fixed the skin of the demon on both sides of the Mridanga. Ganesh then was asked to play that Mridanga and to create some 'talas' (rhythms) along with that. 'Tala' was created then for the first time and was subsequently applied to song and music (Introduction).

Nandikeshwar in his 'Namaskriya' (prayer) in Abhinaya Darpana emphasizes the

role of 'Shiva as the central guiding force of all theatre forms.

"Angikam Bhubanam Jasya Bachikam Sarbabangmayam  
Aharjyam Chandra taradi Tam Numah Sattwikam Shivam ".

( Quoted from Pattanayak : 1)

( He whose body is the entire universe whose language includes all the sounds whose costumes are the stars and the moon I bow and pray to you Oh ! divine Shiva )  
English translation by B.B. Mohanty .

Folk theatre is essentially narrative in its form. And it is mainly adopted from the two epics- Ramayana and Mahabharat and various puranas. This narrative aspect of the folk theatre in India points towards the origin and the age-old sagas of the Sutrathar / Bhagabat / Pathaka in Indian theatre tradition. There is a reference in the Ramayana to Valmiki teaching the art of recitation of Ramayana to the two sons of Lord Rama - Kusa and Laba. The popular recitation tradition of 'Kushilaba' may have originated from that. Similarly the character of 'Suta' in Mahabharat is entrusted the job of narrating the story of Mahabharat. Suresh Awasthi has offered an interesting narrative in this regard.

Suta, Lomaharshan's Son, Ugrashrava, henceforth called Sauti comes to the great sages eagerly waiting to listen to the wonderful stories of the Mahabharata by Vyas. The great epic was recited in full in the Naga Yajna (Serpent Sacrifice) organized by king Janmejaya. In the Adiparva story, the sages offer Sauti a seat and tell that they want him to narrate the Itihasa, also called Bharat, the holy composition of Vyasa just as it was recited by Vaishampayan under the direction of Vyasa himself at the serpent sacrifice. Sauti accepting their request, starts narrating the epic story.

(Quoted from Awasthi : 3 )

Folk theatre in India still has retained its age-old narrative form while echoing a highly dramatic narrative style.

There is a long tradition of folk entertainers who either operate alone or in groups in rural India. They are entertainers as well as the preachers of values, philosophical tenets and of religious cult. Folk theatre has adopted their mode of expression amidst dance, music and songs. Indian folk theatre, dynamic and ingenuous in its forms and rich in variety, has established itself as the powerful medium of communication in folk cultures. Amrita Gupta in her paper "Folk theatre of India" writes : "Folk plays provide a valuable weight into the local dialect, dress, attitude, humour and art of the regions in which they are staged. Although mythological and medieval romances are their main thrust, folk theatre acquires a timeless appeal by improvising with symbolic relevance to the current socio-political happenings" (Internet Source).

Indian folk theatre can be broadly divided into two categories - the religious and the secular. It subsequently gave rise to the Ritual theatre and theatre of entertainment respectively. The religious folk theatre evolved around the aspects and stories from history, religion and myth; the secular folk theatre, on the contrary, emerged as a typical form of entertainment. The two theatre forms thrived together, mutually influencing each other to create a whole fresh communication in Indian dramatic tradition. Although they are considered as folk theatre traditions, some of them have all the attributes of a classical theatre.

Every state in India has its own distinctive forms of folk theatre. The South-Indian theatre forms usually emphasize on dance forms like Kathakali and Krishnattam of Kerala and possess unique theatre traditions like Yaksagana of Karnataka, Therukuttu of Tamilnadu, Kuttiattam of Kerala, Bhagabata Mela of Andhra Pradesh, etc. The North-Indian forms give stress on songs and acting, like the Khyal of Rajasthan, Maach of Madhya Pradesh, Tamasha of Maharashtra, Prahallad Natak and Jatra of Orissa, Kushan Gan and Ankita Nata of Assam, etc. While most of these theatre styles have their own unique form dependent on their local customs, they differ from one another in execution, staging, costume, make-up and acting style, although there are some broad similarities. Kapila Vatsyayan emphasizes this particular aspect of the theatre traditions in India. To her they are "characterised by staggering multiplicity of genres, forms, styles and techniques" (1).

Vatsyayan talks of the concept of unity and multiplicity operating as the guiding principles in all the theatre forms of India. She is for constructing a pan-Indian theatre form beyond the apparent differences. She comments, "It would be possible to cull out these elements (elements of theatre) against the background of interdependence and inter connection forms within a region and amongst regions" (Vatsyayan : 7). On the issue of classification and sub groupings of various genres of theatre forms, Vatsyayan has offered a sociological perspective. Apart from the traditional methods of classification in terms of form and content and also the region-specific orientation there is a caste and community specific dimension to a particular folk theatre tradition. To her, a particular community or a caste may be the repository of particular theatre forms (11). In that case most of the performances are semi-professional or non-professional and they mostly come from the backward classes. Historically the people belonging to the higher strata or higher castes in society have shown their preferences for anything that is classical, sublime and aesthetically rewarding. The performers or the class of performers are hereditarily trained artists and they usually come from villages or rural communities.

Another significant component of the folk theatre of India is its close connections with the Indian epics. Epics have provided the thematic material, style of recitation and the techniques of story telling to the folk theatre forms of India. Awasthi has made some

interesting observations relating to the reasons of acceptance and popularity of the tradition of recitation of epics. He states : "the tradition of recitation was strengthened by the belief that it was endowed with the power of fulfilling desire taken as a vow, granting of boon under the concept of 'Phalasruti' and fulfillment of desire by listening to the epic recitation" (3).

The typical concept of stage designing is clearly suggestive of simplicity. The actors of the Indian folk theatre generally perform in the make-shift stage. This supports immensely in conversing with the audience in the course of the play as audience participation is an essential part of Indian folk theatre. Vatsyayan says, "in these forms, while large audience participate through active response, there is a clear actor-dancer-musician and audience-spectator-listener demarcation (13). The stage for the folk theatre is usually an empty space, which the actors control skillfully and employ to complement with their dialogues and symbolic gestures. Awasthi talks about the space used for the stage for the performance of the theatre from. The place may be a sacred place, like the temple premises, or an ordinary place in the middle of a village or a privately owned place. He believes that there is a 'non-realistic and metaphysical treatment of spaces' as far as the space for the stage is concerned. "Theatre does not occur in any available space. It creates its own space and alters the available space ( Awasthi : 95).

Regarding the notion of treatment of time in folk theatre Kapila Vatsyayan talks of the "principles of eternity and flux", which she considers as not only a pattern in performing arts, but also as an integral part of Indian thought and mind. This is essentially an effort to strike a fine balance between the metaphysical and the mundane levels of reality. To her, the performing arts of India may be a vehicle of contemporary concern, but "contemporaneity must be contained within the continued symbol of the eternal or at least the old" (9). Awasthi considers this particular treatment of time as privileging "a double time order, both human and divine as well as mythical and historical (Awasthi: 97). In addition to that Awasthi discusses about certain common frames or patterns relating to the performance modes of theatre forms. The opening of the theatre with invocatory song and the concluding with an auspicious verse, which are known by different names usually serve the same purpose. Apart from that on the issue of the separation of art and life in theatre there is a definite perception that the stated separation is never absolute and total. There is a constant juxtaposition of one world with the other a kind of natural interplay, overlapping and fusion. This kind of porous condition is more appropriate for traditional performances, according to Awasthi. He believes " this is more true in case of traditional performances placed in the midst of the community life to mark the rites of passage, cycles of seasons, to commemorate the birth and death of heroes, and to celebrate ritual conflict between

the Gods and demons (99). Another characteristic element of folk theatre form is its fragmented nature. There each major element of performance, such as music, movement, gestures, dance, dramatic dialogues, story, narrative, etc. enjoys autonomy and they can be enjoyed separately. (100).

Elaborate make-ups, masks, chorus, loud music, dance, humour and acting are indeed the hallmark of Indian folk theatre. Folk theatre of India is truly a chronicle of Indian drama where theater broke the barrier of orchestra and pits and reached the mass in a whole new way through the quixotic brilliance of music, song and folklores.

India proffers a colorful array of folk culture, best portrayed through the unique art of folk theatre. In the ancient Vedic culture and even in Buddhist literature folk theatre had its presence as an art form to illustrate the elementary realities of life. During the medieval period folk theatre in India had a significant rise and later on became an integral part of Indian drama.

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# Smelly Encounters: An Olfactory Reading of Indian English Fiction by Women\*

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## ABSTRACT

*George Orwell once described smell as the real secret of gender relations in the West: 'The female sex smells.' Gender connotation is writ large in almost every sociological/anthropological study of smell. Literature is also full of such references where women's sense of smell has been considered stronger than that of men's. Gaze being the masculine sense, greater weightage has been given to it while smell has been deprecated as the feminine sense. Since smell has a deep cultural significance the literature of the Indian diaspora by women is replete with what may be termed 'olfactory analysis.' The smell of nostalgia, of memory and the past; the aroma of native food and all the native fragrances keep haunting; bringing much comfort to the aching heart. While Jhumpa Lahiri's characters are particularly nostalgic about the native food finding refuge in the gustatory, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni dedicated the space of one novel to spices where her protagonist is the 'Mistress of Spices' herself; Radhika Jha's *Smell* reminds one of Patrick Suskind's *Perfume*. Replete with 'olfactory encounters', to borrow Janice Carlisle's expression, the novel is a bildungsroman of Leela Patel, the protagonist whose very being is apparently governed by her nose. I propose to read the olfactory representations in the novels of these women writers with a view to exploring the social, cultural and moral connotations of the olfactory/gustatory.*

**Keywords:** Olfactory, Gustatory, Indian English Fiction, Women Writing.

## 1. Introduction

Fragrance is an essential component of who we are and what we know, conveying information in the forms of memory and emotion. [1]

Years ago, I had an Australian friend in Calcutta and I remember she loved to eat our curries but when my mother fried the lentils using *ghee* (purified butter) she used to shut her nostrils with her frock saying : “*Chee! Chee!* (A Hindi expression to show disgust) How foul a smell this is!” *Ghee* comes from cow milk which is considered sacred and we Indians love its smell but the Australian girl had no such associations and completely disliked

it. Smells have strong associative values; even a not-so-pleasant smell may be pleasing for some if it is associated with a pleasant memory. A friend of mine has an interesting story to tell about how smell helped her evade her mother's scolding as a naughty child. As a child she would keep a book open by her side when her brother and she would play cards in their study time. On smelling a baked-sweet smell both she and her brother would hide the cards and hold the open books in their hands pretending to be absorbed in reading it. Before the poor woman could barge in to see her children playing truant, it was the smell of her hair oil that would herald her entry.

## 2. Cultural Fumes

Before the sense of sight comes the sense of smell, yet smell is by far the most under-rated sense of perception. Constance Classen *et al* [2], while analyzing the course of its derogatory status, discuss the reason for its devaluation. They mainly see this as a result of revaluation of the senses in eighteen and nineteen century: "The philosophers and scientists [...] decided that, while sight was the pre-eminent sense of reason and civilization, smell was the sense of madness and savagery. In the course of human evolution, it was argued by Darwin, Freud and others, the sense of smell had been left behind and that of sight had taken priority" (1994: 30).

Smell is more cultural than sensual. The categories of the fragrant and foul are also not natural but cultural: what is deemed fragrant in some cultures is considered foul in some others. A Hindu would be shocked to learn that in Senegal and many other places in Africa, the smell of onion is classified as fragrant. Clearly, olfactory matters are not fixed but flexible.

In Andaman smell is granted a high status and the Andamanese calendar attaches much importance to aromas. The Andamanese people name the different periods of their year after the fragrant flowers that bloom at different times.

Smell is not only a sense of perception, it has been invested with deeper connotations across cultures in Asia. We Indians attach a lot of importance to this sense, it is associated not only with self but also with honour. 'Cutting off somebody's nose' means dishonouring the person; 'saving one's nose' means saving one's honour; 'a fat nose' means bloated ego and 'a matter of nose' means the matter of one's self-respect.

In India Gods are pleased when they are offered incense sticks. India has a long tradition of the olfactory just like the West. Sanskrit literature is full of references to perfumes and essences known as *attar*. Ancient Indian literature is replete with references to sweet-smelling flowers and to the practice of people wanting a lingering fragrance around them, of collecting flowers in a basket and keeping them in rooms; of bathing in water filled with

aroma of the flowers; or of wearing flowers in their hair. To this day the practitioners of the ancient art of the olfactory keep dried flowers in cupboards, and clove tied in a small packet (*potli*), is kept inside clothes to give them a permanent fragrance. With the Mughal invasion came the Persian influence and the art of extracting oil to create perfume was acquired in India as well. Though these were basically individual oils, other kinds of *attars* may be composed by carefully blending these. It is believed that *attar* was first produced by Hakim Ibn Sena who used *attars* for medicinal purposes. *Ratirahasya* or *The Secrets of Love* written by Kukkoka in honour of Venudatta mentions *Padmini* ( a woman smelling like lotus) as the supreme type of woman. Drobnick refers to Wilber [3] who argues that South American Indians used perfumes to amplify vital human energy and fertility (2006: 229). Marriages in India are not sanctified without incense-sticks and sandalwood. This was a practice begun with Hinduism which came to be adopted by the followers of all religions in India.

### 3. Fragrant Hinduism

Spirituality and aroma have also had a long association across cultures. Hindu scriptures are full of references to perfumes, incense and scents used for worship. Clearly, olfaction has been an important sense in Hindu religion. The fact of India being a more spiritually/ religiously inclined society as compared to the West, which is a rationally inclined society cannot be ignored. In *Saddharma-Pundarika* there is an elaborate description of the five senses of perception and smell finds a place second to none. Mention is made of the *bodhisattva's* senses of perception: "Such is the power of his organ of smell. Yet it is not the divine organ he possesses, but (the natural one) prior to the perfect, divine faculty of smell" (*Saddharma-Pundarika*). In this description one can see no discrimination on the basis of gender. Men and women smell equally, in fact, men's power of smell is even greater than that of women because *Bodhisattva* is male. In the *Srimad Devi Bhagawatam* [4] while elaborating on the rules of *diksha* (initiation) one finds:

Worship the whole body of the Devî with scents and flowers. Next offer to the Devî the sweet scent of Kalâguru mixed with camphor and the Kâs' mîri sandalpaste mixed with Kastûrî and various nice scented flowers, for example, the *Kunda* flowers, etc. Then offer the *Dhûpa* prepared from *Aguru*, *Guggula*, *Us'îra*, sandalpaste, sugar, and honey and know that the *Dhûpa* is very pleasing to the Devî. Next offer various lights and offerings of fruits, vegetables and fooding. Be particular to sprinkle everything with the water of the Kosâ, thus purifying, before it is offered to the Devî. Then complete the *Anga Pûjâ*, and the *Âvarana-Pûjâ* of the Devî, then perform the duty of *Vais'vadeva*. On the right side of the Devî erect an altar (*sthandila*) six feet square and install *Agni* (Fire) there. Invoke there the Deity, thinking of Her Form and worship Her with scents and flowers.



Incense and anointment with sandal paste and other scents find prominent place on the list of fourteen articles to be offered to please gods: (6) anointment with sandal paste and other scents (*Anulepana*), (7) incense (*Dhûpa*), (9) offerings of food (*Naivedya*), (10) Betels (*Tambûl*), (14) garlands, scents” (*Bagawahtam*. IX: XVI). Out of the fourteen offerings that appease gods one can see that five items pertain to the olfactory, as food itself is savour combined with flavor.

In the description of Santanu and Satyawati’s marriage one clearly finds that it is smell that attracts the King to Satyawati and leads to their marriage:

At last he came to a spot on the banks of the Yamunâ the chief of the rivers, where a very beautiful girl, calm and quiet and with feminine gestures and posture amorous, lovely but ill-clad, was sitting; and he found out that *the above beautiful smell* [emphasis mine] was coming out of her body. The form of the lady was extremely beautiful; the smell was very wonderful, and captivating the hearts of all; her age then entered to youth and she was very auspicious [5].

It may be mentioned here that in India, especially in Hindu tradition, reference to foul smell is absent. This may be attributed to the fact that Hindu scriptures associate all the five senses including smell with the divine. Hindus have this knack of associating all useful things with God e.g., rivers, flora, fauna etc. In the medieval times, however, due to Persian influence, scents became associated with black magic and also elimination of bad smell became a concern.

#### 4. Feminization of Smell

“While other spirits glide on the wings of music,  
Mine, O my love! floats upon your perfume” [6]

Aristotle recognized smell as an emotional sense and later Rousseau called it the “sense of imagination” thus, pointing at the femininity of the olfactory sense. George Orwell [7] once described smell as the real secret of gender relations in the West: “The female sex smells” (1937: 159). Gender connotation is writ large in almost every sociological/ anthropological study of smell. Literature is also full of such references where women’s sense of smell has been considered stronger than that of men’s. Gaze being the masculine sense greater weightage has been given to it while smell has been deprecated as the feminine sense. Feminization of the olfactory began in large measures in the nineteenth century. This began with the deprecation of this sense; all things deprecated were considered to be associated with each other and women were as devalued as was the passive sense of smell. All of a sudden the sense of perception which was thought to be the closest to the deities, went out of favour. The sanctity of odours and its therapeutic powers all became a story of

the past while the present reality associated smell with women, savages and animals. Analyzing the reasons for smell going out of favour, Classen *et al* [8] write:

Smell, in turn, was now considered the sense of intuition and sentiment, of home-making and seduction, all of which were associated with women. It was maps, microscopes and money on the one hand, and pot-pourris, pabulum and perfume on the other. Significantly, however, smell was also the sense of 'savages' and animals, two categories of beings who, like women, were deprecated and exploited by contemporary Western culture (84).

Classen *et al* attribute this olfactory deprecation of women to their association with the moon which, in turn, was associated with corruption. It is commonly accepted in the West that women are the perfumed sex. Hence, in postmodern times the only basic purpose of fragrance is to enhance the desirability of the sexes. Chastity however, still remains associated with fragrance. The Spanish word for whore, '*puta*' is derived from the Latin for putrid, so is '*putain*' in French. While wives and mothers are surrounded of respectable perfume, seductresses have heavy & spicy smell. In India, unlike the Americas, men too love to wear perfume. A. H. Verrill [9] writes about the American man:

Though his women use more perfumes than any other race on earth, and although the inhabitants of the United States spend more money on perfumes and cosmetics than on education, the use of perfume in any form is abhorrent to the American male. In vain have perfumers tried to introduce 'manly' scents such as leather, scotch, hay, clover, and salt marsh, etc. Not one has succeeded. And the men of American blood remain firm in their determination not to use perfumes (97).

The truth of Verrill's statement is not much supported by facts though. In India as in other Asian countries men love to use fragrant aftershave lotions as well as deodorants and perfumes. In this regard at least, Indians have no gender bias.

In Andaman again the olfactory is associated with women very closely but not in its deprecated form. The time of a girl's first menstruation is referred to as her 'blossoming time'; she is given the name of the flower that blooms at that time till she bears her 'first fruit,' her first child. Cain [10] and Engen [11] conducted much research on gender as it affects odour perception; all of which remained inconclusive though. However, my intention here is not to go into the anthropological or socio-religio-cultural significance of the sense of smell. I would rather trace how well this sense has found representation in literature, Indian English fiction to be precise.

## 5. Literary gusts

In the post-modern world, with visual media gaining more and more importance, smell is gradually receding into the background. Computers do not have any room for the

olfactory. However, the fragrance industry, the toothpaste industry and the soap industry still manage to keep the traces of the pre-modern relevance of smell alive; and it is not unusual to come across advertisements flaunting the value of smell to attract men and women. Especially notable is the fact that gender is a focal point in these advertisements. In contemporary times, however, literature has realized the power of the olfactory and since the eighties smell has become the central point of many a poem and fiction piece. Patrick Suskind's [12] *The Perfume* is a powerful example in this regard. The story of a psychopath perfumer makes for a powerful case of the denigration of olfaction and by default it strengthens the nineteenth-century view. The protagonist is so obsessed with scent that he ends up killing maidens in order to sniff up their sweet fragrance. In the end, through his de-scenting of maidens he gets invested with such an appealing perfume that a frenzied crowd tears him to pieces and eats him up.

The onset of the avant-garde group of writers and poets had a positive turn for the olfactory. Literature abounds with references to smell. Smell has been convincingly used to describe mourning, nostalgia and yearning, love, spring, horror, ugliness, death, infancy and many other emotions and phenomena.

## 6. Indian Context

Since smell has a deep cultural significance the literature of the Indian diaspora by women is full of what may be termed 'olfactory analysis.' The smell of nostalgia, of memory and the past; the aroma of native food and all the native fragrances keep haunting; bringing much comfort to the aching heart. While Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni [13] dedicated the space of one novel to spices where her protagonist is the 'Mistress of Spices' herself; Radhika Jha's [14] *Smell* reminds one of Patrick Suskind's *Perfume*. Replete with 'olfactory encounters' to borrow Janice Carlisle's expression, the novel is a *buildungsroman* of Leela Patel, the protagonist whose very being is apparently governed by her nose. I propose to read the olfactory representations in the novels of these women writers with a view to exploring the social, cultural and moral connotations of the olfactory/gustatory.

## 7. Moral Smells

A sixteenth-century allegory tells the story of an angel who has no objection to the smell of an honest dung-collector's laden cart, but who stops up his nose at a perfumed courtesan. In Radhika Jha's novel *Smell* one can see the olfactory as the *leit motif*. *Smell* presents an olfactory narration of a pure, innocent girl with a strong olfactory sense who starts having strange 'smelly encounters' when she becomes morally degenerate. Jha's narrative makes a powerful statement of the olfactory. The protagonist Leela Patel has an acute case of phantosmia (a syndrome described as olfactory hallucination). Since her childhood Leela's world is dominated by the aroma of food and spices, which become her

medium of communication with a country (India) which is hers but which she has never been to. She experiences the smell of her country, that she knows and associates with home, infused with French aromas e.g., “the smell of fresh baguette would fight its way into the Madras *epicerie* to do battle with the prickly smell of pickles and *masalas* (spices) ... it would pause, some of its strength diminished by the pungent foreign odours” (3).

Leela is one person for whom all the other senses are dominated by her nose. Even in the dark she could take to a place if only it smelt fresh. When in pain she has the tendency to recall pleasurable smells which soothe her ache. While washing the dirty dishes in her aunt’s kitchen, she takes refuge in some old olfactory memory. Leela’s world is a ‘nosy world’ if one may say so. Airs and fumes impact her mind more than imagery does. Her olfactory memory portends her future in Paris at the instance of her entering into her uncle’s home when, “Almost immediately I could smell it—that smell of oil, pickle and spices, which is the hallmark of the Indian home” (12). This native smell seems quite out of place, hence unwelcome. Leela takes immediate dislike to her Aunt Latha and she starts smelling an “ugly death smell” (31) in her kitchen. Ironically, it is later this same aunt who, while training her in the use of spices, says: “...listen to the smell, it will tell you things” (31). This merger of the smell and sound is what makes smell more potent and overpowering. When smells begin to sound, they acquire character. This ‘mixing’ of the senses has been accepted as a reality by neurologists and a report published in *Medical News Today* [15], affirms this merger: “Surprising as it may seem, there are people who can smell sounds, see smells or hear colors. Actually, all of us, at some point in our lives, have had this skill”.

So obsessed with smell is Leela that she tells her friend Clothilde alias Lotti: “The smells haunt me, they talk to me—telling me about their loves, their hates, their need of company and warmth, their fear of dying. I cannot rid their feelings from my brain” (60).

A migration from Kenya to Paris augments Leela’s sense of smell drastically. Having been forced by her penury to become an *au pair* with the Balenie family, Leela not only becomes Lily for Ms. Balenie’s convenience, but also for the convenience of Mr. Bruno Balenie. She becomes his mistress. A docile, simple girl when she is forced to allow people to use her body, Leela loses respect for herself. Her body begins to smell, then, of sin. Bruno, like all men before him, uses Leela for his pleasure and discards her once he has taken his fill of her and discovers Leela’s smell. When she realizes her real position with Bruno she reflects : “He was a liar. And he had infected me with a terrible smell... After that, the smell haunted me, surfacing when I least expected “ (117).

Leela’s journey may be read parallel to Grenouille, the weird protagonist of *Perfume* who is rejected by others because of his lack of personal smell. He goes to great extents to steal smell from others’ bodies while Lily, alias Leela, would do anything to divest herself

of this smell which seems to give away her secrets. Wanting badly to break this “smelly cocoon” (125), for a while Leela starts to give a second thought to Lotti’s suggestions of going back to Aunt Latha: “If I went back to their world—the world of my aunt and uncle and the Ramdhunes, my smell could be hidden behind the spices and the heavy fragrant oils of their food” (124). This also clearly brings out the metaphoric dimensions of smell, staying with the family Leela would not be suspected of having immoral liaisons with lusty men; behind the respectability of a family her sinfulness would find a refuge. Sacked from many a job she finally becomes a prostitute and realizes that her body has begun to stink : “My smell surrounds me like a shroud, rotten and sweetly fermenting....The dead vegetable odours get more and more pronounced as I breathe” (266).

After wandering through many smelly encounters, Leela finally meets Philippe who she really loves. In Philippe she discovers a protective comforting smell that she looks for everywhere: “You see, after you leave, your smell keeps me company, almost as if you were still there. It comforts me” (184). Leela beats the French at their own grounds, telling them some undiscovered facts about smell: “What do you mean? –the idea of smell? A smell is not an idea. It’s real. Everything has a smell, and the smell changes all the time depending on how it’s treated. A smell is a world... it is memory too” (199).

It is however noticeable that Leela smells bad only when she is rubbed the wrong way. Her journey which starts from the kitchen smells, culminates in body odors of all kinds giving out the secrets of her straying away. It may be mentioned here that Leela’s smelliness has more to do with morality than with gender. It is her fall from the accepted norms of society that results in her smelling body. More interesting would be the fact that in this immoral sense only women are seen as smelly as if men never fall. Clearly, the notions of virtue and vice work only in connection with women. Indians are more obsessed with the idea of virtue in woman. For women it is important to be virtuous because that is normal for them. Promiscuity may be normal for men, but completely abnormal for women hence, those that degenerate start oozing foul smell. Again, this discussion on normal vs. smelly women may be linked with disability. Disability is defined as abnormality hence, foul smell being not normal is a disability. Since only women (immoral?) smell, they are disabled while men howsoever much lecherous do not smell and they are full-bodied normal and healthy. But, more on this some other time.

### **8. Therapeutics of Smell: *Mistress of Spices***

Incense finds an important place in magical ceremonies in all of Asia. A particular kind of incense in China is said to have the power of calling up human spirits. There is also some mention of *Jiki-ko-ki* or incense eating goblins in Japanese Buddhism. In India, the traditional method of greeting in Vedic time was to smell someone’s head. Thus the Vedas

speak of the satisfaction fathers take in smelling the heads of their children after returning from an absence. This act was as meaningful and affectionate as a kiss or hug would be in the West. Classen *et al* [16] write a section on “Healing by Smell” in their book mentioning the cultural healing practices of the Romans:

The ancient custom of applying perfumes to the head and chest, consequently, was not simply an aesthetic practice but also a means of promoting well-being (40).

Olfactory memory plays an important part in the life of diasporas. In an alien world, in the absence of all familiar associations, memory of known smells relieves the pain of nostalgia. The medicinal property of smells becomes the very theme of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *Mistress of Spices*. Moving a step farther from Jha, Banerjee writes the story of a wonder woman who not only shares many of the immigrants’ pains but also successfully heals many of them through her expertise in handling spices. Banerjee touches hitherto unexplored horizons in the history of olfactory literature with her *Mistress of Spices*. *Mistress* is a giant leap in the genre of magic realism. The narrative is divided into chapters that are named after Indian herbs and spices—starting from *tilo* that is the protagonist as well as sesame to the last but one chapter which is named *Sesame*. Tilottama, the spice woman, treats the painful hearts in diaspora by using the medicinal properties of Indian spices. Since all this pain is bred from alienation, the familiar smell of spices provides proper remedy. Jagjit’s innocent heart, Geeta’s rebellious spirit, Haroun’s fearful soul, Ahuja’s wife’s tortured existence, Lalita’s traumatic nights—all find their *manna* in Indian spices administered by Tilottama.

Tilottama, the protagonist herself, takes her name from a spice – *tilo* (sesame), and she knows exactly what the longing hearts in diaspora, aching for a slice of familiarity, yearn for:

Emerald green *burfis*<sup>1</sup>, *rossogollas*<sup>2</sup> white as dawn and, made from lentil flower, *laddus*<sup>3</sup> ... when one has chewed *amlaki* [*Phyllanthus amarus*] to freshen the breath (5).

Tilo has peppercorn, *kalo jire*, *neem*, red chili, lotus root – to heal the immigrant pain as she declares: “I, Tilo architect of the immigrant dream. O Haroun, I sent up a plea for you into the crackling air you left behind. Sandalwood keep safe the brightness in his eye” (29). Tilo plays with the aroma of spices, bringing about some solace to Jagjit’s oppressed life: “Crushed clove and cardamom, Jagjit, to make your breath fragrant. Cardamom, which I, your teacher will scatter tonight on the wind for you (41-42). Tilo has many such prescriptions ready on her tips: “You shall be called Aparajita after flower whose juice, smeared on eyelids, leads one to victory” (43); “Oceans of oil and honey to bathe in, sparkling palaces of rock-sugar” (51).

In times when Aromatherapy has come to exist as a scientific and proven method of healing, it is quite easy to accept the reality of what Tilo does to her patients. Much in the fashion of the French perfumier Rene Gattefosse, Tilo's incantations to the spices work wonders more often than not. Banerjee builds the narration on the olfactory and adds a new dimension to smell.

Banerjee's book seems over-sprinkled with the aroma of spices, flavors of food and fragrance of flowers throughout. Jha, however, deals mostly in imagined smells and also artificial de-odorants. Her protagonist has a nose for different spices and food aromas but the smell that dominates is the smell of her body which is sometimes real and sometimes hallucinative. Whatever be their calling, and position in society, both Leela and Tilottama are in the truest sense of the term 'smelly women' inasmuch as both of them smell, both deal in smells, both have a heightened olfactory sense and both influence others' life by using their smells. It is ironic then, that both these women meet their undoing in smells only. Tilo, while trying to remedy the American's ache, becomes a victim of his love and is finally compelled to leave her empire of spices. She loses all her magical powers and becomes an ordinary woman divested of her kingdom of smells. Leela, who could work wonders in the kitchen with aromas, finally becomes overpowered by her bodily smell and runs from Bruno to Phillipe to Marc till finally she meets the puppeteer Laure with whom she finds herself sharing all her secrets. Laure shows her the real Leela: "You don't smell. You have never smelt," he says at last. "You want to think you smell because that way... it will become impossible for anyone to hurt you, because you have already rejected yourself" (288).

Immigrants' ache of separation and longing finds relief in smell/food from the native land. Tilottama finds relief in the smells of spices; she set out to control the spices to use their pungent aroma to help immigrants, instead she comes under the control of these spices herself. Leela and Tilottama both are one in terms of their olfactory capabilities and talents.

## **9. Conclusion**

In the hands of Indian women writers, thus, the olfactory takes newer dimensions, to be matched by no other sense. If Leela is a 'wizard with spices', Banerjee paints a mistress of spices in the person of Tilottama. Jha, and Banerjee have created truly olfactory/gustatory specimens of women. Banerjee creates a parallel world of native familiar smells for the aching heart in diaspora. These writers bring in what may be termed a renaissance of the olfactory which could well revolutionize the fiction of sensuousness.



**Endnotes:**

1. Diamond shaped sweetmeat made with thickened milk.
2. A kind of sweetmeat made by frying thickened milk-balls in oil and dipping them in sugar syrup.
3. A kind of ball-shaped sweet meat, made with gram-flour.
- 1) This phenomenon, called “synaesthesia” - from the Greek “syn” (with) and “aisthesis” (sensation) - consists of the pairing of two bodily senses by which the perception of a determined stimulus activates a different subjective perception with no external stimulus (in science, the evoker stimulus is called inducer and the additional experience concurrent). Further the report reiterates: “Then, there are people for whom time units evoke colors .... It is also common for a synaesthete to see colors when listening to words, sounds in general or music notes (people who can see music, for instance). There are also cases, although fewer, where people can see colors in flavors, others perceive flavors or experience touch sensations when listening to different sounds, some link flavors to touch sensations, etc.”
- 2) In Vedanta philosophy *Maya* has been described as illusion. Something which is neither real (Sat) nor unreal (Asat) nor partly real and partly unreal (Sadasat).

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# **A Lacanian Analysis of the Play by Peter Weiss, *Marat/Sade***

## **Dr. Anuradha Bhattacharyya**

### *ABSTRACT*

*The play 1964 Marat/Sade by Peter Weiss easily lends itself to a psychoanalytic reading. The lead character called Marat is a paranoiac. The director of the play in this play-within-a-play is Sade, the notorious eighteenth century Marquis after whom is coined the psychological term Sadist. Weiss wrote in the aftermath of the holocaust and his plays represent the theatre of cruelty. The present analysis is a psychoanalytic study of the play, chiefly the character of Marat as a delusional in the lines of the French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan. Here the actor that is named Marat is looked at as suffering from paranoia, a madness/psychosis where he cannot be expected to play any roles. He is being himself and still effectively appears to imitate the legendary leader of the French Revolution Jean-Paul Marat.*

**Keywords:** Peter Weiss, French Revolution, Paranoia, Jacques Lacan, Marat/Sade, psychoanalysis

The 1964 play, *Marat/Sade* is a philosophical exploration of the psyche of man in the face of difficulties. Where revolutionary leaders go mad with grotesque ideas in their heads, the common people suffer due to their thoughtlessness. The dichotomy between leading and being led is examined in this play by Peter Weiss from various angles. The following is an analysis of the play taking the construct Marat as a paranoiac and studying it with inputs from Freud and Lacan.

The singers, it is written at the beginning of the play, represent the fourth estate. They start with 'Homage to Marat' where they mention that Marat is writing even four years after the revolutionists felled the king. The important feature of this information is that Marat still thinks that the aim of his writing has not been achieved.

The rest of the lines by the singers and the chorus reflect this thought. In the scheme of the play the 'fourth estate' is nothing but the echo of Marat's views. As they carry Marat around the arena, they say that Marat has been fighting against all types of evildoers, from the bourgeois to the traitors. This fight is of course by the use of language, but this language "no man understands".

It is Marat's own reflection about himself as a leader that comes in such an

uncomplimentary statement by the chorus. Therefore, in the true nature of homage, the fifth scene of the play is nothing but Marat speaking in the voice of the others.

Marat does not speak until scene eight entitled, 'I am the Revolution'. In his excitement he raises himself up from his bath and speaks about the dead. This is immediately followed by Charlotte Corday's first visit. At the same time as he is talking about the dead with fear and panic, Marat is faced with his own death. In this coincidence, Corday, the individual subject, has hardly any significance.

The scene of Corday raising her dagger before Marat has no consequence. It is a hallucination. It is only after this scene that, as if one is stepping back into the story line, Corday's arrival in Paris is enacted. The image of Corday holding the dagger above Marat communicates the theme of persecution, as has been clearly laid out in the title of the play. However, in the light of the fact that Marat is a paranoiac, this image is a delusion of persecution. The persecutor is not an external agent but the product of one's imagination.

It could have simply been argued theoretically that the nature of persecutory delusion is such that the victim is tortured by the fear of torture rather than direct torture. But the 'action' of the play suggests many complications. In the play it can be observed that Marat suffers from no such imaginary fear. Scene 22 highlights the kind of persecution Marat faces from the Girondists. Simone recognizes this external source of persecution more than Marat. Simone is extremely wary as far as Corday's approach is concerned, but Marat is surprisingly neutral to her presence.

The word 'persecution' has significance beyond the historical perspective. Although Marat is confined in the bathtub, he never expresses the desire to leave the bathtub. He neither hauls himself out nor asks to be taken out. There is a distinct internal pressure preventing him from demanding a release from this confinement in clear terms. His demands to be given more bandages, more cold water and more light may be taken as indications of his need for relief from the discomfort of the bath. Marat's confinement constantly impinges on the discussions on life and death. But contrary to our expectations, we can see that even while worrying about what is happening in the streets, he remains immobile.

Marat is primarily a patient, a 'lucky paranoiac' undergoing 'hydrotherapy' (p.45). He cannot be far from thinking about his comfort, his very own needs. According to the fiction, the role-player of Marat is undergoing 'hydrotherapy' for psychiatric purposes, not for a skin disease. For the historical Marat, being confined to the bathtub had functioned as a source of relief. Instead, as the fictional Marat is a person, presumably without a skin disease, it could be the cause of his itching and scorching of the skin. Therefore it can be observed that the paranoiac is really suffering from irritation in the skin because of being under water for so long. He is not putting up an act of being the historical Marat.

So his confinement is a definite source of physical torture to him. In contrast to the historical sense of torture, the reasons for Marat going into hiding during the French revolutionary movements, we have in this play a physical torture as a cause for the sense of persecution.

Nevertheless, the delusion of persecution is noticeable in a psychotic way at the imaginary level also. At the same time as due to his confinement he is unable to communicate with any real people, he is imagining a host of injustices being done in the name of the revolution. In this way, we can see that he does suffer from an internal sense of persecution. It seems to arise from the very theme of the revolution and not from the attitude of the opposing ruling party, the Girondists.

His mental experience of torture is that of the thought of the massacre going on outside. Mutilation and damages to others' life are his central worries. On all the occasions when he complains about the turn which the revolution has taken, he mentions the commoners as offenders, not the Girondist leaders. The Herald has introduced him as a paranoiac who has been confined to a bathtub (for hydrotherapy) for longer than the present situation in the play. Therefore it can be concluded that this deluded person has already been talking before the staging of the play about being a leader who has a vision of the kind of revolution he wants and who is greatly tortured by the thought that all has gone wrong.

Thus, we can conclude two vital things about Marat after considering that he is a paranoiac. First, the player must have been talking in the same manner as he does in the play within the play even before having to enact the role of the historical Marat, and secondly, he has been talking about an imaginary persecution, not a concern for his personal self but something beyond his reach, while he is confined to a bath.

The theme of revolution involves yet another aspect of the patient who is cast in the role of Marat. It is megalomania.

The historical dates involved in this play are those of the death of Marat, 1793, and the performance of the play by the inmates of the asylum at Charenton, 1808. This reveals the fact that even after the decline of the revolutionary movements, Marat's dialogues refer to a period before 1793. This is in stark contrast to scene 6 where the Singers blame the present<sup>22</sup> (1808) rulers. After the fall of the king the ascendance of the bourgeoisie to power was ensured. While the singers classified as the 'bottom drawer' are left poor even by the bourgeoisie. Thus, the common people had much to complain about.

From this discrepancy in the dates, it can be inferred that Marat has spoken his lines all by himself for a much longer time than the play on the stage. Therefore in the present situation Marat is out of context and isolated by his mental illness.

Sade's lines are in many ways an effort to break Marat's illusionary theory of revolution. This is because in Marat, Sade perceives his own old self who wanted a kind of revolution and has by now assumed failure. In contrast to Sade's stoicism, Marat's beliefs are conditioned by an assumption of self-importance. This is, as we can observe, another distinct paranoid feature in the role-player of Marat called megalomania.

Marat says,

"In the vast indifference [of nature] I invent a meaning... see the whole world with fresh eyes" (p.58).

The word 'invent' refers to human intention. Marat's lines reveal an overvaluation of active involvement in society. Coupled with his practical immobility and the factual changes in time, his dialogues begin to lose their value in social effect. Again, the thrust of these lines is on the question of false belief. Marat falsely believes in the possibility of achieving a complete revolution.

Even though Sade does not believe so, he is unable to dissuade Marat from this belief. A few lines later, Marat talks of belief as a matter of obedience, which is not of the same kind as Marat's belief.

"The kings were our dear fathers  
under whose care we lived in peace"  
"And the children repeated the lesson they believed it  
as anyone believes  
what they hear over and over again" (p.59)

In these lines, belief is a matter of rethinking the same thing in the same way as an invocation of the Lacanian Other inside one's mind. It is an acquired belief, not tried by an individual, but adopted from the forefathers. Thus 'in the background' the patients repeat again, "the kings are our dear fathers/ under whose care we live". This belief is a subject of the symbolic dimension unlike Marat's belief in the possibility of a successful revolution under his leadership. I am referring to perception as a dynamic process, where multitudes of meaning can be invented. Clearly, it is Marat who has the wrong facts about the French Revolution.

Marat is lying to himself. He cannot overcome the control of an internalized authority. This problem reveals itself in the shape of his peculiar inertness when the other patients demonstrate the atrocities of the revolutionaries in scene 11, entitled 'Death's Triumph'. Being an extremist Marat might have initially supported the executions until he could feel the injustice in it. He enacts his own confinement in the name of his skin disease. The truth of revolution is that he, as Marat, becomes inconsequential as far as success is concerned.

It can be said that the patient is under the spell of a master; the false beliefs he is harbouring are dictated. But he does not know that. The very master he is fighting against in the name of the revolution is controlling him in the form of confinement. His focus is shifted to the ambiguous notion of revolution where he perceives himself as a leader instead of the real problem of obedience to authorities. The only thing that animates him is the mention of death.

Megalomania is a narcissistic streak of human nature. According to Freud megalomania is the “sexual overvaluation of the ego”. It signifies that ‘I do not love anyone; I love myself’. Freud adds that “we are justified in assuming that megalomania is essentially of an infantile nature and that, as development proceeds, it is sacrificed to social considerations”.

Thus Freud has positioned megalomania at the narcissistic level of sexuality. But according to Lacan this ego-love is frustrated. Marat’s delusion of being a leader is only a kind of search for his self at the imaginary level. This is because he has not been symbolized as a subject. The following quotes may help us to understand the problem better.

“Paranoia is a kind of alienation of the subject. A person who cannot recognize the Others as his true interlocutors and in whom an imaginary object has formed is a madman. ‘Paranoia... always has a relation to the imaginary alienation of the ego.’ “That the subject ends up believing in the ego is in itself madness.” [Lacan, *Seminar II*, p.247] He adheres to his ego. And this ego evades him. In consequence, he is in constant quest for the object which he loves. As Lacan puts it laconically, a paranoiac ‘believes in’ ‘an imaginary object’ but which is ‘alienated’.

In the next lines there is a certain echo of the famous Marxist view that religion is the opium for the poor. Marat says,

“And anyone believes what they hear over and over again  
so the poor instead of bread made do with a picture  
of the bleeding scourged and nailed-up Christ  
and prayed to that image of their helplessness.” (p.60)

That Marat is discussing the poor, as having identified themselves with the image of a suffering Christ is a reflection of the way he has caused himself to suffer. In reminding us of the bleeding Christ, he easily falls into the structure of the same picture. As Sade says,

“I know  
that you’d give up your fame and all the love of the people  
for a few days of health.  
You lie in your bathtub

As if you were in the pink water of the womb.  
You swim all huddled up  
Alone with your ideas about the world  
Which no longer fit the world outside.  
You wanted to meddle with reality.  
Now reality has you cornered.” (p. 63)

In this and in the constant reminders by Simmone of Marat’s position in the bathtub, one can see that the only one who identifies with the image of the Savior is Marat and along with the historical one, it is now the paranoid patient who has come to suffer under the delusion of being a revolutionary leader. The fact that he sees the poor as the sufferers of the same structure is a function of his projection. He is identifying with the other of the poor and so the ‘you’ actually stands for his self. He is seeing himself as the savior for them. This reverse effect of the imaginary dimension foreshadows an encounter with the real – his narcissistic struggle with authority.

The conversation between Marat and Sade is about life and death, about the achievements and the failures of the French Revolution and about God. But there is no real communication. For Sade, as the Herald explains, the mime of the guillotine is a fact, a piece of history to be remembered but not repeated. But it excites Marat because for him it is repeatedly the same reality.

It arouses the second speech of Marat. Not only Marat but the patients also get excited at the sight of the death-drama. Therefore, Marat’s revolutionary attitude is fixed. He does not respond to changes in the society, to any contrivances to distract him or any therapeutic activity.

He is perplexed by his own theories, written in a language “no man understands”. Thus he is like a typical paranoiac; he believes in his function as a revolutionary leader and at the same time does not understand why or how his revolutionary theories are not getting properly communicated to the masses. He is defying an authority, which he is incapable of shrugging off. This internal authority is his torturer.

The only action that animates Marat is the mention of death. But he never seems to fear his own death. Thus it may be concluded that he desires death. Marat actually invites death by theorizing about the revolution.

Corday is the symbol of death. She comes with the dagger to Marat’s door twice, but is prevented from murdering. She is advised to wait, for the time is not ripe yet. The time can only be ripe after the analysis. She stands as Sadean philosophy incarnated. Sade believed that the greatest cruelty is that a person’s fate is displayed right before him making

him fully aware of it. A victim already knows that he is being victimized. Meanwhile he undergoes the Sadean analysis.

The analysis is that Marat has not received enough love from his parents. This no doubt suggests that Weiss is playing the Freudian interpreter of the cause of revolution.

Sade has passed the stage of being a sadist and is now analyzing his own past and seeing Marat in that light. These two figures are struggling in the field of the signifier to give a name to their sense of revolution. In the guise of their quest for the resolution of their dilemma as to what is revolution, their own lack of a cause, the lack of a signifier is shown. He is tearing at an empty cause to which he has given the name revolution.

Coulmier remains almost an unrealized character who is unable to exercise any restraint or any influence on anybody in the play. His shouts are unheard. The sequence of speeches after the mime of the guillotine shows how the authoritarian Coulmier is totally ineffective. He tries to interfere saying that it is not education but making the patients more excited/ill. But the Herald says by way of explanation that it is a fact, a piece of history to be remembered but not repeated. This is promptly followed by Sade saying that one should destroy with passion (p 56). This is how the presence of Coulmier remains irrelevant.

Madness and Freedom is another blended set of concepts examined in the construct Roux. Jacques Roux, one of the most disturbing elements in the presentation, was introduced at the beginning of the play as a radical socialist. He shouts out 'liberty' at the beginning. He has to be kept at bay, with his sleeves tied together so that he cannot do any damage as he has a tendency to jump onto the stage to speak. His first "rabble rousing theme" is heard in scene 19. This is quite late in the play and it seems that he kept his patience that long, while the others were not less agitated. From this it can be assumed that Roux has been temporarily aroused by the others, specially the Singers who are not talking about the nobles but the leaders who have now captured power. Roux's position has originally been at the back and he jumps forward to speak all of a sudden. He is singled out from the patients as an important construct. This asks for a special emphasis on him.

There is a considerable difference between what arouses Roux and what he has pent up for so long. The subject of the patients' discourse is not the same as the type of complaint the Singers have, while the Singers and the type of talk Roux is repeating are similar but stem from different sources altogether. It may be observed that the Singers are speaking in the first person:

"The gentry may lose a few acres

but we lose the little we've got... but we are the ones who get screwed"

In contrast, Roux is speaking in the second person:

“Pick up your arms  
Fight for your rights...  
Up there they despise you  
Because you never had the cash  
To learn to read and write...”

Where does Roux place himself; in which group; against whom? It is not in the same group as the Singers. The Singers are identifying themselves as the commoners, those who have been exploited by the gentry. Fifteen years after the new state has been established, they are still shouting the slogans of the Revolution. They have noticed that the gentry have already lost the battle, and now another group of exploiters is ruling. They realize that they are not the ones who have won.

Roux sees himself as a leader. He is giving himself the status of a priest once again. That shows that he has been frustrated as a cleric in the first place, before turning against the system. The inherent tendency in Roux is to lead. His kind of zeal is not in favour of the people, but a thirst for a position of control over the masses. Should we not say then that Roux is yet another freak who will ultimately never belong to the masses?

The ‘Second Agitation of Jacques Roux’ is yet again aroused by the lines of the Singers. While the two intellectuals Marat and Sade sit and discuss the pros and cons of equality, Roux simply claims that

“We demand  
the opening of the granaries to feed the poor”

He demands rapid action, the kind of action that has already unsettled the structure of the society in a flash. He actually demands destruction in these lines.:

While Marat is speaking in civilized tones, Roux is violent and incoherent. We see once again that Roux is speaking with a voice different from the poor. He is also speaking against the churches with the suggestion that they do not teach anything worth learning but if they were turned into schools for the poor, people would be educated.

The whole thrust of Roux’s speech is on arousing the masses. It is rather ironical, since Corday is coming to kill Marat for this very offence, that of arousing others to do aggressive activities. The play illustrates that Marat does not arouse so much agitation in the patients as a follower of his, Roux does. Roux also tries to arouse Marat:

“Now Marat show yourself  
They are waiting for you”

And amazingly enough, Marat is quiet.



Since after all the angles have been examined by the play there is nothing but a marching tribe at the end, Weiss's problem must be a need to articulate his internal dialogue. He sets up this play as a compromise between his fore-fathers and his protest. This is summed up in the following lines:

“We’re all so clogged with dead ideas  
passed from generation to generation...  
Look everyone wants to keep something from the past”

In Marat pointing blindly in all directions, one can read the agony of a person confronted with the Law set by generations of the same language.

“France once more speaks the forbidden word  
Freedom”.

Thus, in *Marat/Sade*, it seems that the author takes up the subject of a revolutionary leader's death in juxtaposition with a sexual pervert's philosophy to show a contrast as well as a combination of sexuality and idealism in human nature. In this philosophically and psychologically charged drama, the conflict between the two elements of human nature, idealism of the narcissistic streak and natural sexuality, usurps the show while the social theme remains merely as a framework.

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# **The Art of Indexing in Namita Gokhale's *Mountain Echoes* : Reminiscences of Kumaoni Women (1998)**

**Prof. Poornima K.B.**

## *ABSTRACT*

*Writings by women in the last decades of the twentieth century have moved away from the quest for identity to what Julia Kristeva calls Feminist Phase. Women writings in India, particularly of late have increased by leaps and bounds, giving a vent to their repressed thoughts, ideas, feelings and emotions unabashedly and boldly. There is a recognizable shift from Trauma to Triumph!*

*This paper is divided into two sections. The first section deals with feminism as a discourse. Care will be taken to examine the fashion in which the gendered subaltern position of women finds a mode for indenting and indexing in this rapid age of information technology and scientific advancements.*

*The second section of the paper focuses on Namita Gokhale's *Mountain Echoes* (1998) which permeates to the reader through the consciousness of four talented and highly individualistic women, namely Shivani, Tara Pande, Jeeya and Shakuntala Pande along with an evocative recollection of life in the Kumaon hills. Born into an orthodox Thuldhote Brahmin community, the four women recollect their past lives, not just as mothers and grandmothers, but also highlight the fruits of education to women in a pre-independence era. Literacy in fact transforms them into cultural icons with an intense sense of loyalty to the clan and community. In Gokhale's own words "in my upbringing, in subliminal code, I had imbibed from these women, 'femininity' that never stood for weakness, and my gender was never congruent with anything but strength, physical, the emotional moral of my sex."*

*How Namita Gokhale visualizes these women characters as symbols of dignity, strength, integrity and sheer indestructible grit will be discussed. Deliberating on how these four women were witness to the transitions and paradigm shifts of the century, how they become a testimony to the strength and vitality of Kumaoni culture and its traditions will be the focus of attention. And also how ecology formulates the lives of Kumaoni women. Does *Mountain Echoes* unearth the unsung heroines of the hills revealing their stubborn courage and indomitable will in the process providing a platform for re-membering their selves? Can *Mountain Echoes* be viewed as a socio-cultural piece of evidence for the changing status of women in India? Is Gokhale's book arguing a case for "Personal is Political"? Are education and literacy essential for women to voice their presence and opinion? These and other related issues will be examined in the paper.*

**Keywords:** *Feminism, cultural icons, Kumaoni culture, femininity, ecology, feminist phase.*

It is said that the worth of a civilization can be judged from the position that it gives to women. Of the several factors that justify the greatness of India's ancient culture, one of the vital issues is the honoured place accorded to women. One of the verses in the classical text *Manusmriti* says, *Yatr Naryasto Pujyante, Ramantay Tat Devta*, i.e., where women are accorded a place of honor, Gods are pleased to reside there. But in the course of time, deterioration in the status of women took place considerably, noticeably after the Muslim invasion in India. But today, in the rapid age of information technology and scientific advancements, there is a recognizable shift in women's status, from that of trauma to triumph!

Feminism is a product of Europe and most particularly the European Enlightenment. As feminist scholars have demonstrated, women have always attempted to identify and assert their prerogatives. Feminism in literature is essentially an attempt to examine the space occupied by women in a sexist culture. Since women are relegated to the margins in an androcentric set up, women writers have attempted to dismantle such a position and have tried to index their selves. The early signs of feminism in the west can be traced to 1550-1700 where attempts to present the grounds to challenge patriarchy took place. The reign of Queen Elizabeth, Anna Denmark, Countess of Bedford and Pembroke showed that women were not inferior to men given an opportunity. Mary Wollstonecraft's "*A Vindication for the Rights of Women*" (1792), John Stuart Mill's *The Subjugation of Women* (1869), Margret Fuller's "*Women in the Nineteenth Century*" (1845), the writings of Anglo-American and French Feminists stand as fine examples for western feminist Discourse. Interestingly, Western feminism can be striated into three phases- the first wave feminism, which begins with Mary Wollstonecraft, exhibited activism and heated debates regarding women's rights. Second wave which began in the 1970s branded first wave feminism as individualistic and reformist. The second wave which focused on issues of marriage, child rearing, sexual practices provided a base for "women's liberation". This phase produced a variety of schools of thought about the nature of gender oppression, the appropriate goals of feminism and optional means of reaching these goals. Major theories associated with second wave feminism are liberal feminism, cultural feminism, radical feminism and socialist feminism. The third wave feminism, which overlapped with second-wave feminisms, produced elaborations and critiques of previous theories and posits of first and second wave feminism. This phase is also called Post feminism, which is very strongly influenced by the market forces. Post feminism grapples with cosmetic surgery, fashion, women of colour and global generation X.

Feminism in India is a social movement which, largely focuses on limiting or eradicating gender inequality and promoting women's rights, interests and issues in society.

In “Indigenous roots of feminism” Jasbir Jain avers that, “feminism is more than a voice of protest or questioning. It is moral self -reflection, conquering of inner fears and a realization of self-worth... It does not abandon values or relationships, but goes on to create new ones” Thus, feminist discourse in India over the past two hundred years has been shaped by the colonial past, on the one hand, and the opposition to foreign domination, on the other. Also, it has always struggled to create a space for women to fight against cultural impositions and religious restrictions, which underline and reinforce the economic, social, political and psychological suppression vis-à-vis Indian cultural contexts. Writings of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Tagore, Mahashweta Devi, Vandana Shiva, Gayatri Spivak, V. Geetha, Susie Tharu and K. Lalitha, Rajeshwari Sunder Rajan, Gauri Viswanathan, Medha Patkar, Arundhati Roy show that western feminism does not address the problem of Indian women in particular and Asian women in general. Thus, it is quite evident from the above discussion that feminism is not a homogeneous phenomenon all the world over. Like Postmodernism, it eludes any specific definitions and hence it is appropriate to term feminism as a discourse. However, women writing in India no doubt have provided a new dimension to Indian writing in English, and particularly to the Indian English Novel. Namita Gokhale’s works are no exception to such a novelty. Her writings talk about the changing sociological status of Women in contemporary India.

In *Mountain Echoes* Namita Gokhale, brings into focus the four individualistic and highly spirited women who have consciously accepted the supremacy of the patriarchal value system by surrendering meekly to their traditionally assigned roles and allowing themselves to be dominated. What is of interest in *Mountain Echoes* is the fashion in which Gokhale’s women attempt to redefine their status and index their selves by dwelling within the domestic framework and the situation given to them.

*Mountain Echoes* permeates to the readers through the consciousness of highly talented and individualistic women like Shivani, Tara Pande, Jeeya and Shakuntala Pande along with the evocative recollection of life in Kumaoni Hills. Born into an orthodox *Thuldothi* community the four women recollect not only about their past lives as mothers and grandmothers, but also the fruits of education derived during the pre-independent era. Literacy in fact transforms them into cultural icons with an intense sense of loyalty to the clan and community.

The book unfolds with the conventional history of Kumaon region. The word ‘Kumaon’ is derived from ‘Kurmanchal’ the land of *Koormaavatar*, the 9<sup>th</sup> incarnation of Lord Vishnu in the form of a tortoise. It was also known as Uttarkoshal in *The Ramayana* and kingdom of Uttarakuru in *The Mahabharatha*.

Attracted by the salubrious environs of Kumaon, a huge succession of people was

drawn from plains starting from tribes like *coal*, *Kirats* and *Khasas* to the rulers of various dynasties like Kunindas, Katyuris, Malla and Chand from 500 B.C. to 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. In 1790, Kumaon was crusaded by Gurkha rulers whose rule was quite barbaric and ruthless. Later, the advent of the British rule in the Kumaon region, which was once the abode of retreat, refuge and pilgrimage and the holy mountains of Veda, became tourist destinations. Moreover, *Kumaonis* were a martial race and the second world war had its impact in these remote mountains, for a large number of local populace had been recruited into the British army.

It was during the medieval period, the influx of high-cast migrants from various parts of the country into Kumaon took place. The place has also been the footages of several enlightened personalities like Swami Vivekananda, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Govind Vallabh Pant etc.

Namita Gokhale chooses these four women of extraordinary capability, intelligence, spirit and gaiety to bring out the reminiscences of the past lives of *Kumaoni* women and also to reflect the deepest and most intimate convolutions of culture and society in rapid transition. These women whose lives were attenuated to the household and to the rhythm of the life-cycle of successive generations reflect the religion, music, festivals and traditions of the region. The daily lives of these women were crowded with a never-ending succession of festivals, most of them involving fasts and the preparation of unique food. Traditionally, the lives of *Kumaoni* women were bound by the restrictions of fasting and ritual, and by the Brahminical injunctions against the consumption of all food not prepared by suitable Brahmins adhering to a strict code of prescribed practices.

To begin with, the author throws light on Shivani's life who lived a life of her own to the fullest extent adhering to all the orthodox norms of the society then. Amidst the dominance of the patriarchal system she was encouraged by the father to learn art, music and culture. She recalls how religious tolerance was promoted and women were emancipated. But Shivani remains perturbed about the rapid speed at which Kumaonis were losing independence of mind and thoughts, the new society which has totally borrowed from the west and that they have to pay for this betrayal and might just become culturally bankrupt. She feels disillusioned at the "mindless westernization" spreading over her native place and region:

But I am perturbed about the rapid speed at which we are losing our independence of mind and thought to the new culture, the new thoughts, the new society which is totally borrowed from the West. Sometimes I feel that one day when inevitably, we have to pay for this betrayal; we might just become culturally bankrupt. (30)

But these things hardly had an impact on her family for she was taught to share simple joys and sorrows with a great many people and persisted in their duties to their parents, siblings husband and children. More lamentations are explicit in her reminiscences when she tries to look at the world that has not changed for the better, and people not able to realize how much they have lost out in the process of change. She muses:

Of course, change is a fact of life. It is the law of Nature that which was past can never be present and what is today cannot be tomorrow. But the world has not changed for the better, not at least in our country for which we cherished such great hopes. People do not realize how much we have lost out in this process of change. (31-32)

Despite the conventional rules imposed on them, women created 'space' for themselves and lead their lives on their own in a meaningful and substantial way feeling gratified with whatever they possessed. Even amidst disasters, women were able to confront the unexpected challenges and managed every hardship with great fortitude and indomitable spirit. Though the girls were not sent to school, but derived enough education in the form of fascinating stories narrated to them from the epics. And that was the way Shivani seemed to have picked up the flair for writing inspired by one Lohaniji, a servant who through his narration of the stories seemed to have stirred up her vivid and fertile imagination and gave her the power to see beyond the realities of mundane day to day life. Apart from her day to day events ecology also had an indelible impact on her life, be it the tall Deodar trees or the thick Himalayan Oaks which were a standing witness to the story of humankind all enchanted and gave enough sustenance for her thoughts and life. According to an old adage, "grihini griha raksati" A woman is the light of the house, or the Victorian conception of women as the 'Angel in the house', Shivani's sister's mother in law was no less in her intellectual capacities, she in turn had a great generosity not only to show hospitality to serve food to the largest number of visitors at home but also had a good will to educate her domestic servants as well. And we also come to know that when men of the family left to the plains in search of a living, it was women who took up the responsibility to look after the children and ruled the household with an iron hand maintaining discipline all around. Tara Pande is also another woman of the Kumaon region endowed with indomitable will and mettle who fights her sickness with extraordinary capacity has both happy and sad stories to unwind. Though Tara Pande is a motherless child, her Grannies did not lessen the quantum of love and concern towards her. Though only boys were encouraged to go to school and girls trained to look after the household, business, Tara's father and husband encourage and infuse the spirit in her to read and write. Tara Pande takes immense pride and delight in highlighting that she had a very enriching experience living in a large family:

We never felt alone or isolated, we knew we had the network of the family in time

of crisis. Nobody ever flinched from their duties, and we all learnt our lessons in community living early in our childhood. We were all trained to help the weak, and to strengthen and encourage the talented. I think we were very lucky to live in large extended families.(68)

She also feels happy to express that there were no tensions within the family, but only the comradeship and a sense of common purpose which in turn had helped her children, through practice and precept, and pave them all to carve successful lives for themselves in the modern world. All the more, Tara Pande feels jubilant in executing vital values of successful and meaningful life, that is, her respect for elders, care and compassion for the young or sick or less fortunate- which remained the anchor of her life even during the autumnal phase of her life. Though Tara was a victim of Tuberculosis in her early teens, she did not feel dejected. Instead, she withdraws herself in the habit of reading and reflection whereby in the later years, her father nurtures her writing talent to become a seasoned poet. She also recalls how she and her contemporaries were trained up to help the weak, and to strengthen and encourage the talented. But the saddest part was that women belonging to lower strata often became victims of dreadful diseases and in most cases their deaths were taken for granted. The kind of life women led, the uncompromising situations in which they lived, made them all the more susceptible to it. Strict adherence to discipline in no way subdued them; on the contrary, it made them stronger, more resilient to confront the challenges in a novel way. But the period of *Gurkhali* rule, broke the spirit of Kumaon. It also perpetuated a kind of terror psychosis that caused women to recede into the background. their natural independence was curbed for they now had to be protected against the barbarities of *Gurkha* rule. This was the historical reason why attitudes changed, and their situation changed into a marginalized one. Certain backwardness thus visited upon them. Some customs and rituals became really oppressive, especially child marriage with the connected travails of early widowhood. This was a sad corollary to the wars men waged.

Like Shivani and Tara Pande, Jeeya was also born into a large orthodox family, where she learnt to live with and adapt to all sorts of circumstances, to respect the old, and look after the young, to nurse the sick and help the disabled. Besides, she recalls how she was ecstatic and enchanted by the beauty and mystery of Nature in and around Kumaon hills. Happily, she states that the magic of the hills resides in music and the peculiar cultural harmony between the different sections of society in Kumaon is reflected in its music- all over India, and even across the border from Tibet. Blissfully, she recollects how they celebrated the various feasts with great pomp and pleasure:

All these festivals, so much in rhythm with the cycles of Nature, and the life around us, refined our sensibilities and made us sensible to our environment. The cultural life in Almora was also quite extraordinary. There were artistes like Brewster, and the national



poets Sumitra Nandan Pant. The Mirtaula Ashram, also known as Uttar Vrindavan, was another hub for intellectuals and creative people. (110-111)

Her education in a Christian institution at Almora instilled the Christian values which existed beside the *samskaras* of her ancestral home. But at times she feels rather desperate to see how eternal values like honesty and integrity have become devalued and somehow she feels rather reluctant to fight for rights, and demand vociferously, when she believes that it could be exercised with a quiet but unshakable sense of determination. Gokhale's own words are apt here: "In my upbringing in subliminal code, I have imbibed from these women 'femininity' that never stood for weakness and gender was never congruent with anything but strength, physical, emotional and moral of my sex".

Last but not the least Shakuntala Pande also had her formal education in a Christian school, which molded and gave enough exposure to her talents. After her marriage, she recalls her life was tough, filled with rituals and rigid norms, but acclimatized herself to the new challenges she confronted in the new household. Thus the positive attitude of these women is an outcome of their inner strength which enable them to withstand social oppression. Their strength does not lie in their muscular power, but in their inherent capacity for compassion, sacrifice, nurturance and acceptance of the inevitable. Chronicling the experience of these four Indian women, Gokhale shows them as the pillars of the society-supporting, strengthening and enduring certain social conventions and attitude that victimize women. These Bold and Beautiful women who led the life of austerity were chaste and modest in their ways set as a fine example for the upcoming generation. They were the excellent writers who not only gave voice to their repressed feelings, emotions and ideas, but also other marginalized women of both upper and lower strata of the Kumaon region. These women try to establish a new order with changed standards where women can be true to their selves and there is no need for hypocrisy. However, what makes them stand apart is their bold proclamation of freedom, creating a space for themselves especially in their personal lives. Women in Gokhale's *Mountain Echoes* stand as a testimony for effectively communicating an intensely apprehended feminine sensibility, apparently injecting a new consciousness, offering varied interpretations of imperishable Indian values as well as highlighting our cultural heritage. The book also reveals how women are traditional in their way of living, but modern in their outlook and have the capacity to retain their individuality, how these women characters possess an admirable strength to face the calamities of life and are adept at the wisdom of compromise and adjustment. Moreover, these women protagonists achieve Individuation or selfhood yet they do not negate their family or the society. They go beyond what Elaine Showalter calls "the Feminine, Female and Feminist" phases and perform Jungian "Individuation", to possess an integrated "self".



Such a self discovery, one should notice here, invariably paves way for a novel voice to surface for “suppression necessitates expression”. Writers like Namita Gokhale along with the host of emerging writers in India has not only provided an opportunity for women to Indent and Index themselves through writing but has also provided a platform and springboard for all the marginalized, subaltern voices to voice them/selves.

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# In Search Of a Name

**Dr. S. Subrahmanya Sarma**

## ABSTRACT:

*A plethora of Indian writers preferred to write in English ever since the British stepped into India. It all resulted in an unwieldy corpus drawing the attention of the world. Many an Indian scholar debated much as to how to coin an umbrella-term into which fold they can accommodate that ever growing corpus. Many of them went in search of a name for it. Every time when a name is suggested by a scholar, it was again modified by another scholar which was further modified by yet another. This essay is a modest attempt to record their academic adventures in naming it persuasively*

When one thinks of Indian English Literature, one cannot but think of the complexity and difficulty in choosing a name for it. The following names have been given with different interpretations suggesting different nuances and shades of meaning.

Anglo-Indian Literature

Indo-Anglian Literature

Indo-English Literature

Indian Writing in English

Indian-English writing

Indian English Literature

It's true that the literary nomenclatures are never fully resolved to the best satisfaction of all. To start with it was referred to as an Anglo-Indian Literature (to think of Edward Farley Oaten's prize-winning essay with that title) and it covered the writing of Englishmen in India on Indian themes but the word Anglo-Indian also refers to a race, a microscopic minority in India and it somehow acquired a pejorative dimension. But the Indian creative writing in English needs to be referred by a name. The phrase Indian literature, on the analogy of American Literature or Australian Literature is not suitable here, for in America and in Australia, English is the only language (may be with different dialects or creolized English as it happens to be in the case of Black-American Literature) and the spoken medium of people. But in India the case is different. Indian Literature would mean, any literature in any Indian language, hence the difficulty.

It's said that J.H.Cousins coined the term Indo-Anglian literature in 1883 and later

it was given currency by Sreenivasa Iyengar, the pioneer in this field. But Iyengar himself feels that the phrase 'Indo-Anglian' is not much too happy an expression and this phrase was used by him as a title for his handbook on Indian writing in English, brought out by PEN - (All India Centre).

In this book he makes a reference to the phrase 'Indo-Anglian' and how it was misprinted as Indo-Anglican by mistake and how he had to send an answer when he was chastised for this odd expression by 'Autolycus'. He feels that people prefer 'Indo-English' to 'Indo-Anglian', though 'Indo-Anglian' can be used both as an adjective and a substantive. Referring to his body of literature he recalls Bottemley's phrase 'Matthew Arnold in Sari' – not so an appalling apparition, perhaps after the passage of 150 or more years. Iyengar likens this body of literature to legendary Sakuntala who was disowned by her parents and feels that it is a tributary and an off-shoot of English Literature which he refers to as a new mutation.

The more surprising thing is two distinct streams flow together simultaneously; one, the other Indian language classical works getting translated into English and the other creative works in English. V.K. Gokak prefers the phrase Indo-Anglian. Sujit Mukherjee in his essay 'Indo-English Literature' refers to works like 'Geetanjali' (works translated by the authors themselves into English) not merely as translations and like to call them as trans-creations. Referring to 'Geetanjali' he says, "Its unique quality was the result of the author endeavouring to be his own translator, in which process, he went beyond the bounds of translations and achieved something which may be called 'trans-creation'.<sup>1</sup> And he refuses to categorize 'Geetanjali' under either Indo-English or Indo-Anglian. For that matter any creative work is a trans-creation, for, that in the subconscious is brought out as creation. It's a creative transformation.

It's understandable that a distinction is kept between these two types of translation—one, a work put into English by others, (other than the author) two, a work translated into English by the author himself. The former is considered under Indo-English writing and the latter is considered under Indo-Anglian or Indian English Literature (a phrase coined by Dr. M.K. Naik for his critical survey of this body of literature and accepted by Sahitya Akademi and has gained currency now for the simple reason that it scores over other names for it can widely cover the entire body of Indian creative writing in English).

Amarjit Singh feels that "The appellation 'Indo-English' or even the less felicitous 'Indo-Anglian' suggests only a part of the difficulty in trying to place the literature produced by Indians in English within clear, national regional or linguistic boundaries."<sup>2</sup>

Mulk Raj Anand, himself an established writer, prefers the phrase 'Indian-English writing' and says, "I feel that Indian-English writing has come to stay as part of world-

literature".<sup>3</sup> But somehow the phrase Indian-English has not yet coughed off its pejorative colouring. Also Indian-English cannot be considered as pidgin-English, for it is nothing short of degradation, for Indian-English is almost on par with English barring a few irregularities in speech, not can it be considered as creiolized English as seen in some parts of the world.

In this connection, the remarks of MK Naik are quite appropriate. Referring to the origins he says "Indian English Literature began as an interesting by-product of an eventful encounter in the eighteenth century between a vigorous and enterprising Britian and a stagnant and chaotic India".<sup>4</sup> Later, almost coining a phrase, he explains it thus : "The Sahitya Akademi has recently accepted 'Indian English Literature' as the most suitable appellation for this body of writing. The term emphasizes two significant ideas; first, that this literature constitutes one of the many streams that join the great ocean called Indian Literature, which though written in different languages, has an unmistakable unity; and secondly that it is an inevitable product of the nativization of the English Language to express the Indian sensibility".<sup>5</sup> The phrase Indian English Literature appears to be more acceptable than the other phrases discussed earlier.

Indian-English Literature has acquired a new identity as much as American and Austrian literature have acquired which of course is quite distinct from Indian English. The efforts by writers like Raja Rao in Indianizing English language cannot be ignored though it is very difficult to express the Indian sensibility in English. I am reminded of my own remarks in this connection : "to clothe the very Indianness in English toungue- though it has, gone into the very system of our life- without making it appear bizarre is yet another difficulty for the cloth which sometimes is eithter too long or too short which makes one prefer the naked majesty itself. A rapprochement is somehow wrought between Iindianness and the English tongue, sometimes by Indianizing the English tongue and sometimes vice versa."<sup>6</sup>

People feel that Indian writing in English at the moment is more an illusion than of reality and more a promise and less an achievement. It's too early to pass such a judgement. While dealing with this mass of literature, the Carlylean approach of dealing with the literary biography as a first-phase in tracing literary history is needed but it is not all, for "Indian writing in English produced over the last hundred odd years does not reveal a homogenous continuity, but rather a critical cyclical continuity".<sup>7</sup>

The role of a literary historian in tracing this great unwieldy mass of Indian English Literature is a no mean task. The early writers and their immediate demands followed by the next successive phases and writers before and after Independence present a much too complex picture to analyse. The pioneering efforts of Sreenivasa Iyengar followed by the pursuing

efforts of professors like M.K. Naik and C.D. Narasimhaiah in this direction, deserve not only compliments but even commendation.

***Endnotes :***

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# **Pedagogical Significance of Pre-Writing**

**Dr. Amrendra K. Sharma**

## *ABSTRACT*

*It is difficult to imagine teaching writing ignoring pre-writing stage. In fact, by doing a thorough pre-writing, students can provide themselves a broader selection of ideas to select from as the focus of their essays. In doing so, they can minimize time sweating over how to connect distantly related ideas into a focused event of reasoning. This paper attempts to discover the nature of this construct called pre-writing and also its importance in completing a writing task successfully. Further, it also tries to explore how it might be developed well and finally, it explores its role in teaching writing. The paper suggests that a teacher cannot only make pre-writing highly rewarding and meaningful but also an activity full of enthusiasm and pleasure.*

## **Introduction**

Teaching writing consists of three stages - pre-writing, writing and post-writing. It is very difficult to teach writing by ignoring the first stage of writing known as "pre-writing". Pre-writing involves gathering and generating information from different sources. A variety of strategies and techniques is used to develop pre-writing and encourage students overcome their mental block. Good pre-writing may not always prepare students to be good writers but bad pre-writing never makes students good writers. Pre-writing is an important stage in teaching and learning writing. It cannot be skipped because it encourages students to generate record and develop ideas for writing.

This paper, first, identifies what pre-writing is. Then, it discusses the importance of pre-writing stage. Further, it explores how pre-writing stage might be developed well. Finally, it examines the roles of pre-writing in teaching writing.

## **What is pre-writing?**

Pre-writing may be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, "Pre-writing is the first stage in the writing process which begins long before the writer puts thoughts into writing" (Ghaith, 2002, para. 2). Secondly, Singham (2006, para. 4) adds that "Pre-writing probably takes the most time and often does not involve the physical act of writing at all" since this is the stage when the writer is thinking, organising ideas, searching for information sources, collecting and selecting information, figuring out the main point for writing as well as making a rough draft, i.e. creating something of his own. This stage involves students' previous knowledge

such as their own world experiences, interactions and observations that affect the way students generate ideas and put their thoughts in their writing (Olson, 1996 and Ghaith, 2002).

Next, "Pre-writing refers to the range of activities in which the writer engages before setting fingers on the keyboard (or pen to paper)" (Trupe, 2001, para.1). DeSpirt (2007) believes that teachers can help students to generate ideas by integrating their prior knowledge through exploring ideas for getting topics using different pre-writing activities and strategies. He also adds that this enables students to think of topics to write and make effective use of time to expand the ideas for their topics before putting all the ideas into writing. In addition, Trupe (2001) and DeSpirt (2007) suggest that after having a topic a student needs to brainstorm and record the ideas about the topic in different forms such as lists, charts or short notes. Thus, pre-writing is not only the process of generating ideas but also the process of recording all ideas about that topic that occur during this stage.

In contrast, Olson (1996) and Singh & Morrison (2006) state, "Pre-writing begins when the topic is announced by the teacher or decided on collectively by the class," and the activities used in this stage such as oral discussion with a teacher, in pairs or in a small group as well as "resources such as pictures, charts, articles from journals and newspapers, photographs, slides, comic strips, maps, audio and video recordings." Nonetheless, Fowler (n.d.) thinks that students need to practice how to explore their own writing topics by discussing with their peers, brainstorming in a small-group or conferencing with their instructors to obtain ideas about writing since students may have difficulty finding a topic or thesis to satisfy the university requirement in terms of essay writing. Thus, pre-writing activities, such as brainstorming, talking, drawing and reading help students gain more ideas about the topic, identify an audience, state a purpose, determine an appropriate writing, and collect ideas and data before they actually start to write their paper or essay (Bahçekapili & Atasoy, n.d.; & DeSpirt, 2007). In doing so, teachers have to make sure that students understand the meaning and significance of pre-writing and allocate sufficient time for pre-writing stage needed for generating and developing ideas for writing.

### **The Importance of Pre-writing stage**

Pre-writing stage is important in writing an essay or a paper for three reasons. Firstly, pre-writing is important because it provides students the opportunity to generate their ideas and offer students adequate time to express the ideas in writing, so spending time to train students in this stage of the writing process ensures that students have something to write about but if pre-writing is ignored, students have no ideas to write (Olson, 1996; Liu, 2006; & Faigley, n.d.). Pre-writing is equally important for students in junior schools because they write different from adults and their higher achievement is dependent on the use of pre-writing strategies. So "pre-writing helps students create images and ideas about the

assigned topic, as well as consider their emotions and values in relation to the topic" (Roberts, 2004, p. 6). Likewise, Ploeger (2008) points out that pre-writing is also found an important stage in creative writings by the college and university students because it allows them time to equip with all vital thoughts needed for the writing task.

Secondly, pre-writing is crucial because Singh & Morrison (2006) and Time4Learning's Odyssey Writer program (n.d., para. 7) confirm that "Pre-writing is the most creative step" which requires students to employ their creativity for generating ideas and developing the organization of thoughts in their preferred way.

Finally, pre-writing stage is vital since it allows students to have lots of fun in brainstorming ideas without worrying about order or correctness in terms of grammar, structures or spelling errors which may cause their worry and slow thinking (Singh & Morrison, 2006; Cooper, 2008; & Ploeger, 2008). Besides, Kem (2007) claims that if the pre-writing stage is ignored, students may have a nightmare of getting started for writing and never become good writers. Even Lin et al (2004) confirm that good writers always give an importance to the pre-writing stage.

Accordingly, the pre-writing stage is the crucial stage for students of all levels because the ideas of students are creatively produced and all related information needed for a writing topic is gathered and selected in this stage to enable students to put their thoughts into writing.

### **Developing Pre-writing Stage**

Pre-writing stage might be developed through different strategies and techniques used in pre-writing activities including brainstorming, clustering or mind-mapping and free writing. The techniques and strategies used in pre-writing help "encourage the generation of ideas" and those techniques may remove "the mental block and distraction that prevent ideas from coming out" (Liu, 2006, para. 1). Besides, various strategies and techniques for teaching pre-writing need to be introduced in a writing class in order to assist students in exploring and generating ideas for writing topics and also offer each student a collection of techniques for conquering a writer's block or beginning to write (Trupe, 2001 & Ghaith, 2002).

Liu. (2006) argues that brainstorming is the least structured of all pre-writing options. It is a first helpful technique for pre-writing when the whole class has the same topic of writing and the teacher asks students questions about topic to help them generate as many ideas as possible, then the ideas are shared with the class and recorded on the board. Hence, students gain lots of different ideas for the topic from answering the questions (NUOL, 2008; DeSpirt, 2007; & Fowler, n.d). Moreover, brainstorming is the good first activity because it quickly generates a lot of ideas associated with the topic that can be shaped into a more organized outline (Trupe, 2001; Mascle, 2006; Singh and Morrison, 2006; & Fowler, n.d.).



Clustering or mind-mapping is another useful strategy for pre-writing. Singh & Morrison (2006) and Fowler (n.d.) think that clustering helps students explore and determine the relationships among ideas and ensure that all aspects of the main topic are included by using a technique of asking open-ended questions. Thus, students have to ask themselves open-ended questions about the topic and offer many possible answers for these questions quickly to increase the development of ideas on the topic and help themselves to understand possible directions the writing may take (Liu, 2006 & Fowler, n.d.). In addition, clustering or mind-mapping is similar to brainstorming when a main idea written on the board is linked by the generated ideas with the arrows and this strategy can be conducted in the whole class or in a small group of students.

Free-writing is the last popular technique which is very effective and enjoyable for students of all levels and it is commonly used to generate ideas during the pre-writing stage in a writing class (Trupe, 2001 & Fowler, n.d). This technique allows students to continuously write any things that pop into their heads in the limited time such as five or ten minutes without stopping and concerning about grammar or spelling mistakes but students need to write something while running of ideas such as "What shall I write next?" repeatedly until they have an idea to write (DeSpirt, 2007; Trupe, 2001; Liu, 2006). During pre-writing stage, when most students get stuck and do not know how to start writing, free-writing technique enables students to become a quick writer, overcome the writer's block or writing anxiety and surprisingly produce unimaginably vast quantity of texts and so it (free writing) appears to be a very practical technique (Trupe, 2001; Fowler n.d.; & Liu, 2006).

### **The Roles of Pre-writing in Teaching Writing**

There are two essential roles that pre-writing stage plays in teaching writing. First, "Pre-writing plays a vital role in the construction of writing and supports writers in setting goals, brainstorming, organizing ideas, and deciding text structure" and next, pre-writing "has been shown to facilitate the writing process for all types of writing" (Lin J, 2004, p. 1). So, good students have to realize and give a heavy emphasis on pre-writing stage by spending lots of time for planning and organizing ideas because poor writing performance may be caused by insufficient planning. Nevertheless, at times, pre-writing stage may take too much time owing to its fascination (lots of much fun), so it may delay students from leaving and moving on to write their first draft. In addition, pre-writing does not have any praise after the final draft is made because "only the neat piece of writing remains" at the end of writing process even though pre-writing "embraces all the drafts from the first to the last, and all the processes associated with draft" (Ploeger, 2008 & Antoniazzi, 2005, p. 35).

Second, Graham & Perin (2007, p. 4) believe that "to engage students by involving them in activities designed to help them generate or organize ideas for their assignment" is

another crucial role of pre-writing stage. Doing such activities before writing a first draft allows students to write better in their first draft as well as help them write the draft more easily because they know what they want to write at each writing stage (Olson, 1996 & Ploeger, 2008).

Therefore, teachers have to ensure that students know and understand the vital roles of pre-writing stage in order to help them set their writing goals as well as generate and organize ideas for writing.

### **Conclusion**

Pre-writing is one of the most important stages that needs to be included in teaching writing as it is the stage when all information and the ideas related to the topic are gathered, generated and put together. The importance of generating and organizing ideas, developing the thoughts for writing as well as offering fun in writing by ignoring any writing errors increases the demand of teaching pre-writing stage for all ages of students in all types of writing, like descriptive, narrative or persuasive. In addition, the use of helpful strategies and techniques such as brainstorming, clustering or mind-mapping and free-writing in pre-writing stage help boost the development of students during this stage and provide good foundation for writing. The important roles of pre-writing in building writing, selecting the structure of text, assisting students to set writing goals and engaging them in helpful pre-writing activities also make this stage outstanding and popular. Therefore, teaching pre-writing needs to be conducted in all schools and institutions.

Writing skill is a very difficult skill to master. Students may lose their interest and motivation in learning to write due to its complexity. For that reason, teaching pre-writing stage in all schools and institutions needs to be included. Thus, the stress and anxiety of students can be reduced by providing enjoyable useful activities in relaxing atmosphere. However, it is not easy to offer a variety of pre-writing activities when information sources are limited or to properly teach pre-writing stage when teachers lack knowledge for instructing practical writing strategies and techniques. Supposedly, Pre-writing should be regarded as one of the most important stages in writing. It needs to be taught in all schools. Besides, teachers are required to try the best available materials and teaching techniques in selecting the most suitable pre-writing tasks to make students love these tasks full of great enthusiasm and unimaginable pleasure.

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# **The Noble Narrative Style of Alice Munro**

**Prof. Sanket Kumar Jha**

## **ABSTRACT**

*Alice Munro the “master of contemporary short story” significantly challenges traditional literary taxonomies with her noble narrative techniques. The intricacies of language and representation are utilized to their optimum potential in the meta-narrative structures of her stories. The uneasy relationship between language and experience, reality and memory is a recurring concern of her works. Her stories offer a semiotic web where signs do not signify a fixity but lead to other signs and variable possible interpretations. Munro’s understanding of the function of narrative is mordantly paradoxical and her retrospective narrative approach corroborates this everywhere in her stories. Her narratives tend to capture the complexities of human experiences and they “embed more than announce, reveal more than parade”. They attempt to put together fragments of a dispersed reality, but at the same time they suggest their inadequacy to capture the metaphysical and the pre-linguistic thoughts. Most of her narrators, both primary and secondary, come to recognize this imperfection and inadequacy of their medium and the incongruence between their experience and their narrative. Critics have interpreted the stories as mimetic, postmodernist, realistic and some have even found her stories to be on the lines of magical realism. This article discusses the distinctive narrative techniques in the short stories and their impact on the context.*

**Key Words :** Alice Munro, Narrative techniques, Realism, Retrospective narration, Postmodernism

## **The Art of Retrospection**

The Stories of Alice Munro have been applauded for their distinctive narrative style. An analysis of her works suggests that Munro’s narrative technique kept on developing and changing from her first stories onwards. The retrospective narrative style that she experimented with in her preliminary writings has been sustained throughout her sub-sequent works. This is the very means by which memory and fact, past and present commingle in her works and the narrator’s character is communicated. In her works the storyline is not linear. Rather, it fluctuates in time, location and subject, and it is left to the reader to figure out the reasons why the shifts are made and where and how they are made. We can take

example of her “Hard-Luck Stories”, where plot summary is virtually defied. They deal with narrative technique and its ability to retrieve the past, to gain insight and to challenge the flux of time. The story begins in present time, with the narrator meeting her friend Julie for lunch. It moves back to a day- two months earlier to a point when they had been given a ride home from a conference by Douglas Reider. Again the narrative moves back in time to —the afternoon of the drive - the principal setting of the story. But we are taken back still further in time by three stories told by the two women as they eat lunch with Douglas. Their stories, two by Julie and one by the narrator, relate events occurring at different points in the women’s pasts.

The analysis of diction and syntax of a passage from “Thanks for the Ride” reveals both the position of the narrator as well as the theme-

Sitting in a car parked on a lonely country road, passing a bottle of bootleg liquor back and forth, Dick observes Lois and tries to understand her:

*Each time Lois handed the bottle back to me she said “Thank you” in a mannerly and subtly contemptuous way. I put my arm around her, not much wanting to. I was wondering what was the matter. This girl lay against my arm, scornful, acquiescent, angry, inarticulate and out-of-reach. I wanted to talk to her then more than to touch her, and that was out of the question; talk was not so little a thing to her as touching. Meanwhile I was aware that I should be beyond this, beyond the first stage and well into the second (for I had a knowledge, though it was not very comprehensive, of the orderly progression of stages, the ritual of back- and front-seat seduction). Almost I wished I was with Adelaide. (Dance 53)*

Here the retrospective narrative technique allows the reader to understand both Lois’ defiant isolation and Dick’s palpable regret—the two emotions held in tandem. Because the narrative voice is not tied to time, it roams freely through the narrator’s current impressions and memories, and illuminates as it evaluates.

In “Thanks for the Ride,” we see it for the first time in its full flower. This retrospective technique, that allows the narrator to comment on the past and to become, as she says, a “godlike arranger of patterns and destinies”—is not unique to Munro. James Joyce’s “Araby,” in *Dubliners* holds the distinction as the first narrative of this sort. However Munro utilises this technique to its full extent. She remarks: “There is always something in addition which disarranges any fictional structure, however carefully it is created” The whole act of writing is more an attempt at recognition than of understanding, because I don’t understand many things. I feel a kind of satisfaction in just approaching something

that is mysterious and important. Then writing is the art of approach and recognition. I believe that we don't solve these things—in fact our explanations take us further away.

Coral Ann Howells corroborates this postmodernist perception of Munro's fiction, namely, her ability to create something and later disarrange it so as to suggest the temporal, contextual, fleeing nature of reality.

### **Blending Reality & Memory**

The factual and faithful representation of incidents, locale and communities, have led critics to place the short stories of Alice Munro within the tradition of literary realism. A reading of her works certainly invites this sort of classification. Usually set in rural and semi-urban landscape of Ontario, Canada, her characters deal with inner conflicts, romantic relationships, and issues concerning their day to day family affairs. The narrators of these stories are aware of what is happening before, during, and after the events being narrated.

*Munro, as all realists, must somehow persuade her audience that her fiction is not a product of imagination and creativity, but it is rather a truth." This is done in her writings through a variety of subtle strategies which she uses to build our faith in her reality." (Canitz and Seamon, 1996: 68).*

Munro's language is not very poetic or literal. She prefers to use everyday language, which adds to the real life taste of her stories. As one critic puts it, Munro's stories are translations into the next-door language of fiction of all those documentary details, those dazzling textures and surfaces, of remembered experience. Munro seems to be fascinated with the factual and faithful descriptions of places and characters. In a comment on this aspect of her fiction, she states:

*"I always have to know my characters in a lot of depth – what clothes they'd choose, what they were like at school, etc...And I know what happened before and what will happen after the part of their lives I'm dealing with". In another interview she reiterates this comment on the mimetic aspect of her stories: "I'm very, very excited by what you might call the surface of life... It seems to me very important to be able to get the exact tone and texture of how things are".*

But we cannot easily classify her stories as simply realistic or mimetic. Bharati Mukherjee, in a review for The New York Times of Munro's collection entitled *Friend of my Youth* (1990) states that while Munro employs many strategies of realist fiction, she, in many ways, has "deepened the channels of realism". George Woodcock for instance classifies her fiction as "magical realism". Munro is aware that including realistic details into her

stories would not suffice to convince readers that the story presented to them is not fictional, she rather chooses, in a post-modern manner, to acknowledge that she is making up a story.

“Meneseung,” published in 1988, is one of the best illustrations of Munro’s concern with questions of language and representation. Here, she suggests that reality is not a ready-made entity at the full grasp of an all-knowing subject with a god-like eye-view of the facts at hand. Reality in “Meneseung” is constructed in a narrative process with no clear beginning or tidy ending. The story opens with a narrator trying to understand the life of a poetess named Almeda Joynt Roth. The first document she examines is a poetry book, called Offerings, published after the poetess’s death, which contains a picture and date of the book’s publication. On observing the photograph, she starts to make connections and construct a possible subject out of the physical traces registered in the picture. All the way through, she acknowledges the tentative and limited aspect of her endeavor. “Meneseung” stands out then as a narrative where construction rather than representation of reality is the main concern. Here, reality comes about in fragments – from the Vidette, the poetess’s book, photographs – and becomes along the narrative not a tidy, linear set of events, but an assemblage of bits and pieces with no closure. As the narrator puts Almeda’s life in narrative form, the reader is obliged to make the same types of inferences she has made. Consequently, the whole effort is open to all sorts of possible connections and interpretations. In other words, the reader embarks in the interpretive journey along with the narrator only to find out that the narrative does not provide clear distinctions between fact and fiction, truth and eality.

On the surface of the text she apparently adheres to mimetic models of reality, in another level, she subverts the very strategies she employs. Hers is a narrative then where borders are blurred rather than made distinct. Munro’s concerns with issues of language and representation continue to be an important element in her fiction. In several of her stories including – Moons of Jupiter (1977), “Meneseung” (1988) “Runaway” (2003) and “Dimension” (2006) she employs language as an agent of mediation rather than representation.

*Mark Nune on his analysis of Friend of my Youth, argues that “Munro privileges disconnected realities and, in the process, the role of language in putting all the pieces together. This arrangement, always subject to context, takes the form of a narrative constantly open to additions and deletions. Hers is an aesthetic then of contingent arrangements, or, in Nunes’ words, “an aesthetic of piecing, allowing familiar and stable narratives to reveal their condition and contingent nature.”*



### The Narrator or the Character?

During her first few stories, Munro seems to have experimented with number of narrative stances, varying from the first-person point of view to that of the third and back again, in continuous order. In the early stories, however, the shifts in narrative perspective are often marked. For instance in “Story for Sunday,” Munro uses third-person narration but is primarily concerned with Evelyn’s thoughts and feelings. However in “The Idyllic Summer” we see Munro depiction of the two character types is evident throughout her stories: the articulate character describing himself and the inarticulate character rendered through third-person objective descriptions. Thus we find alteration in Munro’s approach to her subject during this period, just as it would be evident in the stories composed after “Thanks for the Ride,” varying between a focus on an individual character’s thoughts and feelings as they introduce themselves and an emphasis on less articulate characters rendered through their actions and setting. In her next story, “At the Other Place,” Munro uses for the first time the first-person point of view, a narrative stance that became dominant in her first two books. It is different in two important aspects, firstly it introduces a conventional family and secondly is unique for vividly describing an immediate sense of place. Because Munro’s presentation of setting figures evocatively in her characterization, it is worth noting that from her very first story, she handled the setting beautifully. For instance In “At the Other Place,” her narrator creates a definable texture of place for the reader, replete with sights, smells, and colors:

*It was a very hot day, but there had not been enough hot weather yet to burn the country up. The roadside bushes were still green and the money-musk was blooming unfaded in the long grass. Haying-time was over, but in some of the fields the coils were still standing. No one was working anywhere; the country was all hot and still in the sun, in the plum-blue shade of the heavy oaks and maples. The cows were lying down in the pastures, the horses dozing on their feet, under the trees. We passed a field of buckwheat in flower; it smelled as sweet as clover. (Laidlaw, “At” 131)*

Munro here is finely attuned to the kind of surface detail that allows the reader to mentally recreate the scene she is describing. Through these figurative images, the reader is able to grasp the sensual context of the story, which in turn lends the dramatized scenes a further sense of immediacy.

To sum up, the narrative technique of Munro enables her characters to express both their perceptions of their positions and their struggles to escape or improve difficult relationships. They serve them to depict a true version of the experience and to recuperate those experiences faithfully and to constitute, through language, the truth of experience



before it is utterly transformed by the mediations of memory. Munro's characters who participate in such narratives not only reach a consensual version of truth, but also escape the object position that first ignited their narrative impulse. Munro achieves this difficult and noble narrative style by means of a unique narrative method consisting of many voices.

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# **The Omission of Om in the Last Line of The Waste Land**

## **Dr. S. Subrahmanya Sarma**

### *ABSTRACT*

*T. S. Eliot's magnum opus 'The Waste Land' needs no introduction. It is acclaimed more for its avant-garde technique in unfolding its numerous themes. Eliot's holding a mirror to the then societal ills attracts the attention of the whole academic world. His endeavours further suggest that all is not dark but there is a ray of light or hope to humanity although F R Leavis looked at the poem as completely elegiac and dismal without any hope for life. However the last line of the poem taken from Hindu Upanishadic text itself is evidence enough for Eliot's attempt at suggesting a burgeoning hope. However in the last line of the poem why he left 'OM' which always precedes 'Shanthi Shanthi Shanthi' is neither noticed nor discussed by any. This essay makes an attempt to discuss this.*

This paper discusses the omission of 'OM' in the last line of The Waste Land. More importantly it focusses attention on the chemistry of OM which is also known as Pranava or Pranavamantra, its importance or significance and the results of its omission in the poem. To the best of my knowledge, none of the critics (either Indian or Western) did discover so far the omission of OM in the last line of The Waste Land.\* It is understandable. The reasons are quite simple. A westerner is not aware of the fact that 'Shanti' repeated thrice is always preceded by 'OM' and to an Indian, it is a different case because 'shanti' uttered thrice is automatically preceded by 'OM'. Hence an Indian when he sees or reads 'shanti' thrice mentally prepares himself for the existence of 'OM', that is how one's attention is not drawn to its omission.

Though the last line 'Shantih Shantih Shantih' apparently appears to be almost justifying Eliot's own casual observation or reference to the poem as 'rhythmical grumbling' still one can find more than 'rhythmical grumbling' in it. It is characteristic of Eliot to play down his own achievement and himself with a humility which he does with a kind of 'pontifical solemnity' which of course was referred to as 'arrogant humility' by Helen Gardner in some other context. Eliot himself referring to the last line of The Waste Land in his 'Notes on the Waste Land' says thus : "Shantih repeated here as a formal ending to an Upanishad. 'The peace which passeth understanding' is our equivalent to this word." It is no mere formal ending to the poem. In point of fact, it is much more than a formal ending especially to those who know its significance.

Conrad Aiken felt that "We could dispense with the French, Italian, Latin and Hindu

phrases— they are irritating."<sup>1</sup> To him the Upanishadic words sound non-sense, perhaps 'Jug jug jug' to his ears. Even Ezra Pound who was responsible for a massive operation on the poem tried to clip the last line saying that "One test is whether anything would be lacking if the last three words are omitted... I don't think it would." To which Eliot politely said, "Criticisms accepted so far as understood, with thanks."<sup>2</sup>

It is an accepted fact the "Om Shantih Shantih Shantih" is a formal ending to Upanishads and Upanishads are part of the Vedas and referred to as the Vedantas and any Veda Richas or mantra or hymn cannot be started or ended without being preceded or followed by OM. In the poem, even if one accepts that 'Shantih Shantih Shantih' is a formal ending, it ought to have been preceded by OM. The very fact that Eliot wanted to retain 'Shantih Shantih Shantih' in the end, inspite of Pound's suggestion for its removal shows that Eliot was quite particular of retaining it (perhaps aware of its full significance). In that case, it is really understandable why the syllable OM is omitted in the last line. One can surmise the following reasons. The omission may be accidental or it may be deliberate. If it is deliberate, why did he omit it ? In that case he must have known its full significance too. It may be haste to say that Eliot would not have known its full significance. Eliot's knowledge of Indian metaphysics and philosophy is so deep and wide that one cannot accept the view that Eliot is not aware of the significance of 'OMKARA' (OM).

Before going into the details why Eliot has omitted OM it is necessary to know something about this OM. The Hindus attach so much of importance to 'OMKARA' that whenever they pray to God, 'OMKARA' inevitably finds a place in their prayer. There cannot be a Hindu prayer without 'OMKARA'. Each of the four Vedas has divisions like SAMHITA and BRAHMANAM which is an explanation of SAMHITA. These Brahmanas deal with the injunctions connected with the performance of YAGNA or YAGYA (a ritualistic offering to God.) At the end of these Brahmanas one finds ARANYAKAS in other words called UPANISHADS which are 108 in number of which Ten are principal Upanishads and hence are quite famous. They deal with the knowledge connected to Brahman and 'OMKARA' is nothing but Brahman and hence the importance of 'OM'. It is pervasive and investive. It is a meditative recitation by many people. The Gayatri Mantra begins and ends with 'OM' (This is a hymn which every Hindu is expected to recite 108 times, three times a day, at morning, noon, and evening— a kind of a daily prayer). Even the origin of Indian music is traced to OMKARA hence the words Nadopasana and Nadabrahma. This 'OM' lends importance to the other hymns too. It is not merely customary but also obligatory that whenever 'Shantih' is uttered thrice it should be preceded by 'OM'. The absence of it is unthinkable because it is not omissible.

It has been very clearly stated that every Vedic Hymn should be preceded and

followed by OM. Referring to the origin of this, it is stated thus :

"akaaramcha pukaaramcha makaaramcha prajapahih  
vedatrayaath niraduhath boorbhuvassuvariteeticha"<sup>3</sup>

The literal meaning is that the three syllables are milked from the udders of the milch-cows of the Vedas. OM is made of three syllables A + U + MA and these three syllables are taken by Prajapati (the supreme Lord) from the three Vedas. Regarding its importance it is stated thus :

'ksharanti sarveh vaidikyah-jyhoti yatatikriyaaha  
aksharanti aksharamjneyam brahmasraiva prajapatih"<sup>4</sup>

It means that any Vedakriya or Vedic ritual, if performed without uttering OM, gets wasted like water in a pot with a hole. It should be known that OM has no destruction. It is nothing but Brahman who is none other than Prajaapathi. In 'Prasnopanishad' it is stated that 'OM' is brahma who is of two types : one is 'Para Bhahman' i.e. an abstract ideas of Godhood explained in the Sanskrit phrase 'Sarvaatoetanirgunabrahman' - the other one is 'Aparabrahman' i.e. a concrete idea of Godhood explained in the Sanskrit phrase : Hiranyagarbha - "Paramchaparamcha Brahma Yadamkaraha"<sup>5</sup>

Manudukyopanishad had discusses the physics of 'Omkaara' thus; the world is nothing but a visual replica of God. Similarly a verbal replica is 'OM'. The following hymn in Maandukyopanishad explains this :

"Omityeitadakshara midag sarvam tasyopavyak hyanam Bhoota bhavad  
bhavishyati sarvamokaraeva - yachhanya trikalaateetam tadapyonkara eva."<sup>6</sup>

This explain that not only 'OM' is God/Brahman but even the time past, time present and time future— all are 'OM' only. The time that surpasses these time past, time present and time future is also 'OM'.

Akara Ukara Makaram - together is OMKARA. The fist syllable is Akara and this pervades every language and it is the first letter and 'MA' is the third letter. After uttering 'MA', when again 'OM' is uttered the 'A' and 'U' spring from 'MA' thus it is continuation.

Further it is stated thus :

"braahmanah pranavam kuryat aadamamtecha sarvada sravati anomkrutuam  
poorvam parastacha viseeryati."<sup>7</sup>

That is, if any hymn is chanted or uttered without this 'OM', either at the beginning or at the end, it results in waste like water in a pot with a hole. Its importance is such that even the ascetics who renounce everything in the world are advised not to renounce this 'OM'. The following sloka emphasises this point :

"tureeyasrama sweekaravelayam vedanimam lokam amuncha parityajya-ityidina sakala veda parityagaha bodyage tathapi pranavayya parigrahaeva iti sakala vedasrab hootatwat iti avagamyate."<sup>8</sup>

"Yateenam pranavomantraha", "Pranaayate iti pranavah",

"avati rakshati samasarasaagaraditi OM"<sup>9</sup>

This clearly points out that even the ascetics are expected to concentrate on Pranava mantra that is 'OM'. Apart from this spiritual connotations, even an ordinary man leading an ordinary life, is expected to utter it everyday, to live happily without any troubles. Apart from this the Hindu Trinity seems to have been represented by OM which consists of three syllables - A + U + MA - that is A (akara) representing Brahma, U (ukara) representing Vishnu and MA (makara) representing Siva-who all in turn represent Creation, Preservation and Destruction respectively. Thus one can go on listing out myriad interpretations or explanation of OM in vogue. All this is said to impress upon that 'Shanti Shanti Shanti' is never used without 'OM' preceding it. 'OM' cannot be divorced from 'Shanti'. In all Hindu sacred texts and in all the Hindu rituals, these two are used together and never separately.

When such is the importance given to OM one finds it difficult to understand why, Eliot left it out before his line 'Shanti Shanti. Shanti Even if one takes Eliot's explanation of this in this 'Notes' as just formal ending, still OM should have been added to it. The effect which Eliot thought to have wrought into the poem seems to be slipping away without OM. Did he deliberately omit this or is it accidental is the question very difficult to answer. One cannot expect the hand of printer's devil in the omission of OM.

One can surmise the following reasons for its omission :

1. It might be an accidental omission.
2. Eliot would have thought that the word 'shantih' repeated thrice is enough to convey the force of his thought, hence the omission of 'OM'.
3. The full mystic significance of OMKARA (OM) with its myriad layers of suggestive nuances in all its fullness would not have been sufficiently explored by the poet and hence the omission.
4. Or perhaps he felt that it is untranslatable and therefore left it out.
5. Or may have felt that his readers might shy away from a so called 'mystic syllable'.
6. Since he bemoans the loss of spiritual values in general, he does not want to pin down to any particular religious dogmas and 'OM' means Hinduism and hence the omission.
7. It may be part of poetic strategy of deliberately underplaying the religious element in the poem. The poet wants it to be as secular as possible. This is an attempt to give the

- poem a secular garb although the import of the poem is spiritual. Hence the omission.
8. Eliot would have thought that the full import of 'OM' may not be fully comprehended by the western reader and hence the omission.
  9. Since Eliot is basically a poet, he wants to bring out a poem and not a religious treatise and hence the omission.
  10. The trisyllable 'OM' may not be sufficiently and poetically evocative apart from the readers' capacity to respond to it and hence the omission.
  11. The penultimate line "Datta Dayadvamm Damayata" has nine syllables and if 'OM' is added to the last line 'Shantih Shantih Shantih' it exceeds nine syllables and hence the omission of 'OM'.
  12. Any other plausible reason.

However without 'OMKARA' (OM) the importance or the significance which the poet wanted to convey or weave into the very texture of the poem seems to have lost like the water in a pot with a hole.

Now coming to the thrice repeated word 'Shantih'. (It should be repeated thrice at a single breath; that is to say there is no pause between one 'shantih' and another). One may ask a question why it is repeated three times. Eliot merely says that it is repeated as a formal ending to an Upanishad and it means 'the peace which passeth understanding : Apart from the fact of it being a formal ending to or Upanishad, it has still a wider significance. The following verse explains this :

"Shantih Shantih Shantih riti thrirvachanamaadhyat-mikaadhi bhoutikaadha  
davikaanam vidyaprapyusarnanam upasamanaaretham."<sup>10</sup>

That is, in this world, one has to encounter three types of evils/troubles viz. Aadhyatmika, aadhibhoutika and aadhidaivika (i.e. Jnanasambandha, panchabhoutikasaambandha and devatsambandha) that is to say, evil connected to soul, body and religion.

1. 'aadhyatmika tapam' refers to troubles/evils connected to our body (diseases, and body ailments etc.)
2. 'aadhibhoutika tapam' refers to troubles from out side-may be from thieves, from animals, from earthquakes etc.
3. 'aadhidaivika tapam' refers to troubles from spirits, ghosts (yaksha aakshasa, pisachadi grahaha)

Further from a Sanskrit Dictionary, one gets the following interpretation of the above terms.

1. Adhidaivika - 1. pain/suffering related to Adhidaiva or tutelary deity as a mantra.

2. pain/created by fate.
2. Adhyatmika : 1. Pain relating to the supreme spirit.
  2. pain spiritual or holy
  3. pain caused by the mind (pain, sorrow etc.)
3. Adhibhoutika : 1. pain caused by animals
  2. pain related to beings
  3. pain elementary, material.
4. 'aadhi' means mental pain or anguished, agony anxiety as opposed to 'vyaadhi' which is bodily pain.

It is for the upasamanartham, i.e. to ward off these three types of evil one has to utter the word 'shantih' three times. The following Sanskrit lines further elucidate this point :

"vignascha trividha-tatra jvrasiro vyayadaya aadbyat mikaaha-  
daivadrupadravasta aadhidaivikaah  
yaksha rakshasaanrupadravaasta aadhibhoutikaah  
tesham trayaana mupasmanaaya thrihi santi sabdam patyate"<sup>11</sup>

The three types of evil are those connected to the body, soul and religion as discussed, and to get relief from these three types of evil one has to utter the word 'shantih' three times.

Shanti-originally sectarian, later acquired a wider significance. Shanti-uttered thrice encompasses all levels of existence. For example when it is said "Lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu-Om Shantih Shantih Shantih" it means 'let all the world be in comfort'. It is a benedictory note. This is a positive aspect of Shanti mantra, though originally intended to have negative implications like warding off the three types of evils/pains.

As it is said, for the well-being of all people, it has to be uttered.

"mangalaartham paapakshayaarthaani bhavamteeti-iti Bhattachhaskara  
nirvachanam."<sup>12</sup>

For the welfare of all 'shantih' is uttered. In addition to this in all Aaranyakaas which are part of Vedas (for example Yajurveda which is of 82 pannas (parts), 44 of Samhita, 28 of Brahmanaas and 10 of Aaranyakaas) both in the beginning and in the end this 'shantih' is uttered.

One can see in the poem the poet makes a mention of these three types of evils and perhaps this may be why he preferred to retain this line in spite of Pound's suggestion for its removal. From 'Burial of the Dead' through the 'Game of Chess', 'Fire Sermon', 'Death by Water', to 'What the thunder said', the poet makes repeated references to the three types of

evil connected to the Soul, body and religion though it might be difficult to draw a demarcating line and identify each separately for each falls or shades or fades into another. But all these evils get a mention in the poem and for the warding off all these evils, this last line is needed. The progression in the poem is cyclic and not linear. This further strengthens the idea that the three types of evil affecting the entire humanity, permeate the whole poem and hence a benedictory note like 'Shantih' is all the more required. But when Eliot himself writes in his 'Notes' that this is a formal ending to the poem, one is compelled to ask whether Eliot really worked out all these connotations into the poem. One is free to make one's own reading into the poem.

As every one knows the themes in the poem are "the perversion and sterility of sexual desire, particularly in our time, the nature of lust which burnt those who succumb to it, the drying up of waters which have fertilised European civilisations, the deadness and hollowness of metropolitan life particularly life in London; the desire of physical, social and spiritual healing which if granted would renew the wasteland; these themes recur, the poet weaves variations on them and uses a wide range of poetic devices to bring out the implications of the themes."<sup>13</sup> The poem focusses on these themes and it cannot be taken as a cry in the wilderness and definitely does not end where it begins. One can take the last line as a kind of benediction and the very mentioning of these three words 'Shantih Shantih Shantih' seems to bring out the poet's intention or expectation or atleast a remote hope of spring or rejuvenation to the wasteland, which seems to have been slightly hinted in the lines:

"Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves  
Waited for rain, while the black clouds  
Gathered far distant, over Himvant  
The jungle crouched, humped in silence  
Then spoke the thunder  
DA"<sup>14</sup> (I don't have to go into the details of the story  
from Bruhadaranyakopanishad)  
I sat upon the shore  
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me  
Shall I at least set my lands in order ?"<sup>15</sup>

But this thought of the poet would have been more evocative and effective had the last line been preceded by 'OM'.



Notes :

\* It so happened while delivering a speech in AIR, I had to conclude my speech with the following sentences; "It is not for nothing that Eliot concluded his *The Waste Land* with an Upanishadic utterance 'OM Shantih Shantih Shantih', and only after verifying the poem later, I found 'OM' missing and presumed that in my copy of the poem perhaps it is missing. But later to my surprise I understood that it has been omitted by Eliot. My thanks are due to my teacher Shri R.A. Jayanta who offered valuable suggestions when I brought this to his notice.

Endnotes :

1. Allen Tate (ed) T.S. Eliot - The Man and His work. p. 204
2. C.D. Narsimhaiah, *Moving Frontiers of English Studies in India* (Chand & Co., Delhi), 1977, p. 96
3. Manusmriti, 2nd Sarga, 86-sloka 4.
4. Ibid, 84-sloka
5. 'Prasnopanishad' - Upanishaddarsanam - Sree Nori Sreenathvenkata somayajulu-Sree Nori Suryanarayana Charitable Trust-T.Nagar-Madras-p.97.
6. Ibid, p. 150. (mandookyopanishad).
7. Manusmriti-75 sloka
8. Samshyavandana Bhashyam - Krishnapanditab, pub. by Vavilla-Ramaswamisastrulu, Madras - 1949, p. 44
9. Ibid, p. 41
10. Samkarabhashyaha Sikashavalli-p.4
11. Aaranya bhashyam- Taituriireeyaaanyak-A. Madhavasastri & K. Rangachrya (eds). vol. I, Govt. Press-Myore, 1900). p. 185.
12. Ibid
13. John Press, *The Waste Land and the Hollowmen-Notes on Literature*, British Council, London (Number RP 14-83), p. 2
14. *The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot*, Faber and Faber, London, 1969, p. 74
15. Ibid.



# **Meditations on Marital Discord and Moral Ambiguity in *The Guide***

**Prof. Krishna Nand Mishra**

## **ABSTRACT**

*The issues of marital discord and moral ambiguity become all the more relevant in contemporary time and these are the major concern of modern man with his life full of complexities and intricacies. Marital discord and disharmony as a result of incompatibility, lack of understanding, companionship, communication and equality, unequal equation between couples has been one of the dominant themes of many Indian English writers. Writers like Nayantara Sahgal, Kamla Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Raji Narasimhan deal with the attitudinal differences leading to clash of personalities and final disintegration of marriage. In this age of debilitating moral and ethical crisis the theme of moral ambiguity has also received ample scope and attention by many prominent writers. Rosie-Marco relationship in R.K Narayan's novel *The Guide* is strained because they live on different planes. Rosie is devoted to the art of dancing while Marco looks at it as mere street acrobatics. He is obsessed with his archaeological surveys and studies. Rosie's longing for sharing of ideas and ambition is dismissed by Marco as a foolish woman's sentiments. He is more interested in the carvings on the walls, stone figures and caves but neglects the throbbing, pulsating heart of his wife. Raju comments on Marco "dead and decaying things seem to loosen their limbs". It is apparent that there is utter lack compatibility between Rosie and Marco, there is no love- lost in their conjugal life. It is more a marriage of convenience than a marriage of two loving and caring souls. This paper also attempts to highlight the issue of moral ambiguity. Rosie defies social and marital morality by having extramarital relationship with Raju. She is not even faithful to Raju, uses him as a ladder to achieve worldly successes. Raju's morality is also being questioned here. His rash and impetuous behavior with his mother and his uncle, his relationship with Rosie, his attempt at forgery and other aspects of his character are examined and scrutinized in detail.*

The discord, disharmony and dissension in relationship have been some of the most puzzling problems before human beings. In the present time the relationship problem especially man- woman relationship has got aggravated beyond measure. The connecting link or thread which holds the edifice of relationship together is becoming so tenuous and

fragile that even the slightest jolt can cause the entire structure of relationship to crumble and collapse. Thus, the role and relevance of discussion and debate on the issues of marital discord and disharmony and moral ambiguity have become more pertinent in contemporary life with its complexity and due to rapid industrialisation, globalisation, and westernisation of attitudes and lives of the people, increasing professionalism in all aspects of life. The problem relationship is the greatest challenge or we can say it is the worst predicament before modern man. The age old moral and ethical values, codes and conventions of relationship are being questioned and interrogated. The marital dysfunction is peculiar to contemporary age as we witness gradual lessening and weakening of the influence and impact of the traditional codes and philosophies laid out by our ancestors. Another crucial problem confronting humanity today is the problem of debilitating moral and spiritual values. Now a days, human values such as love, compassion, peace, happiness, truthfulness, honesty, sincerity, contentment, non-violence, patriotism, fearlessness, confidence, courage, self-restraint are replaced by hatred, cruelty, deceit, greed, dishonesty, lust, anger, fear, cowardice, selfishness, violence, self-indulgence, etc. which have created vacuum and hollowness in the hearts of people. Marital discord or husband-wife conflict is as old as the institution of marriage itself. But there has been ominous rise in its degree, dimension and magnitude. We, modern men have blindly started imitating western ideas and way of life and seek to strive towards individual happiness, peace and prosperity even at the cost of marital or conjugal happiness. The present paper is a humble attempt to discuss the problems of marital discord and moral ambiguity and its implications with reference to R.K Narayan's magnum opus *The Guide* .

R.K Narayan is a name in English Literature in general and Indian English Literature in particular which hardly needs an introduction. However, some basic details about his writings will help the readers understand him better. He is credited with taking the genre (Indian Literature in English) to the rest of the world. He is the pioneer of regional novel in Indian Writing in English. He has been compared to William Faulkner, who also created a fictional town that stood for reality, brought out the humour and energy of ordinary life, and displayed compassionate humanism in his writing. Narayan's writing style is simple and has natural elements of humour about it. Most of his characters are common people; he reveals the secrets of common man's life. Narayan beautifully depicts our moral values, religious beliefs and relationships, in way; he gives us an observation of Indian way of life. He satirises age old superstitions and evils in society, but his writing is free from didacticism. As M. K Naik puts it, "Narayan's delicate irony and sympathy, quiet realism and fantasy stands poles apart from Anand's militant humanism with its sledge-hammer blows and his robust earthiness." (Naik 168)

There is an intimate and inseparable relation between literature and life. Life provides the raw material to literature. The relation between literature and society is integral and inalienable. Critics after critics propounded that literature is essentially social and its agenda is largely social empowerment and improvement. Critics such as Plato and Aristotle have postulated that literature is primarily social.

Rene Wellek and Austin Warren profess the sociological approach to literature

*"Literature is a social institution, using as its medium language, a social creation. Such traditional literary devices as symbolism and metre are social in their nature... Literature 'represents life' and 'life' in large measure a social reality...The poet himself is a member of society, possessed of a social status..." (94).*

In contemporary society extramarital relationship, infidelity and unfaithfulness, lack of mutual trust, temperamental incompatibility and consequent marital discord are not very rare to find, these are frequent occurrences in society. The inability of an individual to be responsive to the behaviour patterns of his or her partner leads to strain and tension in the relationship. Some of the obvious reasons for the crisis in conjugal relationship are: incompatibility in marriage, lack of understanding between married couples, clash of ego, lack of adjustment and synchronisation in marriage, personality conflicts. Marital discord and disharmony or husband wife estrangement as a result of incompatibility, lack of understanding, companionship, communication and equality, unequal equation between couples have been some major themes of many Indian English writers. The books like Nayantara Sahgal's *The Day in Shadow*, Kamla Markandaya's *Coffer Dam*, Ruth Praver Jhabvala's *Get Ready For Battle*, Raji Narasimhan's *For ever Free*, Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock, Voices In the City* and her other novels deal with the attitudinal differences leading to clash of personalities and final disintegration or breakdown of marriage. The modern novelist treats this subject in a different manner from that of earlier novelists. They portray the relationship between man and woman as it is, whereas earlier novelists concentrated on as it should be. I mean their approach to this problem is realistic rather than idealistic. Raja Rao, one of the trios of Indian English Literature discusses this theme in the context of the cultural disparities and sharply contrasted traditional values. R.K Narayan chooses to deal with the theme of estrangement between husband and wife in the context of temperamental and attitudinal difference.

R.K. Narayan's novels show his keen observations about Indian social life. Social realism pervades his novels. Social realism means faithful and authentic portrayal of society, delineation of life in its true spirit. Narayan specifically mentions that there is "a nucleus of absolute truth in all my novels." This truth is conveyed and portrayed in diverse ways

with the objective of uplifting the consciousness and sensibility of the people. Narayan's novels explore the changing social structure of the time. His characters are typically Indian-Swami, Chandran, Krishnan, Margayya, Raju, Rosie are Indians not only in name but also in character and spirit. They have the notions and feelings, taboos and morals of India with them. They are deeply steeped in Indian cultural and social ethos. They suffer due to Indian traditions and morals. Traditionalism and conventionality are defied by his characters and they entertain more modern and more individualistic values. Thus, the clash and conflict between tradition and unconventionality, conservatism and progressivism remain one the predominant themes of his novels.

In the Narayan's novel *The Guide*, Rosie, the heroine of the novel, marries Marco. Rosie-Marco relationship is strained because they live on different planes. It seems that it is marriage between two sharply contrasted individuals. Rosie is devoted to the art of dancing while Marco looks at it as mere street acrobatics. When Rosie asks Marco "You think dancing is street-acrobatics?" (147) He retorts "I am not prepared to discuss all that with you. An acrobat on a trapeze goes on doing the same thing all his life; well, your dance is like that. What is there intelligent or creative in it? You repeat your tricks all your life. We watch a monkey perform, not because it is artistic but because it is a monkey that is doing it" (148). He is obsessed with his archaeological surveys and studies. Rosie's longing for sharing of ideas and ambition is dismissed by Marco as a foolish woman's sentiments. He is completely impractical and has very strange and stereotypical notion about fair sex, he says "If a man has to have peace of mind it is best that he forgets the fair sex" (71). When Rosie expresses her desire to see the king Cobra which Marco vehemently opposes, he says "If it interests you, you can make your own arrangements. Don't expect me to go with you. I can't stand the sight of a snake; your interests are morbid" (64). Another incident where we find the glaring expression of temperamental incompatibility is when on seeing the wild surroundings; the Saraju sparkling in the sun, vegetation and many other picturesque sights, Rosie is in ecstasy, she runs like a child from plant to plant with cries of joy, while Marco looks on with no emotion. "Anything that interested her seemed to irritate him". When Raju asks her what it that interests her is, she answers "anything except cold, old stone walls" (83). This statement amply underscores the polarity of their ideas and aspirations. He is more interested in the carvings on the walls, stone figures and caves but neglects the throbbing, pulsating heart of his wife. Raju comments on Marco "dead and decaying things seem to unloosen his tongue and fire his imagination rather than things that lived and moved, swung their limbs" (82). Raju asks Rosie 'Every night you generally sit up and quarrel, do you?' (83). Rosie replies "When we are alone and start talking we argue and quarrel over everything. We don't agree on most matter, and then he leaves me alone and

comes back and we are all right". (83). It is apparent that there is utter lack of compatibility between Rosie and Marco, there is no love- lost in their conjugal life. Here, I am reminded of Maya and Gautam relationship in Anita Desai's novel *Cry, the Peacock*. They have strained relationship because of their incompatible temperament. Maya is dreamy, sensitive and emotional, while Gautam, realistic, insensitive and rational. Maya is poetic and high-strung, Gautam detached, philosophical and remote. In case Marco and Rosie, the matrimonial bonds that bind two are as fragile and tenuous as that of Maya and Gautam. What leads to the estrangement between the husband and wife is the polarity of attitudes towards life and lack of acceptance and adjustment. For Marco, life is nothing but a serious intellectual pursuit. He fails to perceive Rosie's passionate attachment to the art of dancing. Marco fails to understand his wife that she is made up of different stuff. He is totally prosaic in his approach to life. Like Raman in Anita Dasai's *Where shall we go this Summer* he is practical to the core. His appreciation of the butler Joseph shows his indifferent and prosaic attitude to life. He says that, "Joseph is a wonderful man, I don't see him, I don't hear him but he does everything for me at right time. That's how I want things to be, you know". This attitude of Marco has a stifling effect on Rosie. Their marriage is more a marriage of convenience than the marriage between two loving and caring souls. Rosie belongs to a family traditionally dedicated to the temple as dancers and their mother, grandmother and all were viewed as public women. Once they come across an advertisement in newspaper "wanted: an educated, good-looking girl to marry a rich bachelor of academic interests. No caste restrictions"(85). To purge themselves of social stigma, members of Rosie's family marry her to Marco. Raju comments "Perhaps he married out of a desire to have someone care for his practical life, but unfortunately his choice was wrong- this girl herself was a dreamer if ever there was one"(113). Marco has least understanding of woman's needs and desires. He is more concerned with inanimate and lifeless things than with animate and living things.

Marco and Rosie's interests and pursuits are diametrically diverse. While Marco is completely dedicated to scholastic pursuits. Rosie has wholeheartedly dedicated herself to dancing. Marco undermines the importance of love and sex in conjugal life. They are husband and wife of extraordinary talents and noble aspirations but their mutual incompatibility brings catastrophe and chaos in their life. The seeds of their tormented relation lie in their uncommon interests and uncompromising temperaments. In married life two partners of opposite sex establish physical intimacy to give meaning to their personality and fulfil the purpose of nature, but this does not happen in Marco- Rosie case. The very foundation of this sacred relationship between a man and a woman has been violated by Marco and secondly by Raju.

Thus we find that the temperamental incompatibility, personality conflicts, lack of mutual understanding and co-operation lead to final discord and disintegration in marriage.

Among Indian novelists writing in English, Narayan has the distinction of being a pure artist who writes specifically for the purpose of aesthetic satisfaction and does not have any ulterior motives of disseminating his political or economic agenda. It does not mean that he is without moral vision. The moral vision in Narayan's novels is not overt, it is implicit. This paper also attempts to highlight the issue of moral ambiguity. The term 'moral ambiguity' means the lack in ethical decision-making, that is when an issue, situation or question has moral dimensions or implications, but the decidedly "moral" action to take is unclear, either due to conflict in principles, ethical systems or situational perspectives. In other words we can say that moral ambiguity is when there is a complex situation in which there are no clear-cut rights and wrongs. Usually, it involves mental conflict. In the novel, the protagonist Raju encounters questions of traditional morality when he attempts to materialize his aims and ambitions. One of the characters in the novel utters "Appearances are sometimes misleading" (32). This is amply applicable to the leading characters of the novel- Raju and Rosie. Raju, the guide is supposed to show the right path to tourists but most of the time he misguides them. Krishna Sen., aptly remarks in this context:

"The theme revolves around Raju's failure to fulfil the moral responsibilities of being a guide that is to show the true path and interpret it correctly" (23).

Raju once says "I was a true guide" (87). But this is partially true. Gaffur warns him not to increase intimacy with Rosie because she is a married woman. At this Raju reacts "You are unhealthy minded, Gaffur. She is like a sister to me" (88). Raju's morality is also being questioned here- his rash and impetuous behaviour towards his widowed mother and his maternal uncle, his carnal relationship with Rosie and his forgery. Knowing full well that Rosie is the wife of someone else he doesn't restrain himself from making sexual advances towards her. A part of his conscience keeps pricking him that what he is doing is not right but he completely ignores the dictates of soul. The whole society including his own widowed mother is against his action but he doesn't care for anybody or anything. Raju is an opportunist of a very perverse type. He exploits Rosie's weakness and Marco's abnormal capacity to trust for his own carnal satiation.

Rosie defies social and marital morality by having extramarital relationship with Raju. She is not even faithful to Raju, uses him as a ladder to achieve worldly successes. Once her selfish ambition gets materialized she deserts Raju. When Raju is under arrest on the forgery charge she is not sufficiently sympathetic to his cause and goes through her work, practice, and engagements unconcernedly. Raju asks Rosie 'What is troubling you?' She starts crying. 'After all... After all... Is this right what I am doing? After all, he has been

so good to me, given me comfort and freedom. What husband in the world would let his wife go and live in a hotel room by herself, a hundred miles away?" (120).

Fidelity in relationship is a must because any kind of friction in relationship has direct repercussions on other aspects e.g. emotional, physical, psychological and financial. Acceptance is the most important thing for a healthy and harmonious relationship. There will be differences in opinions, ideas and attitudes but there has to be mutual acceptance. One should provide another partner ample physical, emotional, mental and spiritual space. Rosie- Marco relationship fails because no one is prepared to yield; both are rigid on their terms and conditions. Rosie tries to surrender only when her infidelity is discovered. Thus it is seen in the novel that moral ambiguity definitely leads to marital discord and the very fabric of relationship is thoroughly damaged. Through this paper I have tried to show how the moral ambiguity is an enemy to a civilised, peaceful and harmonious existence and how it ruins the lives of the leading characters in the novel.

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# **Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* : A Tale of Shedding Identities in Quest of the Real Self**

**Prof. Sanket Kumar Jha**

## *ABSTRACT*

*Bharati Mukherjee, a renowned Indian diaspora novelist, centres her writings on the vicissitudes of the Indian immigrants in America. She creates her fictional world of cultural conflicts and identity crisis from her personal experiences of dislocations and immigration. Her novel *Jasmine* presents the sufferings, experiences and metamorphosis of the eponymous protagonist whose search for her real self is actualized only after she has undergone experiences of various lives with multiple identities. Born as an unwanted daughter in the village of Hasnapur in Jullandhar district of Punjab, Jyoti is transformed into 'Jasmine' by her husband Prakash and then her American dream leads her through various identities of 'Jazzy,' 'Jase' and 'Jane' until she is assured that "The moment I have dreamed a thousand times finally arrives." Through *Jasmine*, Mukherjee depicts the interplay of several factors including culture, environment, society, goodness and evil that determine the identity of an individual. The novelist also delineates how the real self is actualized only after migrating through such identities, like a soul that transmigrates from one body to another. The proposed paper seeks to find out Mukherjee's depiction of the diasporic quest of the real self through the journey of the protagonist *Jasmine*.*

**Keywords:** *Diaspora, Identity crisis, Cultural conflicts, Dislocation, Immigration, Metamorphosis, Real self*

Bharati Mukherjee has established herself as one of the most fascinating voices among the Indian diaspora writers. In her works Mukherjee focuses primarily on the issues of migration, immigrants and quest of identity arising out of the feeling of alienation in the new world. Mukherjee emigrated to Canada and later became an American citizen. Her personal experiences of the difficult phases of immigrant life, the clash of cultures and the quest of identity find way in her stories. Hence she creates her fictional world of cultural conflicts and identity crisis from her personal experiences of dislocations and immigration. Mukherjee's female characters are, to a great extent, embodiments of her experiences as an expatriate. Their struggle for identity especially in a cross- cultural crisis forms part of the major narrative structure of her works. Through *Jasmine's* life Mukherjee portrays the

shedding of different labeled identities by an immigrant Indian woman in quest of her real self. She delineates how the real self is actualized only after migrating through several identities, like a soul that transmigrates from one body to another.

In the post modern world the concept of identity has become central to the meaning of one's existence. In *Postmodernism and its Critics*, John McGowan argues that “*Individual identity, like communal identity, is a construct and, more particularly, a construct created through constitutive action [...] a self identity must be constructed by any individual who is ‘thrown’ (to use Heidegger’s term) into a network of inter-subjective relations. The resulting self is the product of a process, radically non-autonomous, but is differentiated from other selves and possesses an identity that unifies its disparate experiences, guides the presentation of the self to others, and forms the context for the various choices that the self makes.* (McGowan 1991: 243).

Jasmine’s story traces the trials and tribulations, the sufferings, experiences and metamorphosis of the eponymous protagonist whose search for her real self is actualized only after she has undergone experiences of many lives with many identities. Her several identities are constructed in the context of her relationships with others and they are either voluntarily rejected by her or she is forced by her situations or ‘circumstances she is ‘thrown’ into, independently of her will or wish. Her process of self-construction is never complete, as she goes on acquiring and shedding a number of identities which, in their turn, are responses to different life situations or settings. Born as an unwanted daughter in the village of Hasnapur in Jullandhar district of Punjab, Jyoti, the fifth daughter was considered a curse from her very conception. Her mother even tried to strangle her to spare Jyoti the shame and disgrace of being a dowry less bride in the future. Born to a traditional Indian family, Jyoti is forced to comply with the demands of her family and society. Yet Jyoti never surrenders....she makes her choices and goes for them.

To quote McGowan again: “*choice can only be made in relation to the self’s commitment to its past and to its sense of itself. Choices are self affirming and serve to reinforce identity by enacting it.*” (McGowan 1991: 216-17).

Early in her life, Jyoti rebels against blind belief in traditional values. She considers the scar on her face as her “third eye,” She refuses the astrologer’s prophecy regarding her “widowhood and exile.” And learns English since she wants to be educated and empowered. “*To want English was to want more than you had been given at birth, it was to want the world.*” Learning English is Jasmine’s way to see beyond her narrow life in India and gives her the ability to seek opportunities for a new life. Moreover, Jasmine knew that she “*couldn’t marry a man who didn’t speak English, or at least who didn’t want to speak English.*”

At the age of fifteen the first shift in the Jasmine's identity takes place when she marries Prakash, who gradually transforms the old Jyoti into a "new kind of city woman" "Jasmine." : *Pygmalion wasn't a play I'd seen or read then, but I realize now how much of Professor Higgins there was in my husband. He wanted to break down the Jyoti I'd been in Hasnapur and make me a new kind of city woman. To break off the past, he gave me a new name: Jasmine.[...] Jyoti, Jasmine: I shuttle between identities* (Mukherjee 1990:77).

Jasmine was preparing to accompany Prakash to America but unfortunately Prakash was executed by the fundamentalists – the Khalsa terrorists just the day before their departure and now Jasmine was left with two options either to embrace widowhood as Hasnapur's Jyoti or to continue as Jasmine and fulfil Prakash's American dream. She decides to go to America and commit Sati after reaching the campus of the University where her husband was supposed to study. Jasmine begins her odyssey with her fake passport and her husband's heavy suitcase. Jasmine loses much more than her innocence when she is raped by Half-Face. But she refuses to submit. She does not end her life rather she kills Half-Face like Kali, the Goddess of Destruction, Mukherjee depicts the death of Jasmine's old self and her new birth with the symbolic image of the broken pitcher:

*"I said my prayer for the dead clutching my Ganapati. I thought. The pitcher is broken. Lord, Yama, who had wanted me, who had courted me, and whom I'd flirted with on the long trip over, had now deserted me ..... My body was merely the shell, soon to be discarded. Then I could be reborn, debts and sins all paid for. (pp. 120-121)*

After this dreadful experience of America, Jasmine finds comfort at the refuge of Lillian Gordon who takes the injured Jasmine home to nurse her back to health. Under the guidance, support and encouragement of Lillian, Jasmine's process of assimilation begins and she goes on to accomplish and fulfill her American dreams. Jasmine eagerly imbibes her new experience. She dresses up in American "high school clothes", learns to "walk American" and gradually sheds her past identity to be transformed into an American girl "Jazzy."

Jasmine's comparison between herself and Kate's pet iguana, Sam, highlights the changes that have come in Jasmine's life. The cosmic forces have thrown both Sam and Jasmine into similar circumstances. Both are far off from their native homelands, both of them find their new homes more pleasurable than their past experiences and both are in the process of assimilation. Their American names signify their identity in flux. In fact the changing of names is an important aspect of Jasmine's life. She sheds her past with her names and every new name gives her the ability to see "*herself as more than one person.*"

The incident of Jasmine's meeting with Dr. Mary Webb is again of much significance. Mukherjee beautifully unfolds new vistas of para-psychology and brings in

the theories of reincarnations to compare Jasmine's shedding of her identities with the transmigration of a soul from one body to another. In the meeting, Dr. Webb talks about her past lives and remembers being an Aboriginal man in a previous lifetime. Noticeably, this incident also connects to Jasmine's experience of being reborn and makes her recall past memories as well. Jasmine has experienced a life time worth of experiences with her identities/names. And she sheds them like a soul sheds a dead body.

Mukherjee further compares the life of Jasmine with that of Professor Devinder Vadhera. Both of them had their American dreams and got American names yet Dave once a distinguished professor in India, is unable to find a job in a University and supports his family as an importer and sorter of human hair. In fact, Professor Devinder's new American name doesn't change him in any way. The Vadheras cling to Brooklyn's Indian ghetto and refuse to be a part of the American community. Jasmine on the other hand resents their old Indian, traditional and submissive lifestyle. She is no longer a traditional Indian girl but a young American woman "Jane." Determined to seek her new life in America, Jasmine leaves them without hesitation or guilt. For her "*Nothing was rooted anymore. Everything was in motion*" and she welcomes her new identities and unforeseen circumstances with her indomitable willpower. The difference in outlook is apparent in the lives of Dave and Jane.

The cosmic forces once again throw Jasmine into a dilemma. No sooner than Jasmine begins to enjoy her American lifestyle when, she spots the murderer of her husband, Prakash, and flees to Iowa to protect her friends in New Jersey. Here she finds her new benefactor Mrs. Ripplemayer gets a job in a bank. And Jasmine now transforms into Jane:

*"Bud calls me Jane. Me Bud, you Jane. I didn't get it at first. He kids. Calamity Jane. Jane as in Jane Russell, not Jane as in Plain Jane. But Plain Jane is all I want to be."*

With Bud Ripplemayer and his adopted son Du, Jasmine was leading a peaceful life.

She had no remorse for Bud's divorce with Kate. But once again she had to face violence when Bud was shot at a point blank range by a disgruntled farmer. Jane to comforted and served him lovingly and caringly after Bud was crippled. By now it appears that Jane had assimilated into and has accepted the American life. But suddenly Taylor came to her life again. She is convinced that there would be nothing wrong to leave Bud. Jasmine now walks out of Bud's life as she has found true love. . Until now she had been serving her duty toward others, but now she thought of her love and herself. Her two remarks, "The moment I have dreamed a thousand times finally arrives"

In his "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" Stuart Hall states "*There are at least two*

different ways of thinking about 'cultural identity.' The first position defines cultural identity in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self'.....There is, however, a second, related but different view of cultural identity. This second position recognizes that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep difference which constitutes what we really are....( S. Hall P 223-24).

Jasmine's story emphasizes this *second position* where the differences constitute multiple identities, where the protagonist Jasmine makes choices to differ from her past in order to assimilate into a society in flux.

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# **Gandhian Religious Philosophy : A Panacea for Peace and Harmony**

**Prof. Yugeshwar Sah**

## **ABSTRACT**

*Religion has been a powerful bridge which links people of different strata and bring them under one banner for a social or national or global cause. India has been the land of lords and religions since ages and can give a message of peace and harmony to the whole world and can show the way for the contemporary crisis and constant conflicts. Gandhiji is an apostle of peace, Ahimsa and harmony and he is an epitome of a sacrifice, selfless service, simplicity, spirituality, patriotism and tolerance. His religious teaching can create the culture of tolerance and culture of co-existence amid diverse culture and religion. It can break the culture of silence and build the culture of dialogue among the people of all communities, countries and continents. Gandhi is more relevant today than he was in his own time because ours is a conflict ridden society with plethora of problems and perils which need to be addressed as soon as possible. We live in an era in which we are surrounded with numerous conflicts such as religious, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, racial etc... in the contemporary world. Gandhi's religion is inclusive of all and works for the welfare of whole humanity.*

*The paper attempts to explore the prospects of Gandhian religious philosophy in attaining global peace and harmony. It seeks to examine the role and relevance of his religious teachings in eradicating contemporary conflicts and constant violence which cause colossal damage to lives and properties. The effort has been made to find the ways and means to establish unity and amity globally through the religious philosophy of Gandhi. This paper emphasizes on how religion can be a powerful panacea for global peace and communal harmony in an age of globalization. It also focuses on how conflicts and violence of various types can be uprooted from the face of the earth for ever. It discusses how Gandhian religious teaching can be made more effective in implementation and in daily practice so that society may be violence and conflict free to bring paradise on earth. It analyses how this philosophy can create the culture of tolerance and culture of co-existence in such diverse world and how it can break the culture of silence and build the culture of dialogue among the people across globe. How will Gandhi's teaching handle the challenges of religious diversity? And how will it tackle the threats posed by religious pluralism in contemporary scenario? These are some pertinent questions which need to be addressed. We need Gandhi more than people needed him at that time. Gandhi is our global need.*

**Keywords :** conflicts, harmony, non-violence, Peace, religious pluralism, religious tenets, understanding, violence, religion

## Introduction

“If humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable. He lived, thought and acted inspired by the vision of humanity evolving toward a world of peace and harmony. We may ignore him at our own risk” - Martin Luther King, Jr.

Gandhi has been the epitome of truth and tolerance, peace and ahimsa, simplicity and spirituality, and values and virtues. He is an Indian Ambassador of Peace and Ahimsa to the whole world in this turbulent time.

Gandhi is a man of millennium and he is for all ages to come. He is a multidimensional, magnetic and mesmerizing personality. According to me Gandhi followed one religion i.e. Humanity. Humanity was his only religion. It is a packed term. It is all encompassing and comprehensive. Humanity means religion of love, peace and Ahimsa, religion of truth, tolerance, acceptance and renunciation, religion of selfless and self-effacing service, and sacrifice, religion of peaceful co-existence and embracing others. This is the essence of all religions and this is discovered, experimented, practiced, preached and propagated by Gandhi “What he thought best in the world”. It is also well asserted by IBN Al-Arabi.

“I follow the religion of love : Whatever way love comes take, this is my religion and my faith.” (Qtd in Iyer and Nand : 1994, p. 3)

The emergence of Gandhi on Indian soil marked a new era in the history of mankind. He was born and determined to eradicate evils from the face of the earth and to establish a peaceful, prosperous and harmonious world through the religion of Ahimsa, tolerance, selfless service, sacrifice and love. He has been regarded as the reincarnation of divine power to emancipate India from the tyranny and oppression of the mighty British regime and to save the world from death and destruction.

“Yada Yada hi Dharmasya Glanirva Bhavathi Bhartha  
Abhyuthanam Adharmasya Tadatmanam Srijami Aham”  
(Bhagwad Gita – ch. 14-7)  
(Whenever there is decay of righteousness O! Bhartha  
And a rise of unrighteousness then I manifest Myself)

Etymologically the term religion refers “to reconnect” (derived from ‘ligare’ which means “bind”, “connect” and “reconnect”, i.e. to connect again). According to Max Muller “the term religion, the root of English word religion used to mean “reverence for God or the gods, careful pondering of divine things, piety”.

## Gandhi's Religion

Gandhi's essence of religion has been already propagated by Christ, Mohammad,

Buddha, Gurunanak and Swami Vivekanand. For Gandhi:

“I am a human being first and foremost, and as such I am for whoever, and whatever benefits humanity as a whole. (Malcom X, qut in Dalton : 2011). “Service to humanity is service to God” is also practiced and preached by all great men.

Swami Vivekananda emphasized that “If you want to find God, serve man.” Mother Teresa also finds God in the service of wounded humanity. She asserts that “I spend hours helping the poor, the dying, the unwanted, the despised, the lepers, and the insane. I do it because I love God. I know that whatever I do for my brothers, it is as if I did it for Him.” (Mother Teresa) Gandhi also did the same practices in whole of his life and spent whole of his life and sacrificed himself in the service of mankind and in this way he found God and reunited with Him. He said:

“The only way to find God is to see Him in His Creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all. I am a part and parcel of the whole, and I cannot find him apart from the rest of humanity (Harijan, 29-8-36, p. 226)

The heart of the religion is the religion of the heart. Religion is dynamic and pregnant with multiple meanings. For Gandhi, religion “does not mean formal religion or customary religion, but that religion which underlies, which bring, us face to face with our Maker”. (M. K. Gandhi, By Joseph J. Doke, 1909, p. 7) The goal of “all religions is to realize this essential oneness. (Harijan 15-12-33, p. 3). Tenzin defines the purpose of religion in these words : “The purpose of all major religious traditions is not to construct big temples on the outside, but to create temples of goodness and compassion in our hearts”. (Tenzin Gyato, 14th Dalai Lama). According to Swami Vivekanand the purpose of all religions is “Help and not Fight”, “Assimilation and not Destruction”, “Harmony and Peace and not Dissension.” (In Nikhilanand : 2013, p. 136). So the purpose of all religions is the welfare of mankind (all).

Gandhi believed that as there are many people so are the different roads to reach the goal of life. He has profound respect for all the religions. He says “Religions are different roads converging to the same point what does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal? In reality there are as many religions as there are individuals”. (Harijan, 2-2-34, p. 8) Gandhi pays due regard to all religions and considers them beneficial to the welfare of mankind. “I do regard Islam to be a religion of peace in the same sense as Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism are. No doubt there are differences in degree, but the object of these religions is peace.” He is well aware of the difference between religions but his view of religion creates culture of co-existence and tolerance and embracing the diversities. For him Gita is as relevant as Quran or Bible. “The Bible is as much a book of religion with me as the Gita and the Quran” (Harijan, 6 march 1937). The same philosophy



has been practiced and propagated by Swami Vivekananda, who also accepts and embraces religious diversity and pluralism. According to him “ The religious ideals of the future must embrace all that exists in the world... Religions must also be inclusive and not look down with contempt upon one another.” (Qtd in Rolland : 2013, p. 214)

He always used to chant the mantra of “Hey Rama” and even he died with three words on his lips. But his idea of ‘Rama’ is different from Tulsidas’ Rama or Valmiki’s. His Rama was not the son of the king Dashratha. His Rama is almighty, only one and eternal. Once he said about his idea of Rama. “Call him Ishvara, Allah, Ahura Mazda. His names are as instrumentable as there are men. He is one without a second. He alone is great. There is none greater than He. He is timeless, formless, stainless. Such is my Rama. He alone is my Lord and Master (Harijan, 24.11.46, p. 409)

Gandhi is above all religions in the sense that he is above all rituals and superstitions which other people think the integral part of religion but it is the surface only. We are just scratching the surface of religion but Gandhi was at the deepest level of religion and found the pearls and Jems of it, and propagated it in the whole world. If we really want peace and harmony we have to strike the root i.e. to go deeper and deeper and discover the essence of religion. The problem is that we have crisis of courage to do something different.

“Jin Khoja tin paaiya gahre paani paith

Jo boura duban dara rahe kinare baith.” (Kabir)

Gandhi discovered the essence of religion, experimented it, practiced it and then preached and propagated “What he thought best in the world.” (Arnold)

As long as we are on the surface of religion so long there would be religious strife, riots, disputes, disharmony, differences and disturbance in this global village. Gandhi’s religion is all encompassing, comprehensive, multidimensional and dynamic.

Religion is a way of life in India. It has been the integral and indispensable part of life because India has been the land of lords and birth place of multiple religions. There has been religious diversity and religious pluralism in India since ages. Religion, in India, as well as in abroad serves as a weapon to fight against injustice by uniting and integrating people of diverse communities. He was well aware that without Hindu-Muslim unity India could not achieve independence. As he himself said that “Let Hindus and Muslim understand firmly that the cornerstone of Swaraj, the cornerstone of the freedom of India is Hindu unity.” (qtd in Dalton : 1993). Therefore he blended politics and religion to fight against the mighty power in which regime the sun never set.

For Gandhi religion was a way of life. All the religious beliefs which he propagated, he had already practiced in his life such as truth, non-violence. He was the staunch worshiper

of truth and Ahimsa. For him truth is God. As he himself asserted that “I want to see God face to face. God I know is the truth. For me the only means of knowing God is non-violence – Ahimsa”.

### **Contemporary Problems and Resolution**

Contemporary society is conflict ridden and violence ridden and it is flooded with plethora of problems which are a serious threat to mankind. There is something wrong going on in our society. “Something is rotten in the state of Denmark (society).” (Shakespeare, Hamlet).

The major problems which we are facing are (i) Terrorism, nexalism, pluralism and racism (ii) Communal riots and religious strife (iii) wars and weapons (iv) violence in various forms (v) corruption and criminality (vi) crisis of intercultural, interreligious and Interlingual dialogue (vii) crisis of tolerance and acceptance (viii) cultural, religious and lingual diversity etc... These are some serious problems which are a grave threat to whole humanity. The real causes of these problems / conflicts are socio-economic inequality, cultural, lingual and religious prejudices, intolerance, lack of understanding and acceptance, misinterpretation of religious texts, education without character, dirty politics, etc... Mahesh Dattani, an eminent playwright says that “If we can understand one another, nothing can destroy us.” (Final Solutions). This is the final solution but the problem is that “one reality cannot accept another reality.” This is the crux of all problems.

If we can adopt and practice Gandhian religious philosophy we will be able to solve all these grave problems and challenges. These religious philosophies are:

#### **(1) Religion of Ahimsa**

Nothing can be achieved without Ahimsa. Humanity can be ruined through violence. In the 21st century, almost all the centuries spend / invest more on weapons and bullets than on education. We have already witnessed two world wars, two atom bomb attacks, 9/11 attack, 26/11 attack, many communal riots in India, racial riots in America, Australia and Africa, currently war between Palestine and Gaza, many civil wars, many cold wars so on and so forth. Ours is a conflict and violence ridden world. Crimes and killings are very common and prevalent in our society.

There is a crisis of peace and harmony on earth. By adopting Gandhian philosophy of religion i.e. non-violence, we can have peaceful and harmonious society. According to Gandhi “we must aim at complete harmony i.e. harmony of thoughts, words and deeds.” From him “Ahimsa parmo dharma” (Non-violence / Ahimsa is the highest religion). This philosophy has also been practiced and preached by Buddha. If society will aim at an eye for an eye practice then the whole world will be blind.

Religion of Ahimsa is very practical and it is for all. Gandhiji stated “The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the Rishi and Saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute.” (Young India, 11-8-1920, p. 3). No man-made weapons, guns, bullets can defeat the sword of Ahimsa. The Britishers would have defeated and killed Gandhi if he would have used any man-made weapons for the mission of independence. For him “Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapons of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man”. Gandhi was even opposed to passive violence. Not only physical violence is dangerous but also verbal / oral violence. To hurt someone has been called the heinous sin in Indian scripture

“Paropkaraya Prunyaya Papaya par Peednam”.

Therefore, we should be aware of passive violence as well all the time. “The fact is that Ahimsa does not simply mean no-killing. Himsa causing pain or killing one life out of anger, or for a selfish purpose, or with intention of injuring it. Refraining from so doing is Ahimsa. (Young India 4-11-1926 p. 384).

So, Ahimsa is the only way to peaceful and harmonious society. It can wipe out all kinds of violences, crimes, killings, murders.

## **II. Religion of love**

Gandhian philosophy of love and tolerance will help us to create a culture of understanding amongst us. His philosophy accepts and embraces all differences and diversities, encourages us to love all, hate none. The power of love can dissolve all differences and discriminations. Gandhi says “It is easy to be friendly to one’s friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy, is the quintessence of true religion.” This teaching preaches us that we are all human beings and we should love one another. We should not hate even our enemies. Gandhi himself did it in practice. He never hated the Britishers although they used to inflict all kinds of tortures upon him and all Indians. He often used to say hate deeds, not the doers. So Gandhian religion of love will eradicate cultural, religious, racial and lingual hatred and will change the heart of human being. Gandhi jiri ghtly said “Ahimsa means the greatest love, greatest charity. If I am a follower of Ahimsa, I must love my enemy.” (Nateshan, 1933, p. 346). So in a profound sense of the term religion of Ahimsa and religion of love are interconnected and interrelated.

## **III. Religion of self-less service and sacrifice**

For Gandhi service to humanity was the highest religion. He sacrificed his whole life in serving the soil of mother India and did not expect anything back. The other leaders occupied the significant posts and positions but he did not. This is self-less service and

finally he was assassinated for the sake humanity. "I do not worry about the future." (Prabhu: 1954, p. 4) Service to the poor and needy will wipe out many social evils such as poverty, economic inequality, greed corruption etc. This type of religion will make up sensitive, sympathetic and human being. For Gandhi "*The human body is meant solely, for renunciation for not for indulgence*. The happy life lies in renunciation. Renunciation is life. Indulgence spells death." (Harijan. 24-2-46. p. 19).

#### **IV. Religion of tolerance and acceptance**

We are becoming intolerant and insensitive day by day. If we tolerate one another, no communal cultural, racial tension and discrimination would take place. We have lost the power of tolerance therefore we fight at every small issues in the family and in the society. Gandhi's philosophy of tolerance teaches us to bear anything and everything. He says if some one slaps on our one cheek then we should give him our another cheek to slap. This is the highest kind of tolerance. The religion of tolerance leads to inclusive and harmonious society. Where there is tolerance and acceptance there is no conflict and violence in the world because this religion aims at embracing others and builds the culture of understanding, breaks the culture of doubt and suspicion. It will create the space for intercultural and interreligious dialogue. The religion of tolerance creates culture of peaceful co-existence which provides space for the people of all communities, castes, colours and creeds. India is the best example where we can see unity and amity in diversity.

#### **V. Religion of Righteousness**

Gandhiji always emphasized that education without character formation is abortion, of no use and of no value rather it will create plethora of problems. Character making education is of highest value. It is said that if wealth is lost, nothing is lost, if health is lost, something is lost but if character is lost everything is lost. Character is the mirror of whole personality and it can be formed through the religion of righteousness. Once the right character is formed we will nip almost all our problems in the bud. The heart of education is the education of the heart. Vivekananda also said that the purpose of education is "man-making" and "character building" and it can be achieved through the religion of righteousness. Therefore, in current scenario, there is emphasis on moral education, so, moral education must be imparted through different media. Gandhi's religion of morality teaches us that

"Politics without principles  
Pleasure without conscience  
Wealth without work  
Knowledge without character

Business without morality  
Science without humanity and  
Worship without sacrifice”

It is a heinous sin and crime against humanity and would destroy mankind. Such type of religion will wipe out corruption robbery, scam, snatching, stealing, dishonesty, etc. and establish a culture of honesty, integrity, morality, prosperity and transparency. So religion of righteousness is a must for us.

This is how Gandhian religion is relevant for us in the contemporary scenario. Where there is Gandhi, there is peace, mutual love and tolerance. If we do not adopt Gandhian way of living, then, a day will come when the whole world will be destroyed. Where there is religion of Ahimsa, love, tolerance and acceptance, selfless service and sacrifice and righteousness, there is unity, amity and culture of peaceful co-existence. For all this we need Gandhian religion.

#### **Conclusion:**

If we can practice Gandhian religion in our daily lives, we can certainly make this world a better place. This is a religion of humanity which would civilize us and would make us a good human being. This religion is also urged and emphasised by Gopal Das Neeraj :

“Ab to majhab koi ais a bhi chalay aj aay  
Jahan insaan ko insaan bhi banaya jaay.”

If we really want to save atom-enriched world then Gandhi is the only global alternative for us.

The best and most effective way to achieve peace and harmony is through Gandhian philosophy:

“If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character. If there is beauty in the character, there will be order in the nations. When there is order in nations, there will be peace in the world”. (Sathya Sai Baba)

Wherever and whenever we would need love, Ahimsa, peace, selfless service, harmony, sacrifice, truth and tolerance, there we need Gandhi and Gandhi alone. Whenever we need to save mankind from death and destruction, wars and weapons, bombs and bullets, there we would need Gandhi.

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# **FDI & Indian Higher Education System**

**Dr. Divakar Jha**

## *ABSTRACT*

*This paper is an endeavour to scan the emerging conditions of higher education institutions in the wake of global connectivity in post-globalization. Indian higher education is a part and parcel of global system and FDI in this sector is imposing extra challenges to the institutions to be of global standard. Using SWOT analysis of the modern management the present study tries to analyse the conditions and define the strategic needs. This paper is the outcome of a brainstorming exercise and its core value lies in identifying the capabilities of HEIs to compete with global giants in new socio economic conditions of the country.*

## **I. Backdrops**

The world today is witnessing a new kind of revolution-the Information Revolution—ushered in by technology. This revolution is far more sweeping than any other revolution in history in its reach and influence, bringing fundamental changes in all aspects of our life. Information Technology (IT) is the engine used to drive useful information systems. This includes computers, software, internet/intranet and telecommunication systems. IT provides the means for collecting, storing, encoding, processing, analysing, transmitting, receiving and printing text, audio or video information.<sup>1</sup>

Globalization, a catch word today, is the outcome of the path-breaking advancements in the field of information and communications Technology (ICT). Broadly speaking, the term globalization means integration of economies and societies through cross country flows of information, ideas, technologies, goods, services, capital, finance and people.<sup>2</sup> Knowledge, therefore, has become principal input of all output in the times of globalization and globalism. Information Scientists driven knowledge network of 21<sup>st</sup> Century is giving extra support to the development pace of the globe. World Wide knowledge sector today is dominating and playing a decisive role in the holistic development of nations.

In a tech-savvy world, education in general and higher education in particular, is the most-vibrant side of human development. India is an old country but a young nation. At 5 pm on July 11, 2015, World Population Day of the Year, The Republic of India clocked in at 1.27 billion accounting for 17.5 % of global population.<sup>3</sup> Also a sizeable number of country's

population is below 25 years of age. More than 50% of India's current population is below the age of 25 and over 65% below the age of 35. The most recent estimate gives India a population of 1,377,234,174 billion in 2016<sup>4</sup>. In a knowledge-centric development process our youths below 25 years of age are, in fact, our intellectual property/capital. Their making is the biggest task for India's higher education system which is part and parcel of global higher education system in the times of global connectivity of Indian economy.

Global connectivity of Indian economy has, in fact, paved the way for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in education sector of India, 100% FDI all owed through automatic route.<sup>5</sup> In a purely competitive site at home and overseas Indian needs quality people capable to contribute in our modern economy effectively and efficiently. Also, higher education is a powerful tool to build knowledge based society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Govt. has set-up a target of increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) to 30% by the year 2020. Indian higher education centres have to compete with foreign institutions in aforementioned circumstances.

The focal of all objectives of this paper is to evaluate the circumstances and readiness of Indian Higher Education Institutions and the systems saw a hole for foreign direct investment in present globally connected economic and social environment emerging fast in the wake of path-breaking advancements in the field of ICT which has virtually made the globe a Global Village and the economies of the nation a Global Economy on the eve of new millennium.

Doubtlessly, this paper is the outcome of a brain storming exercise (viewpoint) of the Author free from data capture and data mining on the issues of the write-up and its core values lie in scanning the capabilities of HEIs to compete with Global players of the field coming to India through the policy decision on FDI and for this it uses the managerial device SWOT analysis, a highly used tool in management galaxy under Strategic Management principles & practices.

## **II. Indian Higher Education System**

India has the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest higher education system in the world and the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest scientific and technical manpower globally. Yet our public expenditure on higher education is a miniscule 0.6% of GDP. Existing challenges in India's higher education—access, equity and quality will only intensify, unless we transform our education and skill development model. We will be the youngest nation in the world by 2030 hence high-quality education and skilling of 50 Crore Indians over the next 10 years is a gigantic but critical mission. Seamless integration of Academia, Research and Industry is critical to lever age India's Demographic Dividend. We need to mobilize existing resources and expand education infrastructure with support from the industry, leverage our nation's potential to build outstanding academic and research institutions.<sup>6</sup>



This is certainly an individual commentary but presents some of the ground realities of the higher education universe of India which is being challenged in the current wave of knowledge society of a liberal and globalized economy. We all are well acquainted with the fact that ours is a vast and better structured higher education system encompassing many

Sorts of higher education institutions (HEIs) including Government sponsored Universities which are in majority in number and consequently playing important role in commanding the system. The database<sup>7</sup> available to this paper mentions 757 Universities and University level institutions with 38,056 colleges and 11,768 diploma-level institutions in 2014-15. While India has some of the best institutions of the world in terms of quality of education, a lot more needs to be done.

Under World Trade Organization (WTO), agreement on international trade in services for progressive liberalisation of trade in services, education is one of the 12 services of which Higher Education is one of the category to be negotiated under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). Indian Parliament considered a bill namely the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill, 2001 which provides a time bound and transparent system for the approval process as also for regulation of Foreign Educational Institutions.<sup>8</sup> Hence regulatory environment of India provides several conditions on entry and operation of foreign educational institutions. This academic endeavour confines itself only to the study of the readiness of the system and Institutions of Indian higher education set-up for competing with Global institutions if they come and therefore, turns to the side of the situation analysis using a managerial device known as SWOT analysis.

### **III. Concept and Practice of FDI**

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India, in its present form, is the result of the Economic Reforms Programme initiated by the Govt. of India in 1991 to shift the focus of Indian Economy from Govt. Controlled economy to a market driven economy to boost the development pace. This was, indeed, a far reaching economic reform. From 1991 onwards, reforms became a continuous process encompassing all sectors and segments of the economy. Liberalisation of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) led to sustained increase in FDI. In 2015-2016 India emerged as the largest recipient of FDI among emerging nations with FDI inflows of \$55.56 billion.<sup>9</sup>

FDI is considered to be both an important indicator and a driving force of what is called economic globalization. There are two forms, in fact, of foreign investment—Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI). Hence, conceptually FDI is one of the two forms of foreign investments. The inflow of FDI is considered as a crucial presupposition of economic development. Green field investments, Mergers and Acquisitions and joint ventures are the forms of Foreign Direct Investment which has potentially both

positive and negative effects on Host Economies.

After liberalization, foreign institutions, individuals and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) have got a lot of freedom to invest in business and/or in the capital market. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is now permitted through automatic route, without getting clearance from the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB), in all industries except for a small negative list<sup>10</sup>. In education sector 100% FDI is allowed through automatic route. Needless to say, that Indian Higher Education system now exists as a part of the global system and technology centric environment has given a new height to this people making industry. Also, since we live in an age of globalization, it is not proper that were strict FDI in education and higher education sector. Willingly or unwillingly, the foreign direct investments will be found in the higher education sector and, therefore, we should get ready for welcoming and competing with foreign Universities and Institutions in Indian socio-economic fabric of liberalized era of 21<sup>st</sup> century. The pros and cons of this may be a matter of debate but this is now a matter of fact that sooner or later we have to compete with world class Universities within the geographical boundary of India. It is against this back drop that the paper strives to evaluate the conditions of Indian Universities and Institutions in terms strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats so that strategic needs of our scan be pointed out to get ready for emerging/emerged challenges.

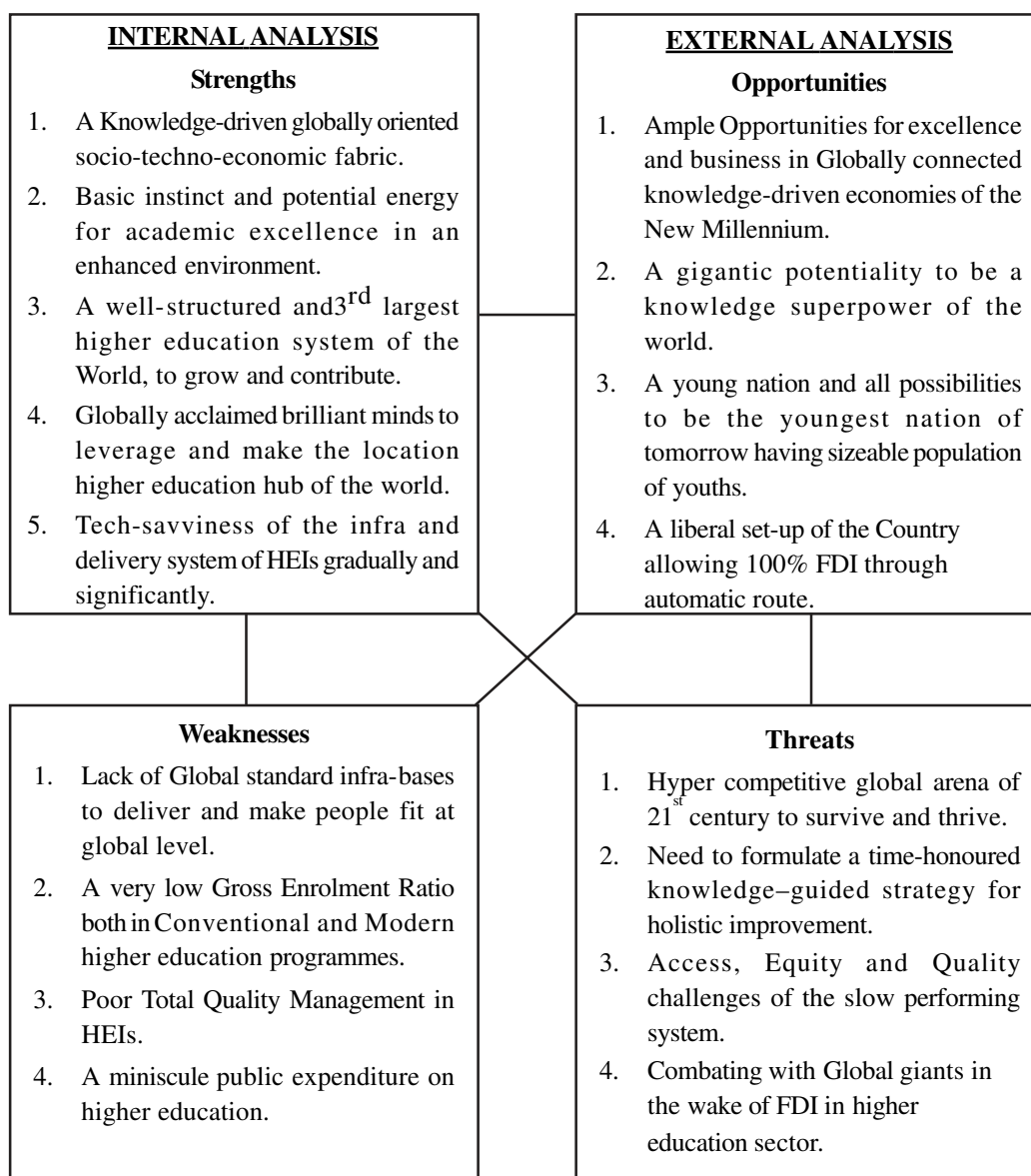
#### **IV. Impacts of FDI**

This paper uses the SWOT strategy tool in University situation. SWOT is the acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It is also known as SWOT-Up analysis.<sup>12</sup> Through such analysis the strengths and weaknesses existing within the target concerns/institutions can be matched with the opportunities and threats operating in the environment so that an effective strategy can be formulated. An effective strategy, therefore, is one that capitalizes on the opportunities through the use of strengths and neutralizes the threats by minimizing the impact of weaknesses. Obviously, this is a lucrative managerial device to search the potentials for excellence and play a key role in the strategy formulation process. This paper believes that in an emerging context of higher education in India in its changed socio-economic philosophy, a worksheet of the SWOT of Indian higher learning Institutions will give a vivid description of their capabilities and may be a useful snap shot to go in the direction of strategic needs.

Let us come to the core points of the study:-

## SWOT WORKSHEET

### HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS OF INDIA



In view of above SWOT worksheet and its analysis, strategic directions of the target institutions can be suggested. Established management norms suggest two ways to go ahead at this juncture. First and more advisable strategy is that which involves the matching of strengths with

opportunities and second, that involves the matching of weaknesses with threats. The key is to exploit opportunities where the institution has strength and to defend against threats where the institution has a weakness.

Let us turn to the strategies that match strengths with opportunities. A matching of the strengths that Indian Higher Learning Institutions have with the opportunities that they have in the new and emerging educational global environment gives the following ways to go, perform and excel along with global partners /competitors.

1. To re-engineer the system to be fit and productive in the changing context and time.
2. Revamping of HELs and the system as a whole in line with competitive global players.
3. All efforts to take the advantages of the emerging conditions of Indian affluent society and conditions by leveraging world admired brilliant minds of youths.
4. Taking note of world class institutions, diversification of the academic portfolios of HEIs to make the campuses again vibrant.
5. An overhauling of the academics in terms of Course, Curriculum, Delivery System and infrastructure for toning up the set up.
6. A need – based transformation of education and skill development models to produce corporate – friendly people.
7. In view of service sector dominance in economies, teach and train for advanced degrees and skills.
8. Try to narrow the growing gulf between Degrees and Employment by inculcating employability traits in learners.

## VI. Recapitulation

To recapitulate, a quote from **CHARLES DARWIN**, “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the most responsive to change.” And time has come to change.

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# Direct Benefit Transfer : Essentials to Reduce Inequalities

**Dr. Ashish Kumar**

## ABSTRACT

*India has been a welfare State since independence and the primary objective of all governmental endeavours has been the welfare of its people. The policies and programmes have been designed with the aim of alleviation of rural poverty which has been one of the primary objectives of planned development in India. It was realized that a sustainable strategy of poverty alleviation has to be based on increasing the productive employment opportunities in the process of growth itself. Elimination of poverty ignorance, diseases and inequality of opportunities and providing a better and higher quality of life were the basic premise upon which all the plan and blue prints of development were built. Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. In order to provide the rural people with better prospects for economic development, increased participation of people in the rural development programmes, decentralization of planning, better enforcement of land reforms and greater access to credit are envisaged. This present paper aims at presenting the need of Direct Benefit Transfer in India as far as the challenges and benefits of cash transfer in concern.*

**Key Words:** Conditional Cash Transfers, DBT, Poverty Ignorance, Social transformation

## Introduction

Government of India launched the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme on January 1, 2003 for bringing equality, improvements in targeting, reducing corruption, elimination of waste, controlling expenditure and facilitate reforms (Handbook on DBT, Government of India). For developing countries like India, it is very essential to reduce inequalities and poverty in order to meet the social development and in this process Government of India has taken this historical initiative. Initiatives like cash transfer contribute to reduce inequalities (Feereira & Souza, 2004; Hoffmann, 2003). Positive impact of these kind & of conditional cash transfer programmes has experienced in poor countries like Brazil as inequality decreased through their Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme Bolsa Familia; One of the largest CCT programme of the world (Scorzafave and Lima, 2010). Many countries have the idea to deliver social benefits to its citizens from the Bolsa-Familia Programme

(BFP) the covered close to 100 percent of Brazil's poor in 2007. Most of the countries using CCT programme to transfer direct cash to a family is based on certain conditions like school attendance, nutritional monitoring, pre & post natural tests etc, and the entire system is managed through efficient targeting disbursement and regular monitoring of the disbursed funds.

Public policy and its implications have a tremendous impact on our economic growth, and social developments world over. However, these policies need to be refurbished and customized to meet the current and evolving needs of the people. Thus, in the rapidly changing environment, understanding and evaluating public policies and other developmental issues; are cardinal and crucial for an inspiring and fulfilling public life. The onus of evolving meaningful public policies lies with the government, but judging their effectiveness and utility lies in the realm of researchers.

The policy debate is not about the choice between good or bad policy but is rather regarding the assessment of their positivity and effectiveness over one another, This will persist, especially when the new policy overtakes the old and hence debate and discussion will continue to incite the matter unless implemented and evaluated in the context of set goals and welfare objectives. Policy matrix which is the corner stone of policy decision making process, must delve exclusively into the issues, consequences of the policy outcomes. The direct benefits transfer as a substitute to the traditional subsidy scheme and as a policy alternative, always has effect on the masses especially on the deprived and marginalized.

The praxis of policy should be designed after understanding the needs and aspirations of the economy, in context of socioeconomic environment and public welfare. Direct Benefits Transfer, as a new policy framework, has been acknowledged from various corners as the demand of the day. It is a process through which the target beneficiaries will get the subsidy amount in cash that shall be directly credited to their accounts by linking transactions to Aadhaar. Cash amount is calculated by finding the difference between the market price and subsidized price in proportion to the quantity purchased from the market, It is an earnest endeavour to streamline the subsidy mechanism in India.

The scheme has potential to control much rooted corruption in public distribution system, by reducing the intermediate cost, improving the efficiency in delivery system and by eliminating the misuse of funds and reduce the role of petty politician and other intermediaries. This will definitely reduce the delivery cost and subsidy bills by better targeting and putting off various malpractices and irregularities. The scheme may not fully eliminate the bottlenecks and constraints in the process but will certainly bring paramount changes in the delivery system. It will prevent growth of black marketing as well as growth of secondary market.

DBT as a concept has been borrowed from Latin America and translated according to the need and context of socioeconomic environment of India. This policy has been time tested and a few countries have already adopted DBT apart from Latin America, and have experienced a mix bag of effects on their people and economy. The scheme has to be framed and implemented with a few institutional and infrastructural amendments and moreover firm improvement is required to make it more effective and efficient, Even then, coming out with such a contemplative programme, Government of India intends to nullify the challenges that are inherent in the previous policy and is trying to enhance the benefits directly to the people by implementing DBT.

According to a study by National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) substantial benefits would accrue to the government by integrating Aadhaar with schemes such as PDS, MNREGS, fertilizer and LPG subsidies, as well as housing, education and health programmes. The benefits arise from the reduction in leakages that occur due to identification and authentication issues. The paper uses the available information for government schemes such as PDS and MNREGS, where the literature has estimated some leakages and uses the learning from the study to make some assumptions for a few other schemes for which similar studies are scarce.

The study estimates the leakages due to identification and authentication errors, i.e. the existence of duplicates and “ghost” beneficiaries. Any reduction in leakages is considered a benefit, because the money can then be utilized for its real purpose, i.e., for the targeted beneficiaries, or if the reduction in leakages leads to a reduction in the overall government expenditure required for the respective scheme, it is a benefit because the money can then be utilized in other programs.

### **Mission of DBT**

Mission of DBT Scheme is to facilitate a paradigm shift in the process of delivering entitlements to all those who are eligible through:

- Accurate identification and targeting of the intended beneficiaries
- Re-engineering government processes for simpler flow of information and funds
- Promotion of Financial Inclusion
- Setting up of digital platforms that are accessible, scalable and reliable, providing user-friendly interfaces between the Government and the beneficiaries

### **Vision of DBT**

Vision of DBT Scheme is to provide a governance regime which ensures a simple and user-friendly Government to People (G2P) interface and directly delivers entitlements to eligible individuals and households in a fair, transparent, efficient and reliable manner.

**Importance of DBT Scheme**

Direct benefit transfer scheme undertaken by the Government of India is a step towards curbing inequality. It has been highlighted that the burning issues related to the implementation of DBT like very few Aadhaar enabled accounts, low accessibility to banking services, very low usage of ATM facilities, and low level of awareness of this scheme at bottom of the pyramid level. Fast expansion of financial inclusion is required for better implementation of this scheme. Socially deprived classes are least among the unaware group, here government may promote this scheme through Gram Sabha and Self Help Groups. Rural people are highly dependent on others to avail banking services so simplified banking services are required so that they can easily yet benefit as they do not feel safe which transacting through others. Among others issues like transfer of subsidy to female member's accounts need to be addressed as cases are of misuse of finance by male members. Moreover, most of the males are daily wage earners and to get subsidy from banks their routine life will also get affected. Above issues require government attention for better implementation and fruitful results.

**Present Status of DBT**

Over the past three years, DBT has shown promising results in pilot schemes being run in different parts of the country. These include PAHAL (modified DBTL for LPG subsidy), Public Distribution System (PDS) in Punducherry, Chandigarh and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) payments in Jharkhand, Bihar, etc. The programme has already been universalised since February 2015 and more than 29 crore beneficiaries are withdrawing their benefits every month using Aadhaar biometric authentication. As on 30th April, 2016, DBT Mission is monitoring data from 15 Ministries/Departments on 66 government schemes operational in the country. The number of DBT transactions in the financial year 2015-16 (upto January, 2016) has crossed 100 crore. More than Rs 60,000 crore have been transferred to about one fourth of the total population of the country.

**Direct Benefit Transfer: Core Concerns and Challenges**

We see that the scope of the problems that can be addressed by DBT is limited and only some of the concerns raised by the Prime Minister at the NDC meeting can be partially allayed by moving to DBT. Further, the pilots have not been designed such that the scope for learning is maximised, especially in terms of districts chosen. This does mean that expectations about DBT being a game changer may be premature, but it does not mean it is not possible. However, we must recognize that “governance is not an apolitical detached technology; it is about people and their actions but about contest actions and their resolution and is thus inherently political” (Kapur, et. al. 2008: 87, emphasis added) and as mentioned



earlier, this contestation may only increase with a switch to cash. We must see technology as only an enabler, not a driver.

To really change the game, the political imagination needs to transcend the current debate. The real challenge is for Aadhaar to progress from a techno-focused scheme for the poor to an initiative that can ease everyday life and discipline the defrauding rich. For example, multiple tax identities will disappear, since each tax identity will now be matched to an Aadhaar number. Arise in tax revenues will follow. Aadhaar could also be used to reassure a home buyer that the seller is really the owner of the house he claims to be, by having his bank biometrically verify the seller's identity number on the house papers. The real potential lies in shifting thinking from targeting to traceability and mitigating transactional instrumentalism in market transactions. It is not clear whether we will find this political imagination in time.

Some recent experiences in Bihar point to the effectiveness of cash transfers which have done quite well. The old-age pension which is based on selection, the conditional cash transfer for bicycles, uniforms and school books, initially for girls but now also for boys, as also the Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) have all done quite well (Rodger et al, 2012). These records of reasonably well functioning cash transfer schemes, should be set against the well-known poorly-functioning PDS in Bihar.

The ease of getting the cash transfer depends on the density of bank branches or at least, points at which cash could be withdrawn. At present banks are not available in each village. Visits are necessary to nearby towns. But the bank correspondent and mini-ATM systems are being developed. As these systems for extending the reach of banks develop, there will be less need to travel to nearby towns, thus bringing down transport costs. One could even argue the other way round: the need for all recipients to have bank accounts, will push forward financial inclusion.

Although the scheme comes with best of intentions, there is a spring of 'impractical idealism' in the way proposal has been drafted and no fool proof measures have been taken to cater the benefits as desired and perceived.

- The population of various states, those are staying in remote villages, mainly consists of farmers, labourers and tribal people. They may refrain from gaining the benefits from DBT as desired because they lack modern day facilities like banking, electricity and proper connectivity. This may pose a threat in implementation of the schemes in these areas.
- Studies conducted by various NGOs and research organizations reveal that people of states like Bihar, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh prefer food to cash. Besides this, the

research revealed that it was mostly female who preferred food to cash than their male counterpart.

- Bulk purchase from the native farmers and venders which was in earlier provision of PDS has supported the fact with perennial demand and desired price. But the scenario is changing because Direct Benefits Transfer is acting as a substitute of food to cash. It has pushed the same farmers to sell the produce in the market at a competitive price which may have fetched him less for the same in the market because previously government directly procured from farmers which assured a sale of the farmer's produce. But after the implementation of National Food Security Act there has been a possibility of selling their produce, at a desired price.
- The scheme much talks about the operational efficiency and implementation than the public needs and the wellbeing of the people. Besides, this scheme may not necessarily bring benefits to all the segments as desired due to multiplicity of culture, tradition, location and literacy rate of various states.
- The economic effects of the scheme may prompt and motivate unnecessary consumption and may encourage people to refrain from work and prefer leisure to work and may disrupt productive activities.
- Lack of awareness and information among the beneficiaries may pose threat to the success of this scheme. Lack of understanding about the programme among rural masses and other beneficiaries may lead to financial malpractices and irregularities at the point of delivery of services at the grass root level.
- The scheme is implemented through an UID card; hence its success depends upon how effectively the government addresses the issue of UID cards. Studies conducted so far on UID card reveals that there is a delay in delivering the cards to their owners. Many of the entitled beneficiaries have not received the card till date which is causing serious implementation challenge for the scheme.
- Error of inclusion and error of exclusion in the process of identifying the poor is the serious concern for the policy makers which cause serious leakages and infiltrations in various schemes. Furthermore, various committee reports and planning commission reports on defining poverty and poverty line is also cause policy debate and create serious threat in implementing the program.
- Identification of target demography is the biggest challenge in our country, hence precautionary step has to be taken by administrative machinery of each state while issuing the UID card, or otherwise DBT scheme will become futile.
- Although constructive criticism is going on, still this endeavor of the government and

its resultant benefits can only be better harvested only when all the State governments and other stakeholders will show their contribution and commitment in the scheme.

### **The Way Forward : Suggestions**

For DBT to be a universal success and fulfill its mandate of re-engineering benefit delivery system, it may be important to address a few issues as discussed below, which will further embolden the DBT efforts in the country.

#### **I. Universal Beneficiary Database and Grievance Redressal System**

Currently, each Ministry/Department maintains its own database of beneficiaries, which is used as a base for transferring benefits to the intended recipients. These databases at multiple levels not only duplicate the effort but hamper the process of aggregating subsidies to individuals as well. Thus, a unified beneficiary database needs to be created by capturing the unique JAM details of each beneficiary. The universal database will need to be dynamic, linked to Birth/Death registration. The database will also need to be maintained at local level and aggregated at higher levels, viz. District/State/National. These unique details of beneficiaries shall help government in effective scheme planning or creation and eventually will lead to holistic realization of subsidy outlays.

A comprehensive & sustainable Social Security Platform is essential and do-able. A bedrock database to act as single source of truth for all Government Policy and Planning, implementing various welfare programmes etc. will be required for the same. This will result in scientific approach to policy formulation and will provide huge efficiency gains.

Apart from creating an integrated beneficiary database cutting across multitude of ministries and departments, there is a need for a strong grievance redressal system which can enable incorporating the feedback of the beneficiaries, their experience with DBT and their grievances into the system. This sort of a two-way feedback loop through a process of continuous learning and improvement shall strengthen the DBT framework.

#### **II. Aadhaar-based Payment**

Only about 37% payments out of total DBT fund transfers were disbursed through Aadhaar Payment Bridge (APB) as on 31.1.2016. Rest of the payments under DBT were made using other electronic transfers including, NEFT. Government intends to make maximum DBT payments through APB. Universal Benefit Accounts linked to Unified Beneficiary Database with banks/mobile/Aadhaar (JAM) details will pave the way, going forward.

#### **III. Rationalizing Govt. Subsidy**

Government is committed that food, kerosene and fertilisers on which large share of government subsidy is involved, may be brought on DBT platform. In the budget speech

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had said, "We have already introduced direct benefit transfer in LPG. Based on this successful experience, we propose to introduce DBT on pilot basis for fertiliser in a few districts across the country, with a view to improving the quality of service delivery to farmers."

Introducing direct cash transfer for fertiliser subsidy will help farmers and manufacturers apart from helping the government's finances. Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) is an ambitious scheme, launched by the Union Government which aims to eliminate Poverty from the country and improve the economic standard of individuals and their families. As per this scheme, money is transferred directly into bank accounts of the beneficiaries subsidies on LPG and Kerosene, pension payments scholarships and employment guarantee scheme payments etc. Basic idea behind DBT is to cut wastage, duplication and leakages and to enhance efficiency. This programme likely to strengthen the setup of different welfare measures of Union Government and channelise the faulty PDS in the country. It is believed that the government Spends about Rs 3.5 for providing financial support of Rs. 1 to the poor through the PDS. The success of this programme depends upon the effectiveness of its implementation. The policy makers will have to examine different limitations and device a mechanism so that the financial benefit reaches the deserving lot of society. Unawareness among masses, lack of technical knowhow, exploitation of beneficiaries by individual/agencies are areas of concern. Appropriate measures are to be taken at every stage. This is the need of hour that right schemes and policies propagate on merit irrespective of the fact whether political party/ alliances A or B is in the power. The below mentioned suggestions may be helpful for better results from the DBT scheme:

- There is a need to promote financial literacy among the rural poor and inculcate banking habits among them for the success of this scheme.
- The entire process of fund transfer should be automatic and error-free; otherwise rent seeking behavior of the delivery agents or officials may crop up in the name of facilitating services to the ultimate beneficiaries.
- There is a need to evaluate the trade off benefits between existing subsidy schemes and DBT in a scientific manner, so as to assess the degree of success and to measure the effectiveness of the program.
- There should not be any unnecessary delay and harassment at the time of cash withdrawal by the beneficiaries, otherwise dishonesty will emerge and the system will become auto-defective.
- Need of political consensus among various political parties and a touch of expertise in shaping the policy, to make it a socially viable option.

- Any decision taken at macro level must act rationally and should exercise various tests on available alternatives to cater to the need of the nation.
- Only the involvement of civil society and NGO's in the scheme can make DBT an effective scheme.
- Each state has its own functionaries and implementing channels; hence DBT and the benefits involved in it, depends upon how the state government will address and acknowledge the scheme.
- A special cell should be setup to communicate the instances of misuse of funds and irregularities and corruption which must be further forwarded to the respective authority for the necessary corrective action.

### **Conclusion**

The DBT system is an experiment in delivering services to citizens. It provides the guarantee that the funds are reaching the accounts of the beneficiaries as the money flow can be tracked digitally. It also ensures that funds are being withdrawn by the beneficiaries themselves through the biometric authentication system. Further, the biometric data collected by the UIDAI through its enrolment drive is available to banks through Aadhar enabled accounts, saving both them and the beneficiaries the need and cost of verification documents and procedures.

Given the performance of the subsidised welfare schemes so far in India, DBT is a game changer. It is a big idea and is expected to change millions of lives in India directly. But, the DBT scheme has to be implemented efficiently and the method of carrying out the cash transfers needs to be well thought out. DBT schemes need proper infrastructure and monitoring mechanism before they get implemented on a massive scale.

The task ahead is mammoth and daunting. The success of the Direct Benefit transfer (DBT) depends crucially on the expansion of the banking network in the country. To tide over this problem, the scheme envisages the Banking Correspondent model, use of micro ATMs or utilisation of the Common Service Centres, Quick coverage of the entire population under the UID project or registration under the National Population Register (NPR) could prove to be decisive factors in the outcome of this initiatives.

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# **Indo-Nepal Cultural Relations : A Study**

**Dr. Mohan Mishra**

## **ABSTRACT**

*Relations between India and Nepal have been bound by long-standing geographical, historical, cultural, social and economic ties that the peoples of the two countries have shared since times immemorial. For some time, particularly with the formation of of Maoist-led coalition government in August 2008, a demand for revision of treaties, trade, and friendship was being made in view of new developments. India's first treaty of Trade and Commerce with Nepal was signed on 31 July 1950. The first section of this paper traces the evolution of India's Trade and Transit Treaties with Nepal beginning since such a Treaty in 1950. The last revision in the bilateral treaty was enacted on 28 October 2009. This paper is a modest attempt to discover the extent to which it addresses the concerns of the respective governments and stakeholders.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The border between India and Nepal is open and the flow of people is allowed without any restriction. The main advantage of an open border is felt by the people living on both sides of the border who can enter each other's territory for daily basic needs. In fact, it is said that there are houses situated on the border where one door opens towards Nepal and the other towards India. Citizens of both the countries enjoy unrestricted freedom of movement through the open border in accordance with the Treaty of Peace and Friendship. Though there is no separate treaty on defining the status of the border, considering the traditional ties between the two countries and taking the geographical reality of the border into consideration which runs through plains, jungles and mountains, the border remains opened. Article VI of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship allows the citizens of both the countries to receive "national treatment with regard to participation in industrial and economic development of such territory and to the grant of concessions and contracts relating to such development." In fact, according to Article VII of the treaty, the citizens of both the countries can move, reside and own property and participate in trade and commerce in each other's territory. However, it is alleged that citizens of other countries also enter Nepal to avail the opportunities under the guise of Indians. Since the border is open it becomes difficult to check the flow of movement of population and to ascertain whether they are from India or some other South Asian country. Similarly, the open border has helped the Nepalese to move and reside not only in India but also in Bhutan from India which has

brought its own problems associated with the movement of population like demographic and economic displacement of the locals. The geo-strategic location of Nepal is such that its Terai opens to the Indian heartland (the plains of UP, Bihar and West Bengal), thus, exposing the country to subversive elements. Nepal is also closer to the Himalayan ranges of western Uttar Pradesh which are demanding separate statehood and the hills of the north-east are active with extremists and militants of Nagaland and Mizoram. Through the mountainous passes of Nepal it is easy to enter the plains and hills of India and exploit the already existing problems.

The open border has been misused by the criminals, smugglers and terrorists who take refuge in Nepal after committing crimes in India or vice-versa. Arms and drugs have also been moving from Nepal to India. The open border is used by the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan to facilitate movement of the Kashmiri terrorists to carry out anti-India activities. There are various Muslim organisations in Nepal engaged in imparting education to the religious minorities with the help of financial aid coming from Pakistan or the Gulf. A few organisations are alleged to be involved with the terrorist organisations to carry out anti-Nepal activities. Documents have been received showing that Islamic Yuva Sangh of Nepal is working to establish "Islam in Nepal and Nizame Mustafa in the country...The Sangh is also doing its best, with the help of Islamic countries, to increase the gap between the Hindus and the Buddhists so that they become disunited and Islam emerges as the strongest religion of Nepal." Though it is not possible to turn a Hindu majority state into a Muslim state, the possibility of creating social tension with external interference cannot be ruled out. The fundamentalists or misguided youth can also be engaged in anti-India activities considering their concentration is in the Terai region of Nepal which is adjacent to the densely populated Muslim areas of UP and Bihar known for nefarious activities of smuggling, movement of arms and drugs. Thus, India and Nepal cannot ignore the geo-political realities. They are cautious of the emerging threat of trans-border movement of criminals and subversive elements. The Government of Nepal has time and again emphasised on its total support to India in not allowing activities adverse to the interests of India from its soil. Geo-strategy still dictates India-Nepal relations.<sup>1</sup>

### **Historical perspective**

Indian leadership has not shown much keenness to address Nepal's calls for reciprocity in high-level visits whereas it's has been customary for Nepali prime ministers to visit New Delhi after they assume office. Nepal has not seen reciprocal trips by Indian PM for more than a decade. The last Indian prime minister to visit Nepal, at official level, was I. K. Gujral who visited Nepal in June 1997. The Gujral Doctrine of maintaining close and friendly relationship with the neighbors was very popular and the Trade and Transit



Treaty signed at that time was the testimony of his doctrine. Mukherjee's one-day visit on November 27 can also be remembered as the milestone in the Nepal India trade and Economic co-operation. Former Prime Minister of India, Atal Behari Vajpayee had visited Nepal in January 2002 but it was only for a day, to attend the 11th SAARC Summit. From 1997 to 2011, eleven Nepali prime ministers visited New Delhi.

Nepal and India enjoy very close, friendly relations, on account of geographical proximity and close cultural and economic bonds. Nepal is in a very important juncture currently. The political developments that are taking place now will have far-reaching consequences. Nepali people are confident that peace, stability and economic development will be achieved through the Constituent Assembly by drafting the Constitution and adopting subsequent economic ethos in days to come. Apart from ethnic, cultural and religious ties, both countries share similarities of approach on many outstanding international problems. SAARC, BIMSTEC have added some more areas for the two countries to work together in achieving the goal of collective self-reliance within the region. Both Nepal and India are the members of major international organizations and share common perceptions and concerns on most international issues.<sup>2</sup>

The visit by the Indian Finance Minister to Nepal at this stage certainly helps concretize the issues and reshaping the bilateral relations. As Nepal is a young republic country seeking to institutional democracy and peace, cooperation from India for the country's social, cultural, constitutional and economic development definitely becomes very crucial. Since India is quite aware of Nepal's situation, particularly of the private sector and the business community, this sector's representatives have been emphasizing that the trade and economic issues between Nepal and India be accorded special attention, especially given Nepal's LDC status. Both Nepal and India should follow the policy of "help thy neighbor prosper" by which it stops migration, increases employment opportunities and increases markets. In the recently concluded seminar, "Emerging Trends in Nepal-India relations", one of the conclusions of the conference was that if hydropower generation in Nepal is expedited, it would help in the industrial development of both Nepal and India. While discussing Nepal's trade deficit with India, it can be said that one single hydropower project would be enough to cover the trade deficit.

The other areas of mutual interest where Nepal and India have mutual advantage are in sectors like IT, tourism and establishing SEZs. The operationalization of the ICD would have reduced the cost of goods and transportation by 37 per cent. However, due to various technical and other problems associated with it, we have not been able to optimally use the ICD at Birgunj, Birtanagar and Bhairahawa. The recent broad-gauge railway extension up to Jogabani will have some positive impacts on the economy of Nepal.<sup>3</sup>

**Aggressive export promotion**

Unauthorized trade between Nepal and India has also a negative impact on both the countries, so formal trade should be encouraged for the mutual benefit of both the countries. On the FDI aspect, when we talk about Indian investment in Nepal, we should not only see what we have achieved, we should also focus more on the prospects and opportunities that lie ahead. The import of POL products accounted for about Rs. 65 billion whereas Nepal's total export constitutes about Rs. 64 billion. Thus, Nepal's export is not even enough to bridge the trade gap for one single product. So Nepal needs an aggressive export promotion drive from the production to the export marketing level. For this to happen, India's vast market access should be exploited.

With effect of the revised Nepal-India Trade Agreement there are two great expectations regarding Nepal's trade with India. First is overcoming the non-tariff barriers (NTBs) that restrained Nepal's export to India, despite the privilege of duty free market access. The treaty has essentially addressed the three long-standing issues faced by the Nepalese exporters: the technical requirements and standards, quantitative restriction, and the value addition criteria for preferential rules of origin. The great expectation is reducing Nepal's massive trade deficit with India which has more than doubled to Rs. 106 billion in the last five years. This proposition cannot, however, be uncontested mainly for two reasons. While the ratio of Nepal's export in the total trade value with India has been shrinking continuously, the import ratio has been swelling rapidly. That created a huge gap between the two. So for several reasons, it wouldn't be that simple for Nepal to bridge the gap so soon.

The areas of core competence of Nepali side are in the areas of Hydro Power, Tourism, High Value Agriculture in the Hilly regions, Service Sector, Transit Route between India & China, the two giant economies of the world. These areas need to be given top most priority during discussion in the present visit and help to tackle the issues which are being impediments to their growth of Nepal and Nepalese economy. Business will not happen only because of goodwill or relationships. It will occur only if it makes business sense. Realizing the importance of trade, the two sides agreed that enhancing trade between Nepal and India was a priority for both countries. Both sides agreed that the Inter Governmental Committee (IGC) at the level of Commerce Secretaries should look into the relevant issues with a view to promoting trade, investments and industrialization in Nepal, expanding complementarities of bilateral trade on a sustainable basis and further removing barriers to trade and investment.

Mutual esteem, tolerance and perseverance from both the countries are required towards this end.

Both of us in Nepal and India keep on flipping back to the pages of history whenever we talk about Indo-Nepal relations. We tend to recall with devotion and nurturing the relations received from towering personalities like Late Jawaharlal Nehru, Late King Mahendra and Late B.P Koirala. Looking back to the our glorious past of 50 years, the first notable feature in our bilateral relationship has been the impact of this influence on the attitudes, approaches and obstacles facing us. This high moral ground sometimes distant from real politic gave us aggravation because not always the rhetoric of ‘sharing a great cultural past and a common heritage’ explain & the urgent cruxes before us.

Clearly, retrospection is essential not only because of the changing global scenario obtained by the collapse of the Soviet Union but because of the danger of moving on into the 21st century with the hangovers and accumulated experiences of the past. Why should we remain prisoners of the past while mindsets in both our countries have changed to a remarkable degree? A new generation has emerged and they demand a new meaning, purpose and direction to the relationship and justification to our deeds. They are no longer inspired by the fact that Nehru supported the Nepalese to oust the Ranas in 1950 or by the passionate solidarity the Nepalese politicians showed to end the British rule in India. The grandfathers of today’s generation of Nepal may have obeyed Gandhi ji to cram inside Indian prisoners and the fathers might have studied in Banaras developing close intimacy with late Jay Prakash Narayan but the new Internet generation with their free spirit and education in Europe and America are no longer emotional regarding this ties of warm friendship. Therefore, Indo-Nepal relations today stands at the crossroads- searching for a new purpose and a new goal. The task before us is to construct an outline consistent with the perils and possibilities of the new era. It requires courage, steadfastness and vision. The purpose here is not just to energize the existing characteristics but making a decisive turning point at which instant, nitty-gritty’s will no longer pester the overwhelming prospects brought about by the new developments in economic and technological fields. Though, I wish to emphasize the most on clearing off the cobwebs of our past, I am tempted if I may, to compare Indo-Nepal relations with traffic lights. No sooner the green light appears and a smooth flow of visits and joint action takes place, already the orange light cautions us on the approaching roadblock. In fact, red lights have been more common and will continue to halt the process of accords and agreements if there is the same old mind-set navigating our journey. Allow me to examine minutely some of the major attributes of alteration of systems and governments in Nepal and India and their influence in the overall bilateral relations.<sup>4</sup>

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru gave a statement in 1959 saying that ‘it is not necessary for us to have a military alliance with Nepal but the fact remains that we cannot tolerate any foreign invasion from any foreign country in any part of the sub-continent.

Any possible invasion of Nepal would inevitably involve the safety of India'. A disapproval on the implicit outlook of the statement by the then Nepalese Prime Minister B.P Koirala might have been the only instance when the bilateral relations confronted a displeasing moment during the era of the Nepali Congress rule when for the first time multi-party system was being exercised by Nepal. King Mahendra's ascent to power by arresting the Prime Minister and dissolving the parliament on December 15, 1960 at the time of the visit of General Thimmiaya to Nepal has been much studied by scholars and historians. India's defeat in the war with China in 1962 and Prime Minister Nehru's passing away in 1965 created a void in Indo-Nepal relations consequently bringing about the viewpoint of 'balancing the two neighbors' or even more bluntly 'playing one against the other'. Nonetheless, Mrs. Gandhi's advent to power saw Indo-Nepal relations again on a sound footing albeit not without occasional hiccups.<sup>4</sup> The personal relations enjoyed at the highest level during that time was extremely warm and cordial. An incident will I hope assist in ascertaining facts: On June 24th 1975, His Majesty's Government received an urgent message from the PMO, New Delhi stating that 'Lalit Narayan Mishra, (the then Railways Minister) would be arriving the very same day to Katmandu' but the purpose and details were not known. All arrangements were hastily made but as soon as Minister Mishra disembarked at the Tribhuvan International Airport, he told officials that without delay, he wanted immediately to have a darshan of the goddess Dakchhinkali. Right after getting the prasada and the tika of the temple, Minister Mishra took off for Delhi. The very next day, as the government of Nepal had already anticipated of some major development, Mrs. Gandhi declared emergency in India. Nepal was likewise, one of the first countries to recognize the birth of Bangladesh in 1971 despite at the same time enjoying hassle-free relations with both China and Pakistan. Thus, I feel that the argument of many scholars that Indo-Nepal relations nose-dived right after the royal takeover in 1960 just doesn't deserve merit. Another instance of a senior Congress (I) leader who became Chief Minister and minister at the center several times happened to possess land in Nepal given to him by his grand mother, a Nepali citizen. Under the Nepalese law, a non-Nepali was barred from possessing any property in Nepal. Such was the altitude of the existing relations between the two governments that his land was sold to a local buyer and the liquid assets handed over. It was only during the final years of the 1980s that saw Nepal and India locked in horns over issues that were at many times in the past amicably solved.<sup>5</sup>

After the restoration of multi-party democracy in Nepal in 1990, definitely, the mistrust and suspicion has been gradually replaced by the shared belief of mutual understanding and interdependence. One thing positive that the advent of multi-party democracy in 1990 has undoubtedly presented is an exhilarating flow of different views

and cross-fertilization of ideas bringing the various issues relating to foreign affairs into public debates and scrutiny. However, contradictory pulls and pressures of a plural society under a multi-party democracy have at times impaired the overwhelming possibilities before us.

Nevertheless, despite odds, I think the last 5 years have seen a steady advancement in consolidating the friendship between the two countries with the initiating of several important agreements reached between Nepal and India. The Mahakali Treaty was one turning point in our journey, which has encompassed multi-faceted collaborative activities, ranging from development of infrastructure to human resource development. For the first time ever, elections in Nepal did not hear anti-Indian slogans to win over the voters. This is not by any means a minor achievement and should not be shoved away for we can easily return to the same situation of animosity and mistrust in no time at all. The scholars present here would agree that as India and Nepal both move towards a liberalized economy, it is high time that we begin focussing on trade, harnessing the water resources and tourism prospects and bringing the private sector on the forefront. India is a big market of energy and Nepal has a huge potential for energy. Obviously, we will gain collectively if we are to close down the assumptions of a by-gone era and embrace the massive wealth being poured into the region. Unfortunately, Nepali politics has been inordinately rigid as regards to sharing water resources and implementing the idea of a joint effort which would be beneficial not only to the power hungry states of northern India but also to the Nepalese people.<sup>6</sup>

As far as security issues are concerned, both the sides must acknowledge the sensitivities and able to tackle things in a more matured manner. India must understand the Nepalese psyche. In fact, India has been raising security-related issues since the days of the Panchayat days in Nepal and its concerns have been growing constantly. While such concerns have been on the rise, the relationship between the two armies has been friendly and cordial. It has been a customary practice for each Chief of the Army Staff of Nepal to pay a visit to India and receive the title of the honorary general of the Indian army and vice versa. Cooperation between the two armies on additional areas has also been taking place and there cannot be any reason why we cannot elevate the relations from meager topics. The emphasis therefore should be on the change of perception. There is also a need of a broader understanding at the highest level and to keep the confidence built up at all levels if we are to rescue ourselves from being victims of the past and if achieved, accounts of narcotics, smuggling, counterfeit currency and even terrorism via Nepalese soil will be the tales of a bygone era. The external world at large is fast changing and it will be unrealistic for us to operate on assumptions we have been having in the past 2 or 3 decades. Generation has

changed in both our countries. Let's realize and apprehend this fact. Only then will we become positivists rather than simply normatives.

## **CONCLUSION**

India-Nepal relations have been responding to the changes taking place in the international arena in the post-Cold War era. The simultaneous political changes taking place in both the countries are also instrumental in shaping their relations. One of the major changes in India is the emergence of pluralism in politics with the decline in the power of the Congress Party which had ruled the country as a major party since 1947. Since 1990, India has had three coalition governments. The governments in India have realised the basic thrust in the changing global environment where it has to develop relations with its neighbours based on trust and confidence and non-reciprocity which is an essential element in defining relations between asymmetrical nations. The change in the Indian policy from the Indira Doctrine to the Gujral Doctrine has been positively received by Nepal which has also been making changes in its foreign policy postulates. Emphasis has been given on developing relations with the neighbouring countries, strengthening the institutional capability of the Foreign Ministry, and resolving the domestic issues affecting the security and stability of the country. The foreign policy of Nepal has come a long way from its policy of special relations with India to the policy of equi-distance with its neighbours to a search of an independent foreign policy. The often played strategy to use one neighbour against the other is no longer effective in the post-Cold War era. As discussed earlier, the growing Sino-India relations have decreased the manoeuvring capabilities of Nepal to play one neighbour against another. Instead, there is a shift from exploiting the differences of the neighbours to its advantage to develop relations with the neighbours on the basis of mutual benefit. However, the changing global and regional political scenario does not undermine the geo-strategic realities. Nepal's buffer status between India and China still exists. In keeping with the global economic activism, both India and Nepal have emphasised on developing trade relations. Nepal's proposal to develop an economic quadrangle consisting of Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and India is a successful attempt towards promoting economic diplomacy. Commenting on the challenges faced by Nepal in the globalisation of world economies, Kamal Thapa, the Foreign Minister of Nepal, said, "Today the aid era seems to be replaced by a foreign investment era. Hence, the need to use the country's resources as an effective diplomatic tool in other words, diversification of the investment regime just like trade and aid regimes were done. For the moment, water might be the only potential for the country to become the regional hub for energy not least water it self." India and Nepal have been successful in agreeing on sharing of hydro-power. However, consistency in foreign policy is synonymous with domestic stability. The weakness in the

coalition government of Gujral has created apprehensions in Nepal on the longevity and stability of the Gujral Doctrine. As discussed earlier, Nepal is in the early stages of democracy. It has had five coalition governments since 1991. An unstable government deters investments in a country. The normalisation of Sino-India relations has removed the external output affecting the India-Nepal relations but the domestic issues affecting the relations remain. Unless the domestic issues are addressed in the country, it will weaken the capabilities of the country to cope with the post-Cold War transformations. It would be in the interest of India to consolidate the socio-economic development of Nepal and have continuous dialogue marking areas of cooperation and resolving areas of disagreement.

Relations between India and Nepal have been bound by long-standing geographical, historical, cultural, social and economic ties that the peoples of the two countries have shared since times immemorial. For quite some time, and particularly with the installation of Maoist-led coalition government in August 2008, the demand for revision of treaties trade and of peace and friendship was being made in the context of new developments in bilateral relationships. Underscoring the close linkage between security and economy, Indias first treaty of Trade and Commerce with Nepal was signed on the same day as the Treaty of Peace and Friendship on 31 July 1950. The first section of this paper traces historically, the evolution of Indias Trade and Transit Treaties with Nepal beginning from the time such a Treaty was initiated in 1950 till the last revision was enacted on 28 October 2009. The paper focuses particularly on the last revision to analyze to what extent it addresses the concerns of the respective governments and stakeholders. The impression obtained is that the amendments rightly stress on a variety of non-tariff barriers as also non-tariff measures that need to be streamlined to enable trade, particularly exports from Nepal to flow more smoothly to India. However some time-bound institutional mechanism needs to be put in place to ensure that the incorporated provisions do not remain in the nature of best endeavor clauses. This is particularly relevant given that with the signing of several bilateral/regional free trade agreements by India over the last decade, the preference margin being enjoyed by Nepal has been severely eroded. In this context Indias offer to consider the removal of special additional duties on Nepalese exports to India (on specific request from Nepal) appears plausible. The paper highlights the trend in bilateral trade between the two countries. It notes that barring setbacks in certain years, the bilateral trade between the two countries has been growing briskly. It notes that even though Nepal has been able to diversify its trade with India, its trade deficit with India has been increasing sharply, and its export earnings are barely sufficient to meet the cost of imports of petroleum products from India. The paper identifies products with high trade potential of both the countries so that these could be targeted in trade facilitation measures or when mutual recognition of each countrys



certification is accepted by the other. Noting the close linkage between trade and investment, the paper examines the volume and status of Indian foreign direct investments in Nepal. An exercise in intra-industry trade between the two countries gives direction for sectors/ industries in which Indian investment could flow. The paper expresses concern about the labour situation in Nepal and the lack of arbitration tribunals in case of dispute. Quite a number of Indian industries have been shut down and those in the pipeline could also be adversely affected. In this context the need for long- pending Bilateral Investment treaty between the two countries has been emphasized.

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## सिरजनहार : विद्यापति को समग्र में खोजने का प्रयास

डॉ. कमलानन्द झा

उषाकिरण खान का ताज़ा उपन्यास **सिरजनहार** ( भारतीय ज्ञानपीठ प्रकाशन ) महाकवि विद्यापति के जीवन-वृत्त, जीवन-संघर्ष और जीवन-द्वन्द्व की सृजनात्मक अभिव्यक्ति है, विद्यापति का सुदीर्घ जीवन विविध भावों, विचारों और व्यवस्थाओं का 'विरुद्धों का सामंजस्य' है। अन्यतम और अन्तरंग शृंगार से लेकर पराकाष्ठा की भक्ति, शास्त्रीय और पांडित्यपूर्ण भाषा संस्कृत से लेकर लोक भाषा मैथिली, राजदरबार के समृद्धशाली एश्वर्य से लेकर गांव के खेत-खलिहान और युद्ध में तलवारबाजी से लेकर काव्य-रचना तक विद्यापति की समवेत आवाजाही उनके व्यक्तित्व को सर्वथा अलग और विविधरंगी बनाती है, और यही वजह है कि इनका व्यक्तित्व और कृतित्व लेखकों को आकर्षित करता रहा है। उषाकिरण ने इस ऐतिहासिक जीवनीपरक उपन्यास **सिरजनहार** में विद्यापति को समग्रता में खोजने का प्रयास किया है, इस खोजने की प्रक्रिया में निश्चित रूप से लेखिका ने विद्यापति की कविताओं को केन्द्र में रखा है, लेकिन ध्यान देने की बात यह है कि उनकी इतिहास-चेतना उन कविताओं में गुम नहीं हो पायी है।

ऐतिहासिक जीवनीपरक उपन्यास लिखना अत्यन्त चुनौतीपूर्ण दायित्व है, कारण, ऐसे उपन्यास में जीवनी की तथ्यात्मकता, इतिहास की ऐतिहासिकता और उपन्यास की कलात्मकता की आवश्यकता एक साथ पड़ती है, इन तीनों गुणों को एक साथ साधना सहज रचना-कर्म नहीं। किसी भी अच्छी रचना में इन गुणों के कसावट और आपसी अंतर्संबंध को स्पष्ट करते हुए आलोचक मैनेजर पांडेय लिखते हैं— “ऐतिहासिक चेतना और कला-चेतना का जहाँ मेल होता है, वहीं से रचना या आलोचना की शुरुआत होती है। ऐतिहासिक चेतना से रचनाकार को राष्ट्रीय चेतना, वर्गीय चेतना और मानवीय चेतना का बोध होता है। इसी से उसे अपनी कलापरंपरा की चेतना भी प्राप्त होती है, और ऐतिहासिक चेतना से ही समकालीन युग के सन्दर्भ में रचनाकार को अपनी रचनाशीलता की सार्थकता का भी बोध होता है। इस बोध से ही रचनाकार को रचनाकर्म की दिशा और दृष्टि मिलती है। इसके बाद ही उसकी कला चेतना की सृजनशीलता रचना में व्यक्त होती है, “सिरजनहार में तथ्यात्मकता, कलात्मकता और ऐतिहासिकता को यथासंभव साधने का प्रयास किया गया है।

ऐतिहासिक उपन्यास की रचना-प्रक्रिया वर्तमान की आँखों से अतीत को देखने की सजग प्रक्रिया होती है। कई रचनाकार अतीत को देखते समय अतीत का ही चश्मा लगा लेते हैं, तब वह रचना अतीत का गुणगान होकर रह जाती है, इस तरह की रचना अपनी सार्थकता खो देती है। जब वर्तमान की नजरों से अतीत को देखने का सार्थक प्रयास किया जाता है तो स्वभावतः उसमें आलोचनात्मक-विवेक की गुंजाईश बन जाती है। **सिरजनहार** में इस आलोचनात्मक-विवेक की पड़ताल की जा सकती है। वर्ण व्यवस्था, धार्मिक संकीर्णता तथा स्त्री-शोषण आदि में उनकी सचेत आलोचनात्मक दृष्टि उपन्यास को

समकालीन उपन्यास बनाती है ।

जीवनीपरक उपन्यास एक तरह से लक्ष्य जीवनी की रचनात्मक समीक्षा भी होती है । पूज्य-भाव से लिखा गया उपन्यास उक्त विधा के साथ न्याय नहीं कर सकता । नीर-क्षीर विवेक की मांग ऐसे उपन्यासों से होती है, और इसी अर्थ में कोई ऐतिहासिक जीवनीपरक उपन्यास समकालीन हो सकता है । समकालीन घटना का चयन ही समकालीनता का परिचायक नहीं होता, बल्कि अतीत की घटना, वस्तु और विचार यदि सार्थक है तो वह भी समकालीन होता है । इस अर्थ में जीवनीपरक उपन्यास में जीवनी नायक की सीमाओं और संभावनाओं तथा तत्कालीन द्वन्द्वों को यदि रचनाकार उभार पाने में समर्थ हो पाता है तो वह रचना समकालीन कही जा सकती है । **सिरजनहार** में विद्यापति की समकालीनता उद्घाटित करने में लेखिका को सफलता प्राप्त हुई है । विद्यापति के द्वन्द्वों और तनावों को लक्षित किया गया है किन्तु विद्यापति के प्रति पूर्ण श्रद्धा-भाव के साथ विद्यापति का माहात्म्य प्रदर्शन उपन्यास को जीवनी नायक के प्रति आलोचनात्मक नहीं बनने देता ।

विद्यापति के जीवन संघर्ष का सबसे अहम् पहलू है उनका लोक भाषा मैथिली के प्रति अथाह अनुराग । उस समय विद्वता का पर्याय संस्कृत भाषा थी, ठीक वैसे ही जैसे आज बौद्धिकता का पर्याय अंग्रेजी भाषा बनी हुई है । कहने की आवश्यकता नहीं कि विद्यापति संस्कृत, प्राकृत और अपभ्रंश के भी रचनाकार थे । इसके बावजूद बहुभाषिक विद्यापति ने काव्याभिव्यक्ति के लिए 'देसिल बयना' को ही चुना । संभव है आज यह बात उतनी क्रांतिकारी और चुनौतीपूर्ण ना लगे किन्तु चौदहवीं शताब्दी में जब यश मात्र संस्कृत में लिखकर ही प्राप्त हो सकता था, संस्कृत ज्ञान के बावजूद लोक भाषा में रचना करना विद्यापति का जोखिम भरा साहसपूर्ण कदम था । लेखिका उषा किरण ने संकेत किया है कि कवि की दूरदृष्टि ने यह देख लिया था कि भविष्य संस्कृत का नहीं लोकभाषा का है । इस साहसिक कार्य के लिए उन्हें अपने विद्वत समाज से ही नहीं लड़ना पड़ा था बल्कि उन्हें स्वयं से भी भीषण आंतरिक लड़ाई लड़नी पड़ी थी । महाकवि के इस अंतरयुद्ध को 'सिरजनहार' में उषा किरण ने विलक्षण रचनात्मकता के साथ प्रस्तुत किया है । उपन्यास में यह पहली लड़ाई विद्यापति को अपने आदरणीय गुरु हरिमिश्र से लड़नी पड़ी । उन्हें गुरु ने मूर्ख, अपढ़ और कुलांगार तक कहा, लेकिन विद्यापति विचलित नहीं हुए, पहली बार जिस दिन हरिमिश्र को यह ज्ञात हुआ कि विद्यापति मैथिली में रचना करने लगे हैं, तो विद्यापति की पेशी गुरु की अदालत में होती है, 'विद्यापति इतनी भ्रष्ट भाषा में यह गान लिखा है, इसका मुझे तनिक भी भान नहीं होता..... तुम देवभाषा के ज्ञाता हो, तुम्हारे कुल में रचनाकार होने की परम्परा है.....इस भ्रष्ट सामान्य जन की भाषा में तुमने रचना की? रचना का स्तर गिरा? यह उचित नहीं? किसी प्रकार मैं तुम्हें ऐसा करने की छूट नहीं दूंगा, तुम मेरा यह अंतिम आदेश मान लो और भ्रष्ट भाषा में रचनाकर्म बंद करो, ताल पत्र को व्यर्थ ना भरो' । विद्यापति का मन गुरु का यह आदेश मानने को तैयार नहीं होता । वे अपने अंतरतम की आवाज को बाल सखा शिवसिंह तक पहुंचाते हैं— 'मित्र, मैं अपने आप में संकल्प लेकर बैठा हूँ, किन्तु गुरु के आदेश तथा व्यवहार पर विचलित हूँ, आप जानते हैं कि देवी वाणी मेरे आदेश पर नहीं चलती, वे तो स्वयमेव

अंतःसलिला की भाँति मुझमें प्रवाहित होकर फूट पड़ने को आतुर रहती हैं, मैं उन्हें कैसे रोकूँ” ।

विद्यापति अपनी आवाज आम जन तक पहुँचाना चाहते थे, आमजन का रूचि परिष्कार करना चाहते थे । कविता को चंद पढ़े लिखे लोगों तक सीमित संकुचित नहीं करना चाहते थे । सम्पूर्ण भक्ति आन्दोलन का सर्वाधिक प्रगतिशील आयामों में एक था भक्त कवियों का लोक भाषा में रचना करना । उत्तर भारत में सर्वप्रथम विद्यापति ने लोकभाषा के अकूत सामर्थ्य को समझा । विद्यापति की इसी लोकभाषा की नींव पर कबीर, जायसी, तुलसीदास, सूरदास और मीरा जैसे भक्त कवियों ने काव्याभिव्यक्ति के लिए अपने ‘देसिल’ भाषा का चुनाव किया । विद्यापति की इस भाषाई चेतना को **सिरजनहार** में वाद-विवाद संवाद के माध्यम से अत्यन्त रोचक शैली में प्रस्तुत किया गया है । गुरु हरिमिश्र द्वारा लोकभाषा में काव्य रचना पर प्रतिबन्ध लगाने के बावजूद विद्यापति का रचनाकर्म पूर्ववत् जारी रहा । गुरु का कोप जाग जाता है । इस बार विद्यापति गुरु से जिरह करते हैं, इस जिरह में विद्यापति की प्रखर तार्किकता और प्रगतिशील सोच को रेखांकित किया जा सकता है ।

लेखिका ने विद्यापति की इस भाषाई चेतना को रेखांकित कर महाकवि के व्यक्तित्व को एक अद्भुत गरिमा प्रदान की है । इस वाद-विवाद संवाद की तथ्यात्मकता जो भी हो किन्तु यह कल्पनाशीलता सत्य के करीब है, क्योंकि उस समय मैथिल पंडित संस्कृत से बाहर रचनाकर्म को अत्यन्त हीनकर्म मानते थे । विद्यापति के समकालीन संस्कृत के प्रकांड पंडित और प्रख्यात दर्शनशास्त्री पक्षधर मिश्र भी विद्यापति के लोकभाषा प्रेम का मजाक उड़ाते हैं । इस आधार पर विद्यापति को राजसभा में भी तीव्र विरोध का सामना करना पड़ता है, किन्तु विद्यापति ने इन तमाम विरोधों को झेलते हुए अंततः काव्यकर्म के लिए ‘भाषा’ को स्थापित कर ही दिया । विद्यापति ऐसे ही इतिहास पुरुष नहीं बनते हैं । ध्यान देने की बात यह है कि विद्यापति मैथिली को ही मीठी भाषा नहीं कहते वे लोक भाषा मात्र को ‘देसिल बयना सबजन मिट्ठा’ कहते हैं । नवजागरण काल में भारतेन्दु इसी भाव को निज भाषा के रूप में स्थापित करते हैं— ‘निजभाषा उन्नति अहै सब उन्नति को मूल ।’

मिथिला लोक संस्कृति सम्पन्न प्रदेश रहा है । उषा किरण इस बात को लेकर सचेत हैं कि विद्यापति जैसा लोक-चित्त में बसा कवि किसी समृद्ध लोक-परम्परा की ही उपज हो सकता है । उपन्यास **सिरजनहार** में मिथिला की लोक-धुन की अनुगूँज अनवरत सुनाई देती है । लोक-संस्कृति की बारीक पहचान उपन्यास को विश्वसनीय बनाता है । मिथिला की लोक-परम्परा में विद्यापति की गहरी आस्था थी । उन्होंने मिथिला के राजनीतिक, सामाजिक एवं सांस्कृतिक जीवन को बहुत करीब से देखा था, उपन्यासकार ने विद्यापति के इस व्यक्तित्व को पूरी कथा में विन्यस्त करने का प्रयास किया है । प्रसिद्ध आलोचक जार्ज लुकाच अपनी पुस्तक ‘द हिस्टोरिकल नावेल’ में इस सन्दर्भ में लिखते हैं, “हम यह कहना चाहते हैं कि एक प्रतिभाशाली व्यक्ति अपने युग के सम्पूर्ण आर्थिक, सामाजिक, राजनीतिक तथा सांस्कृतिक जीवन, महत्वपूर्ण आन्दोलनों के संघर्ष, वर्ग संघर्ष तथा अपने युग की भौतिक-सांस्कृतिक विरासत से कितना अधिक जुड़ा हुआ होता है, तथा वह उस युग की अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण प्रवृत्तियों को बढ़ावा देकर तथा उन पर पूर्ण

रूप से अपने आपको केन्द्रित करके ही अपनी प्रतिभा की मौलिकता को सिद्ध कर सकता हैं '''

**सिरजनहार** में मिथिला के लगभग सभी लोक उत्सवों का जीवंत वर्णन हुआ है। सवर्ण समाज में प्रचलित लोक व्यवहारों के अतिरिक्त निम्न जाति के समाज में प्रचलित लोक संस्कृति का भी चित्ताकर्षक विवरण यहाँ देखने को मिलता है, नट-बक्खो और पमारिया जाति के वैशिष्ट्य को लेखिका ने गहरी संवेदनाशीलता के साथ उकेरा है नवजात बच्चे को अशीषने और नेग निछावर लेने पमारिया मिथिला के घरों में आते हैं। ये हिजड़े प्रजाति के होते हैं। मिथिला में इनका अनादर कोई नहीं करता। नवजात बच्चे को गोद में लेकर ये नाचते-गाते हैं और खुशी-खुशी भेंट-उपहार लेकर चले जाते हैं। कुछ पमरिये कथा बाँचने में प्रवीण होते हैं। उपन्यास में ऐसे ही एक वृद्ध छगन पमारिया का कलात्मक सृजन किया गया है, जो विद्यापति के जन्म पर अपनी टोली के साथ आता है और अपने नृत्य, गायन और कथा-वाचन से सबका मन मोह लेता है। दरभंगा राज के इतिहास को बताने के लिए लेखिका ने पमारिया के कथा-वाचन की शैली का सार्थक उपयोग किया है।

**कीर्तिलता** तत्कालीन इतिहास की प्रामाणिक पुस्तक है। यह पुस्तक विद्यापति की जौनपुर यात्रा की आँखों देखा हाल है। जौनपुर के समाज, बाजार तथा वेश्याओं आदि का अत्यन्त जीवंत वर्णन कीर्तिलता को अनोखी कृति सिद्ध करता है। उषाकिरण लिखती हैं, 'विद्यापति ने सर्वत्र निर्वाचन, चयन एवं सामंजस्य योजना के द्वारा चित्र को पूर्ण तथा सजीव बनाने का प्रयास किया। वस्तुतः तत्कालीन मुसलमान का, हिन्दू का, सामंत का, शहर का, युद्ध का, सेना का, सिपाही का इतना जीवंत और यथार्थ विवरण किया कि पढ़ने वाले दाँतों तले ऊँगली दबाते वस्तुतः उन्होंने अपनी कृति में मुसलमानी प्रभाव के उस विस्तार युग में हिन्दुओं की जीवन दशा का अत्यन्त सूक्ष्म निदर्शन किया''।

उत्तर भारत का भक्ति काव्य अपनी सारी प्रगतिशीलता और समाजोन्मुखता के बावजूद स्त्री के प्रति संवेदनशील नहीं था। माया मानकर स्त्री को भक्ति में अवरोधक-तत्त्व माना गया, अधिकांश भक्त कवियों ने अपनी कविताओं में स्त्री की निंदा की है। कबीरदास, तुलसीदास और चैतन्य महाप्रभु में तो स्त्री निंदा की कोई सीमा नहीं है। इस दृष्टि से विद्यापति अनोखे कवि हैं। उनकी पदावली में स्त्री निंदा का स्वर कहीं नहीं है। स्त्री के प्रति आदर भाव और प्रेम भाव इनकी पदावली की मूल संवेदना है। इनके भक्ति पद में भी स्त्री की महिमा का ही गान हुआ है। संभव है यह भाव शाक्त और शैव भक्ति के प्रति उनके लगाव के कारण आया हो **सिरजनहार** उपन्यास में विद्यापति की स्त्री के प्रति इस संवेदनशीलता को रेखांकित किया गया है। तत्कालीन मिथिला में स्त्री शोषण और उनकी अधोगति के प्रति विद्यापति को चिंतित दिखाकर लेखिका ने उनके स्त्री-सरोकार को स्पष्ट किया है। विशेषकर विधवा स्त्रियों का यौन-शोषण मठों और मंदिरों में तो होता ही था घर और परिवार की चारदीवारी भी उनके लिए महफूज नहीं थी, ऐसे कई संकेत-सूत्र विद्यापति के माध्यम से उपन्यास में बिखरे पड़े हैं। तिरहुत की दो स्त्रियाँ बेला और यामनी अगवा कर बनारस लायी जाती हैं और यहाँ नर्तकी बनने पर मजबूर होती हैं। इन दोनों के संवाद के माध्यम से लेखिका ने स्त्री की दारुण दशा का वर्णन किया है और स्त्रियों के प्रति विद्यापति की दृष्टि

का खुलासा किया गया है। यामनी द्विरागमन से पहले विधवा हो गयी थी, “उस समय उसकी आयु ग्यारह वर्ष थी, धनहीन ब्राह्मण की बेटी होने के कारण छोटी आयु के दूसरे धनहीन के साथ बाँध दिया गया। वह भी नहीं रहा। यामनी शिवशंकर की पति की ओर की कुटुम्बनी थी अतः इनके घर सेवा में जुट गयी। विद्यापति के वृहत्तर परिवार के युवक, प्रौढ़ इस पर कुदृष्टि डालते, यह यदि प्रतिकार करती, तो इसे ससुराल छोड़ आने की धमकी दी जाती,” बनारस में यामनी बेला से कहती हैं “कवि के मन में पीड़ा हो तो वह प्रतिकार करेगा कलम से, वह जो प्रतिकार करेगा उसका परिणाम आज नहीं तो कल मिलेगा बेला।”

सामान्य रूप से मध्यकालीन भक्ति-काव्य में स्त्री की छवि भले ही उत्साहवर्धक न रही हो किन्तु राजनीति में कई स्त्रियों की पकड़ अत्यन्त मजबूत थी। जहाँआरा बेगम, घसेटी बेगम, ताराबाई, अहिल्याबाई, महारानी देवकुंवर तथा वीरांगना जैतकुंवरी आदि के साहसिक कारनामे इतिहास में दर्ज हैं। इनमें से कईयों ने युद्धभूमि में पतियों का साथ दिया तो कुछ ने राज-काज में। **सिरजनहार** उपन्यास में इस बात की तस्दीक की गई है कि मिथिला राज का सफल सञ्चालन कई वर्षों तक शिवसिंह की पत्नी लखिमा देवी ने किया, राजा शिवसिंह के अचानक पलायन कर जाने पर मिथिला राज्य संकट में पड़ गया था लेकिन विद्यापति के सहयोग से लखिमा देवी के दक्ष संचालन में राज्य अपने पाँव पर खड़ा हो गया था, इस ऐतिहासिक सच्चाई को मिथिला में स्त्री शक्ति के संधान के रूप में देखा जाना चाहिए।

**सिरजनहार** में विद्यापति की शिवभक्ति का अत्यन्त विस्तार से वर्णन हुआ है। विद्यापति की महेशवाणियों और नचारियों का उपयोग उपन्यास में महाकवि के सामाजिक सरोकार को दर्शाने के लिये किया गया है। इस सरोकार में बाल-विवाह, अनमेल विवाह, पति का पलायन आदि महत्वपूर्ण हैं। कुछ नचारियों में कृषिकर्म की महत्ता की ओर संकेत किया गया है। एक पद में पार्वती शिव को भीख मांगने की प्रवृत्ति को धिक्कारती हैं और उनसे कृषि कार्य करने को प्रेरित करती हुई कहती हैं कि तुम अपने त्रिशूल से हल बना लो, बसहा को बैल बनाकर हल चलाओ, जटा के गंगाजल से सिंचाई करो। कई पदों में मिथिला की सामाजिक विद्रूपता और कटु सच्चाई से हमारा साक्षात्कार होता है। सम्पूर्ण भक्ति काल में इस आशय का पद ढूँढ पाना कदाचित संभव नहीं। ऐसे कुछ पदों में विद्यापति ने मिथिला की गरीबी और अभावपूर्ण जीवन का मार्मिक चित्रण किया है।

विद्यापति शृंगार के रसराज कवि हैं, विलक्षण राग-बोध के कवि। **सिरजनहार** में इनके राग-बोध और रसिक मिजाज का उद्घाटन उषाकिरण खान ने अत्यन्त बोल्लड रूप में किया है। जब विद्यापति ही इसे टैबू नहीं मानते तो इन पर उपन्यास लिखने वाले को तो नहीं ही मानना चाहिए। विवाहोपरांत महाकवि द्वारा अपने शृंगारिक पदों का व्यवहारिक उपयोग का विलक्षण दृश्यांकन उपन्यास में किया गया है। विद्यापति ने राजा शिवसिंह की पत्नी लखिमा को अपने अधिकांश शृंगारिक पदों में अत्यन्त स्नेह से याद किया है। कई लेखकों ने विद्यापति और लखिमा के मधुर सम्बन्ध के कयास भी लगाए हैं। **सिरजनहार** की लेखिका भी इस सम्बन्ध में सहमत तो होती हैं किन्तु उपन्यास में इस सम्बन्ध को सायास स्पष्ट नहीं करती हैं। स्थान-स्थान पर ऐसे क्षण की सृष्टि की गई है जो इस अकथ्य सम्बन्ध के गवाह बन सकते थे, मगर

लेखिका ने उस पर एक झीना सा आवरण डाल दिया है। लखिमा विद्यापति के गाँव की एक अत्यन्त सुन्दर युवती है और काव्य रचना में उसकी गहरी अभिरूचि है। विद्यापति ही शिवसिंह और लखिमा के बीच विवाह का माध्यम बनते हैं। शिवसिंह के अचानक गायब हो जाने के बाद से अंत तक विद्यापति लखिमा का साथ देते हैं। राजकाज से लेकर जीवन-जगत में कदम-कदम पर विद्यापति का साथ लखिमा को आत्मविश्वास से भर देता है। इस अव्याख्येय सम्बन्ध को लेखिका ने अत्यन्त कोमलता से रचा है।

मध्यकाल में मुस्लिम अत्याचार एक ऐतिहासिक सच्चाई है और इससे मुँह नहीं मोड़ा जा सकता है। अन्य कई साक्ष्यों के अतिरिक्त विद्यापति की 'कीर्तिलता' इसका प्रमाण है। लेकिन यह अत्याचार सम्प्रदाय केन्द्रित उतना नहीं जितना सत्ता-संघर्ष जनित रहा है। इसका एक प्रमाण यह है कि भक्तिकालीन हिन्दी कविता जो सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक रूप से अत्यन्त सजग थी, में साम्प्रदायिक अत्याचार के संकेत नहीं मिलते हैं, विद्यापति में तो बिल्कुल नहीं। विद्यापति की अकूत लोकप्रियता का कारण उनकी 'पदावली' है। उपन्यास का नाम 'सिरजनहार' भी हमें यही संकेतित करता है। उपन्यास सरीखे कथात्मक अभिव्यक्ति में विवेकपूर्ण निर्णय लेना पड़ता है कि देश, काल और परिस्थिति के अनुसार किस प्रसंग को विस्तार दिया जाये और किस सन्दर्भ का मात्र संकेत-भर **सिरजनहार** उपन्यास में विद्यापति के बहाने मुस्लिम अत्याचार को बार-बार रेखांकित किया गया है। यह रेखांकन कहीं न कहीं समकालीन सामाजिक-राजनीतिक दबाव का परिचायक हो सकता है। इस प्रसंग को वगैरे अधिक विस्तार दिए उपन्यास को सद्भावनापूर्ण और संवेदनशील बनाया जा सकता था। **सिरजनहार** 456 पृष्ठों का वृहत्काय उपन्यास है। उषा किरण खान इस इतिवृत्तात्मकता से अपने आपको बचा सकती थीं। कदाचित् उपन्यास लिखने के बाद उषाजी सम्पादन कार्य नहीं कर पायी हैं। कुछ प्रसंगों को सम्पादित कर उपन्यास को और अधिक रोचक बनाया जा सकता था। किसी भी तरह के लेखन में प्रसंग त्याग का बोध रचना को सूक्ष्म, शार्प और अंतर्दृष्टिपूर्ण बनाता है। यद्यपि बड़े-बड़े लेखकों में इस प्रसंग विस्तार की सीमा को देखा जा सकता है। जहाँ तक कि गोदान और झूठा-सच जैसे महान उपन्यास में आलोचकों ने इस कमी को लक्षित किया है।

ऐतिहासिक जीवनी या जीवनीपरक उपन्यास में किंवदंतियों का विशेष महत्व है। किंवदंतियों को एक सिरे से खारिज कर देना जितनी बड़ी भूल हो सकती हैं, उतनी ही बड़ी भूल किंवदंतियों को अभिधा में लेना। विद्यापति के सन्दर्भ में उगना प्रसंग और गंगा विशेष रूप से महत्वपूर्ण हैं। इन किंवदंतियों को सचेत होकर देखने की जरूरत है। लेखिका ने उक्त दोनों किंवदंतियों को जस का तस अर्थ ग्रहण किया है। कहा जाता है कि साक्षात् महादेव, उगना का रूप धारण कर विद्यापति के यहाँ चाकरी करते थे। यह किंवदंती इस बात को कहती है कि विद्यापति शिव के असाधारण भक्त थे। उगना साक्षात् महादेव थे, यह किंवदंती का अभिधार्थ है। उगना नाम का बालक शिव का चाकर रहा होगा। उसे शिवभक्ति के पद बहुत पसंद होंगे। वह विद्यापति से उन पदों को अत्यन्त मनोयोग से सुनता होगा। संभव है इन पदों को गाता भी होगा। तांडव नृत्य भी करता हो। यह भी संभव है कि विद्यापति या किसी के सपने में उगना, महादेव के रूप में प्रकट हुए हों, विद्यापति की अनन्य शिवभक्ति और साथ में नितांत अपरिचित और अनाम कुल गोत्र के अपढ

बालक का शिव के प्रति उच्चकोटि के राग ने इस किंवदंती को गढ़ा होगा । लेखिका **सिरजनहार** में इस किंवदंती को नया अर्थ छवि नहीं दे पाती हैं । मिथकों और किंवदंतियों का रचनात्मक सौन्दर्य उसके अर्थान्तरण और निहितार्थ में छिपा होता है । किंवदंतियों की प्रासंगिकता को रेखांकित करते हुए प्रसिद्ध आलोचक पुरुषोत्तम अग्रवाल लिखते हैं— “किंवदंतियों, लोकमान्यताओं और साहित्य तथा साहित्येतर रचनाओं में झलकने वाले विचारों और रुझानों, कल्पनाओं और फंतेसियों के सामाजिक-आर्थिक आधार की खोज की जाए । बिना बात के कोई समाज किंवदंतियाँ नहीं रचा करता, जरूरत उन्हें समझने की है । चुनौती इनमें निहित सामाजिक कल्पना के ताने-बाने को समझने की है । किंवदंती एक संकेतन व्यवस्था, एक भाषा है । किंवदंती वह अवकाश है, जिसमें समाज अपनी स्मृति भी संजोता है, कल्पनाएँ भी, जिसमें सामाजिक यथार्थ के अनुभवों के स्वर गूँजते हैं और सामूहिक आकांक्षाओं के भी ।”

उषाकिरण खान मैथिली और हिन्दी की लगभग सभी विधाओं में रचना करती रही हैं । इन्होंने हिन्दी और मैथिली में कई उत्कृष्ट उपन्यासों और कहानियों की रचना की हैं । फागुन के बाद, सीमान्त कथा, रतनारे नयन, पानी पर लकीर एवं त्रिज्या इनके महत्वपूर्ण हिन्दी उपन्यास हैं । निश्चित रूप से महाकवि के जीवन पर आधारित इनके उपन्यास **सिरजनहार** को पाठकों और आलोचकों से सराहना मिलेगी ।

संदर्भ—

‘सिरजनहार’, उषाकिरण खान, ज्ञानपीठ प्रकाशन, नयी दिल्ली



## रेणु की कहानियों की संरचना और परिवेश : सुरेन्द्र चौधरी की दृष्टि में

शंकर कुमार

रेणु की कहानियों से नयी कहानी आंदोलन में एक नयी दिशा को संकेत देती संरचनात्मक प्रौढ़ता आती है। इस नयी दिशा का संकेत केवल आंचलिकता से सम्बद्ध नहीं था बल्कि कहानी की अंतर्वस्तु में -रूप और परिवेश में-कुछ ऐसे सार्थक और दीर्घजीवी तत्व रेणु ने जोड़े जिसके कारण उनकी कहानियाँ अपना भिन्न स्वभाव और रचनाधर्मिता प्रदर्शित कर सकीं। रेणु पर सर्वप्रथम महत्वपूर्ण चिन्तन करने वाले डॉ. सुरेन्द्र चौधरी लिखते हैं कि “रेणु की कहानियों का संसार आंचलिक भी है और शहरी भी है। पर तथाकथित आधुनिकता से भिन्न उनका एक जातीय स्वरूप है। रेणु की कहानियों के पात्र अकेले होकर भी अकेलेपन की नियति से अभिशप्त नहीं हैं। वे अपने अकेलेपन की व्यक्तिगत त्रासदी को भी उस रूप में नहीं देखते, जिस रूप में रेणु के समकालीन कुछ कहानीकारों ने देखा है। यह भिन्नता रेणु की कहानियों की अलग से पहचान देती है। पात्र और परिवेश जिस सहजता से कहानी में घुल-मिल जाते हैं, उससे ऐसा लगता है जैसे कहानीकार ने उन्हें एकात्म में देखा है।”<sup>1</sup> रेणु की कहानियों में पात्र और परिवेश की इस एकात्मकता में प्रेमचन्द की कथा-परम्परा के अनेक तत्व संरक्षित मिलते हैं। कथा-रस को समान भाव से सुरक्षित रखकर रेणु ने अपने समय के ‘बदलते हुए यथार्थ से उत्पन्न तनाव की नाटकीयता’ को अपनी कहानियों की संरचना में जगह दी है। यथार्थ का यह तनाव रसप्रिया के ‘मिरदंगिया के मर्म’ तक भी पहुँचता है और ठेस के सिरचन की आत्मपीड़ा तक भी। लोक-जीवन के अंतरंग में पलने वाली सच्चाई सतह पर नहीं दिखती। इसी से रेणु लोक-गायन की एक पूरी धारा के साथ पंचकौड़ी मिरदंगिया को जोड़ते हैं। यह जुड़ाव अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण है, क्योंकि यहाँ कलाकार की सार्थकता का सवाल ही हाशिये पर है। जिस मिरदंगिया पंचकौड़ी की उँगली ‘रसपिरिया’ बजाते हुए (कला-साधना में) टेढ़ी हुई, वह अधपगला होकर अत्यन्त ‘निर्लज्जता’ और ‘थेथरई’ से लोगों की नजर में जीता है तथा ‘गले में मृदंग लटका कर गाँव-गाँव घूमता है, भीख माँगता है।’<sup>2</sup> लोक गायक की इस वर्तमान व्यर्थता में जीवन का जो दर्द है उसे रेणु संजीदगी से दिखलाते हैं। उनका संजीदापन तब और महत्वपूर्ण लगता है जब यथार्थ के इस तनाव में सामाजिक अंतर्विरोध के तीखे हो रहे अहसास भी समाहित होते हैं। डॉ. सुरेन्द्र चौधरी के शब्दों में “एक कलाकार की पीड़ा सम्पूर्ण सामाजिक अस्तित्व की पीड़ा में बदलने लगती है।”<sup>3</sup> ‘ठेस’ का सिरचन इस पीड़ा के दूसरे स्तर को प्रकट करता है। ग्रामीण समाज की जीवन शैली में नयेपन के प्रवेश से जो ‘एँठन भरी वास्तविकता’ उपस्थित हुई है, उसमें एक कलाकार के स्वाभिमान को ‘ठेस’ लगती है। यह ठेस उसको आत्मकेन्द्रित करके समाज से काटती है। ग्राम्य-जीवन का भावात्मक परिवेश जहाँ इन कलाकारों के जीवन में बचा दिखता है वहीं बदलता हुआ यथार्थ उसकी नियति पर प्रश्नचिह्न खड़ा करता है। इस प्रसंग में डॉ. चौधरी लिखते हैं कि “मिरदंगिया और उसकी (सिरचन की) नियति एक है। दोनों ही एक गुजरती हुई दुनिया के लोग हैं।



नई दुनिया की नई कला है, नई संस्कृति है। उसका बदला हुआ शिल्प-संसार है। सामुदायिक संस्कृति के इस विध्वंस की पीड़ा को मूर्त करती ये दो कहानियाँ रेणु के भाव संसार की जीवित प्रतिकृतियाँ हैं।<sup>14</sup>

रेणु की इन कहानियों में परिवेश निश्चित रूप से विषम स्थितियों वाला है, पर रेणु के इन पात्रों में नियति की एक शक्ति भी है, और वह शक्ति आस्था की है। मिरदंगिया की अपनी सामाजिक दुर्दशा के बीच मोहना को पाना और 'रसपिरिया' के गायन पर भावावेश में नाचना और मृदंग बजाना उसका 'अधपगलापन' नहीं है, कलाकार की एक खोज का सुख है, जिससे उसे लगता है कि अब उसकी उँगली सीधी हो जायेगी। इसी तरह सिरचन को लगी ठेस में जहाँ कलाकार आहत होकर भिखारी की तरह कुछ पाने की अपेक्षा निठल्ला रहना पसंद करता है, वहीं वह मानू की भावना को बखूबी समझता है और बगैर मोहर छापवाली धोती का दाम लिए "ऐसी कारीगरी, ऐसी बारीकी, रंगीन सुतलियों के फन्दों का ऐसा काम"<sup>15</sup> करके देता है कि शीतलपाटी, चिक और आसनी बनाने वाला यह कलाकार समाज द्वारा कला और कलाकार की उपेक्षाओं की वर्तमान परिपाटी को तो झकझोरता ही है, साथ ही उन विषम स्थितियों में भी सुरक्षित उसका अपना कला-भाव मर्म को छू जाता है। रेणु की कहानियों की संरचना में मानवीय आस्था के ये स्वर रचनात्मकता के अंग बनकर ही आते हैं। बकौल सुरेन्द्र चौधरी "रेणु की कहानियों में जीवन की धड़कन है, बावजूद इसके कि परिस्थितियाँ दम घोंटती हैं। परिस्थितियों से संघर्ष करते हुए रेणु के पात्रों में एक विचित्रता है, आस्था की। यह आस्था इसलिए विचित्र लगती है कि रेणु के समकालीन कथा लेखन में यह आस्था दुर्लभ होती गयी है।"<sup>16</sup>

गाँव के परिवेश को रेणु की कलाकार आँखें तह तक पहचानती हैं। दैनंदिन जीवन के छोटे-छोटे व्यवहार, नोक-झोंक और श्रेष्ठता की लड़ाई में पिल पड़े स्त्रियों के कटाक्षों, व्यंग्य-बाणों तथा क्षणिक मनोमालिन्य के अलावा हार्दिकता के उस तत्त्व पर भी उनकी दृष्टि रहती है, जिससे कोई 'लालपान की बेगम' बन जाती है। 'लालपान की बेगम' कहानी में रेणु ने कथा के संरचनात्मक धरातल पर नैसर्गिक भाव सम्बन्धों के द्वारा ग्राम-व्यवस्था के बदलते हुए सम्बन्धों के साथ संवेदनात्मकता का अनुपूरक उपयोग किया है। डॉ. चौधरी लिखते हैं कि "गाँव की जिन्दगी में स्त्रियों के लिए सामाजिक प्रदर्शन का एक ही मंच होता है- मेला। इस मंच के साथ रेणु ने एक कथा जोड़ी है, सामाजिक उत्तरण की कथा।"<sup>17</sup> मेला की इस भावात्मक परिस्थिति में बिरजू की माँ जिस तरह जंगी की पतोहू का ताना भूलकर उसे स्वयं मेला ले जाती है, बिरजू और चंपिया पर अपने आये गुस्से का परिमार्जन करती है और जाने की तैयारी में मखनी फुआ का भी मन अच्छी तरह रखती है, उससे "'लालपान की बेगम' का साधारण कथ्य अपनी संवेदनशीलता में असाधारण हो उठता है।"<sup>18</sup> यहाँ रेणु की कहानी की संरचना सम्बन्धी एक गहरी दृष्टि भी दिखती है जिसे डॉ. चौधरी इन शब्दों में प्रकट करते हैं कि "रेणु आत्मलीनता से पैदा होने वाली असाधारणता का भ्रम तोड़कर कहानियों की दुनिया में आते हैं।"<sup>19</sup>

रेणु की कहानियों में संरचना के कुछ ऐसे भी क्षेत्र हैं जो अपने परिवेशगत यथार्थ की विडम्बना के कारण अस्वाभाविक मानसिक परिस्थितियों में पहुँचे लगते हैं। उनकी चेतना इस तरह अस्वाभाविकता और अतार्किकता को अपने व्यक्तित्व का अंग बना लेती है कि उसके सहयोगी भाव पर तत्कल ध्यान ही नहीं जाता, पर वे बड़े ही महत्वपूर्ण और गुत्थियों को खोलने वाले होते हैं। मसलन 'टेबुल' कहानी और उसकी

पात्र दुर्वादास। टेबुल दुर्वावास का कवच है, क्यों? क्योंकि दुर्वावास अनेक नंगी दृष्टियों की यातना झेलती हैं, “जो निरंतर उसे उघाड़ती रहती हैं, उसकी परतें उतारती रहती हैं। जीभ की खुजली है जो उसके हर क्रियाकलाप को किस्सा बना देती हैं। आकर्षण और उपेक्षाओं की दुहरी मार से दबी है, मिस दुर्वादास।”<sup>10</sup> कार्यकारी जीवन के इस परिवेशगत यथार्थ में इन सहयोगी भाव के यथार्थ को जाने बगैर मिस दुर्वादास का अपने निर्जीव मित्र टेबुल के प्रति पागलों सा बर्ताव करना—“जो उसके आत्मसंघर्ष का साक्षी है।”<sup>11</sup>—असम्भव मानसिक परिस्थितियों का व्यवहार भले ही दिखे, पर यहाँ भी मानवीय वास्तविकता गहराई से व्यंजित हो जाती है। यह वास्तविकता ‘टेबुल’ कहानी की संरचना में टेबुल के प्रतीकगत इस्तेमाल से कार्यकारी जीवन में स्त्री के मानसिक संघर्ष की आत्मपीड़ा को व्यंजित करती है, उसे एक आधार देती है। इस प्रसंग में डॉ. चौधरी लिखते हैं कि “‘फेटिश’ वस्तु रति नहीं, टेबुल वस्तु नहीं, यही तो उसका असंज्ञ है, जो उसे परिवेश के उन्माद से बचाता है, यही तो शरणदाता है।”<sup>12</sup>

रेणु की कहानियों में मानवीय रागबोध की सार्थक पहल है। यह रागबोध जीवन के स्पन्दनों को जिस निकटता से आत्मसात् करता है उसके साथ यथार्थ की एक नयी भंगिमा तैयार होती है। यथार्थवाद की रूढ़ियों से परे यह यथार्थ जीवन के संवेदनाओं और तरलता को एक मिठास देता है—सौन्दर्यानुभूति। रेणु की कहानियों के रूप-तत्त्व का इस यथार्थ से गहरा जुड़ाव है। उदाहरणस्वरूप संवेदिया कहानी। इस कहानी के हरगोबिन का चरित्र और उसके जीवन में पल रहे भावनाओं और विचारों का तालमेल किसी पेशेगत यथार्थ के फार्मूले में फिट नहीं बैठता। बड़ी बहुरिया के संवाद की टीस उसी तरह उसके हृदय की कोमलता में घुल जाती है और वह उसके मायके वालों से उसके दुःखपूर्ण संवाद कहने के बजाय उसकी कुशलता बताकर अपने गाँव की लक्ष्मी को बचा लेता है। हरगोबिन के मानसिक संवेगों की हलचल—जो ग्राम्य-जीवन के मानवीय राग-बोध का स्पन्दन है—उसके निठल्लेपन के यथार्थ को तोड़ता है, एक नया सन्दर्भ और विकास देता है। रेणु में यथार्थ के विस्तृत होते सूत्रों की सुरेन्द्र चौधरी ने सटीक पहचान की है और लिखा कि “संवेगों को कलात्मक महत्त्व देकर भावनाओं और विचारों की उपेक्षा यथार्थवाद नहीं है। रेणु की कहानियाँ संवेगों की नहीं हैं। उनमें मानवीय भावना और विचारों की समृद्धि तो है ही, उसके मूर्त-अमूर्त कारकों की पहचान भी है। यही कारण है कि उनकी कहानियों का मानवीय सत्य विश्व के भीतर के कारक शक्तियों से स्वतन्त्र नहीं है। मानवीय सत्य को ठहरे हुए ढाँचों में कैद करने की चेष्टा रेणु ने नहीं की है।”<sup>13</sup> मानवीय सत्य के विश्वजनित रूप को किसी ठहरे हुए ढाँचे में कैद करने का प्रयत्न यदि रेणु ने किया होता तो उनकी कहानियों में वह ताजगी, वह रवानगी और वह अनोखापन न आ सकता जो उनकी रचनाओं को आज भी जीवंत और मार्मिक बनाते हैं। चौधरी जी के कथन के साथ डॉ. विश्वनाथ त्रिपाठी का यह कथन भी उक्त वैशिष्ट्य को ही आलोकित करता है—“रेणु की रचना का जो समन्वित प्रभाव पड़ता है, वह विषमता की पीड़ा का नहीं, लोक-जीवन की सम्पन्न संस्कृति की समृद्धि का होता है। यह प्रभाव आवश्यक नहीं। इस प्रभाव को डालने वाली कहानियाँ हिन्दी में नही के बराबर थी। रेणु की रचनाएँ इस दृष्टि से अछूती ताजगी से युक्त हैं।”<sup>14</sup>

यह अछूती ताजगी रेणु की कहानियों में लोकपक्ष की गहराई से आती है। लोक-जीवन में उपस्थित

रूप-रस-गन्ध-स्पर्श-नादमय परिवेश ही नहीं, 'मूलराग' की गहरी समझ और सम्पृक्ति को वे अपनी कहानी के रूप-तत्त्व अथवा संरचना की मूल भित्ति बनाते हैं। मूलराग के इस पहचान और नियोजन से उनकी कहानियों में कई जीवन्त पात्र उपस्थित हुए हैं। 'तीसरी कसम' के हिरामन-हीराबाई, 'रसप्रिया' का मिरदंगिया पंचकौड़ी, 'तीन बिन्दियाँ' का हाराधन 'अच्छे आदमी' का उजागिर, 'लालपान की बेगम' का बिरजू की माँ, 'संवदिया' का हरगोबिन जैसे पात्र अपने परिवेशगत यथार्थ से जिस तरह अपना तालमेल दिखलाते हैं, उनमें तमाम विसंगतियों और विडम्बनाओं के बीच भी 'मूलराग' अप्रतिहत होकर बच जाता है—अपने सन्दर्भों को फैला देता है। रेणु की रोमान्टिक दृष्टि इन कहानियों में उपस्थित जीवन-सत्य को कमजोर नहीं होने देती बल्कि उसके राग-पक्ष से जुड़कर यथार्थ की नयी भंगिमाओं को उभारती है। इस प्रसंग को कोनरॉड की इस उक्ति से मिलाकर भी देखा जा सकता है कि "वास्तविकता की रोमान्टिक अनुभूतियाँ शायद अपने आप में अभिशाप हो सकती हैं, किन्तु जब वे किसी व्यक्तिगत अनुशासन और दायित्व से रेखांकित होती हैं और मानवीय सत्ता के कठोर तथ्यों की पहचान बन जाती है, तब समस्त मानव-भावना के सार के रूप में 'विश्व दृष्टि' बनकर जीवन के अंतरंग को उजागर करने लगती है।"<sup>15</sup> रेणु की कहानियाँ वस्तुतः वास्तविकता को इन्हीं भाव-सन्दर्भों में रोमान्टिक बनाती हैं। डॉ. चौधरी ने भी रेणु की कहानियों में व्यक्त 'मूलराग' की इस क्रियाविधि और 'गंधवाह के रहस्य' को पहचाना है। साथ ही वास्तविकता की अनुभूतियों के माध्यम से भावात्मक होने के कारण रेणु में जो रचना-दृष्टि का निर्माण हुआ है उसे भी प्रकट किया है। वे लिखते हैं कि "वास्तविकता जब मन पर प्रतिक्रिया करती है, तो वह अनुभूतियों में प्रकट होती है, फिर अनुभूतियाँ भावनाओं में अपने को सहेजती हैं। इस प्रकार भाव-संसार का एक रूप बनता है। कहानियों से अभिव्यक्त होने वाला संसार भावनाओं व्यापारों के परस्पर सम्बन्ध और विच्छिन्न से भिन्न नहीं हो सकता। ...अधिकांश कहानियों में गंध-परिवेश से मानवीय भाव व्यापारत जीवन को ही लेखक ने प्रतिकृत किया है।"<sup>16</sup>

नयी कहानी के दौर में अभिव्यक्ति की नवता के मुहावरे से जिस तरह नये कहानीकारों ने कथा-आख्यायिका की परम्परा से मुक्त हो अपने लिए नयी राह की बात की, वैसी आवश्यकता रेणु को कभी नहीं पड़ी। रेणु की कहानियों की संरचना में न केवल कथा-परम्परा की लोक शैली का जीवन्त उपयोग हुआ वरन् इस शैली के सहारे उन्होंने 'तीसरी कसम' जैसी अविस्मरणीय कहानी भी लिखी। यह कहानी अपने रूप में रागदीप्ति का जैसा जीवन्त मार्मिक आख्यान बन सकी है, उसका कारण लोक-कथा, कविता की बिम्बात्मकता तथा प्रतीकात्मकता के अलावा लोक-जीवन की अंतरंग पहचान है। यहाँ एक विधुर गाड़ीवान की सरल जिन्दगी के भीतर छिपे रागों और टीसों से मानवीय सहमेल बनना-हिरामन को हीराबाई मीता कहती है—अत्यन्त सहज और स्वाभाविक लगता है, विपरीत जीवन शैली के बावजूद। यात्रा के हर पड़ाव पर जैसे परिवेश इन दोनों में सिमटता जाता है, गीतों से और लोक कथाओं के द्वारा। इस पूरी यात्रा में हिरामन जिस ऐन्द्रिक स्पर्श के धरातल पर पहुँचता है वह सुरेन्द्र चौधरी की दृष्टि में "विश्वबोध का हिस्सा है। हिरामन का विश्वबोध किताबी नहीं है, वह तीसरी दुनिया के तमाम-तमाम निरक्षरों में एक है। मगर आखिर तो ध्वनि में भी है, गंध और स्पर्श में भी है। मन की भाषा तो इन सबमें एक साथ प्रकट होती

है। यह पूरी यात्रा एक गंध-स्वर-स्पर्श-संधान ही तो है!! मीता के साथ यह यात्रा अदृश्य स्पर्श की आत्मीयता को जैसे मानस-गोचर कर देती है। 'पराया-सुख' तो नहीं है यह।<sup>17</sup> आत्मीयता के जिस धरातल पर पहुँचकर हिरामन और हीराबाई की कथा "ग्रामीण दुनिया के सार्वजनिक मंच"-मेला, तक की यात्रा करती है, वहाँ जीवन-सन्दर्भ बदल जाता है। जिस हीराबाई को वह लोगों की नजरों से बचाकर यहाँ तक लाता है, वह यहाँ बाजार की वस्तु है। लोगों की फब्कियों के बीच उसका थियेटर कंपनी में नाचना महुआ घटवारिन की कथा जैसा ही है, जिसे सौदागर ने खरीद लिया है। "मर्द गुलाम-श्रमिक-औरतें बाजार की वस्तु।"<sup>18</sup> यही तो बाजार का दर्शन है। इसी दर्शन के दंश की परिणति 'तीसरी कसम' में होती है। हिरामन कसम खाता है कि "कम्पनी की औरत की लदनी.....।"<sup>19</sup> रेणु इस कहानी में कथा के समस्त पहलुओं के बीच से मानवीय राग-बोध की नैसर्गिक पहचान को सामने ला देते हैं और 'तीसरी कसम' का रोमांस एक गहरे अर्थ की प्रतीति से हमें जोड़ देता है। डॉ. चौधरी लिखते हैं कि "कठोर विचारधारा के गिरफ्त में आकर जो लोक-जीवन के रोमांस को नकारते हैं, उन्हें यह कहानी बहुत कुछ मुक्त कर सकती है। प्रतीक और नाटकीयता का यह संयोग कहानी को एक अलग जमीन देता है।"<sup>20</sup>

रेणु की कहानियों के रूप में नाटकीयता का महत्वपूर्ण स्थान है। यह नाटकीयता कहानी को गति देकर उन्हें एक खास दिशा में मोड़ने तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि इसके द्वारा रेणु जीवन की विसंगतियों के बीच से मनुष्यता के तत्त्व खींच लाते हैं। रेणु की एक कहानी है 'अच्छे आदमी'। 'अच्छे आदमी' कहानी के उजागर का अंत में नाटकीय बदलाव हमें चौंकाता अवश्य है, पर इस नाटकीयता से रेणु सामाजिक यथार्थ के बीच पलने वाली विडम्बनापूर्ण सच्चाई को खोलकर रख देते हैं। इस सच्चाई में सीता की पवित्रता भौतिकता की चन्द चीजों के लिए डूँवाडोल दिखती है। यहाँ 'अच्छा' दिखने के पीछे का नकाब तो उतरता ही है, साथ ही 'संपत्ति की लालसा' तथा 'व्यक्ति के नैसर्गिक अधिकार' से सम्बन्धों की खींचातानी का नाटकीय कथ्य भी उजागर हो जाता है। इस प्रसंग में डॉ. चौधरी दिखलाते हैं कि "अर्थतंत्र की भावनाहीन दुनिया से सीता-उजागर की वापसी नाटकीय सूक्ति चाहे हो, पर वह हमें छूती है। कस्बे की जिन्दगी और परिवेश की नाटकीय सजीवता से चित्रित करते हुए रेणु भावनाओं के अन्तराल में आगे बढ़ जाते हैं। संपत्ति की लालसा से भी नैसर्गिक अधिकार बड़ा है। गरीब को अधिकारहीन सम्पत्ति की विडम्बना ही मिलती है।"<sup>21</sup>

रेणु की कहानियों में नाटकीयता के अलावा प्रगति के तत्त्व खासकर ग्रामीण ध्वनिग्राहकता का गुण उन्हें अपने दौर के रचनाकारों के बीच एक विशिष्ट पहचान देता है। 'तीसरी कसम' के हिरामन द्वारा ग्राम संगीत से राग और गंध को मूर्त करने की कला हो या मिरदंगिया पंचकौड़ी का 'रसपिरिया' की धुन पर मृदंग की थाप देकर स्वर को जीवित करना, 'संवदिया' के हरगोबिन के अन्तर में बसा 'हमरो संवाद ले ले जाहु रे संवदिया' का दर्द हो या तीन बिन्दियाँ के हाराधन का गीताली को आंचलिक राग-रागिनियों को अपनाने की सलाह देना— ऐसे अनेक उदाहरण भरे पड़े हैं, जिन्हें उचित परिवेश देकर रेणु ने अपनी कहानियों में शक्तिशाली तत्त्व के रूप में अपनाया है। उनकी कहानियाँ "मूलराग" से आँख-मिचौली खेलती छोटी-छोटी आंचलिक रागिनियाँ"<sup>22</sup> सी इसी शक्ति के कारण लगती है। इस मूल राग और उसकी सहायक

रागिनियों से रेणु विपन्न जीवन की सम्पन्न संस्कृति और उत्सवधर्मिता तो मूर्त करते ही हैं, उसके परिवेश को भी पूरी निष्ठा से रूपायित कर देते हैं। सुरेन्द्र चौधरी लिखते हैं कि “रेणु की कहानियों में यह जो प्रत्यक्षता है, वह वातावरण के मूर्त होने के कारण ही है। रेणु वातावरण को संगीत की ध्वनियों, लहरियों से भरकर हमें उदास करते हैं या उद्वेलित, उसे छाया-छवियों में सजीव बनाकर हमें अभिभूत करते हैं या आतंकित; पर वातावरण गोचरता नहीं खोता, स्पर्श से बाहर नहीं जाता। चेतना के भीतर भी उसकी लहरियाँ उठती रहती हैं, स्मृतियों के साथ जुड़ी हुई और घटनाओं के प्रभाव के रूप में। उन्हें आप चाहकर भी कहानी से अलग नहीं कर सकते।”<sup>23</sup>

रेणु परिवेश के निर्माण में भी गजब की रचनाधर्मिता दिखलाते हैं। उनकी कहानियों में कथ्य परिवेश से इस कदर एकात्म हो जाता है कि परिवेश पात्र की तरह जीवंत और क्रियाशील लगता है। मसलन टेबुल कहानी में दुर्वादास की स्थिति! उनकी मानसिक स्थिति के निर्माण में कार्यकारी जीवन का विडम्बनापूर्ण परिवेश ही सबसे महत्वपूर्ण कारक है। इसको भूलकर या समझे बगैर दुर्वादास के चरित्रगत अस्वाभाविकता को स्पष्ट नहीं किया जा सकता है। रेणु परिवेश से न केवल पात्रों की मानसिक स्थिति के निर्माण को स्पष्ट करते हैं वरन् इससे सामाजिक यथार्थ के कई पहलू भी बेधकता से व्यंजित हो जाते हैं। सुरेन्द्र चौधरी के अनुसार “यदि परिप्रेक्ष्य को ध्यान में रखें और कार्य व्यापारों की विविधता को ही एकमात्र आधार न बनाएं, तो यह स्पष्ट हो जाएगा कि उनकी कहानियों में सामाजिक यथार्थ आंतरिकता के साथ व्यक्त हुआ है।”<sup>24</sup> यह सामाजिक यथार्थ कभी बदलते हुए परिवेश में कलाकार की विडम्बना को दर्शाता है, जैसे ‘ठेस’, ‘रसप्रिया’ और ‘तीन बिन्दियाँ’ कहानियों में, तो कभी सामाजिक दंभ भरने वालों को हास्यास्पद भी बनाता है, जैसे ‘पंचलाईट’ कहानी के सरदार और दीवान जी जैसे चरित्रों में। परिवेश के इस जीवन्त उपयोग से रेणु कार्यकारी जीवन के सच को रचनात्मक प्रस्तुति देते हैं। इसी से डॉ. चौधरी लिखते हैं कि “रेणु की कहानियों का वातावरण ध्वनि-संकुल ही नहीं व्यापारत और कार्य संकुल भी है। जीवन व्यापारों के साथ जुड़ा हुआ यह वातावरण परिचय की अपेक्षा नहीं रखता। इतना परिचित होकर भी जैसे रेणु की कहानियों में वह पहली बार अपनी सम्पूर्णता में खुलता है। कैसी प्रभावशाली होती है यह विवृत्ति! वह खुलकर हमें झकझोरती है, अपने आप से बाहर निकालकर कहानी के देश में, पात्रों की दुनिया में ले जाती है। रेणु के वातावरण का आकर्षण दुर्निवार होता है, इसे मानने में हमें किसी प्रकार की कोई कठिनाई नहीं होती।”<sup>25</sup>

रेणु की कहानियों की दुनिया में डॉ. सुरेन्द्र चौधरी के साथ प्रवेश करना एक महत्वपूर्ण अनुभव है। वे उत्तम परिचायक की तरह केवल कहानियों की विविधता और परिचय की जानकारी तक ही सीमित नहीं रखते, वे कहानियों के अंतरंग में भी प्रवेश दिलाते हैं। रेणु में रूप-रस-गन्ध-शब्द-स्पर्श की महिमा से लोक-जीवन की जो उत्सवधर्मिता मूर्त हुई है, उसकी सम्यक् पहचान करवाते हैं। कहानी की संरचना में आंतरिक लय ही नहीं, आधुनिकता के सीमांत पर पड़े भावों से हमें रू-ब-रू करवाते हैं। प्रगति और नाटकीयता के वे तत्त्व जो रेणु की कहानियों की संरचना से अभिन्न रूप से जुड़े हैं, उसकी प्रासंगिकता में जीवन-विवेक की जो मर्मभेदी दृष्टि है, उसकी ओर इंगित करना डॉ. चौधरी नहीं भूलते। वे लिखते हैं कि “दैनंदिन जीवन

के छोटे-छोटे ब्यौरों से वातावरण गढ़ने की कला कोई रेणु से सीखे। इस दिशा में उन्हें महारत हासिल है। अपने ब्यौरों को जब वे नाटकीय तफसील देने लगते हैं, तो सहजता धारदार होती चलती है। भावात्मक और नाटकीय दोनों प्रकार के वातावरण रेणु की कहानियों में समान सफलता के साथ संयोजित है।<sup>126</sup>

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## साम्प्रदायिकता के खिलाफ जंग : स्वयं प्रकाश की कहानियाँ

हरिओम कुमार

1947 ई. में देश-विभाजन के पश्चात् साम्प्रदायिकता की जो ज्वाला भड़की थी वह अभी तक शान्त नहीं हुई है। उसकी लपटें यदा-कदा न जाने कितने को अपनी आगोश में ले चुकी हैं। देश में साम्प्रदायिक दंगों के कारण प्रायः हर दशक में हजारों लोगों की मौत होती रही है। 1958, 1959 और 1961 में दंगा करने वाली हिन्दू-मुस्लिम जनता 1962 के चीन युद्ध के समय सचेत होती है; उसके भीतर राष्ट्रीय भावनाएँ जाग्रत होती हैं। लेकिन वे दीर्घजीवी नहीं हो पातीं। आगे भी देश में यदा-कदा हिन्दू-मुस्लिम-सिख दंगों का वीभत्स रूप उभरता रहा है। पंजाब, उत्तर प्रदेश, मध्य प्रदेश, गुजरात, उड़ीसा, पश्चिम बंगाल, केरल, तमिलनाडु, आन्ध्र प्रदेश जैसे राज्य इन दंगों की आग में जलते रहे हैं। “साम्प्रदायिकता आज भारतीय समाज और राजनीति के लिए सबसे गंभीर खतरे के रूप में सामने आयी है। यह धर्म निरपेक्षता की जड़ें खोखली कर रही है, भारतीय जनता द्वारा कठिनाई से हासिल की हुई एकता के लिए संकट बन गयी है और बर्बरता की ताकतों को उन्मुख करने का खतरा पैदा कर रही है।”<sup>1</sup>

पिछले कुछ दशकों में साम्प्रदायिकता का जो रूप उभरकर सामने आया है वह विभाजन के समय से बिल्कुल अलग है। इसकी व्याप्ति राजनीति तक है और यह राजनीति के द्वारा परिचालित है। राजनीतिक माहौल में साम्प्रदायिक उन्माद का रंग गहरा कर दिया जाता है, जिसका परिणाम काफी भयंकर होता है। विभाजनकालीन साम्प्रदायिकता और आठवें-नवें दशक की साम्प्रदायिकता के स्वरूप में जो अन्तर आया है उस पर प्रकाश डालते हुए खगेन्द्र ठाकुर कहते हैं – “साम्प्रदायिकता का आज का रूप, उसकी भूमिका और उसका कारण विभाजन के समय की साम्प्रदायिकता जैसा नहीं है। हालाँकि लोग विभाजन को भुला नहीं पाये हैं, उसका गहरा प्रभाव लोगों की चेतना पर है, जो साम्प्रदायिकता को उभारने की एक प्रेरणा भी बन सकता है, लेकिन आज की स्थिति भिन्न है। इतिहास अपने को दोहराना चाह रहा है। जब देश का बँटवारा हुआ, धार्मिक संप्रदायवाद के आधार पर दो राष्ट्रों के सिद्धान्त का आंदोलन चलाया गया, जिसको साम्राज्यवाद ने तरजीह दी। आज फिर धार्मिक संप्रदाय के आधार पर राष्ट्र की पहचान करने का अभियान छिड़ा हुआ है। इस अर्थ में इतिहास अपने को दोहरा रहा है लेकिन बदले हुए रूप में। उस समय मुस्लिम संप्रदायवाद ने उसकी अगुवाई की थी, आज हिन्दू संप्रदायवाद इसकी अगुवाई कर रहा है। विभाजन ने न केवल देश को, बल्कि परिवार को, मनुष्य की संवेदना को और मनुष्य के व्यक्तित्व को भी प्रभावित किया। सारे सम्बन्ध जैसे बिखर गए और उस पीड़ा से बहुत-सी मार्मिक कहानियाँ निकलीं। आज की स्थिति में फर्क यह है कि विभाजन की स्थिति तो नहीं आई है, लेकिन साम्प्रदायिकता की समस्या विकट रूप में सामने है।”<sup>2</sup>

साम्प्रदायिकता की समस्या के मूल में निहित कारकों का कहानीकार स्वयं प्रकाश ने अपनी कहानियों में सूक्ष्म पर्यवेक्षण किया है। अपनी संप्रदाय-विरोधी कहानियों में उन्होंने दर्शाया है कि हृदय के



भीतर दबी हुई सांप्रदायिक भावना किस प्रकार उग्र रूप धारण कर लेती है। यह भावना प्रभावी व्यक्ति को कभी भेद-भाव की सभी सीमाओं को तोड़कर अमानवीय बना देती है, तो कभी हिंसा की ओर ही प्रवृत्त कर देती है। साम्प्रदायिकता को भड़काने वाले कारकों और लेखक के दायित्व की चर्चा करते हुए स्वयं प्रकाश कहते हैं – “साम्प्रदायिकता का सारा कारोबार अफवाह, झूठ और उन्माद के सहारे ही चलता है। लेखक अपने पाठकों के प्रति जवाबदेह होता है और इसलिए अपने पाठकों को अफवाह, झूठ से खबरदार करना और उन्माद से बचाना उसका धर्म होता है।”<sup>3</sup>

स्वयं प्रकाश की साम्प्रदायिकता से सम्बद्ध कहानियाँ पाठकों को सचेत करती हैं कि साम्प्रदायिक कट्टरता सूक्ष्म रूप से घुप रही भेद-भावपूर्ण दृष्टि का परिणाम है। उनकी कहानियाँ प्रायः बड़े-बड़े दंगों का वर्णन करने से बचते हुए व्यक्ति की सोच और व्यवहार में आ रहे सूक्ष्म बदलाव को चित्रित करती हैं। ये चित्रण हमें भावुक बनाकर रूलाने के लिए नहीं होते, बल्कि हमें भीतर से झकझोर देते हैं। हमें सोचने पर मजबूर कर देते हैं कि आखिर ऐसा परिवर्तन आ क्यों रहा है। रमेश उपाध्याय का जनवादी दौर की सांप्रदायिक कहानियों पर आरोप है कि “ऐसी कहानियों में या तो दंगा, मार-काट, आगजनी और बलात्कार जैसी घटनाओं की अखबारी ‘रिपोर्टिंग’ होती है”<sup>4</sup> लेकिन स्वयं प्रकाश की कहानियाँ इन क्षुद्रताओं के बचते हुए अलग मार्ग तलाशती हैं। ‘बर्डे’, ‘बेमकान’, ‘आदमी जात का आदमी’, ‘पार्टीशन’, ‘रशीद का पाजामा’ जैसी कहानियों में किसी प्रकार के दंगे, मार-काट और आगजनी जैसी घटनाओं का चित्रण नहीं है, लेकिन हृदय में किस प्रकार साम्प्रदायिकता घुप रही है, इसकी अच्छी परख है। इन कहानियों के कट्टर पात्रों के व्यवहार, सोच और वक्तव्यों से ही साम्प्रदायिक कलुषता झलक पड़ती है, जिसको लक्षित करना ही लेखक का उद्देश्य रहा है जिसमें उन्हें कलात्मक सफलता मिली है। कहानी के अन्त में प्रत्यक्ष या अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से एक प्रश्न छोड़ दिया जाता है, जो पाठक को सोचने पर विवश कर देता है। यह स्वयं प्रकाश की जबर्दस्त विशेषता है। इससे पाठक लेखक के साथ निकटता का अनुभव करता है, साथ ही उसे किस्सागो का भरपूर आनन्द मिलने के साथ सहज ही विचार की प्रवृत्ति भी जगती है।

स्वयं प्रकाश के तीसरे कहानी-संग्रह ‘आसमां कैसे-कैसे’ में संकलित ‘चौथा हादसा’ शीर्षक कहानी में कथावाचक मिनर्वा होटल पर चाय पीते हुए हल्के अंदाज में अपने दोस्तों के समक्ष तीन हादसों का जिक्र करते हैं। जैसलमेर की फिजाँ से ऊबरकर कथावाचक मस्ती करना चाहते हैं। उन्हें लुंगी पहनकर घूमने और बड़ी-बड़ी दाढ़ी रखने की धुन सवार होती है। आगे इसी दाढ़ी के कारण उन्हें मुसलमान समझ लिया जाता है। एक दिन जब कथावाचक प्याऊ पर पानी पीने जाते हैं, तो वहाँ पानी पिलाने के लिए बैठी हुई डोकरी के द्वारा पूछा जाता है- ‘थे कुण हो?’ हिन्दू कहने पर उन्हें पानी पिलाया जाता है। मुसलमान कहने पर उन्हें पानी नहीं पिलाया जाता। जब उस बूढ़ी डोकरी को कथावाचक यह कहकर दुआ देते हुए भागते हैं कि “अल्ला तेरा भला करे माई!”<sup>5</sup> तो वह भौंचक होकर उन्हें खूब गालियाँ देती हैं।

एक बार बस में यात्रा करने के दौरान एक प्रचण्ड साम्प्रदायिक हिन्दूवादी यात्री कथावाचक के मिस से कटाक्ष करते हुए कहता है- “....अजी इन ‘कटवों’ ने तो देश का सत्यानाश कर दिया है।”<sup>6</sup>



इस प्रकार कहानी में छोटे-छोटे हादसों के माध्यम से लेखक बहुत बड़ी बात कह देते हैं जो निश्चय ही सुधी पाठकों को सोचने पर मजबूर कर देती है। एक साक्षात्कार में डॉ. नामवर सिंह ने इस कहानी पर टिप्पणी करते हुए कहा है - '....कहानी के अन्त में हबीब कैफी की ओर से टिप्पणी करवायी गयी है जो स्थिति के ज्यादा नाजुक पहलू की ओर संकेत करती है। अब यहाँ दो टूक स्टैण्ड लेने से या हिन्दू-मुस्लिम का सपाट हल दिखाने पर यह कहानी चौपट हो जाती। आज की सच्चाई पर पर्दा पड़ जाता। वह सपाट-बयानी की कहानी नहीं, लेकिन कहानी में उलझन कहीं नहीं है। बहुत साफ लिखी गयी है। जो सामने आने वाला यथार्थ है, उसकी जटिलता का अहसास वह कराती है।' <sup>17</sup>

इसी तरह की एक अन्य कहानी है- 'रशीद का पजामा'। नैनीताल से लौटते वक्त आगरा स्टेशन के बाथरूम में स्नान करने के बाद जब रशीद पजामा पहनने लगता है तो उसका नाड़ा नेफे के भीतर घुस जाता है। इसके कारण उसकी जो मनःस्थिति होती है वह देखने लायक है। गाड़ी के आने का समय निकट आते देख उसके अन्य साथी परेशान होने लगते हैं। नन्दकिशोर नामक पात्र स्नेहलता से कहता है- "ये कटवे साले ऐसा ही करते हैं।" <sup>18</sup>

इसके बाद का दृश्य प्रस्तुत करते हुए स्वयं प्रकाश लिखते हैं- 'रशीद रुँआसा हो गया। उसे समझ नहीं आया कि इसमें कटवे वाली बात कहाँ से आ गयी? सोफिया को भी बुरा लगा। वह सारे रास्ते रशीद के पास ही बैठी रही गाड़ी में और बीच-बीच में कई बार चुपचाप रोती रही। पता नहीं क्यों?' <sup>19</sup>

प्रेसीडेंट्स स्काउट्स के प्रशिक्षण शिविर में भाग लेने के लिए जब आठ छात्र-छात्राओं का समूह दो शिक्षकों के साथ नैनीताल के लिए प्रस्थान करता है, तो सबमें आपसी मित्रता कायम हो जाती है। रशीद इस समूह का एक मात्र छात्र है जो विभिन्न खेलकूदों और प्रतियोगिताओं में पुरस्कार जीतता है। वह चाहता है कि उसके अन्य साथी भी पुरस्कार जीते; जिसके लिए वह कई प्रतियोगिताओं में हिस्सा भी नहीं लेता। फिर भी उसकी जीत सबकी आँखों का काँटा बन जाती है। उसकी यही जीत सबके मन में जलन पैदा कर देती है। एक मात्र सोफिया उसके प्रति सहानुभूति रखती है। नन्दकिशोर का सांप्रदायिकता के विष से बुझा हुआ वाक्य मानो विष-बाण की तरह उसके हृदय को भेद देता है। यह 'कटवा' शब्द ही स्पष्ट कर देता है कि वह अलग है, 'मुसलमान' है।

1984 ई. के सिख-दंगे पर लिखी गयी एक कहानी है- 'क्या तुमने कभी कोई सरदार भिखारी देखा?' कहानी के मुख्य पात्र सरदार जी सत्तर वर्ष के बूढ़े और बीमार आदमी हैं। वे निरीह, निहत्थे और निरपराध हैं। ट्रेन के जिस कूपे में बैठकर कथावाचक यात्रा करते हैं, उसी में सरदार भी ऊपर वाले बर्थ पर लेटकर बिलासपुर जा रहे हैं। इन्दिरा गांधी की हत्या के बाद देश में सिखों के प्रति भड़के उन्माद का कुत्सित रूप कहानी में दिखाया गया है। सरदार जी के लिए यह यात्रा भीषण रूप से पीड़ादायक सिद्ध होती है। दंगे में आये आक्रोशित लोग- जिनमें अधिकांश युवक और बच्चे हैं- सरदार को बुरी तरह पीटते हैं। वह बीमार बूढ़ा आदमी न अपने बचाव में एक शब्द बोलता है और न बचने का कोई प्रयत्न करता है,

बस अपने हाथों को ढाल बनाकर अपने सिर पर रख लेता है। फिर भी उनके सिर पर इतनी चोट लगती है कि बाल के गुच्छे खून से भींग जाते हैं। पीरा सिर खून से तर हो जाता है, दाढ़ी मूँछ और नाक पर भी खून इस प्रकार है मानो खून में नहाकर आये हों। उन्हें आततायियों द्वारा लगभग नंगा कर दिया जाता है, सारे सामान छीनकर उनकी होली जला दी जाती है, पौने तीन सौ रूपये छीन लिये जाते हैं और वे खून से लथपथ हैं। लेकिन आँखों में न कोई भय या शिकन है और न ही एक बूँद आँसू! कैसा धैर्य और साहस है उस बूढ़े व्यक्ति में! फिर भी वे थाने में जाने से मना कर देते हैं और कहते हैं—“इन्होंने कम से कम जिन्दा तो छोड़ दिया। थानेवाले तो.....”<sup>10</sup>

जिन सिखों के गुरु गोविन्द सिंह के बारे में निराला जी ने लिखा है --‘सवा-सवा लाख पर एक को चढ़ाऊँगा, गोविन्द सिंह निज नाम जब कहाऊँगा।’ उन्हीं की वीर परम्परा का वह सरदार आज केवल मार खाने के लिए विवश हैं। वे निःशस्त्र हैं, उनके हाथ में कृपाण भी नहीं है। न वे किसी से दया-याचना करते हैं और न किसी से कोई सहायता ही माँगते हैं। वे यह जानते हैं कि यात्रा करने वाले लोग मेरी कोई सहायता नहीं कर सकते। सबके भीतर कहीं-न-कहीं साम्प्रदायिक भावना दबी हुई है, जो सबको पंगु बना रही है। तभी तो सिन्धी लोग प्रतिकूल व्यवहार करते हैं और डिब्बे का दरवाजा भी खोल देते हैं। एक औरत ‘खिड़की से सिर निकालकर’ दंगा करने वालों को बताती है कि इस डिब्बे में एक सरदार है नारी दया और श्रद्धा की प्रतिमूर्ति मानी जाती है, लेकिन उसके भीतर भी साम्प्रदायिकता पैठी हुई है जो फूट पड़ने को व्याकुल है।

सरदार ने दिन भर की यात्रा के दौरान कुछ नहीं खाया है, सिवाय दवाइयों के। हाँ, एक चीज और-मार ! और स्थिति ऐसी हो गयी है ‘जो मार खा रोई नहीं’। और मार केवल सरदार को नहीं लगी है, मार लगी भारतीय संस्कृति को, जिसमें कहा गया है ‘वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्’। मार लगी राष्ट्रीय एकता और अखण्डता को और मार तो पड़ी है समस्त वृद्ध समाज को जो अपने अनुभवों का खजाना लिये भावी पीढ़ियों को यथार्थ दिशा का बोध कराता है।

इस कहानी के माध्यम से एक बड़ी और बुरी बात यह उभर कर आती है कि दस-बारह साल के बच्चों में भी साम्प्रदायिकता की जड़ें जम रही हैं। साम्प्रदायिक मानसिकता उन्हें विरासत में मिली है। वे खेलने की उम्र में दंगा करते हैं, बल्कि उनसे दंगा करवाया जाता है। उनके साथ अंधेड़ लोग भी हैं-शह देने के लिए।

सरदार जी के साथ यात्रा करने वाले बहुत-से लोग हैं। कथावाचक तो बड़ी-बड़ी बातें करते हैं, सरदार जी को आश्वासन तो जरूर देते हैं, लेकिन जब कुछ करने का वक्त आता है तो उनका हौसला भी पस्त हो जाता है। यूरोप की बातें करने वाला सम्भ्रान्त आदमी अपनी बेटी के साथ शराब पीने में मशगूल है। सरदार की पिटाई हो जाने के बाद वह अपना बड़प्पन झाड़ने आता है। इधर सरदार खून से लथपथ हैं और वह कहता है- “कोई खास नहीं लगी। कोई गहरी चोट नहीं है।”<sup>11</sup> अपनी मान-मर्यादा, प्रतिष्ठा-सब

कुछ गँवाकर घायल सरदार जी अन्त में 'सम्भ्रान्त' सहायात्रियों से केवल 'चा-चू' के लिए पैसे माँगते हैं। भीख नहीं उधार ! लेकिन इस स्थिति में भी उन्हें उसी तरह अनेदखा कर दिया जाता है, जिस तरह भिखारियों को। यही सरदार जी को ट्रेजडी है। जिनसे उम्मीदें हैं वे "तीनों सम्भ्रान्त सिगरेटें पी रहे हैं और ठाठ से ताश खेल रहे हैं।"<sup>12</sup> आखिर ऐसी उदासीनता और कायरता क्यों? क्या शराब पीने वाले, सिगरेट पीने और ताश खेलने वाले अथवा तमाशबीन बने लोग उन दंगाइयों से कम साम्प्रदायिक हैं? स्वयं प्रकाश सफेदपोशों के भीतर उदासीनता और कायरता के आवरण में छिपी साम्प्रदायिकता की पर्तें उधारकर दिखाते हैं।

सरदार जी को इतनी मार मारने के बावजूद जिन्दा छोड़ दिया जाना कहानी की कलात्मक सफलता है। दंगा करने वाले लोग इन्दिरा गाँधी की मौत का बदला मौत से लेना चाहते हैं। जब सरदार जी के सामान जलाये जाते हैं, तो उसी आग में एक अन्य सरदार को ढकेले जाने का संकेत है। दंगा करने वाले लोग सरदार के बारे में स्पष्ट कहते हैं-"नंगा कर दे साले को, मारो साले को, छोड़ना मत गद्दार को..."<sup>13</sup> फिर भी सरदार को 'जिन्दा' छोड़ दिया जाता है। यदि भीड़ द्वारा सरदार को मार दिया जाता, तो कहानी कमजोर हो जाती। सरदार की यह जिन्दगी क्या मौत से अच्छी है, जबकि 'सम्भ्रान्त' लोगों द्वारा माँगें जाने के बावजूद चाय पीने के लिए रुपये उधार नहीं दिये जाते? और रहीम कवि का दोहा 'रहिमन वे नर मर चुके जे कहूँ माँगन जाहिं' याद करके तो बिल्कुल लगता है कि सरदार का जिन्दा रह जाना मौत से भी बड़ी सजा है। इस प्रकार यह कहानी साम्प्रदायिक समस्या के विविध आयामों को व्यंजित करती चलती है।

साम्प्रदायिक समस्याओं से जुड़ी स्वयं प्रकाश की कहानियाँ विविध स्तरों, रंगों, विचारों और अनुभवों से सम्पन्न हैं। उनके यहाँ सभी स्तरों के पात्र साम्प्रदायिकता के जाल में फँसे हैं। 'उल्टा पहाड़' और 'आदमी जात का आदमी' में कवि, 'क्या तुमने कभी कोई सरदार भिखारी देखा?' में स्त्री, बच्चे और 'सभ्य' कहलाने वाले लोग, 'पार्टीशन' में मजदूर और वकील, 'बर्डे' में स्त्री, 'रशीद का पजामा' में छात्र, 'तलबी' में अध्यापक तथा अन्य कहानियों में और भी ऐसे पात्र हैं जो साम्प्रदायिकता के शिकार हैं। समाज के किसी वर्ग का पात्र जिसमें साम्प्रदायिकता पनप रही है, स्वयं प्रकाश की दृष्टि से बच नहीं पाया—चाहे वह हिन्दू हो या मुसलमान, पंडित हो या हाजी, उच्च वर्गीय हो या निम्न वर्गीय। उनकी कहानी इसलिए भी विश्वसनीय हो पाती है, क्योंकि वे समस्या की जटिलता को भली-भाँति परखते हैं, गहराई से अनुभव करते हैं, चाहे समस्या किसी समाज या वर्ग की क्यों न हो। जो बात ऊपर से देखने पर हमें मामूली-सी लगेगी, उसे भी स्वयं प्रकाश की बड़ी समस्या का मूल मानते हैं—विषवृक्ष का बीज। इसी बीज को जमने से पहले नष्ट करने की जरूरत है। कुचलने की जरूरत है। साम्प्रदायिक समस्याओं से इतर भी उनकी ऐसी अनेक कहानियाँ हैं जिनमें विकृतियों के इसी 'बीज' को उन्होंने खोजा है और हस्तामलकवत् पाठक के समक्ष प्रस्तुत कर दिया है। मामूली या कहें तो फालतू-सी लगने वाली बात को लेकर लिखी गयी 'आदमीजात का आदमी' तथा भिन्न स्तर की कहानी 'बर्डे' इसीलिए सफल रचना बन पायी हैं। इन दोनों कहानियों का प्रवाह सहज ढंग से होता है। भावों की जटिलता सहजतापूर्वक रूपायित कर दी गयी है। पात्रों की केन्द्रीय स्थिति में भी अन्तर आ जाता है। 'बर्डे' कहानी में श्रीमती बैजल शुरू से केन्द्र में रहती हैं,

लेकिन अन्ततः हाशिये पर चली जाती हैं और हाशिये पर खड़ा बन्ने केन्द्र में आ जाता है और पाठक के मन-मस्तिष्क पर छा जाता है। कुछ ऐसी ही स्थिति 'आदमी जात का आदमी' में भी है। यहाँ सुधीर रंजन पूरी तरह से हाशिये पर तो नहीं जाते हैं, लेकिन उनकी केन्द्रियता जरूर भंग हो जाती है और युसूफ मियाँ अनायास ही उनकी स्थिति को डावाँडोल कर देते हैं। पात्रों का स्थितिगत यह परिवर्तन उनके वैचारिक अन्तर का परिणाम है और यह अन्तर ही किसी को सेकुलर बनाता है तो किसी को साम्प्रदायिक। 'उल्टा पहाड़' शीर्षक कहानी के सांखला साहब और सुरूर साहब की दृष्टियों में भी यही अन्तर है।

'बर्डे' शीर्षक कहानी मुख्यतः श्रीमती बैजल नामक मध्यवर्गीय महिला की महत्वाकांक्षा और लालच को उद्घाटित करने वाली कहानी है। शीर्षक का विकृत रूप ही उनकी विकृत मानसिकता को प्रतीकित कर देता है। कहानी प्रारंभ से ही सहज धारा में बहती चलती है, लेकिन अन्त में जाकर ऐसी नाटकीय घटना घटती है जिसमें श्रीमती बैजल की वितृष्णा और तिरस्कार की भावना हिलोरें मार उठती हैं। वे बन्ने को नजरअंदाज कर देना चाहती हैं। उसे खाने के लिए जूठा गुलाब जामुन देती हैं। वह बन्ने रोज उसके बेटे को (स्वीटू को) अपने तौंगे से स्कूल ले जाता है, जो आज स्वीटू के जन्मदिन पर उसे देने के लिए गंदे के फूलों की माला लेकर आया है। वह सभी लोगों के खाकर चले जाने के बाद आया है। स्वीटू को एकमात्र बन्ने के आने पर खुशी होती है, उसके द्वारा लायी हुई माला को पहनकर तो उसकी खुशी का ठिकाना ही नहीं रहता। आज स्वीटू का जन्मदिन है, फिर भी वह अपने किसी दोस्त के साथ नहीं खेलता है, न खुशी मनाता है, लेकिन बन्ने के आते ही वह पूरे घर में धमाचौकड़ी मचाना शुरू कर देता है। वह बन्ने की गोद में बैठकर खेलता है। वह बच्चा जिस आदमी के साथ इतना घुल-मिल कर खेलता है, खुश है, उसी को उसकी माँ जूठन देती है। यह बन्ने की हार्दिकता और अपनेपन का परिचायक है जो वह अपने प्लेट से वही जूठा गुलाब जामुन उठाकर स्वीटू को खिला देता है। जो बन्ने स्वीटू को इतना प्यार करता है उसे श्रीमती बैजल 'मुसट्टा' समझती हैं। वह अपने आपको सेकुलर नहीं रख पातीं। इस प्रकार स्वयं प्रकाश चुपके से चोरी करने वाले चोर का नकाब उतारकर उसका काला चेहरा सबको दिखा देते हैं। जिस प्रकार मेघखंडों के बीच छिपी बिजनी अन्ततः प्रकट होकर गिर ही जाती है उसी प्रकार लोभ, आकांक्षा और घृणा के आवरण में लिपटी श्रीमती बैजल की साम्प्रदायिकता भी यहाँ छलक पड़ती है।

'आदमी जात का आदमी' नामक संग्रह की शीर्षक कहानी कवि सुधीर रंजन के विचार-परिवर्तन को रूपायित करती है। फतेहगंज के एक गंदे मुहल्ले में जहाँ 'चिंचियाते सूअर और चोंच मारती मुर्गियाँ' हैं, उसी मुहल्ले में रहने वाले युसूफ मियाँ का हृदय इतना साफ है कि सुधीर रंजन को सुखद आश्चर्य होता है। सुधीर एक कवि हैं, लेकिन प्रगतिशील नहीं हैं, मानवतावादी नहीं हैं, साम्प्रदायिक और संकुचित विचारों के शिकार हैं। इसलिए वे फतेहगंज में होने वाले कवि-सम्मेलन में अपनी 'जन्मभूमि' वाली प्रसिद्ध कविता का पाठ करने की उमंग में हैं।

'आदमी जात का आदमी' में एक 'टर्निंग प्वाइंट' है, जहाँ से कवि सुधीर रंजन—उसे नायक कहा जाय या खलनायक—का हृदय - परिवर्तन होता है, 'मैला आँचल' के तहसीलदार विश्वनाथ प्रसाद की तरह,

लेकिन इस कहानी का अन्त 'मैला आँचल' की तरह आदर्शवाद का शिकार नहीं होता। विश्वनाथ प्रसाद का हृदय परिवर्तन लोगों के जले हुए स्थान पर लेप लगाकर उसे छिपाने का प्रयत्न है और सुधीर रंजन का हृदय-परिवर्तन तो वस्तुतः विचार-परिवर्तन है। अब वह जिस विचार को ग्रहण कर रहा है वही उसे 'आदमी जात का आदमी' बना सकता है।

स्वयं प्रकाश का मानना है कि साम्प्रदायिकता संस्कार बनकर व्यक्ति के भीतर पैठ गयी है, जिसे लात मारकर बाहर निकालने की जरूरत है, तभी व्यक्ति आधुनिक और संस्कारवान बन सकता है। साम्प्रदायिकता स्वार्थ से प्रेरित होती है और स्वार्थ तो आदमी को अन्धा बना देता है। इसलिए साम्प्रदायिक उन्माद में वह सारी मानवीयता भूलकर क्रूर हो जाता है। इस स्थितिमें वह बिना अच्छे-बुरे परिणाम की परवाह किये हुए कठोर कदम उठा लेता है, जो कभी-कभी अमानवीयता की हद पार जाता है, परिणामतः अबोध बच्चों के सिर से उनके पिता का साया उठ जाता है, तो कई महिलाएँ वैधव्य के अभिशाप से ग्रस्त हो जाती हैं। यह विडम्बना मात्र किसी क्षेत्र विशेष की नहीं है, बल्कि विभाजन का दंश झेल रहे भारत और पाकिस्तान— दोनों देशों की है। 'हमला' और 'स्याह तवारीख के आखिरी पन्ने' जैसी कहानियों में इन्हीं विडम्बनाओं का भयावह चित्र उकेरा गया है। विभाजन नहीं होना चाहिए था, लेकिन हो गया। तब भी उसकी प्रक्रिया थमी नहीं है, जिसका भावी दुष्परिणाम दोनों देशों के लिए कितना भयावह हो सकता है, इसकी कल्पना भी भविष्यद्रष्टा साहित्यकार के हृदय को उद्वेलित कर देती है। इसी भावोद्वेलन की कलात्मक अभिव्यक्ति 'स्याह तवारीख के आखिरी पन्ने' शीर्षक कहानी में हुई है।

डायरी की शैली में लिखी गयी इस कहानी का उद्देश्य साम्प्रदायिक रूढ़ियों को ध्वस्त कर स्वस्थ मानसिकता का विकास करना है ताकि भविष्य में होने वाले अवांछित परिणामों से बचा जा सके। करीब बीस वर्ष पूर्व लिखी गयी इस कहानी में लेखक ने व्यथित होकर जिन भावी दुष्परिणामों का उल्लेख किया है, दुर्भाग्य से उनमें से कई तो वस्तुतः 'स्याह तवारीख के काले पन्ने' बन चुके हैं। कहानी के अन्त में लेखक की यह आशा हमें धैर्य बँधाती है कि एक दिन साम्प्रदायिक क्षुद्रता नष्ट हो जायेगी और तब जो हमारा इतिहास होगा वह संतोषप्रद होगा, लेकिन इसके लिए हम सबको आगे बढ़ना होगा। आशा व्यक्त करते हुए स्वयं प्रकाश पाठकों से कहते हैं। "30 सितम्बर 2004 से 15 अगस्त 2047 तक की यात्रा एक महान जाति के पुनर्जन्म की लोमहर्षक चमत्कार कथा है। लेकिन उसका वृत्तान्त अभी मैं आपको नहीं सुनाऊँगा। दरअसल उसे अभी लिखा भी नहीं गया है और सच तो यह है कि मैं उसे लिखूँगा भी नहीं। उसे आप और हम और हमारे बच्चे सब मिलकर लिखेंगे। लिखेंगे न ?"<sup>14</sup>

देश में जहाँ एक ओर हिन्दू-मुस्लिम दंगे हो रहे हैं, लोग साम्प्रदायिकता की आग में जल रहे हैं, वहीं हिन्दू भी हिन्दू के प्रति तथा मुसलमान भी मुसलमान के प्रति नफरत का जहर उगलते हैं। इसका परिणाम यह होता है कि देश में अलगाव, भेद-भाव, आपसी फूट की समस्याएँ उत्पन्न होती हैं। साम्प्रदायिक सोच के लोगों द्वारा समय-समय पर हिंसा की आग भड़कायी जाती है। ऐसे लोगों की निम्न सोच का ही कुफल है जो 'हमला' शीर्षक कहानी का मुख्य पात्र जुमैदीन भीतर से टूट जाता है। उसकी जवान बेटी की

शादी नहीं हो पाती है। समाज में उसकी बदनामी फैलती है। हाजी उसे झूठे मुकदमे में फँसा देता है। परिणामतः वह पूरी तरह टूट जाता है और बरसों पहले छोड़ी हुई शराब फिर से शुरू कर देता है। नियमित नमाज अदा करने वाला जुमैदीन अब रोजा भी नहीं रखता है। तात्पर्य यह कि अब ईश्वर पर से उसका विश्वास उठ चुका है “....जहाँ मुट्ठी भर लोग देश की सारी दौलत पर कब्जा किये बैठे हों, वहाँ बाकी सारे लोग सुखी हो ही कैसे सकते हैं? फिर मुल्क का नाम जो हो। पर नहीं कहता।”<sup>15</sup>

‘हमला’ शीर्षक कहानी साम्प्रदायिक सोच के परिणामस्वरूप बर्बाद होते जा रहे एक परिवार की व्यथा को उद्घाटित करती है। देश-विभाजन से उत्पन्न साम्प्रदायिक सोच ने लोगों के भावों को बाँट दिया है, परिणामतः यदा-कदा हिंसा की आग भड़कती रहती है जिसका शिकार होता है जुमैदीन और उसका परिवार। इस कहानी में हिन्दू-मुस्लिम दंगे का वर्णन नहीं है, बल्कि दो देशों के दो मुस्लिम-परिवारों के अन्तःसम्बन्धों के माध्यम से इस्लाम को अपवित्र करने वाले हाजी जैसे इंसानों के नापाक इरादों का पर्दाफाश करने वाला यथार्थ और विश्वसनीय चित्रण है। यह चित्रण भिन्न समाज के लोगों को देखने की विशिष्ट एवं सूक्ष्म लेखकीय दृष्टि का प्रमाण है। देखिए, जुमैदीन की स्थिति कितनी लाचार हो गयी है— “शर्म, नफरत और हिकारत से जुमैदीन का तन-बदन जलने लगा। या खुदा! या तो जिन्दा रहने की मजबूरी न देता. ...या अपने पुरखों का वतन छोड़कर न भागने का यह इनाम न देता।”<sup>16</sup> हमला होना चाहिए कट्टरपंथियों पर, साम्प्रदायिकता पर, तो होता है जुमैदीन पर, इस्लाम पर। फिर भी जुमैदीन धर्म के ठेकेदारों से दो-दो हाथ करना चाहता है। चूहे की हैसियत वाला होकर भी शेर से भिड़ना चाहता है। बेटी की सरेआम बेइज्जती सहने और झूठे आरोपों की सजा काटने वाले बाप की क्या स्थिति हो सकती है, सोचा जा सकता है। कोई उसका साथ देने वाला नहीं है। वह परिस्थितियों के मकड़जाल में फँसता चला जा रहा है। उसकी पीड़ा का कोई ओर-छोर नहीं है। वह टूट चुका है, लेकिन हारा नहीं है। अपना गम भूलाने के लिए वह फिर से शराब पीने लगा, लेकिन गम को नहीं भूला पाता है। कहानी का कथावाचक कहता है—“मैं अक्सर रात को अपने मकान के पीछे जुमैदीन को नशे में चीखता-चिल्लाता सुना करता और बेचैन होता रहता। कभी वह मुझे खिड़की या छत से अपनी जानिब देखते हुए देख लेते तो वहीं से चिल्लाकर कहते— ‘बाबूजी! मुसलमान मुसलमान का खून पीता है, तो वो मुसलमान कैसे हुआ? बोलो! बाबूजी, पैसे वाले सब काफिर हैं। काफिर का-फि-र! इनके मुँह पर थू। या अल्ला .....फिर ऊपर आसमान की तरफ मुँह उठाकर छाती कूटते हुए और बाल नोचते हुए वह चीखते— ‘इस पैसेवाले के बदन में कीड़े डाल! इसकी मिट्टी गारत कर। इस काफिर पर बिजली गिरा!! जैसे अल्ला को हुक्म दे रहे हों।’”<sup>17</sup>

फैंटेसी की शैली में लिखी गयी ‘आलेख’ शीर्षक कहानी साम्प्रदायिकता के कारण उत्पन्न घृणा, जहालत, सड़ांध, हत्या, बलात्कार आदि पाशविक वृत्तियों के वीभत्स रूप से हमारा साक्षात्कार करवाती है। बीमारी की वजह से जनेश्वर बाबू न तो सो पाते हैं और न जगे ही रह पाते हैं। फिर भी उनके मानस-पटल पर अनेक बिंब उभरते रहते हैं। यद्यपि वे दृश्य बिखरे हुए से प्रतीत होते हैं, लेकिन सबके तार आपस में जुड़े हुए हैं। जनेश्वर बाबू कभी अपने बेटे मानव को अपने मित्र रशीद की लाश समझ बैठते हैं, तो कभी

प्रोफेसर साहब की हत्या उन्हें महात्मा गाँधी की हत्या का भ्रम उत्पन्न करती है। एक दृश्य यहाँ द्रष्टव्य है—“लेकिन मनीऑर्डर प्रोफेसर साहब को कभी नहीं मिला। दस-बारह रोज बाद खबर मिली कि उन्हें मय बीवी-बच्चों के नागपुर स्टेशन पर छूरा भोंककर मार डाला गया और सबकी लाशें दिल्ली ले जाकर चील-कौओं के खाने के लिए ताजमहल के कंगूरे में छेद कर टाँग दी गई।

ताजमहल! लाशें! माँ भारती!!! भ्राता जी!! नागपुर!! ये नागपुर कहाँ से आ गया? और ताजमहल दिल्ली में कब से होने लगा?? रशीद! बेटा रशीद! तुम अब तक सो रहे हो?? टाइम क्या हो गया!!”<sup>18</sup>

‘टाइम’ जानने की तीव्र इच्छा जनेश्वर बाबू की उलझनों को और बढ़ाती जाती है। उनकी कल्पना यथार्थ को काफी विकृत कर देती है। स्वयं प्रकाश उस मूल समस्या को पकड़ते हैं जो इस विकृति का कारण है। “बुखार उतरता नहीं। छाती जकड़ी रहती है। साँस ठीक से ले नहीं पाते। अजब जमाना है। मलेरिया न्यूमोनिया बन जाता है। न्यूमोनिया टाइफाइड और टाइफाइड रिलेप्स होकर पता नहीं क्या जितने डॉक्टर उतनी बीमारियाँ। जितनी बीमारियाँ उतनी दवाइयाँ। जितनी दवाइयाँ उतना मुनाफा। मुनाफा.....संपत्ति..कैपिटल और जितनी कैपिटल उतनी बीमारियाँ!!”<sup>19</sup> इस समस्या का परिणाम इतना ही नहीं है। इस स्वप्न-कथा में जितने बेतरतीब चित्र उभरते हैं वे साम्प्रदायिकता के ही परिणाम हैं।

‘नयी यात्रा’ शीर्षक कहानी में हिन्दू लोगों की भीड़ आती है जो साम्प्रदायिक उन्माद के कारण डा. बनर्जी के मुसलमान माली की हत्या कर देती है। इसका बदला लेने के लिए साम्प्रदायिक मुसलमान लोग डॉ. बनर्जी और अमला बनर्जी के लव-कुश समान दो मासूम बच्चों को भी मौत के घाट उतार देते हैं। लाश का कोई सम्प्रदाय नहीं होता न वह हिन्दू होती है न मुसलमान। इसलिए अमला बनर्जी उन तीनों लाशों को अपने आँगन में रखकर खूब रोती है। यह घटना पालित जैसे घोर विलासवादी मानसिकता के आदमी के पूर्णतः बदल जाने का कारण बनती है। इस कहानी के बारे में विश्वनाथ त्रिपाठी का कहना है—“मैंने ऐसी प्रेम कहानी दूसरी नहीं पढ़ी है। ऐसी भरपूर प्रेम कहानी, साहसपूर्ण और अकुंठ। जीवन राग से रंजित। हिन्दी में एक ऐसी प्रेम कहानी तो मिली जो रोमांटिक है और जिसकी नायिका प्रेमी को शरीर सुख भी देती है। शरीर सुख की आध्यात्मिकता इतने हल्के संकेत से प्रकट कर पाना मुश्किल काम है।”<sup>20</sup>

कहानी में अमला और पालित का यह प्रेम इसलिए भी विशिष्ट हो जाता है, क्योंकि उसमें आदर्श का ऐसा रूप है जो यथार्थ से टकराता है और नयी प्रेरणा पाकर संघर्षशीलता को स्वीकार करता है। गंदी नाली में बजबजाते कीड़ों की तरह भोग-लिप्सा की चिन्ता में डूबे रहने वाले पालित की चेतना जब जागृत होती है तो उसके कल्पना-लोक में अमला बनर्जी के दोनों बेटे जीवित हो उठते हैं “और उन्हें दुनिया की तमाम बेवकूफियों से बचाने की जिम्मेदारी, अचानक उस पर, पालित पर आ गयी है।”<sup>21</sup> साम्प्रदायिकता के शिकार बने अमला बनर्जी के दोनों बेटों के कारण पालित की मानवता जागती है, तब वह यहीं से नयी यात्रा शुरू करता है।

कमलेश्वर का मानना है—“कहानी विचारों और भावना दोनों को वहन करने वाली विधा है। विचार के अभाव में भावना भावुकता में बदल सकती है और भावना के अभाव में विचार पुंसत्वहीन हो



सकता है। तर्क संचेतना की शक्ति है, जो गहरे यथार्थ तक उतरने में मदद देता है...इसलिए बौद्धिकता ही कहानी को संयमित कर सकती है, उसे अरु-विगलित शोक-प्रस्तावों और 'अँधेरे की चीखों' से अलग कर सकती है। अपने यथार्थ को वहन करते हुए, निरन्तर बदलते परिवेश को देखते हुए लिखने का प्रयास ही 'लेखक' का 'प्रयास' होता है।<sup>22</sup> स्वयं प्रकाश की कहानियाँ इसी लेखकीय 'प्रयास' के जीवंत प्रमाण हैं। स्वयं प्रकाश ने गतिशील धारा के अवरोधों को, स्वस्थ मानसिक विकास के बाधक तत्त्वों को पहचाना है और अपनी कहानियों के माध्यम से उन्हें भेद सकने वाली दृष्टि प्रदान की है जो इन तत्त्वों के नये रूप और तेवर की शिनाख्त करने में समर्थ है। उनकी दृष्टि में साम्प्रदायिकता इन्हीं तत्त्वों में से एक है। बदलते समय के साथ साम्प्रदायिकता का रूप भी काफी बदल रहा है। अतः जनवादी दौर में साम्प्रदायिकता के विरुद्ध लिखी गयी कहानियों के रूप और अन्तर्वस्तु में भी परिवर्तन आया है जिसे स्वयं प्रकाश की कहानियों में भी स्पष्ट देखा जा सकता है। सूक्ष्म चित्रण और मार्मिक व्यंजना के कारण चर्चित होने वाली 'पार्टीशन' शीर्षक कहानी इस दृष्टि से द्रष्टव्य है।

अपनी ईमानदारी और मेहनत के बल पर समाज में निरन्तर अपनी प्रतिष्ठा बढ़ाने वाले कुर्बान भाई को अपनी जन्मभूमि जननी की भाँति ही प्रिय है। इसलिए तो वे विभाजन की आग में जलने के बावजूद भारत में ही रहना स्वीकार करते हैं, जबकि उनके दो भाइयों का कत्ल कर दिया जाता है, बड़ी-सी दुकान आग के हवाले कर दी जाती है और पूँजी लेकर नौकर भाग जाते हैं। वे अपनी जान बचाने के लिए अजमेर से नागौर, नागौर से मेड़ता और मेड़ता से टौंक तक जाते हैं, लेकिन पाकिस्तान नहीं जाते। "क्योंकि कुर्बान भाई को अच्छे लगने वाले बहुत-से लोग नहीं गए। तो कुर्बान भाई क्यों जाते?"<sup>23</sup> वे यहाँ के लोगों से प्यार करने लगे हैं। घोर अभाव और दुःख के दिनों को उन्होंने हँसकर झेल लिया - एकदम लापरवाह फक्कड़ की तरह। छोटी-सी दुकान पर ग्राहकों से फुरसत पाकर कब वे किस पर्ची पर शेर लिख दें, उन्हें भी पता नहीं चलता जिसके पीछे काम करती है उनकी आन्तरिक संवेदनशीलता, जिसका प्रमाण उन्हीं के एक मार्मिक शेर से मिलता है-

“फ़क़्त पासे-वफ़ादारी है, वरना कुछ नहीं मुश्किल ।

बुझा सकता हूँ अंगारे, अभी आँखों में पानी है।।”<sup>24</sup>

कुर्बान भाई अंगारों को बुझाने की कोशिश तो करते हैं, लेकिन पूर्णतः बुझा नहीं पाते। “अपने अतीत के बारे में सोच-सोचकर गुस्से में भरे रहने की बजाय भविष्य की तरफ देखकर कभी-कभी चहकने भी लगे।”<sup>25</sup> लेकिन उन्हें यह नहीं पता था कि उनकी इस खुशी पर किसी की गिद्ध-दृष्टि भी है। उन्होंने कभी सपने में भी नहीं सोचा था कि कोई उन्हें 'मियों' कहकर गाली भी दे सकता है। ऊखचन्द वकील का हाली गोम्या उन्हें एक मिनट में ही 'कुर्बान भाई' से 'मियाँ' बना देता है। तिल-तिल करके बनाया गया पहाड़ एक फूँक में उड़ जाता है। बरसों से जमी रुलाई एक साथ फूट पड़ने को जोर मारने लगती है। वे अपने आपको एकदम अकेला महसूस करते हैं और इतिहास के एक प्रोफ़ेसर से कहते हैं। -“आप क्या



खाक हिस्ट्री पढ़ाते हैं? कह रहे हैं पार्टीशन हुआ था! हुआ था नहीं, हो रहा है, जारी है....'<sup>26</sup> कुर्बान भाई का यह कथन हमारे भीतर दबी साम्प्रदायिक भावना पर गहन चोट करता है। बाहरी बटवारा तो 1947 में ही हो गया था, लेकिन उस बटवारे के मूल में जो साम्प्रदायिक उन्माद था उसका खतमा अभी तक नहीं हुआ जिसके परिणामस्वरूप ही एक वफादार और ईमानदार आदमी 'मियां' समझ लिया जाता है। पार्टीशन जारी रहने के कारण और आन्तरिक उन्माद की परख स्वयं प्रकाश ने जिस सूक्ष्म दृष्टि से इस कहानी में की उसी दृष्टि के कारण यह कहानी 'कितने पाकिस्तान' (कमलेश्वर), 'सिक्का बदल गया' (कृष्णा सोबती), 'अमृतसर आ गया है' (भीष्म साहनी), 'शरणदाता' (अज्ञेय), 'मलबे का मालिक' (मोहन राकेश), जैसी श्रेष्ठ कहानियों के साथ अगली पंक्ति में खड़ी है—अपनी विशेषताओं के साथ।

यहाँ न एक बूँद खून गिरता है, न मार-काट होती है और न ही कोई दंगा होता है, फिर भी साम्प्रदायिकता छलक पड़ती है। विभाजन की आन्तरिक प्रक्रिया अनायास प्रकट हो जाती है। हृदय के भीतर दबी हुई सांप्रदायिकता एकाएक जोर मारती है और झटके में ही कुर्बान भाई को मियां बना देती है। कुर्बान भाई अपना गिरेबान पकड़े जाने और गोम्यां द्वारा गालियाँ दी जाने पर जितना आहत होते हैं, उतना तो अपने दो भाइयों का कत्ल होने पर भी नहीं हुए थे।

स्वयं प्रकाश लेखन के लिए विचारधारा को अनिवार्य मानते हैं। एक सबल विचारधारा ही लेखक को समाज के प्रति प्रतिबद्ध बनाती है। अपनी विचारधारा के कारण ही स्वयं प्रकाश के साहित्य में जनपक्षधरता का प्रबल रूप दिखाई पड़ता है, क्योंकि वे मानते हैं— “मेरा पक्का विश्वास है कि विचारधारा के अभाव में किसी बड़ी रचना की सृष्टि संभव ही नहीं है। चाहे विचारधारा वामपंथी हो या दक्षिणपंथी। प्रकट हो या प्रच्छन्न। जिस आदमी के पास कोई एक सपना नहीं है, एक ब्ल्यूप्रिन्ट नहीं है, एक आस्था नहीं है, स्थापित व्यवस्था को उसके द्वारा दी गई गालियाँ भी बेस्वाद, बेसूद और बेअसर होंगी।”<sup>27</sup> और परमानन्द श्रीवास्तव के अनुसार “विचारधारा को जो चीज कहानी के लिए अधिक मूल्यवान् बनाती है वह है—विडम्बना की ठीक-ठीक समझ।”<sup>28</sup> कहना न होगा कि स्वयं प्रकाश की कहानियों में ‘विडम्बना की ठीक-ठीक समझ’ भरपूर है, जिसका निदर्शन हम ‘पार्टीशन’, ‘क्या तुमने कभी कोई सरदार भिखारी देखा?’ ‘उल्टा पहाड़’, ‘इनका जमाना’ और ‘बेमकान’ जैसी कहानियों में कर सकते हैं।

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## “बाबू साहेब चौधरी आ हुनक नाटक”

डॉ० नारायण झा

बाबू साहेब चौधरीक जन्म 27 अगस्त 1916 ई० केँ मधुबनी जिलाक दुलारपुर गाममे भेलनि तथा हुनक मृत्यु 20 अगस्त 1998 ई० केँ भेलनि ।

मैथिली भाषाक समर्पित आन्दोलनी, मातृभाषाक प्रति असीम अनुरागी बाबू साहेब चौधरीक जन्म एकटा एहन निर्धन परिवारमे भेल, जाहि परिवार मध्य नाना प्रकारक समस्या मुँह बौने ठाढ़ छल । गरीबीक दंश, अभावक चीत्कारक बीच बेवश परिवारक सभसँ पैघ आ गंभीर समस्या छल— ‘वैवाहिक समस्या’ ।

नाटककार बाबू साहेब चौधरी मैथिल समाजमे पसरल वैवाहिक समस्या पर आधारित मौलिक नाटक ‘कुहेस’क रचना कयलनि । एकर प्रकाशन वर्ष 1967 ई० मे भेल । सर्वप्रथम एहि नाटकक मंचन 13 मई 1967 ई० केँ नेताजी सुभाष इन्स्टीच्यूट हॉल मे ‘मैथिली रंगमंच’क द्वारा भेल । एहि नाटकमे पुरुष पात्रक संख्या-13 एवं स्त्री पात्रक संख्या-3 अछि ।

हिनक दोसर अनुदित नाटक ‘चाणक्य’ अछि जे स्व० डी०एल० रायक ‘चन्द्रगुप्त’ नाटकक भावानुवाद अछि । ऐतिहासिक पृष्ठ भूमि पर आधारित एकर कथानक मध्य विश्वविख्यात कूटनीतिज्ञ चाणक्यक ओज, प्रतिभा एवं कुशाग्र बुद्धिक प्रदर्शन भेल अछि । एहि नाटकक अनुवाद वर्ष 1965 ई० मे भेल तथा पहिलबेर एहि नाटकक मंचन 23 नवम्बर 1965 ई० केँ भेल ।

दुनू नाटक मध्य एकटा समान्य विशेषता रहल जे स्वयं बाबू साहेब चौधरी दुनू नाटकमे पात्रक भूमिकामे रहला । ‘चाणक्य’ नाटकक प्रमुख पात्र, चाणक्यक भूमिकामे तँ ‘कुहेस’ नाटकक प्रमुख पात्र जनकक (कन्याक पिता) भूमिकामे ।

कहल जाइत अछि जे ई एकटा आओर नाटकक रचना कयलनि, जे ‘चोर’ नाटकक नामे प्रतिष्ठित भेल किन्तु एकर प्रकाशन नहि भए सकल ।

बाबू साहेब चौधरीक ‘कुहेस’ नाटक भोगक यथार्थक व्यथा, वैवाहिक समस्या सँ उबरबाक असाध्य परिश्रम तथा अन्तर्मन कथा थिक । निर्धन, निरीह, निःसहाय, निरालम्ब तथा निरश्रित परिवार मैथिल समाजक वैवाहिक जटिल प्रक्रियामे कोन तरहँ ओझरा जाइत अछि, तकर जीवन्त एवं स्वाभाविक चित्रण एहि नाटक मध्य भेल अछि ।

मैथिल समाजमे व्याप्त लोभी प्रवृत्ति, तिलक-दहेज, पिताक कुत्सित मनोभाव तथा कन्यागतक पीड़ा एवं कुंठा केँ ‘कुहेस’क कथानक बनाओल गेल अछि । कन्याक पिता जनक परिस्थिति सँ लाचार भए दहेजक टाकाक समय पर व्यवस्था नहि कए पबैत छथि, जाहिकारणँ सीताक विवाह नहि होइत अछि ।

इम्हर बेटीक विवाह बरदेबाक स्थितिमे घटक लुट्टी झा सेहो कन्यागत जनकक शोषण-दोहन करैत

छथि मुदा शंकरक सत्प्रयास सँ सुवंशक पुत्र रामकुमार सँ सीताक विवाह भए जाइत अछि । विवाह सँ पूर्व वर-पक्ष एवं कन्या-पक्षक बीच जे समझौता भेल छल— जे विवाहक बाद दहेजक टाका देल जायत । समय पर जनक टाकाक व्यवस्था नहि कए पबैत छथि, जकर परिणामस्वरूप वरक माए सन्ध्या सीताक दुर्दशा एवं प्रताड़ित करैत छथिन । हुनक दुर्व्यवहार सँ दुखी भए जनक अपन जमीन बेचि कए सभटा टाका चुकता कए दैत छथि । अपन माए-बापक एहन व्यवहार देखि रामकुमार विष खा कए आत्म हत्या करबाक निर्णय करैत छथि । किन्तु शंकरक सत्प्रयास सँ रामकुमार बचि जाइत छथि ।

‘कुहेस’क कथानक पर विचार करैत डॉ० प्रेम शंकर सिंहक कथन अछि जे “एकर कथानक मैथिली नाट्य साहित्यक परम्परामे पुरान घाबमे नव पीढ़ा सदृश अछि । नाटकक कथा-वस्तु प्राचीन रहितहुँ हृदयकेँ स्पर्श कयनिहार अछि ।”<sup>1</sup>

कोनो नाटकक सभ सँ महत्वपूर्ण तत्व होइत अछि—कथोपकथन अर्थात् संवाद । संवाद जेहन सरल, सरस, बोध्यगम ओ रूचिगर रहत, नाटक तेहन प्रभावोदायक ओ हृदयग्राही होयत तथा दर्शक केँ बन्हने रहत । एहि दृष्टिँ ‘कुहेस’क संवाद अति प्रशंसनीय अछि । नाटकक भाषा सहज प्रवाहयुक्त रहैत जनसाधारण दर्शक केँ अभिभूत करैत अछि कारण एहिमे ठेठ मैथिली शब्दक प्रयोग, मुहाबरा, कहबी एवं लोकोक्तिक प्रयोग सँ संवाद रोचक, रूचिगर एवं हृदयग्राही बनल अछि ।

संवादक माध्यम सँ मिथिलामे व्याप्त गरीबीक चित्रण स्वाभाविक रूपेँ भेल अछि, यथा—

“जनक (हँसि कए)— भगवान जौं गरीब केँ शारीरिक शक्ति नहि देथिन, दाँत मजबूत नहि करथिन, त कोना भरि दिन कोदारि खुरपी चलाओत एवं टटाओल मरूआ आ खेसारीक रोटी चिवाओत । जाह; तौं काँचे चूरा चाउर वा मुरही किछु नेने आबह ।”<sup>2</sup>

मुदा पिता जनकक अभिव्यक्तिक उपरान्त बेटी सीताक कथन सँ गरीबीक प्रस्तुतीकरणमे विरोधाभास उत्पन्न होइत अछि । ई गरीबीक स्वाभाविक चित्रणमे सन्देह उत्पन्न करैत अछि, जाहि सँ नाटककार केँ बचक चाही । यथा—

“सीता— नहि, नहि । देरी नहि हैत । यावत् अहाँ कनेक पैर धोअब तावत् हम चूरा भूजि ओहि मे कनेक घी मरीच मिला कऽ नेने अबैत छी ।”<sup>3</sup>

सीताक एहि कथन सँ जनकक गरीबी पर कनेक सन्देह उत्पन्न करैत अछि कारण खाद् सामग्रीक रूपमे घी एवं मरीच दुनू बेस कीमती अछि तखन एकर उपलब्धता गरीब घरमे कोना रहि सकैत अछि ।

मिथिलाक वैवाहिक व्यवस्थाक मध्य घटकक चरित्र आ स्वभाव एहि नाटक मध्य विशेष रूप सँ चित्रित भेल अछि । कन्याक माए सुभद्राक कथनमे घटकक चरित्र पर कड़गर व्यंग्य आ चोट अभिव्यक्त भेल अछि—

“सुभद्रा— अहाँ त खाली घटकक भरोसे बैसल रहैत छी । घटक सभक कोन विश्वास । ओ सभ तँ ओहिना कन्यावाला केँ परतारैत रहैत छथिन । नहि हैत तँ कोनो अकलेल बकलेल वा भिखारि के उठा

क आनि देताह ।”<sup>4</sup>

बेटीक विवाह चिन्ता कोनो माएक हृदयमे कोन तरहें समायल रहैत तथा माए सदिखन इएह सोचैत छथिन्ह जे हमर बेटीक विवाह ससमय कोनो सुयोग्य लड़का सँ भए जाय । एहि विषय आ सोच केँ नाटककार संवादक माध्यमे स्वाभाविक अभिव्यक्ति देलनि अछि । कन्याक माए आ बापक बीच भेल संवाद केँ सहज रूपेँ नाटककार प्रस्तुत कयलनि अछि । यथा-

“जनक- टोल पड़ोसक लोकक कहने तँ हम अपन बेटी केँ खाधि मे नहि फेकि देब । दोसर हम पुछैत छी जे एकर एखन बयसे की भेल छै, जाहिलेल लोक चौल करत ? आब आठ-नौ वर्षक कन्याक विवाहक दिन गेलैक !

पिताक एहि उक्ति पर मायक क्रोध आओर प्रचण्ड भेल । माय-बापक बीच भेल बाक्युद्ध केँ स्वाभाविक रूपेँ नाटककार प्रस्तुत कयलनि । पिताक कथन आ सोचक प्रतिउत्तर मायक एहि कथनमे प्रस्तुत भेल । यथा-

“सुभद्रा (तमसा कए) अहाँ लेखे तँ ई एखन दूधपीबा बच्चे अछि । जे मोन हुआँ से करू । हम माउग भए के कइये की सकैत छी !”<sup>5</sup>

एहि नाटकक प्रमुख पात्र कन्याक पिता जनकक कथनमे प्रगतिवादी विचार धारा अछि । ओ विवाह सँ पूर्वक प्रक्रिया-मध्य परिवर्तनक पक्षधर छथि । यथा-

“जनक- हँऽ; परिपक्व बुद्धि नहि रहबाक कारणेँ- मात्र सुन्दरताक लेल, आ ओहो लिपिस्टिक मे ओझरायल सुन्दरताक लेल । किन्तु इहो उचित नहि जे सभ-तरहें सुयोग्य वर के जेहने-तेहने कन्याक हाथ थम्हा देल जाइक । हमर तँ विचार अछि जे विवाह मे वर आ कन्याक राय अवश्ये लेल जाय ।”<sup>6</sup>

एहि नाटक मध्य वर पक्षक मनोभावक चित्रण स्वाभाविक रूपेँ भेल अछि । वरक पिताक लोभी प्रवृत्ति हुनक कथनमे सहज रूपेँ प्रकट भेल अछि । वरक पिता अपन जीवनक समस्त समस्याक निदान दहेजक टाकाक भरसे करबाक दिलासा अपन पत्नी संध्या केँ दैत छथि जे संध्या केँ पसिन नहि पड़ैत अछि । यथा-

“सुवंश (वरक पिता)- एतेक दिन घर सम्हारल भेल, परंच एक वर्ष आओर नहि हैत ? स्त्रीगणक बुद्धि तँ । जनैत छी ? एखन विवाह करौने दस हजारक घाटा ! सम्प्रति; पचास हजार सँ बेसी नहि भेटत । परंच, डाक्टरी पास कयला पर एक लाख पैर पर गनि क दए जायत । सभ सँ फरागत भ जायब । पन्द्रह बीस हजारमे महाजन साफ करब, बीस हजारक जमीन, पचीस हजार मे मकान आ पाँच हजार लए दुनू बेकती सभ तीर्थ घूरब । ओहिना गुम्मी नहि लगने छी ।”<sup>7</sup>

नाटकक कथानक मे जाति-व्यवस्था, गोत्र-मूलक समर्थन, परम्परा आ पाखंडक समर्थन आदि विषय पर व्यंग्य एवं कटाक्ष भेल अछि । तथा बहुपत्नी विवाहक विभत्स स्वरूप पर जोड़गर व्यंग्य-वाण चलल अछि यथा;- शंकर-हरिसिंह देवक प्रथाक नाम पर मिथिला मे की कम अत्याचार-अनाचार भेल अछि ?

शंकरक एहि उक्तिक जबाब लुट्टी एहतरहेँ दैत छथिन-“अहाँ एकरा अत्याचार कहैत छियैक ? हरिसिंह देव मात्र हंस जकाँ दूध आ पानि केँ फराक कए देलखिन । ओ बाबू ! ओ बंश आ पौजिक लोक जाहि गाम देने जाइत छलाह ओहि ठाम लोक हुनका बलजोरी अपन बहिन कन्या, आ भतीजी संग विवाह करा अपना केँ गौरवान्वित बुझैत छल ।”<sup>8</sup>

शंकर-“आ’ ओ लोकनि जातिक नाम पर बीस-बीसटा विवाह करैत छलाह ।”<sup>9</sup>

लुट्टी-“ताहूँ सँ वेशी । सोनमनि झा केँ वत्तीसटा विवाह छलैन ।”<sup>10</sup>

एहतरहेँ एहि नाटकमे अनेको रोचक प्रसंगक अभिव्यक्ति भेल अछि ।

मैथिली नाट्य साहित्यक विकासमे बाबू साहेब चौधरी द्वारा स्व० डी० एल रायक चन्द्रगुप्त नाटकक भावानुवाद महत्वपूर्ण योगदान मानल जाइत अछि । 1965 ई मे एहि पोथीक मैथिली भाषामे अनुवाद कए नाट्य साहित्य केँ एकगोट ऐतिहासिक घटना-क्रम पर आधारित नाटक भेटल । वर्तमान समाज, वातावरण आ समय केँ दृष्टिमे राखि मूल नाटकक कथानक मे काट-छाँट कए अनुवादक चौधरी जी अपन मेधा, प्रतिभाक परिचय देलनि ।

नन्द आ चाणक्यक बीच मेल संवाद केँ अत्यन्त रोचक एवं प्रवाहपूर्ण शैलीमे प्रस्तुत कयल गेल अछि, यथा- “नन्द-हम सभ की अहि ठाम बताहक प्रलाप सुनै आयल छी ? बाचाल हिनका बाहर करू ।”<sup>11</sup>

बा०-[चाणक्यक टीक धएक घिचैत] बाहर जो भिक्षुक नहि तैं...<sup>12</sup>

“चाणक्य-की !...हँ जाइत छी-जाइत छी । किन्तु जयबा सँ पूर्व एकटा बात कहि जाइत छी । महाराज नन्द । घोर कलियुगक ध्वंसावशेषो मे एकबेर ब्राह्मणक प्रताप अहाँ देखब । जौं नन्द वंशक नाश नहि कैल तँ चणकक सन्तान नहि । अहाँक रक्त सँ रंगल हाथे टीक बाहन्ब यैह प्रतिज्ञा कए हम चललहुँ । स्मरण राखब महाराज ।”<sup>13</sup>

चाणक्य आ नन्दक बीच संवाद केँ आओर रोचकताक संग तखन प्रस्तुती भेल जखन चाणक्य पुनः नन्द केँ सम्बोधित कए कहैत छथि-“एकटा भविष्यवाणी अओर कएने जाइत छी- एक दिन अही भिखारीक पैर पकड़ि अहाँकेँ प्राणक भिक्षा माँगै पड़त । किन्तु ओहि दिन हम से भिक्षा नहि देब । ओहि दिन देखबैक अहि ब्राह्मणक तप-शक्ति, ब्राह्मणक प्रतिभा-प्रभाव, प्रतिज्ञाक बल, ब्राह्मणक शपथक तेज, ब्राह्मणक विक्रम, ब्राह्मणक अजेय प्रताप ।”<sup>14</sup>

वस्तुतः ‘चाणक्य नाटकक अनुवादक क्रममे अनुवादक चाणक्यक व्यक्तित्व, चरित एवं कुशाग्र बुद्धिक प्रस्तुती सटीक एवं सुन्दर भावमे कयलनि अछि । निष्कर्षतः 1960 ई०क पश्चात् कलकत्ताक मैथिली नाट्य क्षेत्रमे नव-जागरणक प्रारंभ भेल । विभिन्न नाटकक प्रदर्शन सँ नाटकक प्राण-तत्व संवाद केँ रोचक एवं प्रवाहपूर्ण बनाओल गेल । आधुनिक वैज्ञानिक टेक्निकक प्रयोग भेल । सुयोग्य निर्देशकक कारणेँ नाटक मंचस्थ भेल । एहि कोटिक महत्वपूर्ण उल्लेखनीय नाटक सभ अछि- चोर, सुखायल डारि, नव पल्लव, चन्द्रगुप्त, कुहेस, आगन्तुक, राजा हरिश्चन्द्र आदि ।

मिथिलामे व्याप्त बूढ़-विवाह, बहु-पत्नी विवाह बाल-विवाह, दहेज प्रथा आदि कुरीति, कुसंस्कार पर 'कुहेस' नाटकक माध्यम सँ कड़गर चोट कयल गेल । पुरुष-प्रधान सोच, विचार, मानसिकता पर जे कुहेस लागल छल, तकरा कुहेस नाटकक कथानकक कटाक्ष सँ नाटककार बाबू साहेब चौधरी हटेबाक सद्प्रयास कयलनि । तेँ ई नाटक तत्व, महत्व आ व्याप्तिक दृष्टिँ महत्वपूर्ण अछि ।

बस्तुतः नाटककार बाबू साहेब चौधरी मिथिला समाजमे व्याप्त तिलक-दहेज, जाति-पाँतिक कारणेँ स्त्रीक दुर्दशा केँ नाटक माध्यमे चित्रित कयलनि अछि । अतएव बाबू साहेब चौधरी मिथिला समाजक प्रेरणा-स्त्रोत छथि तथा नव-जागरणक ज्योति-शिखा छथि, जे सम्पूर्ण जीवन मिथिला-मैथिलीक सेवा निष्ठापूर्वक कयलनि ।

#### संदर्भ:-

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## मणिपद्मक नाट्य-साहित्य

प्रो० अशोक कुमार मेहता

डॉ० ब्रजकिशोर वर्मा 'मणिपद्म'क बहुआयामी लेखन में एकटा सशक्त आयाम अछि हुनक नाट्य-साहित्य । कवि, कथाकार, उन्मासकारक अनुरूप हिनका नाटककारक रूपमें सेहो यश भेटैत रहलनि अछि । एकमात्र नाट्य-साहित्य केँ ई सौभाग्य प्राप्त छैक जे ई श्रव्य, दृश्य, श्रव्य-दृश्य दुनू आ पाठ्य-रूप में हमरालोकनिक ज्ञानानुरंजन करैत रहैत अछि । डॉ० मणिपद्मक नाट्यकृति एकर उत्तम उदाहरण अछि ।

अद्यावधि हिनक तीन गोटा नाटक 'कण्ठहार'<sup>1</sup> 'झुमकी'<sup>2</sup> आ 'तेसर कनियाँ'<sup>3</sup> तथा एक गोटा एकांकी संग्रह 'अनमिल आखर'<sup>4</sup> पुस्तकाकार प्रकाशित छनि ।

कण्ठहार महाकवि विद्यापतिक उपनाम थीक । महाकवि मिथिलाक सांस्कृतिक चेतनाक प्रतीक पुरुष ओ मैथिली भाषा-साहित्यक आधार स्तम्भ छथि । हिनक जीवनवृत्त केँ अभिव्यंजित करैत प्रायः सभ विधामे लेखन-कार्य भेल अछि । मैथिली नाटक सेहो पर्याप्त रचित भेल अछि मुदा, मणिपद्मक पहिल नाट्यकृति 'कण्ठहार' विद्यापति पर केन्द्रित सभसँ फराक आ विशेष महत्त्वक अछि । “कारण, ऐतिहासिक पृष्ठ भूमिमें रचित एहि नाटक में नाटककार काल्पनिकताक कतहु प्रयोग नहि कएलनि अछि ।”<sup>5</sup>

'कण्ठहार'क कथानक बड़ दीर्घ अछि । विद्यापतिक युवावस्थासँ आरम्भ भऽ कीर्तिसिंहक देहांतक देवसिंहक नैमिषारण्यसँ घुरि शासन सम्हारब, मिथिला पर यवनक आक्रमण आ विद्यापतिक सहयोगसँ विजय, महाकवि आ मुसाइ झाक मध्य शास्त्रार्थ, विद्यापतिक मध्यस्थतासँ शिवसिंह लखिमाक विवाह, जौनपुरक शाह सुल्तान सर्कीक दरबारमें विद्यापतिक काव्य-पाठ, महाराज शिवसिंह द्वारा महाकविकेँ उपहारस्वरूप बिस्फी गाम भेटब, विद्यापतिक सपत्नीक रामेश्वर, जन्नाथपुरी आ कामाख्याक तीर्थाटन, विद्यापतिक अद्वितीय कवित्व प्रतिभाक बलेँ बंदी बनल महाराज शिवसिंहक मुक्ति, तिलकेश्वरमें शाही सेना संग युद्ध में शिवसिंहक तिरोहित होएब, विद्यापति द्वारा महारानी लखिमा केँ सती होएबासँ रोकब, लखिमा, विश्वासदेवी आ विद्यापतिक महाराज पुरादित्यक राजयाश्रय प्राप्त करब, 'लिखनावली'क रचना, विद्यापति आ उगना प्रसंग, शिवसिंहक तिरोहित होएबाक बारह वर्ष पूर्ण भेला पर लखिमाक महाप्रयाण, विश्वासदेवीक शासन ओ संरक्षण में विद्यापति द्वारा 'शैवसर्वस्वसार' तथा 'दुर्गाभक्तितरंगिणी'क रचना, कार्तिक धवल त्रयोदशी केँ वृद्धावस्थामे महाकविक गंगालीन होएब धरिक कथा केँ नाट्य रूप देल गेल अछि ।

एहि मुख्य कथानकक संग आरो बहुत-रास आनुसंगिक कथा सभ अछि जकरा समंजित करैत लगभग चौबीसटा पुरुष मात्र आ छओटा स्त्री पात्रकेँ लऽ कऽ ई नाटक दस अंक में समाप्त भेल । परिणामतः 'कण्ठहार' प्रवाहपूर्ण कथोपकथनक अछैतो रंगमंचीयताक अनिवार्य शर्त केँ पूर्ण करबा में थोड़ेक चूक गेल अछि । तथापि महाकवि विद्यापतिसँ संदर्भित जानकारी तथा तत्कालीन मिथिलाक शासकीय



व्यवस्था सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक अभिज्ञान करेबाक हेतु ई नाटक उपादेय रहत ।

नाट्य-सिद्धान्तक अनुपालन करैत मणिपद्मक शेष दूना नाटक 'झुमकी' आ 'तेसर कनियाँ' सफल नाट्यकृति मानल जाइत अछि । 1975 ई० मे भारतक तत्कालीन प्रधानमंत्री श्रीमती इंदिरा गाँधी बीस सूत्री कार्यक्रमक शुरूआत कएने रहथि । कार्यक्रमक मूल उद्देश्य छल-गरीबी उन्मूलन, जीवन स्तर मे सुधार तथा सुशिक्षित आ जिम्मेदार नागरिक बनाएब । एहि अभियानक समर्थन मे समाजसेवी रचनाकार डॉ० मणिपद्म 'झुमकी' नामक नाटकक सृजन कएलनि । एहि नाटकक आरंभ मे नाटक कारक टिप्पणी छनि-"राष्ट्रनिर्माण कारी आदर्श ओ प्रभासँ उद्भासित अपराधकर्मिक एकटा काल्पनिक टोल पर आधारित सामाजिक लोक नाटक ।"<sup>6</sup>

बीससूत्री कार्यक्रमक प्रभावसँ अपराधी समूहक महिला झुमकीक कुख्यात डकैतनीसँ समाज सुधारिका बनबाक कथाक नाट्यरूप थीक 'झुमकी' ।

कोनो सरकारी ओ समाजसापेक्ष योजनाक प्रचार-प्रसार मे साहित्यकारक की भूमिका भऽ सकैछ, तकर तकर जीवन्त उदाहरण अछि 'झुमकी' । तीन अंकक एहि मंचोपयोगी नाटकमे नाटककारक समाजवादी चिंतन मूर्तरूप ग्रहण कएलक अछि । बीससूत्री कार्यक्रमक उद्देश्यक अनुरूप नाटककार झुमकीक परिस्थिति ओ परिवर्तनकेँ रेखांकित कएलनि अछि । विगत शताब्दीक छठम-सातम-आठम दशकक मिथिला वा भारतीय ग्रामीण समाजक स्मरण करैत छी तँ 'झुमकी' सत्य घटना पर आधारित सफलतम नाटक मानल जा सकैछ । प्रकाशकीय वक्तव्य एकदम सटीक छनि-

"मैथिलीक सुपरिचित साहित्यकार श्रीमणिपद्म अपन एहि कृतिमे समाज-सुधारक सन्देश देलनि अछि ।"<sup>7</sup>

मणिपद्मक तेसर ओ प्रायः अंतिम नाटक थीक 'तेसर कनियाँ' । मिथिला सहित भारतीय समाजमे दहेजप्रथा ओ तदजन्य कुरीतिक कारणेँ पत्नीक हत्या-सन घृणित कार्य होइत रहल अछि । एकर मुक्तिक उपाय तर्कैत डॉ० मणिपद्म 'तेसर कनियाँ' नाटकक प्रणयन कएलनि ।

नाटकक प्रधान पुरुष पात्र प्रिंस केँ दू टा पत्नीहंताक रूपमे तथा दहेज लोभी प्रिंसक माय केँ सहयोगीक रूपमे चित्रित कएल गेल अछि । प्रधान स्त्री पात्र निरंजना आ परिचारिका कुन्तलाक रूपमे महिला एस०पी० छथि । माय-बेटा समस्या आ तेसर कनियाँ तथा परिचारिका समाधानक रूपमे उपस्थापित कएल गेल अछि नाटककारक उद्देश्य छनि जे नारी समाज केँ प्रिंसक माय सदृश कायर आ लोभी नहि अपितु निरंजना आ कुन्तला सदृश धैर्यशालिनी ओ साहसी बनबाक प्रयोजन छैक । नारीक उत्पीड़नक स्थिति मे दोसर नारीक भूमिका केहन हो तकरा बड़ स्पष्टताक संग प्रस्तुत नाटक मे रेखांकित कएल गेल अछि । समसामयिक कथानक, सहज कथोपकथन, सजीव चरित्र-चित्रण, अनुकूल वातावरण आ सर्वतोभावेन रंगमंचीय दृष्टिकोणसँ 'तेसर कनियाँ' मणिपद्मक उत्कृष्ट नाट्यकृति थीक ।

मैथिली भाषा-साहित्य मे नाटकक संग-संग एकांकी सेहो एक स्वतंत्र विधाक रूपमे समादृत भेल

अछि । मणिपद्मक प्रवेश नाट्यकारक रूपमे एकांकीएक संग भेल छलनि ।<sup>8</sup> पछाति ओ प्रतिष्ठित एकांकी कारक रूपमे परिगणित होमए लगलाह । हिनक एकांकीक संकलन-संपादन कएनिहार प्रो० (डा०) प्रेमशंकर सिंह तैइस गोट एकांकीक प्रकाशनक सूचना देलनि अछि ।<sup>9</sup> एहिमे एकैस गोट एकांकीक संकलित रूप थीक 'अनमिल आखर' । तत्काल अनुपलब्धताक कारणेँ दू टा एकांकी 'शाहीरूप' तथा 'पञ्चकन्या' असंकलित रहि गेल अछि ।<sup>10</sup> एम्हर डॉ० सिंह द्वारा जानकारी भेटल अछि जे हिनक 'जेलक फाटक' शीर्षक एकांकी कर्णामृत पत्रिका मे प्रकाशित भेलनि अछि, मुदा ओ पत्रिका हमरा दृष्टिपथ पर नहि आबि सकल अछि । अस्तु, मणिपद्मक एकांकीक संख्या चौबीस धरि पहुँच जाइत अछि ।

मणिपद्मक संपूर्ण एकांकी-साहित्य पर दृष्टिपात करैत छी तँ एकांकीकार अपन नाट्य-कौशलक परिचय दैत अधिकांश एकांकी मे यथार्थ ओ कल्पनाक मंजुल समन्वय स्थापित कएलनि अछि । विषयगत दृष्टि 'उदगनाक गृह आगमन', 'दिल्लीक इनार', 'मिथिलाक तरुआरि', 'विद्यापति एलाह', भोरूका स्वप्न', 'शस्त्र ओ शास्त्र', 'शाही बन्दी' आ 'मिथिलाक कण-कण मे' शीर्षक एकांकी महाकवि विद्यापतिक जीवनगाथा सँ सम्बन्धित अछि । 'सझौती आश्रम', 'हुनकर भरदुतिया' तथा 'मुनरीक मोल' क्रमशः लोकनायक लोरिक ओ नैका बनिजाराक गाथा पर आधारित अछि । 'मिथिलाक बेटी' आ 'माय-बहिन' पौराणिक कथासँ जुड़ल अछि । 'चित्र ओ गीत' तथा 'अनमिल आखर' भावुकता आ कर्तव्यबोध सँ ओतप्रोत अछि । जखन कि 'हरही' ऐतिहासिकता एवं 'हंसक यात्रा' प्रकृति-प्रेम तथा 'प्रगति', 'हुनकर पुत्रवधू', 'बस कण्डक्टर' आ 'तेसर कनियाँ' मिथिला ओ भारतीय सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक चेतनासँ सम्पृक्त एकांकी थीक । "एकांकीक कथानक चाहे लोकगाथात्मक हो वा ऐतिहासिक हो वा समसामयिक सामाजिक जीवनक परिप्रेक्ष्य मे हो ओ (मणिपद्म) प्रत्येक स्थल पर अपन सूक्ष्म पर्यवेक्षण शक्तिक परिचय अतिथार्थताक संग देलनि अछि; जे वर्तमान संदर्भ मे सर्वथा नवीनताक संकेत करैत अछि ।"<sup>11</sup>

उपर्युक्त एकांकी मे बहुत-रास रेडियो एकांकी सेहो अछि । रेडियोक प्रचार-प्रसारसँ एकांकी लेखन मे बेस अभिवृद्धि भल आ रेडियो एकांकीकारक रूपमे मणिपद्मक नाम उल्लेखनीय अछि ।

समग्रता मे डॉ० मणिपद्मक नाट्य-साहित्यक अनुशीलन सँ ई स्पष्ट होइत अछि वैविध्यपूर्ण नाट्य-कथ्य मे महाकवि विद्यापति हुनक प्रिय विषय रहलनि । तखने तँ अपन औपन्यासिक कृति 'विद्यापति'क नाट्य-रूपान्तर 'कण्ठहार'क रूप मे कएलनि ।<sup>12</sup> एहिना विद्यापति विषयक समस्त एकांकी 'कण्ठहार'क विकेन्द्रीकरण मानल जा सकैछ । 'लोरिक विजय' आ 'नैका बनिजारा' उपन्यासक कतिपय अंशक दिग्दर्शन एतद विषयक एकांकी मे होइत अछि । एकर विपरीत 'तेसर कनियाँ' एकांकीक विस्तार रूप थीक एहि नामक नाटक । ई आदान-प्रदान मणिपद्मक अनुपम नाट्य-कौशलक प्रतिफल थीक ।

नाट्य कृति तत्कालीन सामाजिक स्थितिक अनुकृति होइत अछि । मणिपद्मक नाटक ओ एकांकी मे एहि तथ्यक दिग्दर्शन व्यापकताक संग होइत अछि । हिनक भाषा-प्रयोग ओ शिल्प-वैशिष्ट्य सदैव अनुकरणीय रहल अछि । नाटक व एकांकी मे ओहने विलक्षण भाषाशिल्पक प्रयोग अछि । कहि सकैत छी

मणिपद्मक नाट्य-साहित्य मैथिली भाषा-साहित्यक अमूल्य निधि तँ अछि संगहि कतिपय एकांकी भारतीय नाट्य-साहित्यक समकक्ष ठाढ़ होएबा मे सक्षम अछि ।

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## “प्रो० हरिमोहन झाक कृतिक विश्लेषण”

प्रो० रागिनी रंजन

आधुनिक मैथिली साहित्यक लोकप्रिय, यशस्वी एवं प्रख्यात साहित्यकारक रूपमे प्रो० हरिमोहन झाक नाम महत्वपूर्ण छनि । हुनक साहित्यिक प्रतिभासँ मैथिली भाषाक तीव्र गतिसँ प्रचार-प्रसार भेल । मैथिली भाषामे विशाल पाठक वर्ग तैयार करबामे, मैथिली भाषाकेँ आन भाषा-भाषी सँ सम्मान दिएबामे तथा भाषाक लोकप्रियता बढ़ाबामे प्रो० हरिमोहन झाक योगदान अहम एवं अद्वितीय अछि ।

प्रो० हरिमोहन झा अपन विलक्षण प्रतिभासँ लाखक-लाख पाठक वर्गकेँ आकर्षित, मनोरंजित, शिक्षित एवं सुसंस्कृत करैत रहलाह ।

प्रो० झा अनेको विधासँ मैथिली साहित्यक भंडारकेँ भरलनि । हिनका द्वारा लिखल गेल महत्वपूर्ण विधा अछि- उपन्यास, कथा, गल्प, एकांकी, प्रहसन, निबंध, आत्म-कथा, कविता, आदि । विभिन्न विधामे हिनक महत्वपूर्ण रचना अछि- उपन्यासक रूपमे ‘कन्यादान आ द्विरागमन’ कथा संग्रहक रूपमे ‘प्रणम्य देवता’ रंगशाला, एकादशी चर्चरी, गल्पक रूपमे ‘खट्टर ककाक तरंग आत्मकथाक रूपमे ‘जीवनयात्रा’ आदि ।

हिनक उपन्यासमे प्रयुक्त गद्य शैली, भाषा एवं शब्दलोक जीवनक अनुरूप अछि । विषय-वस्तुक प्रस्तुतीकरण व्यापक उद्देश्यक पूर्तिक लेल भेल अछि । संवादक भाषा अत्यंत रोचक, प्रवाहपूर्ण, आकर्षक हृदयग्राही अछि । एहिमे तत्कालीन मिथिलाक ग्राम जीवनक यथार्थ एवं साकार चित्रण भेल अछि तथा समाजक विकृतिकेँ सुन्दर रीतिएँ व्यंग्यात्मक रूप मे प्रस्तुत कएल गेल अछि जे सर्वसाधारणक लेल आकर्षणक केन्द्र बनि गेल । उपन्यास मे हास्य-व्यंग्यक माध्यमसँ विषय-वस्तुकेँ एहि रूपेँ सजाओल गेल अछि जे समाजक मात्र मनोरंजन टा नहि कएलक अपितु समाज केँ सोचबाक लेल विवश सेहो कयलक ।

प्रो० हरिमोहन झा शिक्षाजनित वैवाहिक समस्याकेँ लए जाहि हास्य-व्यंग्य शैली मे ‘कन्यादान’ उपन्यासक रचना कयलनि ओ मैथिली साहित्यक लेल अमूल्य निधि सिद्ध भेल । कन्यादानक कथानक, कथोपकथन, वातावरण चरित्र-चित्रण, शैली ओ उद्देश्य अत्यंत सशक्त ओ सहज रूपेँ उपन्यासक मध्य अभिव्यक्त भेल अछि ।

1. **कन्यादान-** 1929 मे मिथिला पत्रिकामे एहि उपन्यासक पेनी त’ छानि देल गेल मुदा कतिपय कारणसँ एकर गाड़ी आगौं नहि बढ़ि सकल । पछाति प्रो. हरिमोहन झाक पाठक आ प्रशंसक लोकनिक ततबा ने आग्रह कएलन जे हिनका एहि उपन्यासकेँ पूरा कर’ पड़लनि आ 1933 ई. मे ई पुस्तक भंडार सँ प्रकाशित भेल । मिथिलाक वैवाहिक समस्या, अनमेल विवाह, आशिक्षा आदि सन समस्याकेँ केन्द्रमे राखि लिखल गेल एहि उपन्यासक नायिका बुच्चीदाइ सम्पूर्ण मैथिली साहित्यक अमर पात्री बनि गेलीह । हास्यक आवरणमे लेपटायल बुच्चीदाइ अर्थात् मिथिलाक बेटीक कारुणिक स्थितिकेँ जाहि कुशलताक संग एहि उपन्यास मे चित्रित कएल गेल अछि ओ आइयो पाठककेँ हँसबैत-हँसबैत कना दैत अछि । मैथिली मे श्रेष्ठ साहित्यक गरिमा प्राप्त कन्यादान एहन कृति साबित भेल जकरा पढ़बाक हेतु अमैथिली भाषी लोकनि मैथिली सिखलनि । कन्यादान मैथिलीमे एकटा चमत्कार सिद्ध भेल जे

विद्यापतिक बाद बीसम शताब्दी मे एहि भाषाकेँ राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर चिन्हार बनौलक ।

2. **द्विरागमन-** कन्यादानमे बुच्चीदाइ सन अनपढ़ कनियाँकेँ छोड़ि क' हुनक वर सी.सी. मिश्रा पड़ा जाइत छथिन । बुच्चीदाइक ई अवस्था मैथिलीक पाठककेँ उद्बलित क' क' राखि देलक । बुच्चीदाइक सृष्टिकर्ता प्रो. हरिमोहनझा पर पुनः पाठक लोकनिक दबाव पड़' लगलनि जे ओ बुच्चीदाइ सन निम्नूधनकेँ एना बीच मँझधार मे नहि छोड़थुन । मिथिलाक आने बेटी जकाँ बुच्चीदाइकेँ दाम्पत्य जीवन फेरसँ पटरी पर आएब जाय तकर उपाय करएथ । अपन प्रशंसक लोकनिक एहि आग्रह पर प्रो. हरिमोहन झा कन्यादानक दोसर भागक प्रणयन द्विरागमन नाम सँ कएलनि जे 1943 मे पुस्तक भंडार सँ प्रकाशित भेल । एहिमे अशिक्षिता बुच्चीदाइकेँ हुनक पतिक इच्छाक अनुरूप पढ़ा-लिखा, विभिन्न ज्ञानमे पारंगत करा अप-टू-डेट लेटी बनाओल जाइत छनि तखन हुनक द्विरागमन होइत छनि । यद्यपि द्विरागमनमे ओ सहजता नहि अछि जे कन्यादानमे अछि । द्विरागमन मे किछु नाटकीयता आबि गेल अछि । मुदा ई खण्ड कन्यादानक पूरक बनि एकरा सुखान्त बना दैत अछि, संगहि इहो संदेश दैत अछि जे विवाहक बादो मिथिलाक नारीकेँ शिक्षित कएल जा सकैत छनि प्रो. हरिमोहनझाक एहि दुनू औपन्यासिक कृतिकेँ मिलाक' एहि पर फिल्म सेहो बनाओल गेल ।

प्रो. हरिमोहनझा अपन कथा विधाक लए मैथिली साहित्यकेँ महत्वपूर्ण योगदान देलनि । कथाक माध्यमसँ ई समाजक मनोरंजन टा नहि कयलनि अपितु समाजक रूढ़िवादिता, जड़ता पाखंड, अंधविश्वास छल आ प्रपंचक दुर्बलता पर सेहो प्रहार कयलनि । मिथिला समाजक मानसिकताकेँ ई अपन हास्य-व्यंग्य शैलीक माध्यमसँ एहि रूपेँ चित्रित कयलनि जे पाठक वर्गक लेल अत्यंत रोचक सिद्ध भेल । रूढ़िवादिता ओ धर्ममांधताक प्रकाष्टा पर लिखल हिनक कथा सभमे मिथिला वासी पहिल बेर आत्म निरीक्षण कयलनि । हिनक प्रसिद्ध कथामे उल्लेखनीय अछि- पाँचपत्र, रेलक अनुभव, कथाक जीवन, मर्यादाक भंग, ग्राम सेविका अछि ।

3. **प्रणम्य देवता-** ई हिनक हास्य-व्यंग्यपरक कथा संग्रह थिकनि जकर प्रकाशन 1945 मे पुस्तक भंडार सँ भेल । एहि कथा संग्रहमे एगारह गोटा कथा क्रमशः विकट पाहुन, आदर्श कुटुम्ब, साझी आश्रम, घर जमाय धर्मशास्त्र, फलित ज्योतिष, पंडितजी, कविजी, भदेशक नमुना, आधुनिक पत्नी आ अंडरेजिया बाबू अछि । एकहि संग्रहक गल्पमे समाज आ जीवनक विभिन्न क्षेत्रसँ ताकि क' आनल एगारह गोटा पात्र विनोदपूर्ण चित्रण कयल गेल अछि । जे लोकनि वास्तवमे प्रणम्य छथि । एहिमे एक दिस सनातन परम्परापर आँखि मूनि विश्वास कयनिहारसँ ल' क' अपन संस्कृतिकेँ छोड़ि अंडरेजियाबाबू बनबाक हास्यास्पद प्रयास कयनिहार व्यक्तिपर कटु व्यंग्यक प्रहार कयल गेल अछि तँ दोसर दिस मिथिलामे तिलक-दहेजक समस्या, साझी आश्रमक दारुण स्थितिक जे त्रासद चित्रण कयल गेल अछि से पाठककेँ सोचबाक लेल विवश क' दैत अछि ।
4. **रंगशाला-** इहो रसमय कथाक संग्रह थिकनि जकर प्रकाशन 1949 मे पुस्तक भंडार, पटनासँ भेल छल । एहिमे पन्द्रह गोटा कथा आ दू गोटा प्रहसन अछि । एहि संग्रहमे विभिन्न टिपिकल चरित्रपर अपन हास्यमयी उर्वर कल्पनाक रंग चढ़ा कथाकार ओकरा रोचक ढंगसँ प्रस्तुत कयने छथि । शीर्षक कथामे

रंगशालाक बमबाबू होथि आकि दरोगाजीक मोछक दरोगाजी सब चरित्र अद्भूते अछि जे हास्यक वर्षा करैत अछि । एकहि संग्रहक किछु कथा जेना रेलक अनुभव आ कन्याक जीवन संग्रहक अन्य कथासँ सर्वथा भिन्न चरित्रक अछि जे मिथिलाक स्थितिपर आइयो आत्मविश्लेषण करबाक हेतु विवश करैत अछि । एकहि संग्रहमे बौआक दाम ओ महाराज विजय प्रहसन अछि जे पाठ्य काव्यक संग-संग दृश्य काव्य सेहो थिक । एकरा मंचपर सेहो अभिनयक द्वारा प्रदर्शित कायल जा सकैत अछि ।

5. **खट्टरककाक तरंग-** प्रो. हरिमोहनझाक ई कृति एकटा फराके विधाक सृष्टि कयलक जकरा शास्त्रार्थीय गप्पक संज्ञा देल जा सकैछ । हिनक ई कृति जतबे चर्चित भेल ततबे विवादित । अद्भुत प्रकारक पात्र गढ़बामे माहिर प्रो. हरिमोहनझाक लेखनीसँ 1948 मे खट्टरककाक सृष्टि भेल जखन भाङक प्रेमी, विनोदप्रिय खट्टरककाक पहिल तरंग माछ शीर्षकसँ आचार्य सुमन द्वारा सम्पादित मैथिली मासिक स्वदेशमे प्रकाशित भेल । 1948 मे बारह गोट तरंगक संग जहिना खट्टरककाक तरंग पहिल संस्करण प्रकाशित भेल आकि मिथिलाक सनातनी-परम्परावादी समुदायमे हरविरो मचि गेल । खट्टरकका अपन भाङक निशाने जेना समस्त शास्त्र-पुराणक धज्जी उड़ब' लगलाह से देखि परम्परामे आस्था रखनिहार समुदायक भृकुटि तनि गेल । 1954 मे मिथिला मिहिरमे जनवरीसँ ल' क' नवम्बर धरि खट्टरककाकेँ जे विवाद सुरू भेल ताहिमे प्रो. हरिमोहनझाक कोनो दशा बाँकी नहि राखल गेलनि ।

खट्टरककाक कारणेँ एकर लेखककेँ नास्तिक, परम्पराद्रोही, भारतीय सभ्यताक, विरोधी पश्चिमी सभ्यताक अनुगामी आदि की-की ने कहल गेलनि तेँ खट्टरककाक दिससँ एकर लेखक सहित हुनक पक्षधर लोकनि जवाब देव' मे पाछाँ नहि रहलथिन । ई विवाद जँ खट्टरककाकेँ अमर बना देलकनि तेँ एकबेर पुनः स्वतन्त्र भारतमे मैथिल समाजकेँ अपन स्थिति पर आत्म मंथन करबाक हेतु विवश कयलक । 1954 मे खट्टरककाक तरंगक दोसर संस्करण बहरायल जाहिमे तरंगक संख्या बढ़ि क' चौबीस भ' गेल । एकर तेसर संस्करण' 1967 मे भारती भवन पटनासँ प्रकाशि भेल जाहिमे सब मिलाय तीसटा तरंग अछि । इहो कृति प्रो. हरिमोहनझाकेँ अजस्र ख्याति प्रदान कयलकनि । ई कृति देखा देलक जे एकर रचयिता मात्र हास्य रसाचार्य आ व्यंग्यसमार्ट नहि प्रत्युत विभिन्न शास्त्रक गंभीर अध्येता आ अद्भुत तर्कवादी सेहो छलथि जकर काट किनको लगमे नहि छनि । भंगक तरंगमे समस्त वेद-वेदांग शास्त्र-पुराण, आचार-विचारकेँ मिथ्या सिद्ध कयनिहार खट्टरककाक चरित्रक परिचय एहि पंक्तिसँ भेटि जाइत अछि-“एहि देशमे मूर्खताक कारण के ? पंडित । असली ब्राह्मण कतय छथि ? यूरोप-अमेरिकामे । वेदकर्ता नास्तिक छलाह । पुराण सुनने स्त्रीगण दूरी भ' जयतीह । गीता पाठसँ फौजदारी बढ़ि जायत । आयुर्वेद काव्य थीक । दही-चूड़ा-चीनीसँ सांख्य दर्शन बहरायल । सोमरस भाङ थीक । महादेव मैथिल छलाह । रामायणमे आदर्श चरित्र कोन ? रावण । सभ देवतामे तेज के ? कामदेव । स्त्री जातिमे सर्वश्रेष्ठ के ? वीरांगना । स्वर्ग गेने धर्म नष्ट भ' जाय । भगवानकेँ पेन्सन ल' क' चाहिएन्ह ।

6. **तीर्थयात्रा-** ई हिनक एकमात्र कथा तीर्थयात्रा पॉकेट साइज संस्करण थिकनि जे 1953 मे वैदेही समिति दरभंगा द्वारा प्रकाशित भेल छल । सम्भवतः प्रो. हरिमोहनझाक ई वैह कथा थिकनि जकर लेखन ओ 1929 मे अपन छात्र जीवन कालमे कयने रहथि आ जकरा मिथिलाक दोसर अंकमे प्रकाशित कयल

जयबाक सूचना देल गेल छल ।

7. **चर्चरी-** ई विविध विधाक संग्रह थिकनि जकरा 1960 मे मैथिली प्रकाशन कलकत्ता द्वारा प्रकाशित कयल गेल छल । एहि संग्रहमे तेरह गोटा कथा अछि । प्रो. हरिमोहनझाक कथा साहित्यमे मास्टर पीसक गरिमा प्राप्त कथा पाँच पत्र एही संग्रहमे आयल छनि जाहिमे मात्र पाँच गोटा पात्रमे सम्पूर्ण जीवनकेँ आ जीवनक समस्त आरोह अवरोह केँ अत्यन्त कौशलक संग चित्रित कयल गेल अछि । प्रो. हरिमोहनझा विशिष्ट एकांकीकारो छलाह आ खट्टरककाक चरित्रक विपरीत मिथिलाक प्राचीन संस्कृति आ मैथिल महापुरुष लोकनिक प्रति हुनक हृदयमे कोन तरहक सम्मानक भाव छलनि तकर प्रमाण थीक एहि संग्रहमे संकलित हिनक दू गोटा एकांकी अयाचीमिश्र आ मंडनमिश्र । एकर अतिरिक्त एहि संग्रहमे एकटा छाया रूपक, एकटा पत्रात्मक रचना, भोलबाबाक गप्प, रेलक झगड़ा (प्रहसन) आ खट्टरककाक तीन गोटा तरंग संकलित अछि । इहो पोथी पाठककेँ एकहि संग विभिन्न विधाक आस्वाद प्रदान करैत अछि ।
8. **एकादशी-** ई हिनक एगारह गोटा कथाक संग्रह थिकनि एहि संग्रहक अधिकांश कथा चर्चरी सँ लेल गेल अछि ।
9. **जीवन यात्रा-** ई हिनक आत्मकथा आ हिनक अन्तिम कृति थिकनि, जकर प्रकाशन हिनक मृत्युक बाद 1984 मे मैथिली अकादमीसँ भेल । एहि पोथीपर मृत्यूपरान्त 1986 मे हिनका साहित्य अकादेमी पुरस्कार प्रदान कयल गेलनि । एहि पोथीमे प्रो. हरिमोहनझा अपन बाल्यावस्थासँ 'ल' क' अपन छात्रजीवन, पुस्तक भंडार, प्राध्यापक जीवन, आदि अतीत प्रसंगक रोचक विवरण देने छथि । एहि पोथीक परिशिष्टमे अपन पत्नी सुभद्राझाक मृत्युपरान्त लिखल गेल पुष्पांजलि आ हुनका सम्बोधित अन्तिम पत्र अछि जे अत्यन्त मार्मिक आ कारुणिक अछि । हास्य रसावतार प्रो. हरिमोहनझाक एकटा फराके छवि हुनक एहि दुनू रचनामे देखबामे अबैत अछि जे पाठककेँ करुण रसक उद्रेक करा दैत अछि ।
10. **बीछल कथा :** हरिमोहन झा- प्रो. हरिमोहनझाक तीस गोटा बीछल कथाक संग्रह 1999 मे साहित्य अकादेमी द्वारा प्राकशित कयल गेल । एकर सम्पादन राजमोहनझा आ सुभाषचन्द्र यादव कयने छथि । एहि संग्रहक कथा प्रो. हरिमोहनझा कथाकारकेँ समग्रताक संग उपस्थित करैत अछि जे हिनक कथामे मात्र हास्य व्यंग्येता निह छनि वैचारिकता आ कारुणिकता सेहो ततबे मात्रामे छनि । ई संग्रह हिनका गल्पसम्राटक रूपमे प्रतिष्ठापित करैत अछि ।

प्रो. हरिमोहनझाक जेहने गद्य रसगर होइत छलनि तेहने पद्य सेहो चोटगर होइत छलनि । विभिन्न अवसरपर ई कविता सेहो लिखैत रहलाह । यद्यपि हिनक कविताक कोनो संग्रह हिनक जीवनकालमे प्रकाशित नहि भ' सकलनि, मुदा हिनक मृत्युक पश्चात् हिनक सुयोग्य साहित्यकार पुत्र श्रीराजमोहनझा आरंभक एक गोटा अंकमे हिनक अधिकांश कविताकेँ प्रकाशित करौलनि अछि । हिनक ढालाझा, टी पार्टी, निरसन मामा, घूटरकाका, अडरेजिया, लड़कीक समदाउन आदि प्रसिद्ध कविता छनि । अपन गद्यक सदृशहि अपन पद्योमे प्रो. हरिमोहनझा मिथिलाक सामाजिक विसंगति, आत्मघाती पुरातनप्रियता आदिपर निर्ममतापूर्वक चोट कयने छथि जे ककरो तिलमिलबैत अछि तँ ककरो गुदगुदबैत अछि ।

**उपसंहार**

निष्कर्षतः प्रो. हरिमोहनक झाक समस्त जीवन आ कृतित्वक सम्बन्धमे यैह कहल जा सकैत अछि जे अपन प्रतिभा आ संघर्षक बल पर ओ जीवनमे निरन्तर आगू बढ़ैत रहलाह । एकटा आदर्श पुत्र, एकटा आदर्श पिता, एकटा आदर्श अभिभावक, एकटा आदर्श पति, एकटा आदर्श शिक्षकक दायित्वक निर्वहन ई इमानदारीपूर्वक करैत रहलाह । साहित्य लेखन हिनकालेल कोनो रजनी-संजनीक खेल वा स्वान्तः सुखाय बला वृत्ति नहि छलनि । साहित्य हिनका लेल साधना छलनि जकर उद्देश्य मिथिलाक सामाजिक परिवर्तन, स्त्री शिक्षाक प्रचार, बौद्धिकता आ तार्किकताक विकास करब छलनि । अपन चिन्तनकेँ सामान्य जनसमुदाय धरि पहुँचयबाक लेल ओ हास्य व्यंग्यक आश्रय लेलनि जाहि कारणेँ हुनक विचार सहज ढंगसँ पाठक वर्ग धरि सम्प्रेषित भेल आ भ' रहल अछि । प्रो. हरिमोहन झा कहियो अपनाकेँ कोनो वादमे आवृत्त नहि कयलनि, कोनो विचारधारा विशेषक झण्डा नहि उघलनि । हुनक प्रथम आ अन्तिम उद्देश्य छलनि मैथिली भाषा-साहित्यकेँ नवीन संस्कार प्रदान करब । बीसम शताब्दीमे एकर अभिनव परिचिति स्थापित करब । साहित्य सेहो समाजिक परिवर्तनक माध्यम बनि सकैछ से सामर्थ्य मैथिलीमे उत्पन्न करब । प्रो. हरिमोहन झा अपन एहि उद्देश्यमे सफल रहलाह । अपना जीवितहि अवस्थामे मिथकीय पुरुष बनि गेलाह । मैथिली गद्यक अभिनव विद्यापति प्रो. हरिमोहन झा आधुनिक मैथिली भाषा-साहित्यक प्रतिष्ठापकक रूपमे चिर काल धरि जानल जाइत रहताह । अमर बनल रहताह । इति शुभम् ।

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# भारतीय चित्रकला आ गोदना

प्रो० सुरेश पासवान

प्रकृति द्वारा निर्मित समस्त जीव-जगत मे प्राणी मात्र टा नहि, अपितु गाछ-वृक्ष, नदी-नाला, पोखरि-झाँखडि, पाथर-पहाड़ इत्यादि विधि द्वारा रचित एकटा आकर्षक आ उत्कृष्ट शैली अछि । रंग-बिरंगक एहि मोहक छवि-छटा जकरा देखि प्रकृति सेहो आह्लादित होइत रहैत अछि । चित्रकला-वास्तव मे ई एकटा एहन कलाकृति अछि जे बदलैत समयक अनुरूप अपन भाव-भंगिमाक प्रदर्शन एहि तरहें प्रस्तुत कयलक जाहिसँ लोक एक-दोसराक संस्कृति आ संस्कार सँ परिचित भेल ।

कहल जाइत अछि जे 200 ई० पू० सँ 300 ई० पूर्व मध्य भारत मे कलाक प्रचार-प्रसार पश्चिमी देशक माध्यम सँ भेल । भारतीय लोककथा एवं आख्यान पश्चिमी देश गेल आ भिन्न-भिन्न रूप मे ओ युरोपीय साहित्य मे स्थान पओलक । दुनू देशक सम्पर्कक एकटा दीर्घकालिक परिणाम ई भेल जे भूमध्य सागरीय विश्वक अनेक ग्रन्थ जेना स्ट्राबो क “ज्योग्राफी”, एरियनक “इण्डिका”, प्लिनीक “नेचुरल हिस्ट्री”, पेरिप्लस मेरिस एरिथ्रि तथा प्टोलेमीक ‘ज्योग्राफी’ मे भारतक विस्तृत चर्चा भेल अछि । युनान आ रोम के जहिना विश्व मे परिचय भेटल अछि, तहिना भारत के सेहो महत्वपूर्ण स्थान भेटल अछि । जकर सर्वाधिक प्रभाव कलाक क्षेत्र पर पड़ल आ एकरा बाद गंधार कलाक मिश्रण सँ युनानी भारतीय शैलीक जन्म भेल । गत शताब्दी मे ई अफगानिस्तान तथा पश्चिमोत्तर भारत मे प्रमुख कलात्मक अभिव्यक्तिक माध्यम रहल । गंधार कलाक जन्म अलेक्जेंड्रियाक ग्रीक-रोमन शैली सँ भेल छल आओर जाहि समय अलेक्जेंड्रियाक कला उत्तरी भारत मे पहुँचल ओहि समय मे बौद्धधर्मशास्त्र मे सन्त आ देवता लोकनिक संख्या मे वृद्धि भऽ रहल छल, एहि दुनूक प्रभाव मूर्तिकला आ चित्रकलाक लेल आदर्श प्रमाणित भेल ।

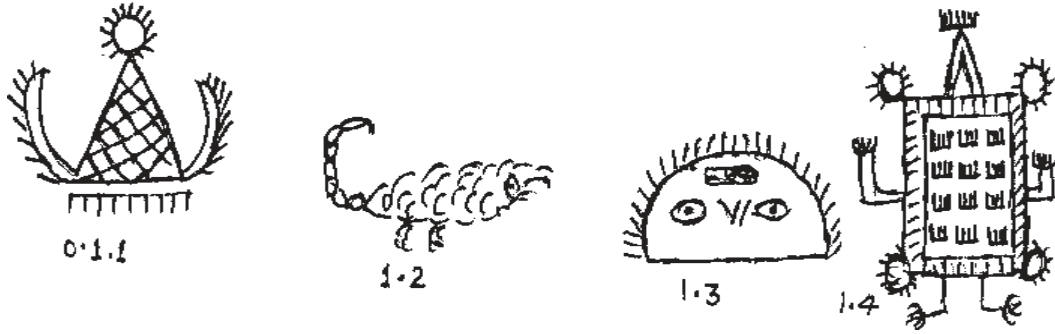
खोदाई वा उत्खनन सँ प्राप्त पौराणिक तथ्यक आधार पर इतिहासकार लोकनिक ई कथन छनि जे मानवीय प्रवृत्तिक आरम्भिक स्रोत थिक-चित्रकला । ताहि दिन मे समाज दू वर्ग मे विभक्त छल । एक वर्ग जकरा लग विलासिताक सम्पूर्ण साधन उपलब्ध छलैक तँ दोसर दिस समाजक निम्न स्तरक लोक जे पाथर पर अपन कलाक प्रदर्शन सँ रोजगारक रूप मे एकरा अपन परिवारक भरण-पोषणक माध्यम बनौने छल । एहन कतेको साक्ष्य इतिहास मे आइयो विद्यमान अछि, जाहि मे प्रमुख अछि गुप्तकालीन शिल्पकला । जकर उत्कृष्ट स्वरूप दक्षिण मे अजन्ताक चित्रकलाक रूप मे अनेको गुफाक भीतरी दवाल पर बनाओल गेल चित्र, उत्तर मे गंगाक मैदानी भाग मे तथा पूर्वी भारत मे कतेको ठाम एकर प्रमाण अधिकाधिक संख्या मे भेटैत अछि ।

भारतीय बौद्ध लोकनि बहुत पैघ संख्या मे उपदेश देबा लय चीन गेलाह । 379 ई० मे बौद्धमत के चीन मे राजधर्म घोषित कऽ देल गेल जकरा फलस्वरूप ओहिठाम बौद्ध धर्मावलम्बी अनुयायी लोकनिक

संख्या मे अत्यधिक वृद्धि भेल । दोसर दिस बौद्ध मतावलम्बी जे एहि धर्म सँ सर्वाधिक प्रभावित छलाह बौद्ध संस्कृत आ पालि मे रचित मूल बौद्ध ग्रन्थ प्राप्त करय चाहैत छलाह । एहि लेल चीनक अनेको बौद्ध जिज्ञासु यथा-फाहियान, युंगसून, ह्वेनत्सांग तथा आइत्सिंग 400-700 ई०क मध्य भारतक यात्रा कयलनि । एकरा बाद चीनी संस्कृति तथा भारतीय संस्कृतिक अनेको तत्वक समावेश भेल, जकर सर्वाधिक स्पष्ट प्रभाव शिल्प तथा चित्रकला मे भारतीय तकनीकक उपयोग छल । मध्य एशिया मे दूर-दूर तक प्रचलित गुफा मन्दिर चीन मे सेहो प्रचलित भऽ गेल संगहि प्रारम्भ मे मन्दिरक भित्ति चित्रकेँ सजेबाक लेल बुद्धक मूर्ति बनेवाक लेल भारतीय कलाकार के आमंत्रित कयल गेल । देखा-देखी वाद मे चीनी कलाकार लोकनि सेहो एहि दिशा मे अग्रसर भेलाह मुदा भारतीय कलाकारक प्रभाव अत्यधिक समय धरि बनल रहल ।

एहन कतेको साक्ष्य जे इतिहास मे वर्णित अछि जाहि आधार पर कहल जा सकैछ जे भारत मे चित्रकलाक परम्परा अत्यन्त पुरान रहल अछि, मुदा एकर प्रारम्भिक अवस्थाक कोनो ठोस प्रमाण नहि भेटैत अछि । आ जौँ भेटितो अछि तँ उत्खनन द्वारा प्राप्त पाथर शैली आ ताम्रपत्रादिक रूप मे । तथ्य भले जे हो मुदा भारतीय चित्रकला अपन विशिष्टताक कारणे समूचा एशिया महादेश मे अपन कीर्तिमान स्थापित कयने अछि । दक्षिण भारत मे जतय ई पाथर शैलीक रूप मे विद्यमान अछि तँ उत्तर भारत मे मिथिला चित्रकलाक रूप मे । उत्तरी बिहार तथा दक्षिणी नेपाल मे कतेको सदी सँ मिथिला क्षेत्रक स्त्रीगण विवाह तथा घरेलू मांगलिक उत्सव पर घरक देवाल आ फर्श पर उत्कृष्ट कलाकृति उकैरैत आबि रहल छथि जे आइ मिथिला चित्रकला नाम सँ प्रसिद्ध अछि । ई चित्रकला परम्परागत रूप सँ नवनिर्मित माटिक देवाल आ फर्श पर उकेरल जाइत छल । वर्तमान मे आइ कपड़ा, हाथ सँ बनल कागज आ कैनवास पर सेहो बनाओल जाइत अछि । मिथिला चित्रकलाक विषय-वस्तु खासकय मिथकीय कथानक एवं ग्राम्य जीवन सँ सम्बन्धित अछि । संगहि एहि मे चटकीला रंगक समावेश एकरा आओरो अत्यधिक आकर्षक बना दैत अछि । 1934 ई०क भीषण भूकम्पक बाद तत्कालीन स्थानीय कलक्टर विलियम आर्चर मिथिलाक गाम मे कुटीरक देवाल आ फर्श पर एहि कलाकृति केँ पहिल बेर देखलनि आ समूचा विश्वक समक्ष एकरा प्रदर्शित कयलनि । एहि चित्रकलाक एकटा अभिन्न अंग थिक-गोदना शैली । जकरा क्षेत्रियताक आधार पर भिन्न-भिन्न नाम सँ जानल जाइत रहल अछि । गोदनाक प्रसंग बहुत रास तथ्य जे लोककण्ठ मे आइयो विराजमान अछि । हम एतय किछु प्रसंगक चर्चा करय चाहब । आरम्भिक काल मे गोदना स्त्री जातिक हाथ पर बाँहि पर ललाट पर, छाती पर, जाँघ पर, पीठ पर, पैरक पंजा पर पाओल गेल । शारीरिक वाहय अलंकारक रूप मे पहिने भिन्न-भिन्न आकृति चित्र जेना-बिच्छू, मोर, सूर्य, तरेगन, चन्द्रमा, सिंहासन, धरती, घोड़ा, पूल आ एहि तरहक कतेको आकृति चित्र ताहि दिनक स्त्रीगण अपना शरीर पर गोदवैत छलीह । गोदना भारते टा नहि अपितु अफ्रीका आस्ट्रेलिया आ चीन मे सेहो ई विस्तृत रूपेँ पुष्पित-पल्लवित भेल । एकरा पाँछाँ एकटा वैज्ञानिक तर्क जाहि सँ लोक एकर आग्रही बनल, ओ छल-एक्यूपंचर (ACUPUNCTURE) ।

ताहि दिन मे चीन मे शारीरिक इलाज लेल एक्यूपंचर एकटा शसक्त माध्यम छल, तहिना गोदना सेहो शारीरिक स्वस्थता के नियमित रूपसँ कारगर बनेबा मे सहायक सिद्ध भेल ।



आकृति चित्र : गोदना

सर्वप्रथम जखन ई परम्परा जोर पकड़लक समाजक बहुधा निम्नजातिक स्त्रीगणक लेल अभिशाप सदृश बुझना जाय लागल । कारण जे गोदना गोदवैत काल असहनीय वेदना के सहन करब तँ दोसर दिस जकरा शरीर पर गोदनाक छाप नहि ओकरा लेल सासूर बसब दुर्लभ । जाहि स्त्रीक देह पर गोदनाक छाप नहि एहन कतेको स्त्रीक परित्याग अशुभ मानि सासुरक लोक द्वारा कऽ देल जाइत छल । घरक अन्य स्त्रीगण गोदना केँ शुभ आ उत्तर फलाफलक प्रतीक चिन्ह मानैत छलीह ।

जेना पूर्वहि कहि चुकल छी भारते टा नहि आन-आन देशमे सेहो ई कला बेस प्रचलित छल, मुदा भारतक उत्तरी बिहार तथा दक्षिणी नेपालक अधिकांश भाग मे सेहो ई परम्परा अत्यधिक विकसित भेल । एकर एकटा प्रमुख कारण इहो रहल जे एहि दुनू क्षेत्रक समीप कामरू कामख्या एवं मोरंग जे वर्तमान मे नेपाल मे अवस्थित अछि, तंत्र-मन्त्र आ जादू नगरीक लेल प्रसिद्ध छल । ताहि दिन मे भारतक उत्तरी भाग बिहारक लोक अपन परिवारक गुजर-बसर करबा लऽ रोजगारक उद्देशे अधिकांशतया मोरंग जाइत छलाह । लोक प्रचलित कथाक आधार पर ई कहल गेल अछि जे मोरंग प्रदेशक स्त्री, सुन्दरी लोकनि स्वस्थ आ सुन्दर युवक केँ अपन मोहजाल मे फँसा ओकरा सुग्गा बना पिंजरा मे पोसैत छली । कतेको स्त्री अपन पतिक बाट देखैत-देखैत दुनिया सँ विदा भ जाइत छलीह, मुदा हुनक पति घर नहि घुर्दैत छलाह । तन्त्र नगरी कामरू कामख्या प्रदेश जे चौंसठ योगिनीक सिद्ध पीठ छल । एहि मे प्रमुख छलीह-नैना योगिन-जे सतीत्वक साक्षात प्रतिमूर्ति छलीह । कहल जाइत अछि जे किओ स्त्री हिनका स्मरण कऽ अपना देह मे गोदना गोदवैत छलीह, हुनक सतीत्वक ई रक्षा करैत छलथिन । एक दिस स्त्रीक सोहागक तँ दोसर दिस नवदम्पति अथवा स्त्री पुरुषक दाम्पत्य जीवनक सुरक्षा सहो, तेँ आइयोमिथिला मे वैवाहिक पद्धतिक एकटा प्रमुख विधि नैना योगिन विधिवत रूपेँ प्रचलित अछि ।

इतिहासकारक मतें गोदना प्रथाक जन्म आई सँ करीब-2800-3000 वर्ष पहिने भेल । ई कला पहिने मिस्त्र देश मे पूर्ण रूपेँ विकसित छल । पराधीन भारत मे उत्तरी भागक संग जखन गोदना प्रथा देशक अन्य भू भाग मे पसरल लोक द्वारा एहि पाछाँ एकटा कुतर्क गढ़ि देल गेल । मुसलमान शासक हिन्दू वर्णक

स्त्री संग अत्याचार करैत छलाह तेँ हेतु ताहि दिन मे गोदनाक लेल तैयार कयल गेल रंग मे सुगरक चर्बी मिला देल जाइत छल । जै स्त्रीक देह पर गोदनाक छाप रहैत छलै । तकरा सँ इस्लामी शासक लोकनि अपना केँ दूर रहैत छलाह । ओहि स्त्रीगण संग कोनो प्रकारक अत्याचार वा जबरदस्ती नहि कयल जाइत छल । ई तथ्य भ्रामक सन बुझना जाइत अछि ।

गोदनाक प्रसंग हम विस्तृत जानकारी प्राप्त करबाक लेल मिथिलाक किछु गामक यात्रा कयलहुँ । एहि क्रम मे सब सँ पहिने हमर भेट झंझारपुर अनुमण्डलक मोहम्मदपुर निवासी हलीमन खातुन सँ भेल । हलीमन खातुन जे स्वयं 77-78 वर्षक छथि, कहलनि-हम नान्हिएटा सँ अपन मायक संग गाम-गाम घुमि-घुमि एकरा सीखलहुँ । हमर पूर्वज लोकनि पीढ़ी दर पीढ़ी एहि सँ जुड़ल छलाह । मिथिलाक समाज मे नट जातिक नाम सँ विख्यात हलीमन आ हिनक समुदाय इस्लाम धर्मावलम्बी छथि । एकर अतिरिक्त हम मधुबनी जिलाक फुलपरास राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग-57क कात मे बसल नट समुदायक लोक सभ, तमुरिया रेलवे स्टेशनक कात मे बसल एहि समुदाय तथा निर्मली रेलवे स्टेशनक कात मे बसल नट समुदायक कतेको गोटा सँ भेंट कयलहुँ, मुदा सब सँ बेसी संतोषप्रद तथा तथ्यपरक जानकारी हमरा हलीमन खातुन सँ प्राप्त भेल ।

हलीमन कहलनि जे आरम्भ मे स्त्रीक वक्षस्थल सँ निकालल गेल वा बकरीक दूध मे डिब्बियाक सियाही अथवा मोखदानी (घरक मूँह-चौकठि) पर जराओल गेल दीयाक सियाही मिलाक एकटा रंग तैयार कैल जाइत छल । एहि तैयार रंग केँ नारियलक खपलोइया (आकार मे छोट) जकरा 'मलसी' कहल जाइत छलैक ताहि मे राखल जाइत छल । मलसी नटीक संग मे रहैत छलै । एहि रंग मे सात गोटा सुइया जकर जड़ि जाहि मे डोरा घुसिआओल जाइत अछि टुटल रहैत छल ओकरा ओहि रंग मे राखि देल जाइत छल आ गोदना गोदबाक क्रम मे बेरा-बेरी सब सुइयाक प्रयोग कैल जाइत छल । एहि पाछोँ एकटा तर्क ई छल जे सातो वहिन देवी के सुमरि सात गोटा सुइयाक प्रयोग सतीत्वक रक्षा करथिन । आ एहि मान्यताक अनुरूप स्त्री लोकनि बामा बाँहि मे स्वयं अपना नामक संग अपन स्वामीक नाम नटी सँ गोदबैत छलीह ।

गोदना नेपालक दक्षिणी भाग तथा भारतक अधिकांश ग्रामीण क्षेत्र मे जतय बूढ़-बुढ़ानुस स्त्रीगण जिनक उमेर सत्तरिक पार अछि- खासकय वक्षस्थलक उपरी भाग जेना गरदनि, ललाट तथा बाँहि आ ठेहुन सँ नीचा पैरक उपरी पंजा धरि अपूर्व सौन्दर्यक दिग्दर्शन करबैत अछि, ताहि दिनक श्रृंगारक परिचय दैत अछि । गोदना कला मुख्य रूप सँ इस्लाम धर्मावलम्बी नट-नटीक व्यवसाय छल । जकर जीवन्त प्रमाण आइ धरि विद्यमान अछि, लोककण्ठमे विराजीत ई गीत:-

उतरहिँ राज सओँ अयलै एक नटिनिया रे जान

जान बैसि गेलै चनन बिरिछिये रे जान-

आरे झिहिर-झिहिर बहलै शीतल बसतिये रे जान

जान घर सँ बहरयलै सुनरी पुतोहूँआ रे जान-

आरे झारे लगलै सीटे लगलै नामी नामी केशिया रे जान  
 जान पड़ि गेलै नटिन के जनरिये रे जान-  
 आरे मचिया बैसल सासू बरैतिन रे जान  
 जान दियौ सासू कोसल रूपैया रे जान-  
 अइया खौकी, भइया खौकी सुनरी पुतोहूआ रे जान  
 जान कहाँ स लयबै कोसल रूपैया रे जान-  
 आरे कहाँ गेल, कियै भेल सुनरी पुतोहूआ रे जान  
 रे जान कियै सुन्नरि गोदना गोदेतै रे जान-  
 आरे सब तिरिया अम्मा अपने दुअरबे रे जान  
 जान हमरो तिरिया कहाँ चलि गेलै रे जान-  
 आरे तोहरो तिरिया गोदना गोदाओल रे जान  
 जान चलि गेलै नटिन सिरकिया रे जान-  
 आरे दिअ अम्मा दिअ एक सेर सतुऐ रे जान  
 जान हम जानब धनिक उदेशबा रे जान-  
 आरे एक कोस गेली पियबा दुइ कोस गेलै रे जान  
 जान तेसरे मे नटिन सिरकिया रे जान-  
 आरे गोदना गोदौनी नटिनिया कीयै लेबैं दनमा रे जान  
 जान कियै लेबही दनमा बकसिसबा रे जान-  
 आरे अइया खौकी, भइया खौकी सुनरी पुतोहूआ रे जान  
 जान लेबै रे सासुक कोसल रूपैया रे जान-  
 आरे गोदना गोदौनी नटिन गे कान दुनू सोनमा रे जान  
 जान आरो देबौ गनती मोहरबा रे जान-

आरम्भ मे गोदना शरीरिक श्रृंगार मात्र टा नहि अपितु विभिन्न रोग सँ बँचवाक लेल सेहो लोक अपना शरीर पर गोदवैत छल जेना-सुनबहरी, खर्वा घाव, एक्जीमा, जादुई प्रभाव तथा प्रथम दृष्टया पराशक्तिक प्रकोप सँ बँचवाक लेल । गोदनाक प्रसंग बात-चीतक क्रम मे हमर भेंट डॉ० शिवकुमार पासवान जी सँ भेल । ओ मधुबनी निवास पर हमरा एहि सम्बन्ध बहुत तथ्यपरक जानकारी देलनि । श्री पासवान जी अनुसंधानात्मक कार्य मे सदैव अपना केँ व्यस्त रखने रहैत छथि आ गोदना पर हुनक बहुत रास कार्य सेहो सम्पादित भऽ चुकल छनि । इतिहास विषयक ज्ञाता छथि तेँ तथ्यपरक बात सब कहलनि । ओ कहलनि- इरिका मोसर स्मिथ (ERIKA MOUSER SMITH) एकटा जर्मनमानवशास्त्री आ पौराणिक

कथाकार मिथिला मे चानो देवी जे मिथिला चित्रकला मे सिद्धहरत छथि हुनका देह पर गोदनाक छाप देखलनि । जकरा देखि स्मिथ महोदयक मोन मे एकटा विचार आयल जे कियाक नहि एहि आकृति चित्र केँ कागत पर उकेरल जाय । चानो देवी अपन सहयोगी पलटी देवीक संग एहि प्रयास मे जुटि गेलीह आ दू मास धरि एकान्त मे आमक गाछी मे बैसि गोदना शैलीकेँ विस्तृत स्वरूप देलनि । मोसर स्मिथ महोदय द्वारा वर्ष 1978-79 मे नई दिल्ली मे गोदना शैली आकृति चित्रक प्रदर्शनी लगाओल गेल, जाहि मे अत्यधिक सफलता भेटलनि ।

आइ वर्तमान मे मधुबनी जिलाक जितवारपुर, पिलखबाड़, राँटी, मँगरौनी, सौराठ, सरिसव पाही, कोइलख आदि गामक स्त्रीगण लोकनि जे राष्ट्रीय सँ लऽ अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय पुरस्कार प्राप्त गोदना शैली केँ जीवित रखबा मे अपन श्रमदान दय एहि कला केँ इतिहास मे सुरक्षित रखने छथि ।

मुदा दुखक संग कहय पड़ैत अछि जे प्राकृतिक रंग सँ निर्मित गोदना शैली जे कहियो शारीरिक सुरक्षा, वाह्य श्रृंगार आ कलाक प्रदर्शनक रूप मे लोक व्यवसायक साधन छल, आइ ओकर स्थान अप्राकृतिक तथा कृत्रिम रंग सँ तैयार आधुनिक उपकरणीय प्रसाधन द्वारा निर्मित टैटू ग्रहण कऽ लेलक । पुरुष आ स्त्री दुनूक झुकाव एक दिस जतय लोक कलाक लेल घातक बनि बैसल ओतहि टैटू मे प्रयुक्त होमयबला अप्राकृतिक आ कृत्रिम रंगक प्रयोग शरीर केँ नाना प्रकारक व्याधिक समीप आनि बैसल । जौँ समय रहैत एहि पर विचार विमर्श नहि कयल गेल तँ लोक कला आ शैली दुनू मृतप्राय भऽ जायत संगहि आधुनिक युगक फैशन ई टैटू भविष्य मे हमरा सब केँ अपनहि सदृश बना केँ छोड़त ।



## “दरभंगा अतीत, वर्तमान एवं भविष्य”

अजय कुमार मिश्र

डॉ० नारायण झा

“दरभंगा अतीत मे विश्वक मानचित्र पर ऐतिहासिक, दार्शनिक, धार्मिक, पौराणिक, शैक्षणिक एवं सांस्कृतिक दृष्टिँ अपन उत्कर्षक कारणेँ सुविख्यात एवं प्रसिद्ध छल तँ राजनैतिक, आर्थिक एवं सामाजिक दृष्टिँ अपकर्षक अवस्थामे छल। राजनैतिक कारणेँ जनसामान्य आर्थिक गुलामीमे जकड़ल छल तथा सामाजिक स्वरूपमे सेहो उँच-नीचक भावना परिव्याप्त छल।

अतीतक दरभंगा जे मिथिलाक मुकुट सदृश छल, जाहिठाम वेद, उपनिषद्, दर्शन, न्याय एवं अन्य विधाक संग विद्वताक प्रवाह प्रवाहित होइत छल, जकरा सँ आकर्षित भए अन्य प्रान्तक नगरक विद्वान ज्ञानार्जनक हेतु एहि पावन भूमि पर आगमन करैत छलाह।

एहि सन्दर्भ मे स्वयं ‘यात्री’ कहलनि-

“मुनिक शान्तिमय पर्णकुटीमे,  
तापसीक अचपल भृकुटीमे,  
साम श्रवणरत श्रुतिक पुटीमे,  
छल अहाँक आवास  
विसरि गेल छी से हम  
किन्तु ने झॉपल अछि इतिहास।”

अतीतक दरभंगा प्रारम्भिक राजतन्त्र ‘विदेह’, गणतन्त्र युगक अन्तर्गत ‘वज्जिसंघ’ बाहरी शासनक अन्तर्गत मगधक, नन्दवंश, मौर्यवंश, कुषाणवंश, गुप्तवंश आदिक साम्राज्यक बीच रहल ।

‘विदेह’ राजतंत्र तथा वज्जि महासंघक विघटन समय सँ कर्णाटवंशक प्रतिष्ठाकालक पूर्वधरि मिथिलाक इतिहास निरन्तर पराजय आ दासताक इतिहास रहल । लगभग चौदह सय वर्षक दीर्घ कालिक दुर्दशाग्रस्त स्थितिक बाद मिथिलामे कर्णाट शासनक स्थापना नान्यदेवक कुशल नेतृत्वमे भेल । हिनक कालखंड 1080 ई. सँ 1824 ई. धरि रहल । मिथिलाक कर्णाटवंश पतन तथा हरिसिंह देवक नेपालमे पलायनक लगभग 30 वर्षक बाद दिल्लीक सुल्तानक प्रयास सँ 1353 ई. मे ओइनिवार वंशक स्थापना भेल। ओइनिवार वंशक संस्थापक कामेश्वर ठाकुर सँ लक्ष्मीनाथ देव धरि रहल किन्तु शिवसिंह एहि वंशक सर्वाधिक प्रसिद्ध राजा भेलाह। कवि कोकिल बहुमुखी प्रतिभाशाली विद्यापति पुरुष परीक्षाक रचना हुनकहि आग्रह पर केने छलाह ।

ओइनिवार शासनक उपरान्त मुस्लिम शासन, मुगलशासन तथा अंग्रेजक शासन संगहि अंग्रेजक

शासनक अन्तर्गत दरभंगा महाराजक शासन रहल ।

अतीतक दरभंगा अर्थात् मिथिलाक मुकुट भूमि दार्शनिक रूपेँ अत्यन्त व्यापक छल। 9म शताब्दीक वाचस्पति मिश्र भारतीय दर्शनक एक एहन नाम अछि जे कोनो नइ कोनो प्रमुख दर्शनक संग जुड़ल अछि। ई आस्तिक-नास्तिक दुनू दार्शनिक सम्प्रदाय पर टीका लिखलनि ।

सांख्य-योग, न्याय, पूर्वमीमांसा आ वेदान्त पर हिनक महत्वपूर्ण ग्रन्थ अछि। संगहि नास्तिक दर्शन पर सेहो हिनक टीका वर्णित अछि।

वाचस्पति मिश्रक अप्रतिम प्रतिभा आ विपुल विधा-कीर्ति सँ प्रभावित भए कतेको विद्वान अपन नामक संग 'वाचस्पति' जोड़लनि। इह कारणेँ 8म शताब्दी सँ लए 17म शताब्दीक बीच वाचस्पति नामक एकटा श्रृंखला संस्कृत साहित्यमे भेटैत अछि।

भारतीय न्याय दर्शन केँ बौद्धक हाथ सँ नष्ट होयबा सँ बचेबाक पूर्ण श्रेय वाचस्पति मिश्रकेँ छनि। “न्यायसूची- निबन्ध” एहि प्रयासक परिणाम थिक तथा ‘तात्पर्य-टीका’ न्यायक विश्लेषणमे फँसल लोकक लेल विवेचन-शक्ति अछि। ‘भामती’ हिनक दार्शनिक विचारक अंतिम परिणति अछि।

दरभंगाक अतीत सरस जीवनक संग न्याय, दर्शन आ आध्यात्मक लेल प्रसिद्ध एवं ख्यात छल। एहिठाम गौतम अनुमान पर आधारित न्याय दर्शन देलनि तँ याज्ञवल्क्य दर्शन आ न्यायक बाट देखौलनि। एहि महत्वपूर्ण एवं गंभीर विषय पर महान कवि वैद्यनाथ मिश्र ‘यात्री’ अपन ‘मां मिथिले’ शीर्षक कवितामे कहने छथि ।

“गौतम अनुमित न्यायक अथमे

याज्ञवल्क्य-दर्शित-नय पथमे

ज्ञानी जनकक जीवन रथमे

अंकित तव पद-पद्म”<sup>2</sup> —यात्री

मानव चिन्तनक इतिहासमे एहि भूमिक विलक्षण स्थान अछि। ई भूमि जनक, याज्ञवल्क्य, न्याय सूत्रक प्रणेता गौतम तथा सांख्य दर्शनक संस्थापक कपिलक जन्मभूमि रहल अछि। ईसाक छठम शतक तथा तकर परवर्ती काल ई पावन भूमि महान् साहित्यिक आ दार्शनिक क्रिया-कलापक केन्द्र बनल रहल। वाचस्पति (अनु. 840 ई. सन्), उदयन (अनु. 950 ई. सन्), गणेश अनेको विद्वान अपन प्रखर प्रतिभा सँ एहि भूमि केँ विभिन्न युगमे उद्भाषित कयलनि।

आचार्य उदयन अपन अलौकिक प्रतिभाक बल पर तर्क एवं प्रमाण सँ नास्तिक मतक निराकरण कए अनेक प्रमाणक संचार सँ नित्य ज्ञानक संग ईश्वरक सिद्धि कयलनि तथा वैदिक धर्मक स्थापना कयलनि। हिनका समयमे वैदिक धर्म स्थिर भेल तथा धर्मक प्रति आस्था जागल।

आचार्य उदयनक अपन ग्रन्थमे सांख्यदर्शनक तथा मीमांसादर्शनक अनुगामीक ईश्वरबाधक मतक खण्डन युक्तिक आधार पर कयलनि। हिनक आठगोट ग्रन्थ विद्वत्समाजमे प्रचलित आ प्रसिद्ध अछि -



‘न्यायपरिशिष्ट’, ‘किरणावली’, ‘न्यायकुसुमांजलि कारिका’, ‘लक्षणमाला’, ‘लक्षणावली’ आदि अर्थात् दरभंगा दर्शन, न्याय एवं विद्वताक क्षेत्रमे अनादिकाल सँ उत्कर्ष केँ प्राप्त केने रहल।

शिक्षाक क्षेत्रमे दरभंगा राज परिवारक अवदान महत्वपूर्ण अछि। अंग्रेजक द्वारा अंग्रेजी शिक्षाक प्रचार-प्रसार भारतमे कराओल गेल ओना मिथिला वा दरभंगामे अंग्रेजी शिक्षाक प्रचार-प्रसार विलम्ब सँ भेल, किन्तु ताँहिमे दरभंगा राज परिवारक महत्वपूर्ण योगदान रहल।

अंग्रेजी शिक्षाक प्रचार-प्रसार हेतु सर्वप्रथम दरभंगा राजपरिवार द्वारा दरभंगामे स्कूल खोलल गेल एवं अंग्रेजीमे पढ़निहार छात्र-छात्रा सभकेँ प्रोत्साहित करबाक प्रावधान सेहो कयल गेल। महाराज लक्ष्मीश्वर सिंहक दरबारमे विद्वान लोकनिक विशेष सम्मान होइत छल। हिनक सभाक विद्वत मंडलीमे म. म. चित्रधर मिश्र, म. म. शिव कुमार मिश्र, वैयाकरण हल्ली झा, नैयायिक विश्वनाथ झा, कविवर हर्षनाथ, कवीश्वर चन्दा झा आदि नाम विशेष रूपेँ उल्लेखनीय अछि। हिनकहि आश्रयमे कवीश्वर चन्दा झा “मिथिला भाषा रामायण” क रचना कयलनि। हिनक आश्रय एवं प्रोत्साहन पाबि ख्यातिलब्ध विद्वान बाबू तुलापति सिंह, म.म. मुकुन्द बख्शी, म.म. परमेश्वर झा, म.म. सर गंगानाथ झा आदि विभूति लोकनि अपन प्रतिभा एवं विद्वता केँ प्रस्तुत आ प्रमाणित कयलनि।

महाराज रामेश्वर सिंह सर्वदा एहि भावना सँ प्रेरित रहलाह जे तिरहुत राज्य विधा बले प्राप्त भेल अछि। आ तँ विधाक प्रचार-प्रसारक लेल ओ सतत् सचेष्ट रहलाह। हिनक सद्प्रयास सँ दरभंगामे एक समृद्ध पुस्तकालय एवं पुस्तक मुद्रण हेतु छापाखानाक स्थापना सेहो भेल।

एहि वंशक अन्तिम शासक महाराजाधिराज कामेश्वर सिंहक शासन कालमे शिक्षाक प्रचार-प्रसार सर्वाधिक भेल। हुनक उद्देश्यक प्रतिफलक रूपमे वर्तमानमे दरभंगाक पावन भूमि पर दू टा विश्वविद्यालय, एकगोट मेडिकल कॉलेज तथा अनेको शैक्षणिक संस्थान अवस्थित अछि।

किन्तु वर्तमानमे दरभंगाक शिक्षाक स्तर संसाधनक कमी, लचर शैक्षणिक व्यवस्था, भाय-भतीजवाद, जाति-धर्मक भेद, उच्च तकनीकक अभाव तथा शिक्षा-क्षेत्र सँ जुड़ल शिक्षक, छात्र एवं पदाधिकारीक असीम उदासीनता सँ चरमरा गेल अछि। सरकारी विद्यालय, महाविद्यालय तथा विश्वविद्यालय खानापुरीक संस्था बनि केँ रहि गेल अछि। प्राइभेट शिक्षा संस्था सभ आर्थिक रूपेँ दोहण-शोषणमे लागल अछि। सत्ता आ शासनक सरकार शिक्षाक प्रति घोर उदासीन अछि। वोटतंत्र लग लोकतंत्रक शिक्षा-व्यवस्था नतमस्तक अछि। एहि सन्दर्भमे नागार्जुनक पद उल्लेखनीय अछि-

“दिन रात मिहनत करके  
तब जुटाये फीस।  
पढ़-पढ़कर आँखे निकल आयी  
नम्बर आये बीस।  
शिक्षा मंत्री ने सिनेटमें कहा  
ऐ जी चाबास।

जीना हैरान हो जाता-  
 जीना हैरान हो जाता यदि  
 ज्यादा होते पास  
 यदि ज्यादा होते पास  
 फेल पूत का पिता दुःखी है,  
 सिर धुनती है माता ।  
 जन-गण-मन अधिनायक जय हे  
 भारत भाग्य विधाता ।’ —प्रतिनिधि कविताएँ

वर्तमान शिक्षा व्यवस्थाक दंश पूर्णरूप सँ समाहित अछि एहि पद्यांशमे ।

धार्मिक दृष्टिअँ अतीतक दरभंगा पंचदेवोपासक सम्प्रदाय सँ जुड़ल रहल तथा वर्तमान दरभंगा सेहो एहि सम्प्रदाय सँ जुड़ल अछि। हिन्दु आ मुसलमान अपन-अपन धर्मक प्रति प्रतिबद्ध रहैत सामाजिक समरसता केँ कायम केने छथि ।

आर्थिक दृष्टिअँ अतीतक दरभंगा दयनीय अवस्थामे छल कारण कृषि आधारित क्षेत्र रहबाक कारणेँ अर्थ-व्यवस्था सुदृढ़ नहि रहल । बाढ़िक प्रकोप सँ कृषक हतोत्साहित होइत रहल । दोसर दिस सामन्तक कर-व्यवस्था सँ कृषकक संग अन्य छोट-छोट कारोबारी सेहो आर्थिक तंगी सँ जुझैत रहल।

वर्तमान दरभंगा आर्थिक रूपेँ समृद्धि केँ प्राप्त केने अछि। गरीब-गुरुबा अन्नक अभाव मे नहि अछि। शहर सँ देहात धरि प्रगतिक पथ पर अग्रसर अछि। बिजली, सड़क आ साधनक दृष्टिअँ एक दशक सँ प्रगतिक स्वरूप प्रगट भेल अछि। जतय सम्पूर्ण दरभंगा अन्हारमे डुबल रहैत छल ओतय 20-22 घंटा बिजली रहैत अछि ।

निष्कर्षतः दरभंगाक अतीत दर्शन, न्याय शिक्षा, ज्ञान, संस्कृति एवं धर्मक क्षेत्रमे उत्कर्ष केँ प्राप्त केने छल तथा आर्थिक एवं सामाजिक रूपमे अपकर्षक स्थितिमे छल। वर्तमानक दरभंगा आर्थिक रूपेँ समृद्ध भेल अछि, धार्मिक एवं सामाजिक समरसता केँ ग्रहण केने अछि। शिक्षाक स्थिति अत्यन्त दयनीय अछि। वर्तमान जँ शिक्षा एवं प्रगतिक प्रति साकांक्ष रहत तँ भविष्यक दरभंगा पुनः अतीतक उत्कर्ष केँ प्राप्त करत ।

संदर्भ सूची-

1. “चित्रा” कविता संग्रह- वैद्यनाथ मिश्र ‘यात्री’ पृष्ठ-15
1. “चित्रा” कविता संग्रह- वैद्यनाथ मिश्र ‘यात्री’ पृष्ठ-15
3. प्रतिनिधि कविताएँ- नागार्जुन



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He has written fourteen books, most of them on linguistics. Dr Karan Singh described his book on the Gita as "bold and original" and the President of the World Sanskrit Association described it as "out and out original". His book on the Upanishads was released at the Rashtrapati Bhavan by Shri Pranab Mukherjee, the then President of India. This book, too, has received great tributes from eminent scholars in India and abroad.

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वर्ष- 4 & 5

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