



प्रतिध्वनि कला एवं
संस्कृति की

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वर्ष-11, साहित्य विशेषांक, 2025
(जनवरी-जून)



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वर्ष-11, साहित्य विशेषांक, 2025
(जनवरी - जून)
(अर्धवार्षिक शोध पत्रिका)

सम्पादक

डॉ. मधु रानी शुक्ला

सम्पादक मण्डल

डॉ. मनीष कुमार मिश्रा,
डॉ. धनंजय चोपड़ा, डॉ. ज्योति सिन्हा

सह सम्पादक

सुश्री शाम्भवी शुक्ला



व्यंजना

आर्ट एण्ड कल्चर सोसाइटी
109 डी/4, अबुबकरपुर, प्रीतम नगर, सुलेम सराय
प्रयागराज - 211011

अनहद लोक

(प्रतिध्वनि कला एवं संस्कृति की)

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- समस्त न्यायिक विवाद क्षेत्र इलाहाबाद न्यायालय होगा।

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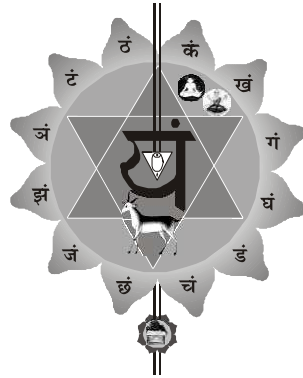
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सम्पादकीय

अनहद लोक, विशेषांक साहित्य आप सभी के शुभ हाथों में सौंपते हुए अत्यंत हर्षित हूँ आपकी मिल रही सकारात्मक प्रतिक्रियाओं से अत्यंत प्रसन्नता का अनुभव कर रही हूँ इसी प्रकार अपनी समीक्षात्मक दृष्टि से प्रतिक्रिया देते रहें प्रस्तुत अंक साहित्य को समर्पित है।

भारत की मूल आत्मा धर्म, अध्यात्म, योग, संगीत तथा दर्शन में निहित है। इसने हमें वैश्विक रूप से प्रतिष्ठा प्रदान की है। जैसा की सर्वविदित है की हाल ही में हमने 21 जून को अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय योग दिवस एवं 22 जून को विश्व संगीत दिवस बनाया है। हमने जहां हठ योग, ज्ञान योग, ध्यान योग पर विचार-विमर्श, प्रशिक्षण, व्याख्यान, संगोष्ठियों में चर्चा-परिचर्चा के माध्यम से विचार-विमर्श किया है वहीं हमने योग तथा संगीत को जोड़ते हुए नाद योग पर भी दृष्टि डाली है। विश्व संगीत दिवस मानते हुए अनेक संस्थानों ने संगीत के आयोजन भी हुए। जब हम संगीत की बात करते हैं तो संगीत अकेला नहीं उनमें अनेक विषय समाहित दिखते हैं- भौतिक, विज्ञान, व्याकरण-शास्त्र/स्फोट से प्रारंभ होकर इतिहास, समाजशास्त्र, साहित्य, योग, अध्यात्म, दर्शन, जीव-विज्ञान, प्रकृति विज्ञान से समृद्ध होकर समाज में प्रतिष्ठित है। अब बात आती है योग की तो योग की दुनिया में प्रवेश करना है तो अनुशासन का पालन करना होगा- अथ योगानुशासनम्। इस लिहाज़ से पतंजलि की दृष्टि योग शब्द के निष्कर्ष अर्थात् समाधि को निर्दिष्ट करती है। पतंजली योग चित्त शुद्धि को भी ध्यान रखता है- योगश्चित्तवृत्ति निरोधः, वहीं हठ योग काया सिद्धि को वरीयता देता है- शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्म साधनम् जिसमें एक चित्त से काया की ओर यात्रा है तो दूसरी काया से चित्त की ओर। इसको शिव और शक्ति के तादात्म्य की दृष्टि से देखते हैं। शक्ति का वास मूलाधार में है और शिव का वास सहस्राधार में जिनका एक दूसरे से जुड़ना योग कहा जाता है। इस मिलन को यौगिक भाषा में कुंडलिनी जागरण कहते हैं। भारतीय शाश्वत और सनातन परंपरा में योग मात्र क्रिया ही नहीं समस्त जीवन दर्शन है। जब हम श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता को देखते हैं तो समस्त जीवन दर्शन योगमय ही दिखाई देता है। सांख्य योग, कर्म योग, ज्ञान योग, भक्ति योग, वैराग्य योग आदि में गीता के समस्त जीवन दर्शन योग से ही संज्ञापित हैं। इन सभी योग के अनेक श्रोत होते हुए भी लक्ष्य एक है जो आत्मसाक्षात्कार से जुड़ता है संगीत में भी आत्मसाक्षात्कार के माध्यम सुर, लय, पद का समयक अनुशासन है जिसे नाद योग की संज्ञा दी गई है।

नाद ब्रह्म का बोध जगत के सृजनात्मक काल से महाकाल की यात्रा तक वैखरी वाक का मध्यमा, पश्यन्ति वाक से होते हुए परा वाक में लीन होना ही नाद योग है। ये स्थूल से सूक्ष्म की यात्रा है जो ज्ञान, कर्म और भक्ति के योग से ही पूर्ण होती है। महर्षि पतंजली के शब्दों में अटूट अवस्था ही योग है, स्वयं भगवान् कृष्ण ने भी कहा है योगोयुक्त तमो मतः अर्थात् मुझमें लीन हो जाना ही योग है। मन बुद्धि व शरीर

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आत्म-शक्ति से ही संचालित है। इनका नियमन आवश्यक है और इसके सरलतम दो मार्ग हैं योग तथा संगीत। योगी की कुंडलिनी जागृत होने पर जब वह उर्ध्वगामि होती हैं तो उस स्फोट को नाद कहते हैं। व्यापक रूप से यह नाद समस्त जगत् को संचालित करता है। सुषुम्ना मार्ग बंद होने के कारण वो सबको सुनाई नहीं देता। यही नाद सप्तस्वरों में विभक्त होता है जो अनाहत चक्र में प्रणव अर्थात् ओंकार के रूप में स्थापित होता है। नाद बिन्दु रूप है दोनों में अनन्य संबंध है ऊर्ध्व बिन्दु सहस्राधार चक्र में तथा अधु बिन्दु मूलाधार चक्र में स्थित है। इसके अतिरिक्त आज्ञा, विशुद्धि, अनाहत, मणिपुर, स्वाधिष्ठान चक्रों में भी बिन्दु है जो गौढ़ है। पंद्रह दिनों का नादाभ्यास योगी के चित्त को एकाग्रता मिलाता है और वो स्थूल से सूक्ष्म नाद को सुनने लगता है। शब्द, काल और वाक् का समयक स्वरूप एवं ताना-बाना नाद है। निरंतर नाद की साधना संगीत साध्य का मार्ग है ये लंबी यात्रा है। अनुशासन बद्ध नित्य नादोपासना से आत्म विस्मृति की अवस्था में नाद योगी पहुँचता है जो उसका लक्ष्य है। अब ये नाद उत्पन्न कैसे होता है तो संगीत रत्नाकर इसकी दार्शनिक व्याख्या करता है :

**नकार प्राण नाभानं दकारमंजनलं विदुः।
जातः प्राणाग्नि संयोगान्तेन तत्र नादोऽभिधीयते॥**

वस्तुतः योग साधना भारत की सर्वश्रेष्ठ देन है जो हमारे शरीर रूपी प्रयोगशाला में चित्त वृत्ति के माध्यम से नाद और संगीत है जो आत्मानुभूति और आत्मदर्शन का सर्वश्रेष्ठ माध्यम है जिसका ध्येय व्यष्टि चेतन से समष्टि चेतन का संबंध स्थापित करना है। योगी नाद में समस्त विश्व को देखते हैं- नास्ति नादात्म परो मन्त्रः अर्थात् नाद से बढ़कर कोई मन्त्र नहीं है। प्राण या प्राणवायु के वायुमहाभूत के सात्विक अंग से बना है जो शरीर में 10 भागों में विभक्त है तथा अनवरत गतिमान है। जागृत अवस्था हो, सुप्तावस्था हो या स्वपनावस्था वह निरंतर गतिमान है योगी है वो आसान, प्राणायाम, प्रत्याहार, धारणा, ध्यान से परिपूर्ण होकर सूक्ष्म तत्वों को दर्शन करता है। नाद को ब्रह्मा विष्णु महेश मानकर सर्जन, धारणा, विलय तीन शक्तियाँ दी गई हैं स्वयं शारंगदेव ने भी संगीत रत्नाकर नामक ग्रंथ की रचना का उद्देश्य बताते हुए कहा है की शाश्वत धर्म, कीर्ति व मोक्ष तीनों को ध्यान में रखकर इस ग्रंथ की रचना कर रहा हूँ।

संगीत एक कला (Art) है और कला का मौलिक चिंतन उसके मूल्य बोध से जहाँ विषयी और विषय दोनों हैं। संगीत के मूल घटक तत्वों पर हम दृष्टि डालें तो दार्शनिक दृष्टि से नाद राग और रस विषय तत्व तथा आत्मन, अवधान व उपलब्धि विषयी तत्व है अन्य सभी आयाम उसके सहायक तत्व के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित हैं। संगीत में क्रमबद्ध श्वासोच्छ्वास की प्रक्रिया है जो योग के निकट ले जाकर अध्यात्म से जोड़ता है यही सत, चित्त, आनंद का अनुभव कराता है जिसकी तीन सीढ़ियाँ आरोह, अवरोह तथा स्थिरता होती है इसे ही महर्षि व्यास ने योगारंभ, योगारूढ़, योगसिद्धि कहा है। अब नाद साधना योग के बारे में देखे तों चक्रों की साधना कही जाती है। समस्त स्वरों का संबंध चक्रों से जोड़ा गया है। 'स' मूलाधार चक्र में, 'रे' स्वाधिष्ठान चक्र में, 'ग' मणिपुर चक्र में, 'म' अनाहत चक्र में, 'प' विशुद्धि चक्र में, 'ध' आज्ञा चक्र में, 'नि' बिंदुविसर्ग चक्र में तथा तार सप्तक का 'स' सहस्राधार चक्र में स्थापित है। पंडित शारंग देव ने इन स्वरों के नाद स्थान श्रुति, कुल, देवता, ऋषि, रंग, छन्द व रस से जोड़ा है जिसमें योग शास्त्र का ही प्रभाव है। इन्ही स्वरों के सन्निवेश से राग बनते हैं रागों के ध्यान होते हैं जो आकृति का निर्माण करते हैं। हम प्रस्तुतीकरण में रागों के देव-देवी, स्त्री-पुरुष, नायक-नायिका से पुत्र-पुत्रवधू, पौत्र का

पारिवारिक वर्गीकरण को मान्यता प्रदान करते हैं। साथ ही नपुंसक रागों की भावुक परंपरा भी इस नाद योग का ही प्रभाव है। जब स्वरों से चक्रों के जागरण की बात की जाती है तो संगीत चिकित्सा को भी मान्यता मिलती है।

- नासिका, कंठ, तालु, जिह्वा दंत से उच्चारित 'सा'- पित्रज रोगों का शमन करता है।
- नाभि, वायु, कंठ से 'रे'- जो कफ तथा पित्र प्रधान रोगों का शमन करता है।
- नाभि, कंठहशीर्ष नासिका से 'ग' पित्र रोगों का शमन
- नाभि, उरः, 'म'- वात् तथा कफ प्रधान रोगों
- नाभि, उरः, हृदय, कंठ, शीर्ष ये पाँच स्थान का स्पर्श करते हुए 'प'- कफ प्रधान रोगा
- पूर्व के पाँच स्वरों की प्रकृति से निष्पन्न तथा चित्त को प्रसन्न तथा उदासीन बनाने वाले धैवत स्वर कफ प्रधान राग
- नासिक से-निषाद-वात् रोगों का शमन करता है।

कुछ रागों को भी चक्र साधना का भी माध्यम माना गया है। राग श्याम कल्याण, यमन, जैजैवन्ती, भैरवी, मालकौंस, बिहाग, तोड़ी, भैरव, केदार, भीम-पलासी, शंकारा आदि अलग-अलग परंपराओं में चक्रों के जागरण का राग मानते हैं। वस्तुतः यह स्वयं अनुभूति तथा अभिव्यक्ति का विषय है। स्वयं के अनुभवों के आधार पर अगर शोधात्मक दृष्टि से हम रागों को देखते हैं, उन्हें अनुभव करते हैं तो हम उस राग विशेष को चक्र विशेष के जागरण का माध्यम बना सकते हैं। यह शोध का विषय है और निरंतर शोध प्रक्रिया चलती ही रहनी चाहिए। अस्तु।

इस साहित्य विशेषांक में हमने साहित्य से संबंधित शोध आलेखों का प्रकाशन किया है जिसे देश के प्रख्यात साहित्यविद् शिक्षकों तथा शोधार्थियों द्वारा तैयार किया गया है। यह अंक निश्चित रूप से शोधार्थियों एवं पाठकों को उपयोगी सिद्ध होगा ऐसी कामना करते हैं। मैं समस्त साहित्यकारों शिक्षकों तथा के प्रति अपनी सद्भावना व्यक्त करती हूँ जिन्होंने अपने सारगर्भित लेखों से इस अंक को समृद्ध किया।

- डॉ. मधु रानी शुक्ला

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Devastating effects of Western ideas of beauty on a black girl in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* : A Narratological Dissection

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This novel, besides exposing the inherent racism of the American standard of beauty, also examines child abuse in terms of the violence that some African-American parents subconsciously inflict on their children by forcing them to weigh their self-worth against white cultural standards. Pecola believes that if she had beautiful eyes, people would not be able to torment her mind or body. Her wish for blue eyes rather than lighter skin not only transcends racism, but also her sanity.

The distinction between plot and story is immediately apparent in the way the events in the novel are related to the readers. The story is of three black schoolgirls growing up in 1940s Ohio, two sisters Claudia and Frieda and their friend Pecola. Pecola likes to have blue eyes like Americans. She is raped by her father; a baby is born prematurely and dies. She becomes mad and goes to Soaphead Church for help. By the end of the book, Pecola is talking to an imaginary friend, asking over and over if her eyes are the bluest of all.

The plot is rather more experimental.

The Bluest Eye has three different beginnings. The first beginning, the opening words of the novel, is from the common 1940s American elementary school primer of Dick and Jane. The first excerpt is a faithful reproduction:

Here is the house. It is green and white.
It has a red door. It is very pretty. Here
is the family. Mother, father, Dick and
Jane live in the green and white house.
They are very happy. (Morrison, *The
Bluest Eye*, 1)

The second lacks all capitalization and punctuation marks heighten the lack of integrity essential to their simplistic order :

Here is the house it is green and white
it has a red door it is very pretty ere is
the family mother father dick and jane
live in the green and white house they
are very happy (Morrison, *The Bluest
Eye*, 1)

The lack of punctuation reduces its effect to create meaning; this throws the work more immediately into the sphere of the reader. This heightens the probability of multiple interpretations.

The third dissolves into linguistic chaos by abandoning its spacing and alignment :

Here is the house it is green and white
it has are dooritis very prety here is the
family mother father dick and jane live
in the green and white house they are
very happy will play with jane they will
play a good game play jane play
(Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, 2).

The letters run together into one, long, ugly, meaningless world. It may be said that the first version is a lack of self-esteem, the second version is self-hate and of course, the third version is Pecola Breedlove herself.

There are two parts of the prologue; part one begins with a series of sentences that seem to come from a children's reader. Each section of this prologue gives an overview of the novel as a whole. At a glance, the Dick and Jane motif alerts us to the fact that for the most part the story will be told from a child's perspective. Just as the Dick and Jane primer teaches children how to read, this novel will be about the larger story of how children learn to interpret their world. In the same way, the children in this novel lack ways to connect the disjointed, often frightening experiences that make up their lives. This third repetition alerts and warns the reader to expect a story that is vivid but fragmented.

Morrison has used the primer as an epigraph. The seven epigraphic sections thematically ties to the chapters which they directly precede. Another strategy which she uses by deconstructing the primer is to authenticate her document as an African-American art. Robert Stepo suggests, "Such a pretextual authorization of the black voice has had a significant

influence in shaping the African-American literary enterprise." (Stepo, *From Behind the veil*, 39)

The second beginning of the novel is a one-page gossip, in which Claudia tells us the rest of the story. This section is interrupted by an italicized fragment representing the memories of Claudia MacTeer, the principal narrator of *The Bluest Eye* by an unnamed narrator. As an adult, Claudia recalls incidents from late 1941 when she was nine years old living in Lorain, Ohio. She tells us the punch line on the first real page of the book:

Quiet as it's kept, there were no marigolds in the fall of 1941. We thought, at the time, that it was because Pecola was having her father's baby that the marigold did not grow...Cholly Breedlove is dead; our innocence too. The seed shriveled and died; her baby too. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, 4)

As the sisters learn of the community's disgust of the baby, they tries to connect the baby's development to the cycles of nature. The sisters believed that the seeds would blossom and Pecola's baby would be safely delivered. But the seeds refused to sprout, and the two sisters blamed each other for this failure in order to relieve their sense of guilt for years.

This (second) section of the prologue not only creates suspense, but also, like the repetitions in the Dick and Jane section, gives a sense of circularity. The first section is marked by a lack of connection between ideas, people, and sentences, the second section is filled with such connections, including an association between the natural cycles of the earth and the unnatural components of the story—a traditional literary device that contributes to the section's lyrical feeling.

The third beginning of the novel begins on page three. The novel, beginning with 'Autumn', is divided into sections that correspond to the seasons. Morrison uses natural cycles to underline the unnaturalness and misery of her characters' experiences. Interspersed throughout the text are fragments in the voice of an omniscient narrator that discuss Pecola's obsessive desire for blue eyes and her parents, Pauline and Cholly; each fragment is introduced with different lines from the Dick-and-Jane primer.

Morrison ignores strict narrative chronology. Morrison's reverse chronological order technique is an oral technique. She oscillates the events from present to past by using Omniscience narrator and first person narrator. She has also used flashback, memory, interior monologue, multiple narrative voices, Black English, fragmentation, and repetition. Flashbacks and shifts in the subject are the formal counterparts of her thematic concerns. Her characters understand who they are and what their lives mean when they can tell stories about how they came to be. In a flashback using interior monologue, Pauline describes her first meeting with Cholly in this way:

When I first seed Cholly, I want you to know it was like all the bits of color from that time down home when all us children went berry picking after a funeral and I put some in the pocket of my Sunday dress, and they mashed up and stained my hips...he used to whistle and when I heard him. Shivers come on my skin." (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, 90)

In an interview with Bakerman, Morrison admits this writing weakness of using italics to symbolize Mrs. Breedlove's own thoughts:

When I wrote this section in *The Bluest Eye* about Pecola's mother, I thought I would have no trouble. First I wrote it out as an "I" story, ...then I wrote it out as a "she" story.... I was never able to resolve that, so I used both. The author said a little bit and then she said a little bit. But I wish I had been able to do the "I" thing with her. I really wanted to. (Bakerman, "An Interview with Toni Morrison", 59)

Morrison uses multiple narrators in order to gain greater validity. According to Philip Page, even though the voices are divided, they combine to make a whole, and "this broader perspective also encompasses past and present... as well as the future of the grown-up Claudia" (Page, *Dangerous Freedom: Fusion and Fragmentation in Toni Morrison's Novels*, 54)

The chapters counterpoise three moments in time: a past before the narrative present (the flashbacks), the eternal present of the primer, and the narrative present of Pecola's story as told by Claudia. Much of the time, Claudia doesn't say "I," she says "we," speaking for hers and her sister—and in a very important sense, speaking for us. Morrison's goal is to bring us into the book, to make us participants instead mere observers. Claudia's section ends; the next section begins with a few run-together words from Dick and Jane, then the story is told by an omniscient narrator who can go backward and forward in time and place and can jump in and out of anyone's consciousness.

In "Winter" we read:

SEETHECATITGOESMEOWME
OWCOMEANDPLAYCOMEPLAYWI
THJANET HEKITTENWILLNOT-
PLAYPLAYPLA (BE 63)

The correctly punctuated version of these lines might evoke the cliché of the coy household pet too choosy to play. For one thing, as the narrator tells us, the cat has replaced both Geraldine's husband and her son in her affections, perhaps because it is cleaner. And the cat is, of course, central to the episode the chapter describes. Junior lures Pecola into his house by promising to let her play with his cat. This chapter thus shows some of the forms that overinvestment in an alien cultural standard may take. By juxtaposing these and other stones to Pecola's, Morrison displays the dimensions of her protagonist's condition.

Claudia opens the "Spring" sequence of *The Bluest Eye* with disparate memories about Henry Washington fondling Frieda's breasts, and a visit to Pecola's apartment. The omniscient narrator's descriptions of Pauline and Cholly's history predominates the rest of this section. The cadence of Pauline Breedlove's section begins with an ironic note:

SEEMOTHERMOTHERISVERYNICE
MOTHERWILLYOUPLAYWITHJANE
MOTHERLAUGHSLAUGHMOTHERL
AUGH (BL 86)

Two voices, as in a duet, tell her story: the voice of the all-knowing narrator and the distinctive voice of Pauline Breedlove herself. In Lorain, a drunken Cholly staggers into his kitchen, and overcome with lust, brutally rapes and impregnates Pecola. Soaphead's section completes this circle of the chapter. Morrison appropriately begins his section clearly identifies with an old mangy dog who sleeps in front of his entrance:

SEETHEDOGBOWWOWGOESTHE
DOGDYOUWANTTOPLAYWITH
JANESEETHEDOGRUNR (BE 130)

In "Summer," Claudia resumes her narration, recalling how the gossip spreads regarding Pecola being pregnant with Cholly's baby. Near the end of the novel, Pecola finally narrates a story about her conversation with an imaginary companion concerning her new blue eyes and whether they are "the bluest eyes" in the world. In the last section of *The Bluest Eye* Claudia remembers meeting Pecola after Cholly's baby is delivered stillborn and accounts for the whereabouts of Sammy, Cholly and Pauline.

Pecola is the passive center of the novel, the one to whom things happen and her only action, her prayer for and receipt of blue eyes, renders her tragic. Morrison heads this section:

LOOKLOOKHERECOMESAFRIEN
DTHEFRIENDWILLPLAYWITHJAN
ETHEYWILLPLAYAGOODGAMEPLAY
JANEPLAY (BE52)

The novel ends with Claudia when she says "I even think now that the land of the entire country was hostile to marigolds that year. This soil is bad for certain kinds of flowers. Certain seeds it will not nurture, certain fruit it will not bear...it's much, much, much too late". (BE 164) Peach says, "At the end of the novel, the omniscient voice and Claudia's narrative merge, and the reader realizes this is an older Claudia looking back on her childhood" (Peach, ed. *Toni Morrison: Contemporary Critical Essays*, 37)

Morrison ordering of the chapters is roughly in reverse order. "By beginning the novel with autumn," says Christian, "she [Morrison] informs the readers that

the world of the novel is topsy-turvy. Spring usually symbolizes the beginning of things, the time of birth and rebirth. Autumn, in contrast, is the time of death and decay. Summer, commonly associated with life in full bloom, ripens, is a time of death, life in its final moments. These seasonal divisions aid the reader in understanding the fundamental decadence of life for the African living in the United States” (Christian, “Community and Nature: The Novels of Toni Morrison,” *The Journal of Ethnic Studies* ,74)

The novel still has limitations. For instance, the novel does not undertake to explain, for example, why black Americans aspire to an unattainable standard of beauty. Why do they displace their self-hatred onto a communal scapegoat? How Pecola’s fate might have been averted. Claudia, the narrator that frames Pecola’s story, and the very structure of the novel itself, suggests that such considerations are irresolvable.

Although Morrison is successful in delineating the theme still there are some weaknesses. For example, the use of the omniscient narrator adds to this narrative confusion and awkwardness. It is the omniscient narrator who tells the Breedlove’s story; Claudia, the child and adult,

relates the events within the remaining chapters. Chapters without headings are told by Claudia; those with headings are told by the omniscient narrator to confuse the readers.

Thus, by introducing Claudia as a child narrator to tell the story of Pecola using Dick and Jane primer, flashback, oscillation of events from present to past, using Omniscience narrator, executed with a reliable narrator for the purpose of exploring the devastating effects that the Western ideas of beauty and romantic love have on a vulnerable black girl gives *The Bluest Eye* a high degree of intensity.

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Bollywood and Indian Regional Films : A Self-construal Relation Reflecting Epistemic Injustice

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Introduction :

Around 1930, drawing inspiration from Hollywood, Indian cinema or Bollywood started emerging as a powerful social tool in India which started shaping the consciousness of India. The people of India have always remained spellbound by Indian cinema and have been profoundly influenced in their ideology and lifestyle by Indian cinema. Hence, the impact of Indian cinema on the lives of Indians cannot be underestimated. When it comes to Indian cinema, it is needless to say what a huge impact it has exerted on the lives of Indians. Bollywood has been a reliable partner in India's journey as a nation through various moments of triumph as well as tribulations. It has faithfully represented the hopes, aspirations and fears of the Indian people. So much so, it has incredibly supported the nation's journey to greatness. Films in India enjoy a special status that is difficult to be expressed in words. Even before the advent of cinema, storytelling has always remained popular among Indians. We all know how grandmothers in India are hugely loved for telling stories to their grandchildren

and these stories have always fostered a special relationship among both grandchildren and grandparents. We all have enjoyed a popular song from the film *Gharana* (1961) in which we see how grandchildren are requesting their grand-mother to narrate them a story. The song has been highly instrumental in shaping our collective consciousness about the warm relationship between children and grandparents. Songs like 'Dadi Amma, Dadi Amma Maan Jao' mark the summit of the impact that Bollywood has on the minds of Indian people. The Bollywood films are known to have explored the prevailing social discontent of that period and also mirror the prevailing problems that a newborn nation was facing. Freedom was the only beginning. There were several challenges ahead. The films of that period helped the nation to understand the current issues. In the absence of modern social tools and social sites, Bollywood alone had to shoulder this colossal responsibility. Movies like *Do Aankhen Bara Haath* (1957) are known for the immortal prayer which has been

deeply embedded in the Indian psyche. The payer has been immensely loved and accorded a special status in our public life.

Some Popular Perceptions About Films :

What is a film? What does it do to our lives and how profoundly it impacts our lives are some of the questions that are always subject to a massive amount of debate. However, it is unlikely that any consensus will ever be evolved on the topic. Different segments of society have different opinions about cinema. Few have been conspicuously sanguine about the future and role of cinema in our world, and on the other hand, few dismiss it as something destructive and worthless. Similarly, critics have varied opinions about films as well. Some noteworthy ideas about the role of cinema and films deserve to be discussed here. Pauline Kael in **“Trash, Art, and the Movies”** writes about *Keeps: 30 Years at the Movies* says:

A good movie can take you out of your dull funk and the hopelessness that so often goes with slipping into a theatre..... Good movies make you care, make you believe in possibilities again. If somewhere in the Hollywood-entertainment world someone has managed to break through with something that speaks to you, then it isn't all corruption..... You do meet them, of course, and you know each other at once because you talk less about good movies than about what you love in bad movies. (Euronews.com)

On the other hand, Ranjani Mazumdar says:

Bombay cinema, in its sensuous relationship to the city, generates an urban history that we must grasp through the material and visual forces that shape its memory, history, and politics. The cinema can thus be seen as an archive

of the city, a constantly evolving form of the city's ever-expanding imaginary. (Mazumdar, 2007, p. 15)

This quote reflects the central argument of the book, where Mazumdar explores how Bombay cinema serves as a living archive, capturing the complexity of the city and its urban dynamics through the cinematic lens.

Epistemic Injustice in Regional Indian Films :

Epistemic injustice, as a concept rooted in social epistemology, can manifest in various aspects of society, including cultural representations in regional Indian films. Stereotyping and Misrepresentation are visible in various Regional Indian films and have sometimes been criticized for perpetuating stereotypes and misrepresentations of certain communities or social groups. This misrepresentation can lead to epistemic injustice by reinforcing prejudiced views and limiting the public's understanding of these groups. Some regional Indian films may marginalize or ignore the voices and experiences of particular communities or individuals. This can lead to testimonial injustice by not acknowledging the knowledge and perspectives of marginalized groups. In some cases, regional Indian films may appropriate elements of a culture or community without understanding or respecting their significance. This can lead to hermeneutical injustice by failing to provide adequate cultural context and potentially misinterpreting or misrepresenting cultural elements. In **“The Essentials of Indianness: Tolerance and Sacrifice in Indian Partition Fiction in English and in English Translation,”** Basudeb Chakraborti explores how films based on Indian Partition lite-

rature reveal the duality of human nature—balancing cruelty with inherent goodness. The article emphasizes that tolerance and sacrifice are central to the cultural fabric of India, especially as reflected in Partition. This literature captures the essence of humanity's struggle for survival amidst profound violence and upheaval, embodying the spirit of resilience through these values (Chakraborti, 2009).

Epistemic injustice can also manifest in regional Indian films through gender bias. For example, female characters may be portrayed in a stereotypical or one-dimensional manner, which can limit the understanding and recognition of women's experiences and perspectives. Regional Indian cinema often reflects the dominant culture and perspectives of the region it represents. This can lead to epistemic injustice by excluding or marginalizing the voices and experiences of minority communities or individuals with different viewpoints. Dasgupta says:

Through the powerful medium of Mrinal's letter, Tagore has posed serious questions about the role of women in the family and society. The letter becomes a tool for Mrinal to negotiate the terrain of self-assertion, providing her a platform to explore the self as a free, thinking individual. (Dasgupta, 2010, p. 6).

This quote reflects Dasgupta's analysis of how Tagore's "Streer Patra" challenges traditional gender roles and patriarchal norms through Mrinal's voice.

Bollywood at Present :

The recent movies which have created considerable interest among audiences are of different types. The themes of poverty, inflation or platonic love are no longer in

vogue. What charms the audience most are new ideas that are largely concerned with middle-class society, their aspirations and cravings. These films are clamouring for a new kind of understanding among their audiences so they may understand the dramatically changing surroundings. There are many such movies which deserve a special mention here. A movie like *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha* (2017) is an eye-opener for most of us. The producer has chosen a less-than-ordinary theme for the movie but the execution is impeccable. We are moved to see the plight of those women who are doomed to live a life that does not offer them the necessities of life. The film has reshaped the consciousness of urban India which has become habitual of taking many things for granted. The movie makes us understand how far still we have to go as a nation.

A movie like *Jawani Diwani* (2019) shows us the dilemmas and problems faced by our youngsters. We are made to show that young people living in the big cities are facing some unexpected challenges that we never imagined. Conventional institutions like marriage are under scanner. The youngsters are in no mood to relent or blindly follow their parents. They are more interrogative. The film wants us to reshape our consciousness about young people so that we may handle them differently.

The film *Badhai Ho* (2018) is a treat to the eye. The film director has chosen the most unconventional idea and we are made to see how parents and children sometimes need to understand each other closely and make some bigger adjustments to live a smooth life. The film prepares us to see this relationship from a new perspective.

ctive. It is not only the children who need space rather parents also sometimes need space in their lives and children must understand that *Badla* (2019) is another marvellous film played by Amitabh and Tapsee Pannu. The film is all about its heroine who commits a blunder under the influence of an extramarital affair and complicates her life when she gets involved in a road accident. Amitabh plays the role of a lawyer who is gifted with great acumen and plays his part with incredible skill. The movie is a must-watch movie for youngsters. Similarly, *Thappad* (2020) also wants us to view the sexual politics between husband and wife from a new perspective. The movie is about a couple who are leading a mediocre life until a 'thappad' changes everything for them forever. The wife is in no mood to adjust to the brutality of the husband. The film reshapes our consciousness about the manner women must be treated by society.

Let us take the example of the movie *Badhai Ho* (2018). Though the family system in our country has always remained massively strong and all generations of our country have reposed great trust in this institution, like all other institutions, this institution also cries for certain structural changes and clamours for more freedom. The director has immaculately executed the basic idea of the story. Generally, in our nation, when children grow adults, it is presumed that the sex life of parents has come to an end. They should not have much indulgence in these passions. However, we see how a middle-aged couple in the family conceives a baby unintentionally and this becomes a cause of embarrassment for them. The whole society including their children gets annoyed with them.

They take it as something below their social prestige. However, the child is given birth despite all social taboos. The children gradually understand that they need to view things in a fresh light. The film proves that children, too, must have respect for the privacy of their parents. Parents too have the right to enjoy sex and life. We need to respect each other's space and try to avoid idealizing every relationship. Sex is simply an emotional and biological need of every human including the parents.

Thappad (2020) is not an ordinary movie. Though this is the fact that the film may not have been a huge success at the box office, the film has been made in an amazingly sensible manner teasing us to think of the relationship of a husband and wife in an unconventional manner. The climax of the movie reaches at the point when the husband is overwhelmingly happy to know about his promotion and throws a party on this occasion. Unfortunately, the news of the cancellation of his promotion comes during the party and he has an altercation with his immediate boss. When the situation reaches on a critical point, her wife intervenes to pacify the matter but her husband slaps her in a fit of rage without any fault on her part. The event turns out to be a defining moment in the life of the wife (Tapsee Pannu). She is in no mood to tolerate this nonsense and goes for divorce. Though both families try their best to find an amicable solution to the problem, yet wife is adamant and insists on nothing less than divorce. The 'thappad' becomes a turning point in the story. The director has stirred our consciousness and made us feel how long such irresponsible behaviour against women may be allowed to continue in our society. How long women

are going to be treated as easy prey to the whims and fancies of males? On the whole, the movie goes a long way in changing our ideas and attitudes towards women.

Hegemony in Regional Indian Films :

Hegemony in Regional Indian films refers to the dominance or control of certain cultural, social, political, or economic ideologies within the context of cinema produced in the region. It can manifest in various ways and can influence the narratives, representation, and production of films. Hegemony can be seen in the dominant narrative and storytelling patterns in Regional Indian films. Films may often reflect the prevailing cultural norms, social hierarchies, and political ideologies of the region. The casting choices and representation of different social groups within Regional Indian films can also be influenced by hegemonic forces. Dominant ethnic or linguistic groups may be over-represented, while marginalized or minority communities may be underrepresented or stereotyped. Hegemony can be evident in the preference for the dominant language and cultural norms of the region in films. This may lead to the marginalization or erasure of linguistic and cultural diversity within the region. Traditional gender roles and stereotypes may be perpetuated in Regional Indian films, with women often portrayed in limited or stereotypical roles, while men are depicted as strong and authoritative figures.

Some films may glorify wealth, power and urban lifestyles, reinforcing existing socioeconomic hierarchies and neglecting the realities of marginalized or disadvantaged communities. Callum G. Brown articulates two core principles of postmodernism

that significantly challenge historical study :

1. "Reality is ultimately unrepresentable."
2. "Therefore, there can be no authoritative account of anything."

These ideas compel historians to reconsider the foundations of their narratives and the authority of historical accounts. Brown emphasizes that postmodernism is not just an optional perspective but a vital framework for understanding how ideas operate within historical contexts. Political ideologies and agendas can shape the content of Regional Indian films. Film-makers may align their work with the dominant political narratives or face censorship or backlash for challenging those narratives. Government censorship and regulations can exert control over the content of films in a particular region, limiting freedom of expression and reinforcing hegemonic norms. This can lead to self-censorship by filmmakers to avoid controversy. The film industry in the Regional Cinema, like elsewhere, is subject to market forces. Films that conform to dominant norms and preferences may receive greater financial support and wider distribution, while those that diverge from the mainstream may struggle to find funding and audiences.

Conclusion :

In conclusion, the intricate interplay between Bollywood and regional Indian cinema exemplifies a profound self-construal relationship that underscores the pervasive epistemic injustices inherent within the filmic landscape of India. The hegemonic narratives perpetuated by Bollywood not only overshadow regional storytelling but also contribute to a system

matic marginalization of diverse cultural identities and vernacular expressions. This dynamic reflects a broader socio-cultural discourse that privileges certain epistemologies while relegating others to the periphery, thereby fostering a cinematic hierarchy that is as much about representation as it is about recognition.

The implications of this relationship extend beyond mere cinematic aesthetics; they resonate with the socio-political fabric of India, calling for a critical re-evaluation of the mechanisms through which cultural value is ascribed and disseminated. By interrogating the paradigms of dominance and resistance embedded within this cinematic dichotomy, we unveil the potential for a more equitable and inclusive narrative space, one that acknowledges and celebrates the rich tapestry of India's regional narratives. Ultimately, recognizing and addressing these epistemic injustices is essential not only for the flourishing of regional cinema but also for the enrichment of the collective Indian cultural identity, paving the

way for a more nuanced understanding of diversity in the contemporary cinematic discourse.

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Integrating Literary Theories with Effective Pedagogies in Classroom Teaching for English Literature Students

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It is a fact which is indelible that theories make the world of literature. It is through theories we learn everything. Theories reflect the ages in literature. One can visualize the history and culture through the texts. In my first study about Horace, through his text, 'Ars poetica' this classical writer takes the readers ages back to BCE. His method is theoretical compared to Aristotle and Plato and focused on theoretical approach in poetry and criticism. For Horace- 'Poetry has high regard' and in his epistles can find the role of the poet and the working of poet's mind.

The poet's mind is not easily covetous;
fond of verses, he studies this alone;
he laughs at losses, flights of slaves,
fires; he contrives no fraud against his
partner, or his young ward; he lives on
husks, and brown bread; though dastardly
and unfit for war, he is useful at home,
if you allow this, that great things may
derive assistance from small ones. The
poet fashions the child's tender and
lipping mouth, and turns his ear even
at this time from obscene language;
afterward also he forms his heart with
friendly precepts, the corrector of his
rudeness, and envy, and passion; he

records virtuous actions, he instructs
the rising age with approved examples,
he comforts the indigent and the sick.
(Epistle I to Augustus)

Horace in his 'Ars Poetica' i.e., in the 'Art of Poetry' asks the poet to match their strength and have to pursue with what is their forte while writing. The writer has to know his ability and portray which are familiar to them rather than touching something unknown. In his work, he also guides that, if it is a poem, it has to follow certain nuances and the words should perish with the ages as it is natural to fall and endure when the words are effective. It is interesting to note that Horace spotlights that a character should express the quality. "Raged Gods cannot be presented as trifles." Meanwhile a comic character cannot be attributed with tragic qualities. These conventions can be adapted in current scenarios in classrooms while performing **dramas** and to make this further interesting, even mock plays, can be performed to make it funny and amusing.

Horace in his critical theories stresses that the poet or the creator has impart the

delight and transport his feelings. He wants the creator to cry first, if his character wants to cry. Empathy, the beautiful quality is emphasized and active pedagogical approaches such as debate, storytelling and describing critical incidents can be carried out in classroom. Horace points out the traits of classical characters from the epic *Odyseus*, Achilles should be presented as an unyielding and wrathful character, likewise Medea as fierce and Ixion as faithless. **Art Charades** can be the skill enhancement activity suggested to students asking them to act a character and the rest of the audience need to find out the character by predicting several clues. Further, the activity can be enhanced by learning more about the character and presenting their dialogues in the next class.

The next focus factor is on the handling the plot with brilliance and synchronizing the foibles with genuineness. The beginning of the plot to be connected with middle and end and there should be perfect harmony between the acts. Most important is the reflection of age. The characters should represent the particular age. When it is about chorus, Horace asks the writers that chorus should preserve and function as a chief character not just as intruders. The chorus should give hope to the entire plot. He is also against mingling of tragedy and comedy. Tragedy should represent something serious and light vein should not mar the plot. His theory also suggests that the rhythmic pattern such as iambic trimeters fits the serious plot as it carries slowly on to the ears of audience. Horace quotes about Democritus, Greek philosopher, that talent is important for writers to separate the crude from refined. Horace while

criticizing says that his work is that of a whetstone, a tool which is used to sharpen and he also likes to do the same i.e., to teach the functions and to shape the writer. Students can be encouraged to **write poetry** of four lines and in later phase, improvised by the usage of poetical devices.

The next theory is centered around the study of John Dryden, the proponent of neo-classical age. He wrote so many reputed works – *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), *All for Love* (1677), *Mac Flacknoe* (1682), and *ReligioLaici* (1682). He is such a prominent figure as the restoration era claims his name as the ‘Age of Dryden’ in English literature. Dryden occupies an important position in English prose and criticism and well known for his conversational style. Dryden also translated the satires of Juvenal, Persius and Virgil. When it is about criticism, Dryden occupies the pedestal.

The selection taken for this case study is ‘An Essay of Dramatic Poesy’ (1668). He is identified as the first modern critic as, he believed that literature would constantly undergo changes and was very inquisitive on the evolving changes. His approach towards literature is always creative without a bonding on the past. In this essay, he advocates English works comparing French works, which are considered to be an exemplar. The essay is framed in the form of treatise enacted among four scholars-Lisideus, representing Charles Sedley, a renowned English play-wright. Neander representing Dryden, Eugenius-Charles Sackville and Crites, who is Robert Howard. The validating points of discussion are ancient vs modern works, three unities, tragi-comedy and appropriateness of rhyme. Lisideus complains about the

bareness of French plots as it is single plot without any comical interludes, but in English plays, plots are copious. English plays, has under/sub plots which are synchronized with main plot and provides comic relief.

Eugenius conveys that French plays, by presenting one theme or one action is more prone to boredom. He confesses that French works are the coldest of all the works and their speech have so much of declamations. The metaphor pointed out makes the prose further interesting. As in the article *Renaissance and Reformation*, it is quoted that

Grief and passion are like floods raised in little brooks by a sudden rain; they are quickly up; and if the concernment be poured unexpectedly in upon us, it overflows us: but a long, sober shower gives them leisure to run out as they came in, without troubling the ordinary current. As for comedy, repartee is one of its chiefest graces; the greatest pleasure of the audience is a chase of wit kept up on both sides, and swiftly managed. And this our forefathers, if not we, have had in Fletcher's plays, to a much higher degree of perfection than the French poets can arrive at. (165-206)

Lisideus also highlights the point that, a character is given importance in all the French plays whereas secondary characters are not highlighted, whereas in English works, the more the characters, the plot provides variety which keeps up the interest of the work. This technique is even seen in Indian cinemas as in the midst of the main plot, an interlude mainly associated with comedy is predominant. Further, this can be even substantiated in our classrooms by **story narration** technique involving all the students.

Dryden eulogises the example of Ben Jonson's plays such as *The Alchemist* (1606), *Volpone* (1610) and *The Silent Woman* (1609) - in which all the acts are interconnected and it lead to the fifth act with the universal truth to virtue triumphs and vice falls. Another factor which is discussed in this essay is about the unities. According to classical authors, the plot has to maintain three unities- **time, place and action**. Dryden emphasizes that due to this observation of unities in French plays, there is dearth of imagination as there are limitations. On contrast, the examples from Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher are highlighted, due to liberal plots which never caused trauma to the audience. In literature specifically drama, Shakespeare's plays are the best as he rarely maintains the unities. From his first act to final act, he takes the audience to various locations encompassing various empires and there will be interludes in his plays. How can the people forget the clown in *King Lear* or John Falstaff of Henry part I and IV. Shakespeare took tragic comedy to great heights. In the words of Dryden about Shakespeare:

To begin, then, with Shakespeare: he was the man who of all moderns, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too... He is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great when some great occasion is presented to him; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets (21-25).

Dryden concludes the argument by mentioning that though there are flaws in English works, great writers like Beaumont, Fletcher, Ben Jonson and Shakespeare took their works to greater heights to great heights. **Reading habit** can be developed in literature students by dividing the acts scenes and acts of Shakespeare and summing can be done in the classroom. The pedagogy of flipped classroom is much an effective one while teaching literature as it gives impetus for further reading. **Flipped classroom** technique enables the students to know about the topic prior and it involves higher order thinking skills.

The last piece of study taken for analysis is '*Towards the Feminist Poetics*' by Elaine Showalter published in 1979. This work is considered to be a futuristic, as it explores the relationship between the feminist criticism and ancient literary theories. This essay is presented in the form of lectures at University of Oxford in 1978. Before 1970's feminist criticism and views were not articulated and suspicion in theories persisted, as the society was totally patriarchal. Showalter demarcates women as readers and women as writers. Woman as a readers focuses on literature written by men. It reveals the traditional and stereotypical women represented as weaker sex and confined in all perspectives. On the other hand, woman as writers renders the role of woman as creators of their own text, histories etc. Showalter applied the term *gynocritics* to the writers who dealt with women- centric and aims to replace the traditional patriarchal norms and to motivate women writers to build a dominion of their own developing a new prototype. In handling topics like this, **group discussions** and various topics

related to women empowerment can be carried out in classroom. In addition, women achievers can be presented as a chart to supplement the study.

In this essay, Showalter also pictures Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886) in feminine perspective. In the novel, the opening scene depicts a famous character Micheal Henchard selling his wife and baby for five guineas and this scene is appreciated by many male critics. Showalter points out that Henchard has not only sold his wife, but also his child who is female. In a patriarchal society, people generally won't sell male child. Hardy shows men at their best in this novel. On the other hand, there are female writers, who portrayed their male protagonists as a figure of satire. Virginia Woolf and George Eliot portrayed their male characters in a pitiable manner. 'Traditionally women have been cast in the supporting rather than the starring roles of literary scholarship. Whereas male critics in the twentieth century have moved to centre stage, openly contesting for prime factor for male writer, establishing coterie and schools, speaking unabashedly (to quote Geoffrey Hartman) of their "pen-envy," women are still too often translators, editors, hostesses at the conference' (Towards Feminist Poetics) .

The primary objective of gynocritics is to create a model for female rather than the cliché represented by male critics. Showalter unleashes many American feminist scholars Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Nancy Cott, Ann Douglas, and Nina Auerbach, who contributed to women writings and women's support in all fields like anthropology, psychology and sociology. She insights on Cora Kaplan's criticism on Elizabeth Barrett Browning's 'Aurora

Leigh' and puts forth a fact that Elizabeth Barret Browning stopped publishing and sacrificed her career for the success of her husband Robert Browning. Another example is Florence Nightingale. She transformed her pain and sufferings as a trait of confidence and progress. Showalter ends her essay with the confident note that women should not stop in their path and there is further way to proceed.

It is really a challenge for teachers to teach core theories in classroom. When it is literature, teachers need to adopt several strategies to make the course and the syllabus indelible in students minds. Teachers can follow the Guidelines for *Innovative Pedagogical Approaches and Evaluation Forms* devised by UGC-NEP 2020. In this framework, there are many pedagogies and skill enhancement activities provided to integrate teaching with recent technology. Before a decade, education and teaching was totally different. Current scenario caters to outcome as students need to be strong not only in their academics, but also meet various needs catering to job market or to pursue higher education. This article showcased to integrate teaching literature with effective pedagogies to make the class lively,

enlightening and interesting. Holistically speaking, effective classroom techniques integrating with technology is the need of the hour and it should be practised effectively in classrooms.

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Identity and Freedom : Women's Existential Quest in *The Custody*

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Manju Kapur (1948) possesses an unmistakable and recognized place in Indian English Writing. Kapur has portrayed Indian women with an astonishing expertise and straightforwardness in her works of fiction. Kapur genuinely voices the worries of the working-class Indian women. Her heroes are women. This research examines the literary works of Manju Kapur through the perspective of existentialism.

Researchers' most popular theme in Manju Kapur's novels is the feminist perspective. Her female characters do not simply accept patriarchy as their fate. Rather, they struggle against a world ruled by men and make an effort to be heard. The researcher found that Manju Kapur's writings may be thoroughly analysed from an existentialist point of view throughout her literature assessment. She also discovered that hardly any researcher has examined her writings from an existentialist perspective.

The research work titled "Identity and Freedom: Women's Existential Dilemmas in *The Custody*" addresses the existential concerns raised by women characters in

Kapur's novel. Kapur is one of the writers who has battled against the situation faced by women through her wrings. This study critically examines existentialist themes found in Manju Kapur's works, including freedom of choice, bad faith, guilt, alienation, anxiety and despair. Thus, it is an attempt, to examine the existentialist dilemma that Kapur's female characters face in her novel. Dr. G. Srilatha writes, "The major themes discussed in the novel are freedom from the institution of marriage, self-identity, and legal battle for children, motherhood, isolation, pain and loneliness. This is an attempt to study how women struggle to be free from the bondage of marriage and at the same time fight for their identity as a mother (Srilatha, 2016, p.77)".

Custody, Kapur's fifth novel, explores the tremendous conflict between a husband and wife. Once more, Kapur wrote this book from the viewpoint of a woman. It tells the tale of Ishita and Shagun. It is about Raman, who was employed by a multinational beverage business as a marketing executive. Shagun, his spouse,

was breathtakingly gorgeous. Arjun and Roohi were their children. Raman's boss Ashok had an adulterous affair with Shagun. This book sheds light on the breakup of Raman's family.

When it comes to telling stories about the lives of Indian women in the middle class, Kapur has found success. She looks at the challenges faced by Indian women in the middle class, as well as their goals and longing for a life outside of it. When Kapur was questioned about her personalities at an interview, she stated,

These are the lives I observe around me. Women's lives – at least

here – I can't really speak with authority about other places – are complicated and a source of endless interest. In India women are often caught between the traditional and the modern, caught between the family and their individual desires. As a novelist this is where I place my stories". (qtd. in Nitonde, 2014, pp.27-28)

Kapur has done a good job of defining the existential predicament that faces both men and women today. The lives of her heroes are depressing and full of loneliness. Their life's meaninglessness torments them. Her novels all do a fantastic job of presenting the inner lives of their protagonists. Her characters are consumed with their search for purpose and meaning in life, something that would provide them spiritual sustenance in this meaningless world. Her main characters made an effort to question the accepted social norms. They represent all the women who have longed for freedom. Sartre in his *Being and Nothingness* writes, "Human freedom precedes essence in man and makes it possible; the essence of human being is suspended in his freedom" (qtd. in Crowell,

2012, p. 211). Most of them have formal education. Their education inspires them to think for themselves. Thus, her characters possess all the traits of existentialists. Cunha, writes, "The underlining concepts of existentialism according to Camus are, Man has a free will. Life is a series of choices which create stress. Very few decisions are without any consequences. Some things are irrational or absurd and without any explanation. If one makes a decision, he or she must stand by it" (Cunha, 2016, p.85).

In *Custody*, Kapur explores some of the fundamentals of relationships and the ambiguities surrounding marriage in contemporary culture. The main problem is the disagreement between the husband and wife. The protagonists in Kapur's works are well educated, and this helps them develop their own unique perspectives. It gives individuals the confidence to stand against society. In the Preface to "critical Readings on the Fictional World of Manju Kapur, Lakshmi Prasad says, "Kapur's literary output fashioned a new concept of feminist fiction by voicing for the silent sufferers in the society. She has successfully articulated the concerns of women protagonists to redefine themselves by searching for their lost identity" (Prasad, 2016, vi)

Kapur's scholarly works manage significant topics. Every one of her topics can be clubbed together under the standard of Existentialism. *Custody* unfurls the freedom of choice of the protagonists - Shagun and Ishita. The writer explores the gap of contemporary life surrounding the couple Raman and Shagun, as well as Ashok Khanna, Raman's commander, and childless divorcee Ishita. The original

beginnings with the affection causing situation of Shagun and her significant other's chief, Ashok Khanna. Khanna was a head promoting leader, a corporate man with major areas of strength for an in difficult work. At the point when he understood that he was enamored with Shagun, he became savage to accomplish his objective, Shagun, at any expense. He understood that he had never encountered this sort of adoration before with any other person. He prevailed with regards to catching the body psyche and soul of Shagun.

Kapur's literary works deal with important themes. All her themes can be clubbed together under the banner of Existentialism. Custody unfolds the freedom of choice of the protagonists - Shagun and Ishita. The author delves into the existential void of contemporary existence through the examination of the characters Raman and Sagun, as well as Ashok Khanna, Raman's employer, and Ishita, a divorced woman who is childless. In addition to Raman's boss Ashok Khanna and childless divorcee Ishita, the novel uses the couple Raman and Shagun to analyze the emptiness of modern life. The novel starts with the love-making scene of Shagun and her husband's boss, Ashok Khanna. Khanna was a chief marketing executive, a corporate man with a strong belief in hard work. When he realized that he was in love with Shagun, he became ruthless to achieve his target, Shagun, at any cost. He came to the realization that he had never felt this kind of affection from anyone else. He was able to seize Shagun's body, mind and soul. Raman was a corporate advertiser employed by Ashok. Since he was a little child, he has excelled academically and chosen to become an engineer.

He spent the next five years at an IIT after passing the entrance exam. then two more years at Ahmedabad's IIM. Afterwards, he was hired by India Think Tank, the top advertising firm in the country. His decision in school enabled him to succeed in other areas of his life.

Existentialism is a philosophy of freedom and responsibility in addition to a philosophy of life. Shagun and Ishita both have the freedom to choose and were accountable for the decisions they made in their life. Arjun, Raman's first kid, was born a year after they were married. The arrival of a boy enhanced Shagun's fame. Arjun gave birth to a daughter when she was eight years old. The protagonist of the book, Shagun, made the epicurean lifestyle choice. Shagun, a mother of two, became attracted to modernity and felt bored and alienated. She had an extramarital affair with Ashok Khanna, a fascinating sales executive and boss of Raman. Raman was solely concerned with making money from his work. Shagun changed as a result of Khanna's intelligence and his heartless, uncaring attitude in their marriage. She was having trouble defining her responsibilities as a wife, mother, and lover. Shagun had had a lot of inappropriate boys chasing her since she was a teenager. Her mother had to see to it that her daughter was secure. She prayed for her daughter's and her grandchildren's protection and got up early to recite the Gayatri Mantra. However, she lacked the bravery to counsel her about her extramarital affair. She was reciting the Gayatri Mantra instead. As a result, she neglected to investigate her daughter's extramarital affair.

Raman had suspicions about his wife. In order to get information about her actions,

he engaged The Lovely Detective Agency. He believed that marrying a stunning woman was the only thing he had done wrong. Shagun, however, was becoming more and more interested in Ashok every day. With Ashok by his side, Shagun appeared completely content. She came to the realization that Ashok was the only one who could make her dream come true.

Raman had a very painful life. He concluded that it would be best to dissolve the marriage if she refused to give up her relationship with Ashok. Ashok appeared to be the ideal partner for her opulent lifestyle. Shagun had no problems. She made the decision to move in with Ashok and quit her home after being challenged by Raman. She ventured to leave the cozy confines of the family setup. When she joined Ashok, she was ecstatic. She told her mother about her satisfaction, "Sometimes I feel so happy Mama, I wonder how I am among the lucky ones" (Kapur, 2011, p. 285).

Existentialism grants man complete autonomy in embracing the duty of establishing his own sense of purpose and dignity. In Custody, Ishita's story is told in tandem to Shagun's. Ishita was the Rajoroas' daughter. Due to her infertility and inability to continue the family name, she was vilified. At the age of four, she received a TB diagnosis, and for nine months, she was treated with medication. She chose to pursue a B.Ed. after completing her BA since it would always be beneficial. She began applying for teaching positions after earning her degree. Ishita felt apprehensive when the marriage proposal was made. Afterwards, she made the decision to get married Suryakanta on a fortunate day. Since he was the only son,

a grandchild was anticipated in the upcoming year. After eighteen months of marriage, there were murmurs from the boy's family.

Even after eighteen months of marriage, Ishita failed to conceive. Ishita's mother-in-law, Mrs. Rajora, started to feel uneasy. She went to the societal temple morning and evening with offerings of flowers, coconuts and sweets and she doubled her prayers. However, they did not seek medical advice. After eighteen months of marriage, the boy's relatives started asking her about her infertility. Her parents were just as distraught. She had tuberculosis when she was a child, and it was said to be her karma.

Since he was the only son, a grandchild was anticipated in the upcoming year. After eighteen months of marriage, there were grumbling from the boy's family. Even after eighteen months of marriage, Ishita failed to conceive. Ishita's mother-in-law, Mrs. Rajora, started to feel anxious. She went to the societal temple morning and evening with offerings of flowers, coconuts and sweets, and she doubled her prayers. However, they did not seek medical advice.

Her mother-in-law accompanied her to the doctor a few months later. She advised them to postpone getting tested for a further six months. For Mrs. Rajora, those six months were stressful. She made a lot of promises to the little goddess in her bedroom and prayed for good news. The physician recommended that they consider in vitro fertilization (IUI), which entails injecting the woman's sperm into her body. They could try in vitro fertilization (IVF) if that didn't work; in this procedure,

the egg and sperm are taken from their respective donors and fertilized outside the body in a culture medium. They had made love that evening, but she was never going to become pregnant. Kapur writes :

Prayers, prayers, more prayers. Please stay, please grow. You are my only chance of happiness. So many people to love you, just come into the world. I beg you. But it wouldn't. Even with more hormones it wouldn't. Her period. Her bloody period. Each sanitary napkin soaking up thousands of rupees, hours of energy, months of expectation, now to be wrapped in old newspaper and discreetly disposed of... she hated this baby, hated it. Even living for a few months was beyond it. (Kapur, 2011, p.67)

Ishita sobbed and at last acknowledged that this was her karma. Her mother-in-law was opposed to wasting money on another IVF attempt.

Ishita met Dr. Suhashini Guha, a physician with American training, six months later. When Suryakanta heard the words "severe blockage," tears streamed down her cheeks. While returning, her husband remained quiet, and Ishita was too melancholic to speak. She believed at the moment that suicide was more feasible than life. Ishita sobbed and acknowledged that this was her fate. Kapur writes, "If only she could tear out her whole reproductive system and throw it on the road. She hated her body, hated it" (Kapur, 2011, p.127). It appeared like nobody understood that Ishita was undergoing extreme mental agony.

Subsequently, Ishita and her mother expressed a desire to meet Leela Kaushik's psychic. Mrs. Rajora took Ishita to an astrologer Soon after a week. He remarked

that there was a child in her palm after closely examining it. To counteract the moon's influence, she had to wear a moonstone or white pearl. Ishita had given up hope, but her mother began doing special pujas to get rid of her negative karma. She intended to obtain a white stone as per the astrologer's advice. In addition, she would have to put an unsightly ring on her finger.

Divorce caused Ishita a lot of issues at first. Her mother gave advice on how to launch a home company. Ishita turned down every business proposal. She later joined Mrs. Hingorani as a teacher after learning that she was in charge of a school for underprivileged children. For of course she volunteered; face to face with eager children, so obviously in need, it only took a day to come to that decision. Here, who cared if she had a broken marriage, who cared if her tubes were fused together by a long-ago disease?" (Kapur, 2011, p. 135).

Her life was made happy by the choices and the decision that she made. She later made up her mind to think about adoption. Over dinner, she told her parents about this. "At least it will be nice to choose my fate instead of just waiting for some husband to appear" (Kapur, 2011, p.189). Thus Ishita gave her own life purpose and direction as a result.

Raman came know about Ishita's divorce during a visit to his mother's residence. In order to help her son to heal from his scars, Mrs. Kaushik was searching for a straightforward, homely girl, while Mrs. Rajora was hoping for a fresh start for her daughter. Ishita and Raman began to fall in love. Following Raman's divorce from Shagun, Ishita took custody of Roohi. Roohi was like a daughter to

her. She hoped the child would not feel conflicted about her relationship with her biological mother. She used her freedom of choice to accept Roohi as her own daughter, which changed the dynamic of their household.

Shagun asserted his claim to both children's custody. Ishita, though, was not prepared to part with Roohi. After having a private conversation with the child, the judge gave Roohi to them and Arjun to Shagun. Ishita extended her arm first, grasped the child's hand, and began escorting her from the courtroom. As they made their way back, she came to understand that she was taking the most valuable aspect of their marriage with her. The novel ends in an optimistic tone, "The worst was over, over, thank God. Confidence flooded her. She had won this first, most difficult round . . . In the meantime, victory lay with the possessor" (Kapur, 2011, p. 415). Shagun's decision to become the custodian of Roohi made everyone happy in their family.

The core idea of existentialism is that people have the freedom to determine for themselves what is good or evil, right or wrong. The book details a number of occasions and occurrences pertaining to Shagun and Ishita's autonomy of choice, as well as their adultery and infertility. Despite having quite diverse personalities, these ladies had to deal with the same situation: divorce. Shagun desired a life of freedom and pleasure, but Ishita wanted to be a good wife and mother to Raman's daughter.

Kapur's *Custody* narrates the tale of female happiness and sorrow, along with the techniques that they employ to get their

objectives. The four walls of the household are no longer the limit for her female heroines. They were bold enough to challenge the patriarchal society's tenets. Shagun was plagued by guilt, but she still managed to enjoy her newfound love life. Maji writes, in *Feminism in Manju Kapur's Custody*, "Feelings of guilt tormented her but she goes ahead to enjoy her new love life. Ishita on the other hand, stigmatized of infertility, hopes to find a new life in Raman's broken family" (Maji, p.5). Ishita, who was ashamed of her infertility, came to Raman hoping to start over. She began to love Roohi after acknowledging her as her own child. Therefore, Shagun and Ishita, enjoyed their own autonomy.

Existentialism dealt with human problems. It places a strong focus on the genuine decisions made by people and the obligations that come with having that freedom. *Custody* highlights Shagun and Ishita's existential problem, as well as their freedom of choice and their mothers' lack of sincerity. Kapur depicts the battle between aspirations that converted into passion in *Custody*. The work addresses the subject of marital loneliness. Conflicting circumstances in many contexts are affecting human relationships. This book discusses a number of topics, including discontent, misinterpretation, lack of commitment, misunderstanding, and the quest for identity.

Several essential elements of human relationships, particularly those between a husband and wife, are revealed in this book. It alludes to how relationships between men and women are in the present era. The main problem is the disagreement between the husband and wife. Pew Maji (2013) in "Feminism in Manju Kapur's

Custody” writes “The pain and loneliness of the two children of Shagun is well portrayed by Manju Kapur. The story can be termed as a legal drama of the Indian society” (Maji, 2013, p.5). Thomas E. Wartenberg (2008) in his “Introduction” to *Existentialism: A Beginners’ Guide* writes, “Existentialism attempts to restore philosophy to its ancient mission of exploring the fundamental dilemmas that human beings face during the course of their lives” (Wartenberg, 2008, p.5).

The life stories of Suryakanta and Ishita are the subject of the novel’s subplot. Ishita, the wife of Suryakanta, was publicly branded as infertile. She was consequently disregarded by her family. Her parents supported her decision to remain with her spouse. However, he ignored her, making it difficult to stay in that place. Because of her infertility, her mother regarded her as shameless. She made the decision to leave her husband’s home as a result of feeling bad about continuing to live in the neglected home. “Kapur’s book reveals the unimagined uncertainties of matrimony. The wife’s sense of suffocation, the husband’s fear of loneliness and the constant shifting of the children, like commodities, from one home to the other, are evoked with painstaking sincerity (Nasirsab, 2015, p. 186).”

Ishita felt bad about her infertility and detested her own body as a result. She experienced a sense of estrangement from both her family and herself. Evans (1984) writes, “To the extent that he is unable to face his past, a person is alienated from himself. Human alienation from other people and from nature can plausibly be described as a concomitant of this estrangement from ourselves. The person who

does not like himself cannot like his fellow humans very much (Evans, 1984, p. 92).”

Conclusion :

This research work explored the existential predicament of women characters in Kapur’s novels. The difficult parenting situation in Indian middle-class houses is explored in *The Custody*. Raman, Shagun, and Ishita’s loneliness and emptiness-reality faced by a middle-class Indian family- are brought out very effectively. Gupta (2013) in her article “Existential Angst in the Novels of Manju Kapur and Anita Desai”, writes “While discussing the existential phase of her female protagonists Kapur deals with a plethora of marital problems that assail the educated working middle class wives of India. The displacement that they suffer and the suffocation that they face in the traditional limits of marriage and family is clearly brought out by the novelist” (Gupta, 2013, pp. 3-4). The novel concludes with a note that Shagun has achieved a new identity through liberation from marriage at the cost of losing her right as a mother to Roohi. Alternatively, freedom from marriage for Ishita has given her a new life and made her a mother of two children. Thus, Ishita succeeds in being a mother.

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Exploring the Ambivalent mother-daughter bond in Avni Doshi's *Girl in White Cotton*

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While feminism discusses the varied claims of women to acknowledgement, equality, power and agency, it takes divergent views and divided stances on the issue of motherhood. From time immemorial there have been continuous discussion and representations of motherhood in all cultural productions. But most of these have glorified and romanticised the case of the mother who is presented as an object meant to satisfy the requirements of her child -sacrificing, docile, with no identity of her own. The actual experience of mothers, their sense of frustration with the patriarchal doctrines of motherhood, their struggles, sense of guilt and shame have been eclipsed by the overarching presence of the idea of motherhood propagated and nurtured by the patriarchal cartographies.

In India, there has been consistent and deliberate effort to idealise mothers and subtly appropriate the experience of mothering through asserting the idea of Bharatmata-the suffering nation mother. The omnipresence of the image of the Mother goddess who is seen as the provider and the protector in the Hindu mythology also reasserts the idea of motherhood

as an essentialising signifier of womanhood and femininity (Bagchi, 2017, p. 12). The concept of mother normativity introduced by Amrita Nandy focusses primarily on the fact that there is an essentialisation and normalisation that is done with regard to the role of the mother. All women as per the mandate are compulsorily to willingly embrace motherhood and dedicate their lives to nurturing and caring for her children in a manner that the patriarchy dictates. This essentially curbs the subjectivity of mothers as they are allowed no choice with regard to their role as mothers.

Adrienne Rich's seminal work *Of Woman Born* triggered debates on the nuanced differences between the two terms "motherhood" and "mothering" and also sought to expose the patriarchal interference with the experience of mothering through the institutionalising of motherhood. Such significant interventions by feminists have definitely marked the beginning of a set of discourses that address the case of the mother, treating her as a subject narrating the actual experience of mothering thus giving voice to the unheard sagas of sufferings and agonies narrated

from the mother's perspective. However, even when women narrate their stories, the internalisation of the ideologies of motherhood forced women to present only the sunny side of their experiences as they mask their actual feelings of resentment, anger, frustration and ambivalence for fear of being termed deviant and monstrous. Although ambivalence or the duality of opposing emotions, attitudes, thoughts or feelings which an individual simultaneously holds towards a person or object is an inevitable aspect of all relationships, maternal ambivalence or the experiencing of feelings of love /hate relationship to one's own child is unacceptable and taboo in most traditions and cultures. The paper attempts to unearth the sense of ambivalence that marks the lives of mothers in Avni Doshi's *Girl in White Cotton* (2020). An attempt to identify the reasons for the ambivalence felt by the mothers and the impact of this unvalidated negative feelings that traumatise generations of mothers and daughters is undertaken herein.

Motherhood, mothering experiences and the mother-daughter bond have been discussed by Mahaswetha Devi, Kiran Desai, Anita Desai, Manju Kapoor and Shashi Deshpande in their works most of which delves into the daughter's perspective and examines the fraught and difficult relationship she has with her mother. While there is in these works a tendency to prioritise the case of the daughter who feels deserted, ignored and frustrated either due to the presence/absence of the mother, there is a dearth of works that delve into the psyche of the mother - present her sense of frustrations, doubts, uncertainties and ambivalence in the Indian context. This laxity stems from the

glorification of motherhood ideologies and an assertion of the norms of good mothering and intensive mothering that the Indian culture particularly nurtures. Doshi's novel is clearly an attempt at creating matrifocal literature which is "written and narrated by mothers... they (re)value the significance and meaning of maternal figures in cultural, social, and national arenas, and often contest or negotiate traditional ideologies of the 'good' mother ... with her antithesis, the 'bad' mother" (Podneiks, 2019, p.176). The novel traces the lives of Tara and Antara, the mother daughter duo as Antara narrates her bitter experience of being mothered by a careless, abusive and negligent mother. Even as Antara narrates the trauma of her childhood and explains her resentment towards her mother who she holds responsible for her trauma, her ambivalence is evident as she feels simultaneously inclined to take care of her aging, forgetful mother and wants to shun her for the harm she did to her. The second half of the novel unveils the ambivalence that Antara harbours towards her role as a mother as she comes to terms with her mother and her "erratic" mothering. The novel reveals that the feeling of ambivalence and resentment is mutual. While it is true as per the theories of Nancy Chodorow that the mother sees her daughter as an extension of herself, identifying with her and growing up to "reproducing" her, the novel highlights instances of how the mother Tara seems to consider her daughter as a competitor and enemy. Antara says: "I wonder, did she ever see me as a child she wanted to protect? And when did I become a competitor or rather an enemy" (Doshi, 2020, p.227).

In her work *Torn in Two: The Experience of Maternal Ambivalence* (2005), British psychotherapist Rosika Parker admits that ambivalence in the mother - child bond is essential to the mothering experience since it enables the mother as well as the child to exist as individual entities. Thus, ambivalence in itself is not the problem but in a culture that restricts the expression of ambivalence, mothers end up repressing these feelings since it is an “unacceptable face of motherhood” (Parker, 1994, p.14).

The paper argues that the ambivalent feelings that the mother nurtures is an offshoot of the patriarchal interferences in women’s lives and the mothering experiences. The patriarchal control of women’s body and continuous regimentation of her sexuality together with the difficult to attain gendered expectations from mothers suffocate women and render them feeling lacking agency and identity. While most mothers feel oppressed and constrained by the difficult gendered expectations of womanhood and motherhood for a considerable part of their lives, they often “perform” motherhood as per the dictates of patriarchal codes and end up feeling frustrated and worthless. It is at this juncture that mothers harbour feelings of ambivalence directed towards her children who she feels is partly the reason for her loss of identity and freedom. Amid the patriarchal conditioning that works to negate the existence of the mother who is seen as nothing but a carrier of the “precious” foetus, women are left with only two options. She is to either train herself to be the object who exists for the benefit of the child or assert her identity and undermine the principles of patriarchal

motherhood. Doshi’s Tara and Antara assert their identity and express their ambivalence even though it is the unspeakable and struggle against and resist the norms of the phallocentric discourses.

Phallocentric discourses promote the ideal of the selfless, nurturing mother, mandating that all women embrace motherhood and devote themselves entirely to their child’s needs. The impact of the essentialised, naturalised and idealised mandates of patriarchal motherhood stifle women as they struggle to fight the sense of guilt and shame about not being able to conform and to strike a balance between the patriarchal expectations and their own expectations about their lives. The unaddressed and stifled sense of ambivalence that mothers nurture however tends to be a traumatic experience for both the child and the mother. Donald Winnicott, eminent psychoanalyst observes “children seem to be able to deal with being hated and they can meet and make use of the ambivalence which mother feels and show” (cited in Parker, 1997). He opines however that the child cannot manage and withstand the mother’s repressed unconscious hatred.

Motherhood is a natural expectation from a woman, one that validates her existence in most societies. In such societies a woman who is not inclined to mother or one who puts her interests before her child’s is regarded with contempt. The novel depicts two mothers who choose to mother not for their own sake but to conform to patriarchal family expectations. While Tara decides to mother so as to gain acceptance from her husband and family, Antara embarks on her journey in the hope that a child can strengthen the bond with

her husband. However, both soon realise that they are neither emotionally nor physically equipped for the role. Their agony and exasperation resound when Tara cries out: “I always knew having you would ruin my life” and Antara says, I am tired of this baby. She demands too much, always hungering for more ...she is a rude little bitch (Doshi, 2020, p. 235).

Even though Tara lived a carefree life flouting the codes of society she agrees to an arranged marriage so as to be acceptable in her society and family. However, the loveless marriage to an unromantic husband and the unnecessary interventions of an overbearing mother-in-law completely devastates her. While Tara feels exasperated when all her attempts at improving their marriage is bulldozed by the mother-in-law who can be seen as a tool of patriarchal hegemony adequately disciplining her daughter-in-law to fit into the role of a suffering, docile and ideal wife. The mother of Tara’s husband exercises complete control over her son and never lets Tara enjoy any proximity with her husband. She instructs her to wear her old saris, make herself available for humouring her, wait for her husband at the door. Although her mother-in-law makes it sound very normal, Tara detests such infringement upon her freedom. She asks “What was there to like about standing by the door like a dog” (Doshi, 2020, p.51). Even her pregnancy and motherhood are planned so that she fits into the household. However, Tara soon realises that despite her efforts to adjust and her many sacrifices, neither her husband, nor her own parents were ready to understand her and empathise with her. At this juncture, Tara shuns the garb of a dutiful

wife and decides to rebel. She spends her time in the ashram, smokes even though it is damaging to the foetus and after she begets Antara, she refuses to be the “good mother.” Although the patriarchal statutes claim that all mothers feel an instant attachment and bonding to their children, Tara feels no such bond to her child and infact holds a grudge and enmity that continues throughout her lifetime. Yet, for Tara she is unable to forsake her relationship with her daughter and feels overprotective about her daughter and even names her Antara (Un Tara) in the hope of shielding her from the fate Tara endured. Tara’s longing for acceptance is thwarted by her husband, who neglects her and focuses on pleasing his mother. Tara’s later relationship with the Guruji and with Reza are efforts to find acceptance and validation although she is termed deviant and promiscuous. All aspects of a woman’s life -her body, her sexuality and even her mothering experience is circumscribed by the patriarchal codes of conduct and women are constantly under the surveillance and the gaze of patriarchal echelons which makes her ambivalent. Antara expresses her understanding of how her mother and herself were placed in a similar quagmire from where recovery was difficult. She says: “There was a breakdown somewhere about what we were to one another, as though one of us was not holding out into the empty...maybe we were hungry for the same things but the sum of us doubled that feeling...a deformity from which we can never recover (Doshi, 2020, p.114). Though Antara partly blames her mother, she understands her dilemma as she too struggles for identity and acceptance, despite wanting to be different.

Antara yearns for love and acceptance that is denied to her even as a child. She says “for a portion of my childhood I was always hungry and have been searching for some fullness ever since (Doshi,2020, p.114). Antara’s marriage and interest in motherhood are defense mechanisms for acceptance and security. Her hopes shatter as motherhood and the baggage of responsibilities suffocates her, eroding her individuality and identity. Also, she discredits the claims of patriarchy regarding the “splendors of maternity” and the idea of natural maternal instinct. Antara says, “I don’t feel anything much as I hold her ... I know I should express joy... Maybe I am too tired” (Doshi,2020, p. 231)

Antara’s experiences of pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum reveal maternal ambivalence and postpartum depression. The narrative highlights the physical and psychological toll of pregnancy, the profound changes during these phases, and the demanding nature of childcare, with childbirth often leaving lasting scars. Studies show that postpartum issues, including depression and lasting health challenges, often affect women for years after pregnancy. The seamy realities of childbirth and childcare are often masked by women, fearing judgment. This silence can lead to harmful consequences capable of risking the mother-child bond. Antara feels overburdened by the demands of childcare, angry about the changes childbirth has caused and says: “I am tired of this baby. She demands too much, always hungering for more” (Doshi, 2020, p.235). Her selfhood is negated after she begets her child who is now the focus. Antara hates the bodily changes that happen during her pregnancy, bemoans the loss of her petite

body and detests the lack of control over her own body. She says: “My breasts are double what they once were. My vagina is a crime scene ‘(Doshi, 2020, p. 232). Antara voices her disgust at the turn of events “I have become an assembly line. Each part is incidental, only important if it can do its job” (Doshi,2020, p.235). Her anger and frustration drive her to consider harming her child, despite also being fiercely protective and wanting to care for her. Antara’s frustration peaks as she sees her husband unburdened by childcare responsibilities, despite his desire for a child and their joint decision to undertake it. She says at one point “He is the only one who has remained unscathed through all of this. The baby and I are bruised and battered. He looks smug, proud of himself or his family (Doshi,2020, p. 233). Indian gender norms and inequality unfairly place the blame for inadequate parenting on the mother, while the absent, careless father is excused. Antara initially accepts this view, blaming her mother despite challenging circumstances, until she realizes that the impossible maternal ideals are the true culprits and her mother is a victim struggling to manage both her own life and that of her daughter.

These matrifocal narratives accomplishes the task of discussing the various modes of resistance that women articulate. The work examines how the textual space is utilised to challenge and negotiate the traditional concepts of mothering and motherhood. A shift from child centric texts to matricentric point of view helps unmask the realities of the mothering experiences. Female writers seek to express the complexities of mothering, challenging the good/bad mother binary set by patri-

archy and advocating for a nuanced, middle ground.

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Caste as a Cosmic Principle : Sri Aurobindo's Insights on The Interplay of Social Structures and Spiritual Growth

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Sri Aurobindo opines about caste is not a position, it a divine thing, one who attained the spiritual or cultured the divine values that the recognition of a low position to oblige humankind or the Divine are things which are extremely divine and the noblest privilege of the soul. This view does not admit any hierarchy of castes; the Mahatma accepts castes but on the basis that all are equal before the Divine; a Bhangi doing his dharma is as good as the Brahmin doing his, there is division of function but no hierarchy of functions. According to *Niharranjan Ray*, the development of Caturvarnya, or the principle of four colors known to our caste, also belongs to this period and can be connected to the cognizant organization of Hindu society.³ The inventive division, as specified previously was between divijas and non-divijas the twice-born and once-born those entitled. In the later Vedic period the doctrine of four castes, the Brahmana whose responsibility is to learn and guide. Hypothetically, as in former periods, the misunderstanding was at the root of all mixed castes, and in the period too stated in the

Vishnudharmottara Purana, thousands of mixed castes were produced through the union between Vaishya women and men of lower castes⁴.

The four castes are those, the chief amongst whom are Brahmins in the front position, others are the Kshatriyas and Vaishya who are also in extraordinary position as the Brahmins being competent to get done ceremonies as rested down in the Holy Vedas. The fourth, are the Sudras who are not qualified according to the Vedas and have therefore got to be dependent on the three others for their living. But because the living of the Sudras is connected with the three other castes, they have been included in the caste system and are made the fourth caste. The sattva quality has put under its supremacy the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas and has divided itself into two half's assigning one to teach the two. The Vaishya has been assigned to Sattva and rajas combined. In this way, know, that the three Gunas are, divided into four distinct castes the entire human order consisting of one single group.⁵ those who were descended from the sun and

moon and Manu were Kshatriyas.

In addition, these other Kshatriyas also took their birth from the arm of Brahma but the first-named Kshatriyas were superior to the last-named. The Vaishya sprang from the thigh of Brahma and his feet, the Sudras came out Perhaps more important than all this is a social doctrine of Varnashrama dharma that prevailed in the Hindu society.⁶ This is a social concept that holds to the division of society into castes and prescribes suitable activities for different stages of life. Life is divided into four periods. Brahmacharya, the period of celebrating education, Grihastha-the period of domestic life, Vanaprastha-retirement, and the Tapasya-ascetic search for social life.⁷

Sri Aurobindo opines that the development of Caturvarnya, or the doctrine of four colors known to us caste, also belongs to this period and can be related to the conscious organization of Hindu society. The original division, as stated before was between dvijas and non-dvijas the twice-born and once-born those entitled. In the later Vedic period the doctrine of four castes was the Brahmana's whose duty is to learn and guide. The Kshatriyas, the warrior and protector of the Vaishya engaged in economic pursuits, and the Sudras the common man, the tiller, and the cultivator comes into being. This is what may be called the neo-Aryan society for outside its pale were the Avatars or the Panchamas (the non-colored or the fifth), a large mass of the people who were denied social rights and were held unclean.⁸ In practice, the four castes were not as clearly defined as they were in theory. The admission of non-Aryans into the Aryan folds finds clear Vedic sanction. The Vratasa soma in Sama Veda lays down even the

process of such admission and we have also instances of such admission in many of the tribes that came to be known as Vratya Kshatriyas.

Besides we have the recognized cases of Janaka and viswamitra Kshatriyas kings, one of whom became a royal teacher at whose feet even Brahmins sat and the other a Rishi, a composer of Vedic hymns who set all castes restrictions at naught, performed yagas for outcastes and generally denied the supremacy of priesthood.⁷ Another marked tendency in the later Vedic period is the rivalry between the Brahmins and Ksatriyas.⁹ Pargiter in his puranic tradition in Indian history has brought together a volume of evidence that establishes that the claim of Brahmin supremacy was for long restricted by the warrior classes who were non-Aryans and the latter-day idea of unquestioned Brahmin supremacy in caste is the core of a large scale of rewriting of books and the use of the systems of education for this purpose.¹⁰ The secure establishment of the caste society with its doctrine of Varna was only possible by accepting into the fold of caste local tribes and assigning them suitable positions in the hierarchy.¹¹ Similar is the case with society. The social life as pictured in the Mahabharata is of India as we know it. Indeed, the critical revisions of the epic as we have it are perhaps not earlier than the 4th century AD.

The structure of society in the Mahabharata is based on caste but the difference between Ramayana and the Mahabharata in this matter is most significant. Brahmin warriors, Brahmins living in the house of the potters, lower caste heroes appearing as claimants for the hands of the Kshatriya princess, and numerous facts in the Mahabharata show that the system of the four

castes had ceased to have any rigidity.¹² The Rig Veda speaks of the four major castes, tribes being outside the then localized caste scheme. The four caste system is not described as prevalent outside of India. Where the earliest division into Aryan and Dasa was known to persist.¹² The Vedic conceptions on the subject of the origin of man are rather fluctuating but the human race appears generally to have been regarded as descended from a first man.¹³ It is generally believed that there was no caste system in the early Vedic period. The first mention of the four castes in the Rig-Veda is in the famous Purusha Suktha. This is considered to be a later hymn there is the word *pancajanya* added in the Rig Veda.

According to the traditional Indian interpretation, this means the fivefold nation is divided into the four castes and the fifth caste of the Nisadas. There is no doubt that there was a gradation of the people in the civic life of the nation.¹⁴ This had reference to the social and the spiritual life of the nation also. There is no literature of that corresponding to the dharma Sastras of the later period where we find rigid rules regarding the conduct of the various castes and about their duties and their duties, prerogatives, and disabilities. But a division of the nation into different gradations according to the capacities and aptitudes of the individuals is a feature seen even in Iranian literature, and also in the literature, and also in the literature of other Indo-European nations.¹⁵

The migration of castes to caste was not unknown. Kshatriya became Brahmana's as in the case of art Samada and Viswamitra. The complete equality between men and women is found in all parts of the Vedic literature from the Samhitas to the Upanishads. There is some reference to

headrace in the Vedic texts.¹⁶ The elaborate institution known as the caste system among the Hindus in India may almost be said to be without a parallel in the world, although there is hardly a country where classes or orders of society or grades of social distinction of some kind or other are not met with. A common origin name tutelary deity occupation and ceremonies generally distinguish one homo generous caste group from others but today caste is rigidly fixed by birth and exclusive commensality and coenobiums between the members of a caste group to the exclusion of all others are its fundamental and outstanding characteristics.¹⁷

Further, the conceptions of impurity communicable to a higher caste by conduct with a lower one lie beneath this *tending to break* tendency and have resulted in the untouchability of the so-called Sudras who by popular error is almost intensified with the Panchamas or one outside the framework of the Caturvarnya again in place of the four original Varnas or class-groups, there are today thousands of caste divisions and sub-divisions and the number is still growing.

This distinctive development of a conventional social phenomenon naturally invests its history with distinctive importance.¹⁸ The extent to which caste had been developed in the age of the Rig-Veda Samhitas has formed a subject of keen controversy among scholars. We intend to, therefore state first of all in detail the most widely accepted version in a sense, almost the recognized version of the development of the caste system in the Rig-Veda, contenting ourselves with only a brief statement of divergent views.¹⁹ there are stanzas speculations in later Brahmanical literature regarding the origin of castes. An echo of

this is found in a hymn of the RV (X, 90), the famous Purusha suktha which describes the mythical legend of the sacrifice of a primeval giant called Purusha the ideal man or world spirit.²⁰ This passage refers to the first three castes not as sprang from but as identical with, the mouth, arms, and thigh of the creator. But despite this difference many regards this hymn of the Rig Veda as the earliest exposition of the later Brahmanical view, and regard the essential features of the caste system as existing even in the earliest Aryan society in India.²¹ As regards the fourth class, the Sudras are mentioned for the first and only time in the Purusha suktha. But Dasyu is mentioned in the holy book and Dasa is known to the Rig-Veda both as aborigines independent of Aryan control and as subjugated slaves.²²

The summit of the political structure was occupied by three governing bodies, the king in his ministerial council, the metropolitan assembly, and the general assembly of the kingdom. The members of the council and the ministers were drawn from all orders. The council included a fixed number of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras representatives. The Vaishyas have indeed numerically a great number, but this was a just proportion as it corresponded to their numerical prevalence in the body of the people, for in the early Aryan society the Vaishyas order comprised not only the merchants and small traders but the craft men and artisans and the agriculturalist and formed, therefore, the bulk of the commons, Visah and the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Shudras however considerable the position and influence of the two higher orders, were later social growth and were comparatively very inferior in number.²³ The stronger permanent

element in the Indian communal system, one that grew up in the frame of the four orders- in the end even replacing it and acquired an extraordinarily vital persistence and predominant significance was the historic and still persistent though the degenerate institution of caste, jati. Initially, this design was from sections of the four orders that nurtured up in each order under the tension of numerous forces.

The subdivisions of the Brahmin castes were mainly due to religious socio-religious and ceremonial causes, but there were also regional and local divisions, the Kshatriyas remained for the most part one united order, though divided into Kula's. On the other hand, Vaishya and Shudra's orders split up into innumerable castes under the necessity of a subdivision of economic functions based on the hereditary principle.²⁴ The caste in town and village was a separate communal unit, at once religious, social, and economic and decided its religious, social and other questions, carried on its caste affairs and exercised jurisdiction over its members in perfect freedom from all outside interference. Only on fundamental questions of the dharma, the Brahmins were referred to for an authoritative interpretation or decision as custodians of the Sastras. As with the king, each caste had its caste law and rule of living and conduct jati-dharma, and its caste communal assembly, jati sangha.²⁵

As the Indian polity in all its institutions was founded on a communal and not on an individual basis, the caste also counted in the political and administrative functioning of the kingdom.²⁶ The village community and the township were the most tangibly stable basis of the whole system; but these, it must be noted were not solely territorial units or a convenient

mechanism for electoral administration of other useful social and political purposes, but also true communal unities' with an organic life of their own that functional in its power and not merely as a subordinate part of the machinery of the state.

The village community has been described as a little village republic and the description is hardly an exaggeration: for each village was within limits autonomous and self-sufficient, governed by its limits autonomous and self-sufficient, governed by its own elected panchayats and elected or hereditary officers, satisfying its own needs, providing for its education, police tribunals, all its economic necessities and functions managing itself its own life as an independent and self-governing unit.²⁷ The ancient Caturvarnya must not be judged by its later disintegration degeneration and gross meaningless pride, the caste system. But neither was it precisely the system of the classes that we find in other civilizations, priesthood, nobility, merchant classes and serfs or laborers. It may have had outwardly the same starting point, but it was given a very different revealing significance. The ancient Indian idea was that man falls by his nature into four types. There is, first and highest, the man of learning and thought and knowledge; next, the man of power and actions, ruler, warrior, leader, administrator, third in the scale, the economic man, producer and wealth getter, the merchant, artisan, cultivator, these were the twice-born, who received the initiation, Brahmin, Kshatriyas, Vaishya

Last came the more undeveloped human type, not yet fit for these steps of the scale, unintellectual, without force incapable of creation or intelligent production, the manual only for unskilled labor

and menial service, the Shudra. The economic order of society was cast in the form and graduation of these four types of castes.²⁸ The Brahmin class was called upon to give the community its priests, thinkers, the man of letters, legislators, scholars, regional leaders, and guides. The Kshatriyas class gave it its kings, warriors, governors and administrators. The Vaishyas order supplied it with its producers, agriculturists, craftsmen, artisans, merchants, and traders. The Shudra class ministered to its need for menials and servants. As far as this went, there was nothing peculiar in the system except its extraordinary durability and perhaps the supreme position was given to religion, thought, and learning, not only at the top of the scale, for that can be paralleled from one or two other civilization-but as the dominant power.²⁹

The Indian idea in its purity fixed the status of a man in this order not by his birth, but by his capacities and his inner nature and if this rule had been strictly observed, that would have been a very cheer mark of distinctness a superiority of a unique kind the ethical and spiritual content of the four Varna's. 40. But even the best society is always something of a machine and gravitates towards the material sign and standard and to find truly the social order upon this finer psychological basis would have been in these times a difficult and vain endeavor. In practice, we find that birth became the basis of the Varna. It is elsewhere that we must look for the strong distinguishing mark and sole in its type.³⁰

The real greatness of the Indian system of the four Varna's did not lie in its well-ordered divisions of economic function. Its true originality and permanent value

were in the ethical and spiritual content that the thinkers and builders of the society powered into these forms. This inner content started with the idea that the intellectual, ethical and spiritual growth of the individual is the central need of the race. Society itself is only the necessary framework for this growth; it is a system of relations that provides it with its needed medium, field, and conditions and with a nexus of helpful influences. A secure place had to be found in the community for the individual man from which he could at once serve these relations helping to maintain the society and pay it his debt of duty and assistance and proceed to his self-development with the best possible aid from the communal life.³¹

The birth was accepted in practice as the first gross and natural indicator, for hereditary to the Indian mind has always ranked as a factor of the highest importance it was even taken in later thought as a sign of nature and as an index to the surroundings which the Individual had prepared for himself by his past soul-development in a former existence. But birth is not and cannot be the sole text of Varna. The intellectual capacity of the man the turn of his temperament, his ethical nature and his spiritual stature are the important factors. There is therefore a rule of family living, a system of individual observance and self-training, a force of upbringing and education that would bring out and formulate these essential things.³²

The individual man was carefully trained in the capacities, habits and attainments, and habituated to the sense of honor and duty necessary for the discharge of his allotted function in life. He was scrupulously equipped with the science of the things he had to do, the best way to

succeed it's as an interest, artha and to attain the highest rule, canon and recognized perfection of its activities, economic, political, sacerdotal, literary scholastic or whatever else they might because they had these things that even the lowest and least attractive could be in a certain degree a means of self- findings and ordered self-satisfaction. In addition to this special function and training, there were the general accomplishments, sciences, arts and graces of life, those which satisfy the intellectual, aesthetic and domestic powers of human nature. In ancient India, many and various were taught with minuteness, thoroughness and subtlety and were available to all men of culture.³³

The classification of Caturvarnya was gradually established, but these divisions were more based on status and culture at the head of armies: lower-class heroes sought the hand of Kshatriya's princesses. The old distinction between Aryans and non-Aryans was maintained but there was provision for admittance of the latter into the Aryan fold. The ceremony of Vratya soma is unmistakable evidence of it. There are instances of many tribes thus admitted coming to be known as Vratya ksatriya.³⁴ Interwoven with the master idea of dharma was the institution of Varna, class the fourfold come in for so much ill-informed criticism. The author approaches this question in an understanding spirit and quotes Tagore explaining it 'as India's attempt to solve her complex social and racial problems by the system of specialization and toleration that minimized the frictions of ruthless completion note also the diction in Sankranti, "not by birth are the Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Sudras, and mleccas separated, but by virtue and works" and the authors' comment thereon:

“the important point here is that persons are given caste or class status in terms of their actual work and individual character and ability rather than by birth.

In a basic sense, however, this is not consistent with traditional Hindu principles, for we find a similar viewpoint in Manu (XII.114) ‘Even if thousands of Brahmans who are acquainted with the Veda meet, they cannot form a (judicial) assembly’. It will be opposite and instructive to know what Sri Aurobindo has said on the subject of the Caturvarnya in India. Here are a few relevant passages.³⁵ “The system (of four orders) served again as an automatic means of securing a fixed division of labor and settled economic status, the hereditary principle at first prevailing, although here even the theory was more rigid than the practice, but none was denied the right or opportunity of amazing wealth and making some figure in society, administration and politics through influence or status in his order.

For, finally, the social hierarchy was not at the same time political hierarchy; all the four orders had their part in the common political rights of the citizen, and the assemblies and administrative bodies had their place and their share of influence.³⁶ The whole Indian society was founded upon close participation of all the orders in the common life, each predominating in its field, the Brahmin in relation, learning and letters, the Kshatriyas in war, king-craft and inter-caste political action, the Vaishya in wealth-getting and productive economic function, but none, not even the Shudra, excluded from his share in the civic life and an effective place and voice in political administration and justice.

As a consequence, the ancient Indian institutions at no time developed, or at

least did not uphold for extended, those limited forms of class regulation that have so long and forcefully noticeable the political history of other countries. A priestly theocracy, like that of Tibet, or the rule of landed and military aristocracy that prevailed for centuries in France and England and other European countries, or a mercantile oligarchy, as in Carthage and Venice, were forms of government foreign to the Indian spirit.³⁷ Sri Aurobindo concludes that the Indian mind and temperament were less exclusively intellectual and vital more intuitively synthetic and flexible than that of the occidental peoples arrived, nor certainly at any ideal system of society and politics. But at least at a wise and stable synthesis-not, a dangerously unbalanced equilibrium, not a compromise or balance of all the natural powers and orders and organic and vital coordination respectful of the free functioning of all the organs of the communal body and therefore ensured, although not against the decadence that overtakes all human system at any rate against any organic disturbance or disorder’.³⁸ According to Sri Aurobindo, “the family, the commune, the clan or tribe, the class, the city-state or congeries of tribes, the nation, the empire are so many stages in this progress and constant enlargement”.³⁹ But this process of gradual enlargement becomes also more and more complex as it develops and raises several problems because when the larger aggregates are formed the earlier smaller ones are not destroyed.⁴⁰

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Environment Culture and Alcohol : An interplay in the life of Bondo tribe

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Introduction :

Odisha owes its origin to tribal oriented culture, customs and traditions. The Bondo tribe mostly inhabit in the south-western and northern hilly regions of the state mainly in close proximity to forest areas. Most of the tribes of Eastern India used to live in an area made up by high hills, valleys and forested tracts. Odisha is proud of having her wealth and rich biodiversity in the form of tribal people because of its vast tribal population and their rich cultural heritage and unique identity. Presently Odisha is having 64 highest number of tribal group and out of these 13, this is coming under the most Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group in Odisha state.

The popularly known as '*Bonda Ghati*', the whole the valleys covering are high hilly and mountainous area about the high altitudes approximately from 1500 feet to 3700 feet from the sea level. They are coming to Austro-Asiatic language groups and speak on Mundari dialect. This

is locally known as '*Remo*' which means 'Man' in Bondo language. The Bondo people are most vulnerable people, who are currently live in the hills of Malkangiri district in Odisha state in India. The Bondo's are two different categories such as: the Upper Bondo's, who are living on the high hill top areas called as hill Bondo, the total number of population is approximately 6,700, they are isolated from mainstream society and the Lower Bondo's, the total population is 17,000 living on plain areas with other tribal groups. Upper Bondo's they don't have almost any connection to the outside world (Elwin; 1950).

Material and Methods :

This paper focused on the environment, culture and alcohol practices of the Bondo tribe of Odisha. The study was undertaken with an objective of documenting with methodology and based on the environment, how the Bondo community adopting using alcohol in their cultural practices with preparation of verities

alcoholic beverage from different fruits. The study was conducted in the Khairput block of Malkangiri district of Odisha and the by using observation, interview with other tools from the village's lower and upper Bondo habitation. The study was based on ethnography and empirical in nature. Both primary and secondary sources were used and the primary data were collected by using unique anthropological tool.

Historical prospective of Alcohol play important role of the Bondo :

Based on mythological story the Bondo people traditionally woman in the ancient past, as well as to a miracle concerning with the Sago Palm tree. That is how the Bondo people are supposed to have gotten addicted to this juice, and whenever it is scarce or unavailable, they arrange to obtain other alcoholic beverages which they prepare out of various cereals, fruits, nuts and berries whatever locally and naturally and season wise available on their locality.

The Bondo ideology, the choices of alcoholic beverages are very important and as a part of their life style and without the use of alcohol there is no meaningful life cycle event is ever complete. The Bondo tribe they use of alcohol of their high community acceptance as a part of their rich culture.

Bondo is sub group of local neighbouring Scheduled tribe, who is originated from the Gadaba tribe (Elwin; 1950), and it was named based on the Bondi Mahadei', the queen of the king "Jagadek" of Bastar, Chhattisgarh, India (Nanda; 1994.).

The name Bondo (also alternatively known as Bonda, Bondas, Bonda Paraja, and Bhonda) signifies locally known as 'naked people' having the characteristics of being the most rude, wild, aggressive, savage, and cruel among all the 13 PVTGs of Odisha and these Bondo's are exclusively residing in the Malkangiri district of Odisha (Bell RCS; 1945).

The Bondo rituals are really wonderful and connected with various ways with different socio-cultural, magico-religious ceremonies and use the different verities of alcoholic products throughout the year. In Bondo society, alcohol has treated and acts as a communal drink that means of communication between those of different status and ranks in their society. These integrative qualities, along with its role contribute to the key function of the drinking-place as a facilitator of social and cultural bonding. The facilitation of social bonding and interaction with people is one of the main functions of drinking together. It is an integral part of drinking alcohol of Bondo culture. The Bondo people only following the taboo, the restriction place for drinking is on *Sindibor* (village deity) in every village as the Bondo consider *Sindibor* as the sacred place for the abode of village deity. Basically they prefer to drink and the major part of drinking takes place either inside at home or the courtyard of home. Inside home, one corner part of house, there is a particular place reserve for keeping storage the containers of alcoholic products. The other area for drinking them are prefer to the *donger* or shifting

cultivated land, under the *Salap* (sago-palm) tree and in the dormitory house. During the festive occasions the communities drinking are generally performed around the *Sindibor*, but not on it.

Alcohol use as a Socio- cultural framework :

This Hill Bondo's of Malkangiri, preparation of indigenous way of alcoholic beverages of different kinds not only provide nourishment to the Bondo people for their survival but also given all kinds of social interactions with their life cycle rituals and cultural celebrations throughout their life.

Alcohol use was widely accepted in the tribal community, and it was part of their culture. Alcohol consumption was related not only to the celebration festivals, but also it's an important part and parcel of their rite the passage from birth to death including marriage ceremony, they celebrate all these special days with alcohol. We know and observed during the time of field work, their funeral is celebrated with alcohol. They need to serve alcohol to the persons preparing the grave and those attending the funeral for treated as good hospitality.

Life cycle rituals :

Bondo family performs the rituals the name giving ceremony called as *Gupasing*. It is an important ceremony and part of their life cycle rituals of Bondo people for giving the new name of their new born child. This ritual *Gupasing* performed

with maternal relatives. This name giving ceremony is basically based on the 21 days, the name was given based on which day the child was born and was named by the dead ancestor of their family. Offering alcohol is treating as the good hospitality to their relatives on the occasion of naming ceremony. During the pregnancy the women are prefer to drink fresh sago palm juice with sweet flavour of palm, which one collected from the early morning from tree and they are believing it's a nutritious drink for their health and it will help to grow the babies properly. On their society they don't have any restriction for drinking alcohol to their small baby's especially male child of the sap of Sago palm tree. For them this drink is a one of the staple drink for the Bondo region especially at Malkangiri district.

Selection of Mating :

Bondo community people practice dormitory system for both male (*Ingersing*) and female (*Selaniding*). The boys from one village visit another village girl's dormitory (*Selaniding*) of young girls of another village, the dormitory, this is one of social institution and which bringing about matrimonial alliances for Bondo people, where they can get platform to spend some time together with gossiping and lots of fun and later they choose their life partners through close intimacy. Dormitory plays an important role and chief function to socialize the Bondo youth both boys' and girls' and after then during the month of March after the harvesting season over and they will start for their marriage functions.

During the time of fixed the proposal and negotiation meetings of prospective bride/groom and the fixation of marriage are also associated with alcohol use. The boy's family member they will send one bottle of alcohol and hang front of the girl's house and after few hours if the bottle is not available the front of girls houses, it means they are agree for the inviting the marriage proposal. After then getting concern from girls, the boys side they will come with their friend and relatives bringing with alcohol and fixing the marriage proposal. After getting conform concern from the girls and, first the alcohol offer to the girl's father, brother and maternal uncle and then distribute to other member's and drink together and finalized the marriage. Once marriage fixed there is no restriction for both boys and girls to go together any places and work together on agricultural field and visiting nearby villages. After fixing the proposal up to marriage days the groom's family having important role for visit all festive occasion to the bride family bringing with alcohol and some amount of dry or boil rice. During the marriage day the groom family when they will come to invite the bride, that time also they bring alcohols with them and first offer to the family and relatives then they will bring the bride to the groom's house. Sometimes same amount of food grains are keep on the bride family and rest part bring to the groom family, when they will come for bringing the bride. Together the food will be cooked and they serving the food with

the singing and dancing the bride relatives and village people going to grooms house with bride.

Death Rituals :

The ritual performs after the death of a person is called death rite and the Bondo tribe they have their own beliefs and the community is more emotional people and sorrow for the their dead family members. The death rituals observed the series of rituals at different stage such as before funeral. The Bondo word dead called "*saiem*" and related to the funeral function in which a religious leader/priest visits the deceased person's home and graveyard to offer prayers and worshiping for a peaceful rest of the soul. They used alcohol after the funeral ceremony and it continued up to 10th days. The Bondo community people they are sharing their sorrow with the decreased family members with sitting and drinking alcohol together. After 10th days finishing their funeral ceremony their family providing a grand feast to their kin and kith members (a socio-religious brotherhood on Bondo society is called as *Saru* brothers) is boiled rice with beef / chicken / mutton with alcohol, it is an indispensable part of their Bondo culture and it's also treating as a religious taboo. If the family members of decreased person don't offer any feast with alcohol with grand feast to the *saru* brother's within 12 months or one year other kin and kith members, they may also suffer different kinds of problem like health issues they are having their believe system on their society. So it is bound to the Bondo

community the death ritual to offer alcohols to their kin and kith member on their community and family friend and relatives.

Alcohol use as a ritual and religious activities :

Traditional alcohol has a strong socio-cultural relevance among tribal communities and is used as a major beverage in festivals, and socio-cultural ceremonies/ rituals fermented foods: microbiology, nutrition and ethnic values (Tadesse NS; 2020, S.S, Mariappan; 2007, Tayler & Francis; 2009, Joshi VK; 2011)

Despite consumption of alcohol in a greater volume, the Bondo people use alcohol in different purposes like worships to satisfy God and Goddess, souls of forefathers, unsatisfied souls, etc. (Chakravarty J, Sharma GD, Tamang JP;2013). Additionally, alcohol is also offered to fellow villagers, relatives, and friends for drinking, which is also prevalent among other tribal communities (Darjeeling district gazetteer. 1907 & Risley , 1928).

The Bondo of Malkangiri, alcoholic beverages of different kinds not only provide nourishment to the Bondo people for their survival but also given all kinds of social interactions with their life cycle rituals and cultural celebrations.

Alcohol use was widely accepted in the tribal community, and it was part of their culture. Alcohol consumption was related not only to the celebration festivals, but also it's an important part and parcel of their rite the passage from birth to death,

they celebrate all these special days with alcohol. Alcohol is also the symbol of coming proposal for girls. We know and observed during the time of field work, their funeral is celebrated with alcohol. They need to serve alcohol to the persons preparing the grave and those attending the funeral for good hospitality. Bondo society alcohol playing important role which is directly or indirectly interlinked their livelihood practises. Alcohol is giving economic support their day today life,

Traditional alcohol has been used by the tribes since ancient times (Kumari A, Raj A, Das A, Kumar A.; 2016). Production of traditional alcohol in the home-based industry by using different ingredients like fruits, cereals, grains, flowers, vegetables, nuts, honey, sugar, jaggery, etc. has been practiced by the tribal's of most parts of the world since ages (Sekar S, Mariappan S. 2007).

Bondo people, they are very good expertise in making alcohol from varieties of fruits like jackfruits, mango, banana, mahua, amla, cashew apple, tamarind nuts like date palm, sugar cane and locally availability of seasonal vegetables, such as tomato, tamarind including boiled rice and finger millet. The above table briefly discuss about the types of alcohol name and prepared by varieties of fruits and locally availability of nuts with their indigenous process. Another table shows that how use of the alcohol on their festive occasion and how, it is the most important part of the livelihood practices.

Name of the Alcohol made by Bondo people available of local fruits

Name of the Alcohol	Local Name	Odia Name	English Name	Use Ingredients	Purpose of Use	Processing
SapungSagur	Salap	Salapa	Sago palm	Juice	Drink, worship	Shoot
Landa	Samme	Mandia	Finger Millet	Millet	Worship & Drink	Boiled Raggi
BawhSagur	Mahula	Mahula	Mahua	Flower	Worship & Drink	Flower
Fendum	Khiang	Bhata	Rice bear	Boiled rice	Worship & Drink	Boiled Rice
UnkusuiSagur	Unkusui	Panasa	Jackfruit	Ripe fruit	Drink	Fruit
Baliasagur	Balia	Kaju	Cashew apple	Cashew apple	Drink	Fruit
UlinSagur	Ulin	Amba	Mango	Ripe mango	Drink	Fruit
BejaSagur	Beja	Bilati	Tamato	Ripe Fruit	Drink	Vegetable
TitinSagur	Titim	Tentuli	Tamarind	Juice	Drink	Fruits
Unsugdaksagur	Unsugdaksagur	Kadali	Banana	Ripe fruit	Drink	Fruits
BuluraSagur	Bulura	Khajuri	Datepalm	Nut & Juice	Drink	Nut and shoot
SiagerSagur	Siager	Aanla	Amla	Nut	Drink	Fruits
GurhSagur	Gurh	Akhu	Sugar cane	Juice	Drink	Stick

Sources: Data collected from primary sources with interview

Types of Alcohol offering god during the different Festive Occasions

Sl No.	Name of the Festivals Bonda Language	Odia Name of the Festival	Month of Festival Observed	Worshipping by whom and where	Using Alcohol	Purpose of Using
1	SuneGelirak festival	Makar	January	By village road / Family member	Salap&Landa Sagur	reaping and threshing harvesting of the rice
2	Giag-gige festival	Chaiti	April	Village deity by Sisa	BawhSagur and Fendum	
3	KhurebGearei/ Geyara	Asha	June -July	By village road / Family Head male person		Work in the
4	Gersum-gige festival	---	August or September	Village deity by Sisa	Salap, Bawh Sagur and fendum	Agriculture Field
5	Khumbaguda	Mundadhua	Sept- Oct	By village road / Family Head male person	Fedum	First Fruits observed with Maize crops
6	Dassera festival	Dasahera	October	By village road / Family Head male person	Salap, Bawh Saguri, Fendum	Protecting agricultural field from forest animals
7	Gewursung festival	Kalipuja	October or November		BawhSagur,	reaping of millet
8	Pusak	Jhatiluda	Dec- January	By village road / Family Head male person		Before harvesting

Sources : Data collected from primary sources

Conclusion :

This paper is clear idea about the better understanding of the underlying socio-cultural with economy factor contributing to using of alcohol among the Bondo. This process started from the colonial period when they don't have any idea to know and knowledge about the monetary system and they only used to barter system and use of local based alcohol for good hospitality. After independent when the state and central govt is trying to develop with eco-forest system, these people lives in different ways and this process started declined due to various reasons. Present days peoples are moving towards education with modernization and urbanisation. They are not prefer to continues these traditional process of mating selection and sometimes they are using and offering readymade cold drinks with foreign liquor instead to country made alcohol. Another factors also influences the Bondo, arising health issues, using alcohol specifically health and cultural and social determination. It is necessary to increasing educated people create non forest based employment with conservation of our natural forest and adopt remedial measures to stop this kind of using alcohol the name of socio-cultural and magico-religious prospective. Law should be strictly implemented how to stop to prepare and drinking alcohol so that devastation of the flora and fauna in these Bondo ghati can be preserved.

It can be concluded that they have the idea of prepare different varieties and indigenous technology to preserve the alcohol for long time. So documentation and preservation are primary duty necessary to audio-visualised the traditional socio-cultural and religious activities along the

preparations method of different fruits, millet, mahua flowers, and sugarcane. It has been and giving awareness about the Bondo people, making the properties and amount of consumption which is help and maintain the good health of the Bondo community by cure and preventing many diseases arises among them.

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Scripting the Marginal : Overhaul of the Narrative Tradition in Chandrabati's *Ramayana*

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Epics, across time and space, have invariably epitomized classical standard. Male chauvinism of heroic stature woven around the social nobility has veritably defined the ideal and idealized picture of society. Social structure and the relative moral order have found their way through the great epic, the Ramayana. Royal origin, well defined nobility, and an attendant heroic quality ensured the moral, ethical victory for the protagonist. The popularity and popular response to the epic must have been varied and different with its several versions and adaptations bearing a testimony to this fact. This paper aims at critically examining the valorization of women in the epic. The two versions of the Ramayana - Chandrabati's Ramayana and Molla's Ramayana in the 16th century is of two different linguistic and geographical origin that expand and elaborate the episode that involve women. This expansion assigns qualities and virtues of heroic and epical dimension to female characters of the epic. Rewriting in this respect is not to be viewed as reaction or rejection; it is, rather an effort of inscribing the missing gap. The superhuman, heroic and cultivated sensibility are venerated and adored irres-

pective of gendered role. The response and reception of the versions of the epic speak volumes for this fact.

Chandrabati is credited with being the first poet in Bangla language who presented Ram's story from Sita's perspective. She lived in the 16th century in Mymensingh, now in Bangladesh. She was not discovered until Nabaneeta Dev Sen, an eminent Indian English writer, translated her Ramayan into English in 20th century. There were only scanty references of her two ballads, collected in D. C. Sen's Maimensingh Geetika, but not of her Ramayan.

Her Ramayan was denounced as incompetent to be taken under consideration as Indian epic story for academic scholarship and discourse. It was Nabaneeta sen's translation (1988-89) which gave Chandra a fair chance to prove her literary worth through the translation, which was a part of CWDS, Delhi project. With this translation, it has been a story of Chandra's triumphal march across academic discipline such as Orality, Bengal studies, Comparative Literature and Gender Studies, narratology etc. Most surprisingly, rural women of modern Bangladesh still sing

parts of Chandra's Ramayan without being familiar with the author.

The paper explores certain enquiries as :

- How is Chandrabati's retelling of the Ramayan contrary to the prevailing ideals of epic narrative convention?
- How does epic narrative tradition differ from a woman writer's view point?
- Does Chandrabati follow the traditional canonical Indian Classical way of orientation in her rewriting?
- If it is changed, what kind of interpolation does she incorporate in retelling of the Ramayan?

Chandrabati's retelling of the Ramayana is not telling the story but it is a shift of focus from worshipping of hero to female heroism. In this retelling latent becomes dominant, dormant becomes alive; it is a conceptual shift. Where on one hand a majority of retellings valorise heroic patterns of male heroism, Chandra's Ramayana exhibits such patterns that can be explored as alternative patterns of female heroism taking Sita's perspective into account. The narrative is neither disruptive nor deconstructive. She rather produces a complementary and parallel construction. She valorises Sita by foregrounding pattern of social behaviour as female orientation to heroic ideals.

Chandrabati's Ramayana consists of 3 parts with a prologue and afterwords. She subverts the narrative tradition (in prologue) of the epic by mentioning Mansa Devi, Goddess of Snake, that infuriated Goddess Lakshmi, which culminated into Chandra's family being indigent throughout the life. She also mentions a river, Phuleshwari that sustained her family. However, the conventional epic narratives typically begin with the veneration of gods and goddesses.

Chandrabati's narration opens up unexplored world of experience through which the 'known story' takes another shape. There are two shifts : one, shift of focus, from the Ram story to the story of Goddess Sita; two, a paradigm shift that consists of change of perception of pre-conceived notion of male bastion of heroism that is also of epic dimension.

In book I, Janmleela, Chandra displaces Ram as the focus of the narration and shifts it to Sita's birth as incarnation to destroy Ravan. Thus, it disrupts the narration from Ram's heroism to Sita's heroism. Ram is merely the instrument, almost off stage, as there is no description of epic battle to display his valour.

Therefore, Chandra's Ramayan presents a discourse of Alternative Patterns of Heroism in the form of Sita's sacrifice/chastity and sufferings as the alternative patterns of heroism. Chandrabati's text categorically asks this question , 'Why should one ascribe a text which is align to the experience of women'. A text should have pluralist reaction and response.

In Book II, Chandra replaces the din of war with the Baromasi-a song, longing for one's beloved, which changes with the changing season of the year. By de-emphasizing the battle and making Sita the hero of her story, we may say that Chandra has recast the Ram matter from the perspective of a woman. She also sheds light on how Sita is doubly exiled, one with her husband and two, when Ram chooses to place his honour above his love and exiles her again.

Thus it opens up an avenue to deliberate how her husband does not hesitate to put the public self of king before private self of husband and lover. Non epic form in book II-Baromasi paves a way for women to sing the song and

recognise a common threshold of experience whether it is of pain, acceptance, longing etc. regardless of time and place.

Book III is continuation of Baromasi leading Sita to enter the netherworld proving her chastity.

Writing in the 16th century in Bengal, Chandra rests the scene in which chastity is a performed action rather than an ideal and points to its strength, its power to make things change.

Nabaneeta Dev Sen who took unprecedented pain to translate it and enable to reach it to mass readership to make it a part of cultural and gender discourse. Epic is invariably a narrative poetry, potent and popular means of prevailing discourse in Foucauldian terms. As Foucault calls it discursive practices which is contingent upon evolving change in social relations of power. Sita is assigned with heroic qualities that is not less heroic than male heroism. Chandrabati presents Sita's redemption through her suffering and sacrifice.

Chandra's Ramayan begins with Sita's birth described in detail. She moves away from conventional way of telling the narrative of epic wherein not much emphasis is given to the birth and veneration of Ram. The present narrative brings forth multiple issues into account as gender roles, silenced voices and most importantly individual versus social priorities. The narrative is a link up narrative to all women, in general, Sita in particular, who suffer in silence. The issue of sisters suffering in silence is highly relatable to all women as it deals with love, affection, devotion, faithfulness, betrayal and sufferings. These are viewed common strands in every woman's life. The whole book is narrated in Baromasi convention where there are two narrators- First Chandrabati and then

Sita. The vital issue that need to be addressed is how society takes it when a female narrates epic story. The answer is not needed as it is evident that patriarchal society impose barriers on women through religion therefore women chose to speak through folklore and that is what Chandrabati has done in her Ramayan in the form and approach of Baromasi. It has become a medium and platform for them to vent out their angst, pain and sufferings. It is also evident that during the time Chandra was writing the epic narrative, religion and society (parochial) proved to be two major means of controlling women. She faced acute objection and criticism during her time and her Ramayan was suspended and not accepted by society for the reason of offering unconventional mode of telling it. She was labelled to be inefficient to pen a work like retelling of the epic. It was never heard of that 16th century female poet Chandrabati wrote Ramayan, not until Nabaneeta Dev Sen translated it to English. By its translation she has established Chandrabati an eminent and potential rewriter of the Ramayan.

In Prologue, there is patent account how this Ramayana subverts the conventional canonical beginning of narrative of any epic:

*River Phuleshwari flows swiftly by,
This is where resides Jadabananda
Of the Bhattacharya family, with wife
Anjana,
... Installing her sacred pitcher, they
worship Manasa
Infuriated, Lakshmi leaves them as a
result.*

(Bhanita: Prologue:6)

"After offering Pranam ceremoniously to one and all

Chandrabati sings the Ramayan at her father's behest".

The above account gives the impression that the poet has own personal reasons to compose and retell the epic narrative unlike other narrative chosen to be retold for veneration and divinity of god and gain most out of it. However, the poet was born to brahmin Dwija Banshi and Sulochana, an indigent family which was sustained by blessings of Phuleshwari river. Her life was marked by tragedy and unrequited love with Jayananda, a fellow poet. The heartbreak led Chandrabati renounce worldly life and devote herself to spiritual pursuits. Betrayal by her lover caused her anguish and pain that culminated into retelling the epic narrative from feminist perspective, highlighting women suffering in silence.

Unlike other versions of epic narratives dealing with the beginning of Janmleela of lord Ram, the narrative of the present retelling begins with Sita's Janmleela, thus begins:

" Listen to me carefully, O king of Demons

Today, a thunderbolt has struck the fortune of golden Lanka

In this egg is born today a maiden

This maiden, O King, will cause the destruction of golden Lanka...."

The retelling highlights a different version of Sita's birth, not a daughter found by king Janak, but a daughter born to Madodari. It narrates thus:

Now pay attention to the birth of story of Sita. When Madodari was told about Ravan dallying night and day with the divine maidens is Ashoka Kanan...he eyes overflowed with tears of wounded pride ...she remembered the potent poison in the casket.

"The poison that kills the deathless gods

Why don't I take that deadly venom?

...she poured it into her mouth

...the queen became pregnant on drinking the poison.

...ten months and ten days went by so fast".

...today a thunderbolt has struck the fortune of golden Lanka

In this egg is born today a maiden

This maiden, O King, will cause the destruction pf golden Lanka.

(Book I, Janmleels:22)

The narrative starts with a focus on Ravan instead of Ram. This unconventional beginning highlights Ravan's valor, knowledge, and reverence.

One fine morning in his court in Lanka

Ravan held a meeting with his courtiers and ministers

He decided to win over the heavens, the divine kingdom of the gods.

...the spy went and informed the king of the gods,

"Ravan, the king, has come to win over the heaven from you"

Heaven shuddered with the roar of the 'rakshasas'

Ravan Raja is almost like Death himself.

(Janmleela: 15)

The retelling replaces the din of war with the Baromasi songs- which changes with the changing of the season. The relatable songs of pain, anguish, longingness, sacrifice, chastity and endurance is what

it makes different from other versions of Ramayan. It is a reverence and veneration to the sacrifices Sita has given and hence achieves salvation/redemption. Through the representational songs of Baromasi Chandra makes Sita's suffering and endurance the kernels of her composition through which she changes the lens and perception of the Ramayan story.

Another woman poet from Telugu language-is Atukuri Molla (1440-1530) who also rewrote the epic narrative and challenged the realm and bastion of elite. Despite adhering to the standard of literary writing in terms of manner and material, she was not acknowledged for her effort. Howsoever she tried to contribute in idealising the ideal and valorisation of elite; her recreational narrative of the epic was never given the due credence. Molla was doubly barred; one for belonging to a shudra community and second for being a woman. How could a lower caste potter woman even dare to think of retelling the grand narrative. Therefore, her Ramayan was considered to be 'shudra kavya' and was never read in the court. Molla and Chandrabati and their way of retelling the narrative became a means to establish an ideal and idealized picture of patriarchal order painted in sanctified category which is deconstructed in several of retellings or materials drawn from classical texts. They both present distinct linguistic community, geographical differences along with socio cultural approach.

Jean Francois Lyotard(1924-1998), a French theorist and philosopher, explored the nature of knowledge in postmodern world and wrote an important work *The*

Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge wherein he related the knowledge to that of the concept of metanarrative. Speaking of the narrative that Chandrabati highlighted in Dev Sen's English translation of the Ramayan Lyotard's concept of metanarrative seemed to challenge the grand narrative of the Valmiki's and Tulsi's Ramayan. He argued and posited that localized knowledge integrate to the grand narrative and establish a platform to evolve. It can be well documented in Chandrabati's Ramayan that how she shifted the focus from dominant to subordinate and hence brought out a new perspective through localized knowledge. Lyotard uses the term '*petit recits*' that refers to a small story, the Baromasi stories in her Ramayan establish the reflection of localized experiences. The postmodern metanarrative rejects linear structure of the grand narrative and advocates multiplicity of the meanings and experiences. This multiplicity of the meaning is evident in Chandrabati's and Molla's Ramayana wherein they decentre the autonomy. Chandra's Ramayan subverts the authority through Sita from traditional grand narrative to a fresh deconstructed narrative.

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भारतीय ज्ञान परम्परा के शिक्षा आलोक में नई राष्ट्रीय नीति में उद्यमिता

डॉ. ममता पंड्या

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‘हितोपदेश’ से लिए गए संस्कृत श्लोक का एक हिस्सा है, जो इस प्रकार है :

विद्या ददाति विनयं विनयाद याति पात्रताम्।
पात्रत्वात् धनम् आप्नोति धनाद धर्मं ततः
सुखम्।⁽¹⁾

इसका अर्थ है “ज्ञान व्यक्ति को विनम्र बनाता है, विनम्रता से पात्रता उत्पन्न होती है, पात्रता से धन और समृद्धि उत्पन्न होती है, समृद्धि से सही आचरण (धर्म) की प्राप्ति होती है और सही आचरण से (सुख) संतोष प्राप्त होता है।”

भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा का मूल आधार भारत की संस्कृति है। इसके अंतर्गत वेद, वेदांग, पुराण, उपनिषद् आदि का अध्ययन किया जाता है। इसका अध्ययन करने पर यह ज्ञात होता है कि प्राचीन समय में ज्ञान का उद्देश्य सर्वांगीण विकास करना था। भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा प्रज्ञा का प्रतीक है, जिसमें ज्ञान एवं विज्ञान, लौकिक एवं पारलौकिक, कर्म एवं धर्म तथा भोग और त्याग का अद्भुत समन्वय है। प्राचीन समय में भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा का दृष्टिकोण शिक्षा के प्रति व्यापक एवं सूक्ष्म रहा है।

हमारी प्राचीन गुरुकुल शिक्षा प्रणाली जो प्रायः मनसा, वाचा, कर्मणा पर आधारित थी। इसने सदैव अनहद-लोक ISSN : 2349-137X
(जनवरी-जून)

बालक के नैतिक, सामाजिक, बौद्धिक, आर्थिक, राजनीतिक, भावात्मक आदि विकास पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया था तथा आत्मनिर्भरता, सम्मान, सत्यता, नम्रता जैसे सनातन मूल्यों के सृजन पर बल दिया है जो यह दर्शाता है कि आदिकाल से ही भारतीय शिक्षा व्यवस्था का स्वरूप व्यावहारिक एवं दैनंदिनी जीवन को सुचारू रूप से संचालित करने में सहायक रहा है।

विश्व गुरु भारत दुनिया को अनादि काल से ज्ञान विज्ञान शिक्षा साहित्य कला, संस्कार और संस्कृति का न केवल उपदेश करती आई है वरन् व्यावहारिक रूप से दुनिया के समृद्धतम मानव विकास को चाहे वह शिल्प कला हो, अध्यात्म कला हो, धातु कला, वास्तु कला हो आदि ऐसे अनेक 64 कलाओं में विभाजित करके दुनिया में अपने श्रेष्ठ को प्रतिपादित और प्रदर्शित करती आई है ।

शिक्षा एकांगी नहीं होती। ज्ञान का मतलब है संपूर्ण ज्ञान। उन सभी विषयों का ज्ञान जो विद्यार्थी चाहते हैं। स्वामी विवेकानंद ने एक पंक्ति में शिक्षा का उद्देश्य बताया- “शिक्षा वह है जो मनुष्य को मनुष्य बना दे।”⁽²⁾ इसमें सारी चीजें अंतर्निहित हैं। इसके और विस्तार में जाये तो शिक्षा ऐसी हो जो ज्ञान दे, कौशल दे और नागरिकता के संस्कार भी दे। व्यक्ति शिक्षा से ज्ञान, नागरिकता के संस्कार

साहित्य (वर्ष-11, 2025)
(UGC CARE - Listed Journal)

अर्जित करता है। शिक्षा कौशल प्रदान करती है। व्यक्ति में आजीविका अर्जन की क्षमता के अलावा उसमें मनुष्यता विकसित करने में शिक्षा का महत्वपूर्ण योगदान है।

शिक्षा का उद्देश्य संपूर्ण शिक्षा होना चाहिए। यदि कोई बच्चा पढ़-लिखकर भी संस्कारवान नहीं हो पाता है, राष्ट्रभक्त नहीं हो पाता है तो ऐसी शिक्षा का क्या महत्व है। विद्यार्थियों में नागरिकता के संस्कार होना बहुत जरूरी है। विद्यार्थियों को दिशा दे दी तो वह महान विद्वान बनेंगे, देश-प्रदेश और दुनिया की समृद्धि व विकास में योगदान देंगे। युवा बेटियों की इज्जत करनेवाला, ईमानदार, कर्मठ और देशभक्त बने, इसकी चिंता भी की जानी चाहिए।

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति-2020 को तैयार करने के लिए जनवरी 2015 से पूरे भारत देश के 676 जिले तथा ढाई लाख ग्राम पंचायत, 6600 नगरीय स्वराज संस्था आदि से अलग-अलग सलाह ली गई थी। मई 2016 में एस. आर. सुब्रमण्यम की अध्यक्षता में नियुक्ति की गई समिति ने नई शिक्षा नीति-2020 का ड्राफ्ट प्रस्तुत किया। आगे चलकर इसी के आधार पर डॉक्टर कस्तूरिरंगन की अध्यक्षता में जून 2017 में राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति की मसौदा समिति गठित की गई। इसी समिति द्वारा तैयार किया गया मसौदा 29 जुलाई 2020 की केंद्रीय मंत्रिमंडल की बैठक में पारित हो गया।

पढ़ने के बाद रोजी-रोटी नहीं मिले तो ऐसी शिक्षा का क्या मतलब है। जिससे आजीविका नहीं मिल सके, ऐसी शिक्षा व्यवस्था अधूरी है। जो शिक्षा दूसरों को रोजी-रोटी न दे सके तो ऐसी शिक्षा का क्या फायदा। नई शिक्षा नीति से वह युवाओं को इतना कुशल बनाएंगे कि उन्हें रोजगार मिलने में कोई परेशानी नहीं होगी।

यह नीति इस बात की अनुमति देती है कि आप फ़िज़िक्स और केमेस्ट्री भी पढ़ें और साथ में हिंदी या संस्कृत के विद्वान भी बनें। अगर रोजी रोटी नहीं

कमा सके तो शिक्षा का कोई महत्व नहीं है। ऐसी शिक्षा से विद्यार्थी कुंठाग्रस्त हो जाते हैं। हमें ऐसे बच्चे तैयार करने हैं जो रोज़गार लेने वाले नहीं, रोज़गार देने वाले बनें। नई शिक्षा नीति इस बात की अनुमति देती है कि छात्र फिजिक्स, केमेस्ट्री पढ़ते हुए भी हिंदी का विद्वान बन सके, संस्कृत का ज्ञान प्राप्त कर सके, इतिहास का अध्ययन कर सके।

क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं में शिक्षा प्रदान करने का विचार सरल था, मातृभाषा और क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं के उपयोग को बढ़ावा देना और भारत को विदेशी भाषा के चंगुल से मुक्त करना। निम्न आर्थिक वर्गों से आने वाले छात्रों द्वारा महसूस की जाने वाली हीन भावना को दूर करने पर भी ध्यान दिया जाता है, जो अंग्रेजी से अच्छी तरह वाकिफ नहीं हैं। गरीब और मध्यम वर्ग की पृष्ठभूमि से आने वाले छात्रों को लाभ पहुंचाने के लिए यह फैसला लिया गया है।

शिक्षा का उद्देश्य नागरिकता के ज्ञान, कौशल और मूल्यों को प्रदान करना है। अतः राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति के तहत व्यावसायिक शिक्षा के साथ-साथ नैतिक शिक्षा प्रदान करने की प्रभावी पद्धति का क्रियान्वयन इस लक्ष्य की दिशा में एक बड़ी भूमिका निभाएगा।

हमारे देश के प्रधान मंत्री श्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने 7 अगस्त 2020 को राष्ट्र को संबोधित करते हुए राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2022 के मुख्य तथ्यों पर चर्चा करते हुए कहा था कि नई शिक्षा नीति नए भारत का आधार बनेगी, यह भारत के छात्रों को वैश्विक नागरिक बनाएगी और साथ ही उन्हें अपनी सभ्यता से जोड़ेगी। यह नई शिक्षा नीति छात्रों को अपने जुनून का पालन करने का अवसर प्रदान करेगी। छात्रों की मानसिकता का जिक्र करते हुए कहा कि छात्र अपनी रुचि, क्षमता और मांग का नक्शा तैयार करें। छात्रों को आलोचनात्मक सोच विकसित करने की जरूरत है क्योंकि अब जब हम एक ऐसे युग में प्रवेश करने जा रहे हैं जहां कोई व्यक्ति अपने पूरे जीवन में किसी पेशे का पालन नहीं करता है, तो यह नई शिक्षा नीति

इसी पर आधारित है। इसे ध्यान में रखते हुए हमने विविधता के साथ शुरुआत की है। अब तक शिक्षा नीति आप जो सोचते थे उस पर ध्यान केंद्रित करती थी, लेकिन यह नई शिक्षा नीति अब इस बात पर केंद्रित होगी कि कैसे सोचना है। इस नई शिक्षा नीति को लागू करने में शिक्षा विभाग से जुड़े लोगों का बड़ा योगदान होगा और साथ ही शिक्षकों के प्रशिक्षण पर विशेष ध्यान दिया जाएगा।⁽³⁾

नई शिक्षा नीति में 10+2 के फॉर्मेट स्थान पर 5+3+3+4 फॉर्मेट लागू होगा। स्वतंत्र भारत के बाद हुए सबसे बड़े नवाचार में अनेक शिक्षाविद् और कुलपति आदि ने परामर्श देने का कार्य किया।

भारत में पहली बार आठवीं अनुसूची में शामिल भारतीय भाषाओं को शिक्षा से जोड़ा गया है। विद्यार्थी स्वयं का मूल्यांकन करेगा। उसे रिपोर्ट कार्ड नहीं प्रोग्रेस कार्ड प्राप्त होगा। वोकेशनल विषयों को सुनने का विकल्प दिया गया है। विज्ञान के विद्यार्थी भी संगीत और मनोविज्ञान पढ़े सकेंगे।

पाठ्यक्रम पूरा न हो पाने पर भी प्रमाण पत्र, डिप्लोमा और डिग्री शिक्षा प्राप्त करने की अवधि के अनुसार प्रदान की जाएगी। स्टडी इन इंडिया, स्टे इन इंडिया के तहत भारत के विद्यार्थियों को प्राप्त शिक्षा भारत के काम आए, यह प्रयास होंगे। अब पाठ्यक्रम नवाचार के साथ लागू होंगे। आज भारत में 3 लाख से अधिक छात्रों को सांकेतिक भाषा की आवश्यकता है। इसे ध्यान में रखते हुए पहली बार सांकेतिक भाषा को विषय एक विशिष्ट माना जा रहा है। भारतीय साइन लैंग्वेज को पहली बार एक भाषा विषय यानि एक भाषा विषय का दर्जा प्रदान किया गया है। अब छात्र इसे एक भाषा के तौर पर भी पढ़ पाएंगे। इससे भारतीय साइन लैंग्वेज को बहुत बढ़ावा मिलेगा, हमारे दिव्यांग साथियों को बहुत मदद मिलेगी।⁽⁴⁾

इस नीति के तहत स्कूल छोड़ चुके बच्चों को मुख्यधारा में वापस लाना, उच्च शिक्षा में मल्टीपल एंट्री और एग्जिट सहित कई अन्य कई परिवर्तनकारी

सुधार शुरू किए गए हैं। ये प्रयास अमृत काल में देश की प्रगति को परिभाषित और नेतृत्व करेंगे। ऐसे माध्यमिक विद्यालय जहां विज्ञान की प्रयोगशालाएं हैं, उन्हें मिट्टी की जांच के लिए किसानों से जुड़ना चाहिए। इसके साथ ही उन्होंने छात्रों में सैद्धांतिक दक्षता विकास के लिए स्वदेश में विकसित खिलौनों का इस्तेमाल बढ़ाने पर जोर दिया। आंगनबाड़ी केंद्रों के डाटाबेस को बिना किसी बाधा के स्कूलों के रिकॉर्ड के साथ एकीकृत किया जाना चाहिए क्योंकि बच्चे आंगनबाड़ी से आगे बढ़कर ही स्कूलों में पहुंचते हैं। स्कूलों में तकनीक की मदद से बच्चों की नियमित स्वास्थ्य जांच और स्क्रीनिंग होनी चाहिए।

जीवन में कभी भी शिक्षा ग्रहण करने के लिए उच्च शिक्षण संस्थानों में प्रवेश लेने और बाहर जाने के कई विकल्प देने और डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म पर अकादमिक सामग्री उपलब्ध कराने के लिए बनाए गए दिशा-निर्देशों से छात्रों को अपनी सुविधा और पसंद से पढ़ाई करना संभव हुआ है। इसके अलावा यूजीसी के नए दिशा-निर्देश से छात्र अब एक ही सत्र में दो कोर्स में दाखिला ले सकते हैं। पहले यह सुविधा हासिल नहीं थी। इसके साथ ही क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं में प्रथम वर्ष के इंजीनियरिंग कार्यक्रम और उच्च शिक्षा के अन्तर्राष्ट्रीयकरण के लिए दिशा-निर्देश भी जारी करेंगे।

भारत का युवा हर क्षेत्र में अपनी पहचान बनाने के लिए आगे बढ़ रहा है। वे भारतीय स्टार्ट-अप पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र में भी क्रांति ला रहे हैं। वे उद्योग 4.0 के लिए भारत का नेतृत्व तैयार कर रहे हैं और डिजिटल इंडिया को नए पंख दे रहे हैं।

नई शिक्षा नीति युवाओं को ये विश्वास दिलाती है कि देश अब पूरी तरह से उनके साथ है, उनके हौसलों के साथ है। जिस आर्टिफिसियल इंटेलिजेंस के प्रोग्राम को लॉन्च किया गया है, वो भी हमारे युवाओं को future oriented बनाएगा, AI driven economy के रास्ते खोलेगा।

नई शिक्षा नीति को आधुनिक रूप दिया गया है। आधुनिक टेक्नोलॉजी पर आधारित Academic Bank of Credit सिस्टम से इस दिशा में विद्यार्थियों के लिए क्रांतिकारी बदलाव आने वाला है। अब हर युवा अपनी रुचि और सुविधा से कभी भी एक स्ट्रीम का चयन कर सकता है, छोड़ सकता है। मल्टीपल एंट्री और एग्जिट की जो व्यवस्था आज शुरू हुई है, इसने विद्यार्थियों को एक ही क्लास और एक ही कोर्स में जकड़े रहने की मजबूरी से मुक्त कर दिया है।

आज बन रही संभावनाओं को साकार करने के लिए हमारे युवाओं को दुनिया से एक कदम आगे होना पड़ेगा। हेल्थ, डिफेंस, इनफ्रास्ट्रक्चर, टेक्नालजी, देश को हर दिशा में समर्थ और आत्मनिर्भर होना होगा। आत्मनिर्भर भारत का ये रास्ता स्किल डेवलपमेंट और तकनीक से होकर जाता है।

हमने-आपने दशकों से ये माहौल देखा है जब समझा जाता था कि अच्छी पढ़ाई करने के लिए विदेश ही जाना होगा। लेकिन अच्छी पढ़ाई के लिए विदेशों से स्टूडेंट्स भारत आयें, बेस्ट संस्थाएं भारत आयें, ये अब हम देखने जा रहे हैं।

मुझे पूरा विश्वास है कि आने वाले समय में जैसे जैसे नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति के अलग अलग फीचर्स हकीकत में बदलेंगे, हमारा देश एक नए युग का साक्षात्कार करेगा।

सन्दर्भ ग्रन्थ :

1. हितोपदेश - श्लोक संख्या, 6
2. स्वामी विवेकानंद का सामाजिक दर्शन, अध्याय 6:1
3. 'मन की बात' - 7 अगस्त 2020
4. मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 नई दिल्ली भारत सरकार मिनिस्ट्री ऑफ ह्यूमन रिसोर्स डेवलपमेंट।



Decentralised Musicians in *Nocturnes : Five Stories of Music and Nightfall* by Kazuo Ishiguro

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Music has always been the core of Anglo-Japanese writer Kazuo Ishiguro's works. Ishiguro in an interview, reveals how "in his youth, Ishiguro styled himself as a singer-songwriter" (Kellaway, 2015). Later as a university student, he turned his attention to creative writing which eventually led to his winning the Nobel Prize for literature in 2017. Despite this, music remained the core of his narrative structures and is a "recurring image inserted in discourse and plot, which is listened to, talked about, described, performed, and created by the characters" (Yilin, 2023, p.15). This study concentrates on his collection of short stories, *Nocturnes: Five Stories of Music and Nightfall*. All the protagonists are musicians or music lovers, unsuccessful in their careers and are in critical junctures of their lives. Past research has stressed themes like alienation, disillusionment, and cultural estrangement in the analysis of these texts. This paper takes the enquiry a step further analysing the impact of time on the characters' lives, relationships, and identities.

In the process of acknowledging his indebtedness to music Ishiguro says: "One of the key things I learnt writing lyrics- and this had an enormous influence on my fiction- was that with an intimate, confiding, first-person song, the meaning must not be self-sufficient on the page. It has to be oblique, sometimes you have to read between the lines" (Kellaway, 2015). Reading between the lines of the select text the paper finds music works as a symbol and a narrative adjunct for memory and ageing. It validates the tone, mood, and leitmotifs of the stories. Marking structural coordinates, the first short story "Crooner" and the fourth story "Nocturne" have the same heroine, Lindy Gardner. This is an embedding strategy and is defined as: "the 'story within the story', the structure by which a character in a narrative text becomes the narrator of a second narrative text framed by the first one" (Herman, 2010, p.10). A closer reading reveals the use of many similar strategies. The titles "Crooner" and "Cellists," the last story, signal distinct professional descriptions from the music

world. In each story, the author explores a unique connection with music through a saxophonist, a singer, a guitarist, a songwriter or a jazz musician. Other than musicians' presence, the stories are connected by the repetition of themes and characters. According to Herman, an embedded narrative has three primary codes namely "hermeneutic, relating to enigma and interpretation; roairetic, relating to action, motivation and reference; and formal, highlighting structural boundaries within the text" (Herman, 2010, p.11). Hence the stories are explored as embedded narratives that facilitate the focus of the author; woes of ageing musicians.

Nocturnes, the title chosen for the whole collection represents the declining period in an artist's life where anonymity, loss of fame, legacy, etc become a concern. The plural term nocturnes denote all five stories have protagonists who have passed their prime and are connected to music. The word nocturne semantically refers to a short romantic composition and is used as the title of the fourth short story. The subtitle 'Nightfall' proposes the regret that comes from failures or unexplored potential, thoughts that are most poignant at night or the end of one's career. The second story "Come Rain, Come Sunshine" probes changing perspectives towards life and music as one matures. In "Malvern Hills" the musician's selfish want for appreciation and acceptance is highlighted. The last story "Cellists" speaks about lost potentials and opportunities due to misguided and fake appraisals. As Steve notes in "Nocturne" an artist's success "has to do with image, marketability, being in magazines and on TV shows, about parties and who you ate lunch with" (Ishiguro, 2009, p.97). The texts not only check the predi-

caments of talented artists but with great acuteness portray artists with low potential who strive persistently to make a mark.

The crooner in "Crooner" is Tony Gardner the successful singer from the past who is now on the verge of divorce from his wife Lindy whom he still loves deeply. In Venice for their final trip before separating they meet Janeck a struggling street musician. Janeck decides to help Tony perform as a tribute to his wife because Tony was Janeck's mother's favourite artist. Accompanied by Janeck on the guitar, they perform a selection of Tony's successful songs to serenade Linda, on a Venetian gondola. After the performance a visibly moved Janeck reminisces: "Mr. Gardner, you've been an important part of my growing up" (Ishiguro, 2009, p.21). Tony then narrates a very unusual reason for his divorce.

Look at the other guys, the guys who came back successfully. Look at the ones from my generation still hanging round. Every single one of them, they've remarried ... Me and Lindy are getting to be a laughing stock. Besides, there's been this particular young lady I've had my eye on, and she's had her eye on me. Lindy knows the score. She understands it's time to go our separate ways. (Ishiguro, 2009, p. 23)

The conversation reveals the importance of success, fame and honour in an artist's life. "But a comeback's no easy game. You have to be prepared to make a lot of changes, some of them hard ones. You change the way you are. You even change some things you love" (Ishiguro, 2009, p. 22). Memory serves as a double-edged sword here, allowing Tony to recreate a moment from the past, but delivers the bittersweet realisation that the past has altered irreversibly; he is now

“some crooner from a bygone era” (Ishiguro, 2009, p. 11). Janeck on the other hand is given a chance to reminiscence about his mother who never had the chance to make a daring move like Tony, to reinvent her life.

Elaborating further on the divorced Lindy’s perspective, she is reintroduced in “Nocturne” the fourth story in the collection. Here Lindy is in the process of recovering from a corrective cosmetic surgery. She has moved on just like Tony hoped she would do. “She’s nowhere near old yet. You’ve seen her, she’s still a beautiful woman. She needs to get out now, while she has time. Time to find love again, make another marriage. She needs to get out before it’s too late” (Ishiguro, 2009, p.23). While awaiting recovery she meets another patient Steve, a struggling saxophonist. Steve’s manager feels he is “not just big-league session player, but big-league headliner” but blames his ugliness for his unsuccessful career (Ishiguro, 2009, p.94). So, Steve reluctantly agrees to undergo surgery. He is led to believe if he is handsome and successful Helen, his wife, would not leave him. Lindy saw Steve as a valuable opportunity to regain her former social status, aiming to leverage him like a ladder. But unfortunately, Steve is very proud and refuses to play along. “It won’t be big-league anything, Bradley, because I’m not going over there again, and I don’t want any doors opening for me other than ones that open because of my music...” (Ishiguro, 2009, p.110). Steve is thirty-nine, proud of his talent, and is ready to wait for genuine music lovers to appreciate his talent.

Lindy reveals it is her third attempt at reinventing herself through surgery but is hopeful. Her stealing the “Jazz Musician

of the year award” from the presidential suit and presenting it to Steve reveals her hopes to reinvent Steve to the like of Tony Gardner (Ishiguro, 2009, p.120). She understands her talents are nowhere comparable to Tony’s or Steve’s. Her memories become a prison rather than a source of comfort. But her perseverance, hard work and foresight garner reader admiration and empathy. “Look at me. When these bandages come off, am I really going to look the way I did twenty years ago? I don’t know. And it’s a long time since I was last between husbands. But I’m going to go out there anyway and give it a go” (Ishiguro, 2009, p.139). She is angry with Steve for not trying and asks him “to start getting some perspective” (Ishiguro, 2009, p.141). At the ending of the open-ended story Steve is contemplating his next move and rethinking his perspectives about Linda and his “artistic integrity” (Ishiguro, 2009, p.97).

Changes in perspectives, brought in by memory and forgetting, as one matures is the motif in “Come Rain Come Sunshine.” This is the only story with no practicing musicians but music lovers. Is it possible to forget one’s love for music? Emily, Charlie, and Raymond were at college together and they loved music. Decades later when they meet as forty-seven-year-old adults they find their love for music has changed greatly.

Today, a young person’s likely to listen to any sort of music. My nephew ... is going through his Argentinian tango phase... as well as any number of the latest indie bands. But in our day tastes weren’t nearly so diverse. My fellow students fell into two broad camps: the hippie types... and the neat, tweedy ones who considered anything other than classical music a horrible din. (Ishiguro, 2009, p.25)

Today, Sarah Vaughan's singing unsettles Raymond. Charlie now estranged from Emily invites Raymond to rekindle his wife's feelings. Raymond's current indifference to music shocks Emily. "It is funny, but I don't listen to this kind of stuff much these days" which shocks Emily who feels "short of having had a lobotomy, there's no way you could have forgotten" (Ishiguro, 2009, p.62). Raymond retorts: "Well. A lot of years have gone by. Things change." But he agrees, "... it brings back memories" (Ishiguro, 2009, p.62). Emily's diary reveals her persisting admiration for people like David Corey, Michael Addison and Roger Van Den Berg while Raymond is referred to as "Prince of Whiners" which hurts Raymond's pride. Despite Charlie's comparison of Raymond as a "material failure" and Emily's discontent, their shared musical past sparks deep emotions. Both find a glimmer of their former selves in their cherished music. "Like Ray Charles singing 'Come Rain or Come Shine' where the words themselves were happy, but the interpretation was pure heartbreak" (Ishiguro, 2009, p.). Similarly, their old happy selves lay embedded somewhere inside them.

"Malvern Hills" is the third story in the collection and explores memory through a young musician's reflections on his career aspirations and family dynamics. The narrator describes himself as a singer-songwriter and is not named giving an autobiopic touch to the character delineation. His artistic journey is seen pruned by his sister Maggie's love and discipline, his teacher Mrs Hag Fraser's disapproval and lessons of perseverance and tolerance are imbibed from Sonja, a foreign tourist at Malvern Hills. In their different ways, the varied perspectives of these characters

have encouraged and guided the songwriter to reinvent his talents. In the beginning, the songwriter is unproductive and selfish hoping to "write a brand-new batch of songs" to play in the next London season (Ishiguro, 2009, p. 69). Unwilling to help with the chores of the café he expects Maggie to listen and praise his compositions as she had done in their childhood. He thinks his brother-in-law's work is worthless and does not deserve appreciation. Unlike Emily, Maggie is practical, values family time, and appreciates and supports her husband's café business more than her brother's non-profitable aesthetic perusals.

Against this is a Swiss couple who are touring musicians and are financially supported by their parents. Unlike audition managers from London, they praise the songwriter's performance. Through them, Ishiguro projects two ways to deal with success and failure. Tilo elaborates a cheerful acceptance of their success and proclaims things have worked splendidly for them. Sonja is more practical and begins to "get angry at many things" displaying her disappointments (Ishiguro, 2009, p.91). Sonja does not praise unnecessarily but she allows Tilo to have his way. "I would like to say the same. Because you are young and talented. But I am not so certain. As it is, life will bring enough disappointments. If on top, you have such dreams as this ...". She smiled again and shrugged. "But I should not say these things. I am not a good example to you" (Ishiguro, 2009, p.92). She recognises the narrator like Tilo would go to London to try his luck even in the face of setbacks. It is an interesting reminder that the best reinvention will integrate the best from both worldviews.

The last story “Cellists” is a continuation of the discussion regarding praise and timely rectifications. Tibor, a young cellist, meets Eloise, a mysterious woman who claims to be a virtuoso. Unlike Sonja, Eloise praises, guides, and instructs an aspiring artist when she has not played the saxophone since she was eleven. Her absence unsettles Tibor and his fellow players notice he has grown aloof and is not pleased with his new job. “He’s spent the summer being told he’s a genius. A hotel job, it’s a comedown. Sitting talking to us, that’s a comedown too. He was a nice kid at the start of the summer. But after what that woman’s done to him, I’m glad we’re seeing the back of him” (Ishiguro, 2009, p.167). Even though all stories have an element of sadness, the loss of Tibor’s youthful enthusiasm, opportunities, and right guidance strike as the most poignant. The collection hence culminates with a detailed psychological analysis of the loss of fame, diminishing of talent, loss of love and sacrifice forced upon musicians in contemporary times.

The paper concludes that this collection of short stories is not a random assemblage. The addition of music makes Nocturnes “jump out the medium of language”, “pursue the aesthetic effect and narrative energy of the music medium, and form a grand narrative with a common theme” (Yilin, 2023, p.15). The narrative is interspersed with references to well-known

songs, singers, bands and musical instruments all helping in embedding story in stories. The song *Godfather* finds mention in three of the short stories thus embellishing a common time frame. The first story begins with the memories of Janeck a wandering café musician and the last narrative ends with Tibor being spotted at a café. As in songs with refrains, the book begins and ends in the same place Venice, Italy. All narrative junctures are not explained distinctly which helps the narrative to retain an enigmatic texture. The cleverly inserted thematic coherence provides new perspectives often overlooked. The ups and downs in the lives of these musicians mimic a rhythmic pattern making it a unique collection.

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Reimagining the Literary Landscape : Amitav Ghosh's Intervention in Contemporary Discourse

Dr. Shafqat Mushtaq

Introduction :

Amitav Ghosh's work has had a significant impact on contemporary literature, particularly in the fields of postcolonial studies and environmental humanities. His novels provide a deep understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of the Indian subcontinent and beyond, offering valuable insights into the legacies of colonialism and the challenges of globalisation. In postcolonial studies, Ghosh's work is often cited for its nuanced portrayal of colonial histories and their lasting impacts. His novels explore the complexities of identity, migration and displacement, highlighting the ways in which colonialism continues to shape contemporary societies. Ghosh's focus on individual stories within larger historical contexts provides a human perspective on these issues, making them more accessible and engaging for readers. He often incorporates multiple languages and dialects into his narratives, reflecting the diversity of the regions he writes about. This attention to linguistic detail adds depth and authenticity to his storytelling, capturing the nuances of different cultures and communities. Ghosh's contributions to literature have been widely recognised

and celebrated, with numerous accolades including the Jnanpith Award (2018), India's highest literary honour, the Sahitya Akademi Award (1989) for *The Shadow Lines*, and the Ananda Puraskar for *The Circle of Reason* (1986) and *The Shadow Lines*. His works have also been short-listed for prestigious international awards like the Man Booker Prize. These awards and recognitions reflect Ghosh's standing as one of the leading contemporary writers. His ability to weave complex historical narratives with contemporary issues has earned him a dedicated readership and critical acclaim. Ghosh's work is extensively studied in universities and literary circles worldwide, highlighting his profound influence on contemporary literature.

Historical Fiction and Postcolonial Issues :

Amitav Ghosh's works are a profound exploration of history and its lingering effects on contemporary society. By using historical fiction as a medium, he vividly reconstructs the past and its complexities. His postcolonial themes offer critical insights into the impacts of colonialism, the

formation of identities, and the resilience of marginalised communities. Ghosh's contribution to literature lies in his ability to weave together these narratives, providing a nuanced and empathetic portrayal of human experiences across time and space. Through his storytelling, readers are compelled to reconsider historical events and their ongoing significance in the contemporary world. The *Ibis Trilogy*, encompassing *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011), and *Flood of Fire* (2015), stands as one of Amitav Ghosh's most formidable literary achievements. Set against the backdrop of the 19th-century opium trade between India and China, this trilogy meticulously dissects the intricate interplay of economics, geopolitics, and human agency. Ghosh's narrative spans a vast spectrum of social and cultural terrains, offering a multifaceted exploration of colonialism, migration and the global networks of trade. Through his vivid portrayal of historical events and richly textured characters, the trilogy immerses readers in the volatile nexus of imperial ambitions, economic exploitation, and cultural transformation during this pivotal era. Ghosh captures the intricacies of this period, from the plantations of Bihar to the bustling port cities and the opium wars. The trilogy brings to life the socio-economic conditions, the colonial enterprises, and the lives of diverse characters caught in these turbulent times.

- *Sea of Poppies* introduces readers to a diverse cast of characters, including Indian peasants, British colonial officials and Chinese traders, all of whom are affected by the opium trade. The novel's rich detail and multifaceted characters illustrate the complexities

of colonial exploitation and resistance.

- *River of Smoke* shifts focus to the bustling trade hub of Canton, exploring the cultural exchanges and conflicts that arise from the opium trade. Ghosh's vivid descriptions of the city and its diverse inhabitants provide a deep understanding of the global interconnectedness that characterised the period.
- *Flood of Fire* concludes the trilogy with the First Opium War, depicting the violent clash between British and Chinese forces. The novel's exploration of war, displacement, and identity underscores the human cost of colonial ambitions.

The *Ibis Trilogy*'s meticulous research and narrative complexity make it a landmark in historical fiction, offering a profound critique of colonialism and its enduring impacts.

Ghosh's other novel, *The Glass Palace*, set across India, Malaya and Burma spans a century, commencing with the British invasion of Burma in 1885. Through the lives of its characters, Ghosh depicts the far-reaching impact of colonialism, the dislocation of communities and the struggles for independence. Ghosh skilfully blends historical facts with fictional narratives, creating a seamless tapestry that educates as well as entertains. His narratives often include real historical events and figures, which ground his stories in reality. This approach not only enhances the authenticity of his work but also allows readers to engage with history on a personal level. In *An Antique Land* (1992), there is a unique blend of travel writing,

memoir, and historical fiction. It traces the author's own experiences in Egypt while uncovering the story of a 12th-century Jewish merchant and his Indian slave. By juxtaposing past and present, Ghosh explores themes of cultural exchange and historical interconnectedness.

Ghosh's works frequently examine the enduring legacies of colonialism. He delves into how colonial rule disrupted societies, economies, and cultures and how these impacts resonate through time. In *The Shadow Lines*, Ghosh explores the partition of India and its aftermath. Through the fragmented memories of its characters, Ghosh portrays the seemingly constructed nature of national borders and the enduring trauma of displacement and communal violence. The narrative in *The Glass Palace* captures the upheavals caused by British imperialism in Burma, the exploitation of resources, and the displacement of local populations. Ghosh examines the complex relationships between the colonizers and the colonized, and the internal conflicts within the colonial subjects themselves. Ghosh often focuses on characters who are displaced, either by colonial forces or by broader historical currents. These characters grapple with questions of identity, belonging, and cultural hybridity. *The Hungry Tide* explores the lives of settlers, refugees, and native inhabitants in a marginal environment. Through the stories of its characters, Ghosh examines themes of migration, displacement, and the search for home. *Sea of Poppies* convenes a varied group of characters aboard the ship Ibis, bound for Mauritius. The novel explores their intertwined fates, their struggles with identity, and the formation of new communities in the diaspora.

Ghosh's narratives often highlight acts of resistance against colonial and postcolonial oppression. His characters, through their resilience and defiance, subvert dominant narratives and reclaim their agency. The science fiction thriller *The Calcutta Chromosome* also serves as a critique of Western scientific and cultural hegemony. By reimagining the history of malaria research, Ghosh challenges the traditional accounts of scientific discovery and emphasises indigenous knowledge systems. Similarly, *Flood of Fire* showcases the varied forms of resistance against British colonial policies, including the opium trade. Characters from different backgrounds come together to fight against the injustices imposed by the colonisers.

Environmental and Ecological Concerns :

In recent years, Ghosh has increasingly focused on environmental themes, reflecting his concern about climate change and ecological degradation. Ghosh questioned, "Where is the fiction about climate change?", observing that "serious literary fiction" had abdicated its responsibility in engaging with climate change, noting that "fiction that deals with climate change is almost by definition not of the kind that is taken seriously: the mere mention of the subject is often enough to relegate a novel or a short story to the genre of science fiction" (Ghosh). His works highlight the interconnectedness of human and ecological systems, urging readers to consider the environmental consequences of their actions.

In *The Great Derangement : Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016), Ghosh offers a critical examination of the

literary and cultural establishment, asserting that it has inadequately engaged with the complexities and urgency of climate change. He argues that prevailing narrative structures, aesthetic priorities, and thematic conventions have marginalised or obscured the issue, thereby limiting the capacity of literature and culture to respond meaningfully to the ecological crisis. He argues that the scale and urgency of the climate crisis require new forms of storytelling that can capture its complexities and mobilise collective action. Ghosh contends that the conventions of modern literature, with its focus on individualism and human-centred narratives, are ill-suited to addressing global environmental issues. He calls for a shift towards narratives that emphasise interconnectedness and the non-human elements of our world. This work has been influential in the field of environmental humanities, encouraging writers and scholars to rethink their approaches to ecological issues.

In the *Gun Island* (2019), Ghosh weaves a contemporary tale that explores the effects of climate change on migration and human communities. The novel serves as a dynamic chronicle of a planet destabilised by the relentless forces of climate change, where ecosystems unravel and species—both familiar and unknown—are forcibly uprooted from their native habitats. This unfolding narrative captures the accelerating cascade of environmental dislocations, portraying a biosphere in flux as the mechanisms of ecological collapse drive lifeforms to navigate the fractures of a fractured world. The novel follows a rare book dealer who becomes entangled in a series of events linked to climate change, migration, and mythology. Through this

narrative, Ghosh highlights the ways in which environmental changes are driving social and cultural transformations. *Gun Island* illustrates Ghosh's commitment to addressing environmental issues through fiction, demonstrating how storytelling can raise awareness and inspire action on ecological crises.

Migration and Globalisation :

Another central theme in Ghosh's work is the experience of migration and the effects of globalisation. His novels often depict characters who navigate the complexities of multiple identities and cultural intersections, reflecting the fluidity and interconnectedness of the modern world. *The Shadow Lines* (1988), explores the blurred boundaries between nations and identities. The novel centres on the journey of a young boy navigating his childhood in Calcutta, as he grapples with his family's connections to Bangladesh and England. Through the intertwining stories of his family members, Ghosh examines the ways in which personal and collective histories are shaped by migration and displacement. The novel's title reflects its central theme: the arbitrary and often invisible lines that divide nations and peoples. Ghosh's narrative challenges the notion of fixed borders and identities, emphasising the fluid and interconnected nature of human experiences. *The Glass Palace* (2000) spans over a century and several generations, following the fortunes of a Burmese family as they navigate the upheavals of colonialism, war, and independence. The novel explores the impact of historical events on individual lives, showing how migration and displacement shape identities and destinies. Ghosh's portrayal of the family's journey across

Burma, India, and Malaya illustrates the interconnectedness of these regions and the shared histories of their peoples. *The Glass Palace* is a testament to Ghosh's ability to weave personal stories into broader historical contexts, providing readers with a deep understanding of the forces that shape our world

Linguistic and Cultural Diversity :

Ghosh's work is characterised by its rich linguistic and cultural tapestry. He often incorporates multiple languages and dialects into his narratives, reflecting the diversity of the regions he writes about. This attention to linguistic detail adds depth and authenticity to his storytelling, capturing the nuances of different cultures and communities. In the Ibis Trilogy, Ghosh uses a variety of languages, including Bhojpuri, Bengali, Cantonese and English, to depict the multicultural milieu of the Indian Ocean world. The characters come from diverse backgrounds and their interactions are marked by a blending of languages and cultures. This linguistic diversity not only enriches the narrative but also highlights the interconnectedness of different regions and peoples. Ghosh's use of language in the trilogy reflects the complexities of colonial encounters, where communication and misunderstanding often coexist. By giving voice to different linguistic communities, Ghosh emphasizes the importance of cultural diversity and the need for mutual understanding in a globalized world.

Conclusion :

Amitav Ghosh's contributions to literature are multifaceted and far-reaching. His ability to blend historical and contemporary themes, his focus on environmental and ecological issues and his exploration

of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Indian subcontinent and beyond have made him a pivotal figure in modern literature. Ghosh's work not only provides valuable insights into the past but also addresses some of the most pressing issues of the present, challenging readers to think critically about their world and their place within it. Through his richly detailed narratives and profound thematic explorations, Ghosh has expanded the horizons of contemporary literature, offering new perspectives on history, identity, and the environment. His influence on literary studies and his contributions to the broader cultural conversation about these issues ensure that his work will continue to be read, studied, and celebrated for years to come.

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Intergenerational Communication : Social Media's Role in Bridging and Widening Language Gaps across Generations

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Introduction :

In the digital age, social media has become a ubiquitous presence, profoundly transforming the ways in which people interact and communicate. This transformation is particularly significant when examining intergenerational communication, where distinct generational cohorts-Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z-each bring their own unique linguistic and communicative styles to the online landscape. The advent of social media platforms has not only provided a space for these generations to connect but has also highlighted the potential for both bridging and widening language gaps among them.

Intergenerational Communication (IC):

Intergenerational communication (IC) broadly encompasses interactions between individuals from different generations. The concept of a generation can be understood in various ways: through role relationships (e.g., grandparent and grandchild, aging parent and adult children), age cohorts (e.g., Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials), or developmental stages (e.g., adolescents, middle-aged adults, elders).

The Role of Social Media in Shaping Language Use :

The role of social media in shaping language use among different age groups is complex and multifaceted. The influence of social media on language use across various age groups is intricate and diverse. Baby Boomers and Generation X, having been raised in a time before the digital age, tend to communicate in a more formal and organized manner. Conversely, Millennials and Generation Z, who are digital natives and have been exposed to technology from an early age, prefer informal, concise, and visually vibrant forms of communication. This includes the frequent use of emojis, memes and quickly changing slang. These divergent styles can lead to misunderstandings and communication barriers but also offer opportunities for cross-generational learning and adaptation.

Overview of Social Media's Influence on Modern Communication :

Social media has profoundly transformed modern communication, reshaping how individuals connect, share information

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and interpret the world. This evolution is evident across several dimensions:

1. **Real-Time Interaction and Connectivity** : Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram enable instant, boundary-less communication. This immediacy revolutionizes personal and professional interactions, fostering global discussions and collaborative opportunities.
2. **Diverse Communication Styles** : The advent of social media has introduced new communication styles, including the use of informal language, emojis, memes, and hashtags. These elements have become integral to digital communication, allowing users to express emotions, convey humor and categorize content. The brevity and visual nature of social media communication contrast sharply with more traditional, formal methods of interaction.
3. **Information Sharing** : Social media serves as a primary source of news and information. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook provide quick access to diverse perspectives and user-generated content. However, concerns about misinformation, echo chambers and content quality persist.
4. **Community Building** : Social media facilitates the creation of online communities based on shared interests and identities. These digital spaces provide support, foster collaboration and nurture a sense of belonging among users. Online communities can range from niche groups to large networks, creating opportunities for individuals to connect with like-minded people and engage in collective activities.

5. **Language Evolution** : Social media accelerates linguistic changes by introducing new terms, abbreviations and expressions. Its informal nature promotes conversational and spontaneous communication, influencing traditional norms.
6. **Professional and Academic Integration** : Platforms like LinkedIn and Research Gate revolutionize professional networking and academic collaboration. However, balancing the informal tone of social media with professionalism remains a challenge.
7. **Emerging Challenges** : Despite its benefits, social media poses challenges such as the digital divide, online harassment and privacy risks. The overwhelming volume of content underscores the importance of media literacy and critical thinking.

Literature Review :

1. **Generational Gap** The generational gap is one of the biggest reasons for intergenerational disconnect. The largest generational gap is between the Baby Boomer (classified as being born more or less between 1946 and 1964) generation and the Millennial generation (classified as being born more or less between 1980 and 2000). Much of their conflict is rooted in their differing communication methods, styles and how big the gap between the two generations is. Venter (2017) found that Baby Boomers prefer to communicate face to face, over email, and via telephone, while Millennials prefer to communicate face to face as well, over social media networking sites and text messaging through their

smartphones. Baby Boomers grew up in an era when being successful in the workforce was their number one priority. Boomers are loyal, committed, reliable and expect the same from others. Boomers' sense of accomplishment comes from excelling. Millennials have grown up experiencing technology and most have known it throughout the entirety of their lives (Venter 2017). They're masters at communicating technologically, mostly through social media networking sites, text messaging through their smartphones, and other mediums of digital technology (Leung 2013).

2. Language Evolution in the Digital Age Existing research has extensively explored how social media influences language evolution. Studies such as those by David Crystal (2006) on "Language and the Internet" and Jean Aitchison (2003) on "The Language Web" have documented how digital platforms contribute to linguistic innovation, including the adoption of new slang, abbreviations, and emojis. "The rapid evolution of language on social media is not just a reflection of new communication trends but a catalyst for linguistic change across generations" (Weller & Puschmann, 2022, p. 101). Social media's rapid and widespread dissemination of language trends accelerates linguistic change, affecting syntax, vocabulary and communication norms.
3. Impact of Social Media on Communication Styles Research by Sherry Turkle (2011) in "Alone Together" and Danah Boyd (2014) in "It's Complicated" examines how social media reshapes
- communication styles. Turkle discusses the impact of digital communication on interpersonal relationships and emotional expression, while Boyd explores the complexities of identity and social interactions among teenagers online. These studies highlight the shift towards more informal, instantaneous and visually driven communication.
4. Intergenerational Communication Studies on intergenerational communication, such as those by Nancy Baym (2015) in "Personal Connections in the Digital Age" and Patricia Greenfield (2009) on "Technology and Cognitive Development," focus on how different generations use and perceive technology. Baym explores how digital platforms affect personal relationships, while Greenfield investigates cognitive and developmental differences across generations influenced by technology. "The interplay between social media and identity formation reveals a complex landscape where generational differences are magnified by the digital environment" (Marwick & Boyd, 2021, p. 57).
5. Generational Language Use on Social Media Research on generational differences in language use on social media is emerging, with studies by Pew Research Center and other institutions documenting how different age groups use social media differently. For instance, studies indicate that younger generations use more visual and informal language compared to older generations who may adhere to more traditional forms of communication. "Recent studies highlight a growing divergence in language use on

social media between older and younger users, with younger generations favoring more innovative and expressive forms of communication” (Smith & Duggan, 2024, p. 30).

Gaps Identified :

1. **Lack of Comprehensive Intergenerational Analysis** While existing research covers language evolution and the general impact of social media on communication, there is a noticeable gap in comprehensive studies specifically focusing on how social media influences intergenerational language use. Most studies tend to examine generational differences in isolation rather than the interplay between generations on digital platforms.
2. **Limited Exploration of Bridging versus Widening Language Gaps** Few studies address the dual role of social media in either bridging or widening language gaps between different generations. Existing literature often focuses on either the benefits of digital communication or the challenges it presents, without a nuanced exploration of how social media can simultaneously act as a bridge and a barrier.
3. **Insufficient Research on Socio-Cultural Implications** The socio-cultural implications of intergenerational communication on social media remain underexplored. Research often overlooks how cultural contexts and societal norms influence language adaptation and understanding across generations, particularly in different social and professional environments.

While there is a substantial body of research on language evolution, social

media and intergenerational communication, there is a significant gap in studies that integrate these aspects comprehensively. Addressing these gaps will provide a deeper understanding of how social media influences intergenerational language use and communication dynamics.

Methodology :

This study will employ a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively examine how social media shapes language use across different generations and its role in either bridging or widening intergenerational communication gaps. Initially, a thorough literature review will be conducted to synthesize existing research on language evolution, social media’s impact, and intergenerational communication, identifying specific gaps such as the lack of detailed intergenerational studies and the dual role of social media as both a bridge and a barrier.

Quantitative data will be collected through structured questionnaires distributed to a representative sample of Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. The questionnaire will gather information on participants’ language use, communication preferences and social media experiences. The data will be analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends and significant differences among generations. Additionally, qualitative data will be obtained through interviews and focus groups to provide deeper insights into the nuances of intergenerational communication on social media. By integrating quantitative and qualitative data with content analysis, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how social media influences intergenerational communication and to offer

practical recommendations for enhancing digital literacy and fostering inclusive online interactions.

Research Questions :

1. **RQ1** : What are the primary factors contributing to the generational disconnect between Baby Boomers and Millennials?
2. **RQ2** : How does each generation perceive the perceptions of others about them, and what impact does this have on intergenerational communication?
3. **RQ3** : How do social media platforms affect the proficiency and comfort levels with digital communication across different generations?
4. **RQ4** : To what extent do generational stereotypes and varying levels of digital literacy contribute to language gaps and miscommunications between different age groups on social media?
5. **RQ5** : What types of interventions are most effective in promoting mutual understanding and collaboration between generations on social media, and how do these interventions impact language gaps?
6. **RQ6** : How do families influence digital literacy and intergenerational communication on social media, and what role do family interactions play in bridging or widening language gaps across generations?

These research questions aim to investigate the specific aspects of social media's impact on intergenerational communication, focusing on proficiency, stereotypes, effective interventions and the role of families.

Hypotheses :

1. **H1** : The primary factors contributing to the generational disconnect between Baby Boomers and Millennials include differences in technological proficiency, communication styles, and values, leading to misunderstandings and gaps in interaction.
2. **H2** : Each generation's perception of how they are viewed by the other contributes to the generational divide, with Baby Boomers perceiving Millennials as overly reliant on technology and Millennials viewing Baby Boomers as resistant to technological change, exacerbating communication challenges between them.
3. **H3** : Social media platforms influence the proficiency and comfort levels with digital communication differently across generations, with younger generations exhibiting greater adaptability and familiarity compared to older generations.
4. **H4** : Generational stereotypes and varying levels of digital literacy on social media contribute significantly to language gaps and miscommunications between different age groups.
5. **H5** : Interventions designed to foster mutual understanding and collaborative learning between generations on social media are effective in bridging language gaps and improving intergenerational communication.
6. **H6** : Families play a critical role in bridging intergenerational language gaps on social media by facilitating digital literacy and encouraging shared online interactions across different age groups.

Findings :

Younger generations, having grown up immersed in social media, demonstrate remarkable proficiency and adaptability to new communication styles and technologies compared to older generations. They exhibit higher digital fluency, effortlessly incorporating emerging social media trends, platforms and communication methods such as emojis, memes, and abbreviations into their daily interactions. In contrast, generational stereotypes and disparate levels of digital literacy contribute significantly to language gaps and miscommunications between age groups. Older individuals are often perceived as less adept with digital tools, while younger individuals may be seen as using overly informal language, leading to misunderstandings.

To address these challenges, interventions designed to promote mutual understanding and collaborative learning between generations on social media have proven effective. Programs such as joint workshops, digital literacy courses and inter-generational social media challenges facilitate improved communication and foster better comprehension between different age groups. Additionally, families play a crucial role in bridging these inter-generational language gaps. Through activities like joint social media use, digital literacy training provided by family members and shared online interactions; families contribute significantly to enhancing digital literacy and mitigating communication barriers across generations.

Conclusion :

The findings highlight a notable generational divide in social media proficiency and digital communication comfort, with

younger generations displaying greater adaptability due to early exposure. This gap, along with entrenched generational stereotypes and varying levels of digital literacy, leads to significant language discrepancies and frequent miscommunications. Targeted interventions, such as collaborative workshops and digital literacy programs, have proven effective in narrowing these gaps by promoting intergenerational understanding. Families are pivotal in this process, providing support and facilitating shared learning experiences that enhance digital literacy and reduce communication barriers.

Despite advances, substantial challenges remain due to differences in technological familiarity between age groups. Younger individuals often find technology intuitive, while older generations may struggle with the rapid pace of change. Addressing these challenges involves fostering digital literacy, promoting empathy and creating supportive learning environments. Educational institutions, families, and community organizations must work together to ensure digital inclusion. Policymakers and technology developers should also recognize the dynamic nature of the digital divide and adapt solutions to meet diverse generational needs. By focusing on these strategies, we can move towards a more connected and inclusive digital society where technology bridges generational gaps rather than exacerbates them.

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संगीत सृष्टि में नारी की प्रासंगिकता

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भारतीय संस्कृति की गौरवशाली परंपरा की अनन्य धरोहर हमारा भारतीय संगीत, सृष्टि के प्रादुर्भाव के समय से ही संसार की प्रत्येक गतिविधि में व्याप्त रहा है। यह एकमात्र ऐसी कला है जो मानव भावनाओं की अभिव्यंजना का सशक्त और सुंदरतम साधन है। इतना ही नहीं अपितु यह मानव हृदय के कोमलम प्रकोष्ठ से अंकुरित होता हुआ अपनी रमणीयता तथा करुणता से मन को भाव विभोर कर देता है। बालकृष्ण गर्ग के अनुसार- “संगीत की सौंदर्य शक्ति के द्वारा प्राणी के स्थाई भावों को जगाकर उसे रसमग्न कर देना कलाकार का लक्ष्य होता है।” संगीत सृजन के समय कलाकार के अंतःकरण में ज्ञान, भाव व क्रिया इन तीनों का संचार होता रहता है। इन तीनों के सम्मिश्रण से नवीन सृजन करने के संस्कार उत्पन्न होते हैं। इन संस्कारों के साथ पांच ज्ञानेन्द्रिय से युक्त रूप, गंध, शब्द, स्पर्श और रस की स्मृतियां साकार होती हैं। जिससे मन एकाकार होता है। फलस्वरूप कलाकार नवीन भावों को प्रकट करता है। इन्हीं से विविध रसों की सृष्टि व संगीत के सौंदर्य तत्वों का उद्घाटन होता है।

नारी और संगीत, प्रगति और स्वभाव से एक दूसरे के निकट हैं। अनादि काल से संगीत और नारी एक दूसरे के पूरक रहे हैं। नारी कंठ की बनावट प्रकृति ने कुछ इस प्रकार से की है कि उससे निकले

स्वर स्वतः मधुर और मनमोहक हो जाते हैं। मानव सभ्यता से वर्तमान तक की जीवन यात्रा में नारी की उपयोगिता उसका महत्व और उसके दर्जे में भी उतार-चढ़ाव आते रहे हैं लेकिन इन सभी विभिन्नताओं के बावजूद भी भारतीय संस्कृति में नारी की मां और देवी शक्ति के रूप में दर्जा हमेशा ऊंचा रहा है। हमारे आचार्यगण भी व्यवहारिक जीवन की शिक्षा में ‘मातृदेवी भव, पितृ देवो भव, आचार्य देवो भव’ कहते थे। इनमें माता का स्थान गुरु और पिता से पहले हैं। जगतगुरु शंकराचार्य ने भी कहा है ‘जगन्माता जगत गुरु’ यह जगत माता का स्थान न केवल परिवार और समाज में मां के ऊँचे स्थान का परिचायक है बल्कि उसे दैवत्व तक उठाकर आदि शक्ति का रूप भी दिया गया है। संसार में शक्ति के बिना ना तो किसी लौकिक कार्य में सफलता मिलती है ना किसी साधना में सिद्धि। अतः नारी जीवन दात्री है, सृष्टि का आधार है। कला मानव संस्कृति का प्राण है। वह त्याग और बलिदान की प्रतिमा है। नारी के बिना समकाज अधूरा है। अथर्ववेद का एक श्लोक है -

‘यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः।

यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः॥’

जिस कुल में नारियों की पूजा, अर्थात् सत्कार होता है, उस कुल में दिव्यगुण, दिव्य भोग और उत्तम संतान होते हैं और जिस स्कूल में स्त्रियों की

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पूजा नहीं होती है वहां उनकी सब क्रिया निष्फल हैं। भारतीय शास्त्रीय संगीत का इतिहास वैदिक काल से ही माना जाता है। मानव और संगीत का इतना गहरा संबंध है जो उसके जन्म के साथ ही चल रहा है। प्राचीन साहित्य के उल्लेखों को देखते हुए यह अनुमान लगाया जा सकता है कि जहां तक धार्मिक अवसर का संबंध था, ब्रह्मण एवं क्षत्रिय दोनों वर्ग अपने जातिगत धर्म के अनुसार यज्ञादि में भाग लेते थे। यज्ञ में धार्मिक संस्कारों पर कन्याओं या यजमानों की पत्नियों का संगीत से संबंध प्राप्त होता था। जैसे धार्मिक अवसर या अन्य यज्ञ एवं धार्मिक संस्कारों के अवसरों से लेकर सामाजिक अवसरों तक स्त्रियों का महत्वपूर्ण योगदान रहा है। महाव्रत यक्ष इत्यादि के अवसर पर साम या साम गायक पुरुषों के साथ-साथ उनकी स्त्रियां गायन-वादन करती थीं। दास कुमारियों द्वारा नृत्य तथा कथाओं का गायन किया जाता था। संगीत संबंधी सभी अवसरों पर महिलाओं का विशेष योगदान रहता था। ऋग्वेद में स्त्रियों के गायन और नृत्य की भी चर्चा प्राप्त होती है। वैदिक काल में आपला, लोपामुद्रा, घोषा आदि संगीत की अच्छी ज्ञात थीं। महाकाव्य काल में राज्य सभाओं में भी संगीत कला में निपुण महिलाओं को राजकलाकार के रूप में नियुक्त किया जाता था। जिसका जीवन उदाहरण है, वैशाली की नगरवधू आप्रपाली।

हरिवंश पुराण में ऐसा उल्लेख मिलता है की यादवों का अत्यंत प्रिय गान, छालिक्य के गान थे। विष्णु पर्व में ऐसा पाया जाता है कि महाराजा अग्रसेन ने अपना राज्य भार वासुदेव को सौंप कर श्री कृष्ण और यादवों के साथ समुद्र यात्रा की थी। जिसमें सत्यभामा, रेवती के अलावा 1600 रमणीयां भी श्री कृष्ण के साथ थी और यादवों ने अपने पत्नियों को भी साथ लिया था। क्रीडा के समय विभिन्न नृत्य गीतों का आयोजन हुआ था। इसके लिए अप्सरा, नर्तकियां भी साथ थी। इन अप्सराओं ने नृत्य, गीत, वाद्य में अपना योगदान दिया और नर्तकी रंभा ने

असारित नृत्य के बाद अपने नृत्य से सबको विमग्न कर दिया था। यह उल्लेखनीय है की प्रथम और द्वितीय शताब्दी में कई नाट नटिनियों की मूर्तियां मिलती हैं। जिसमें यह प्रमाणित है कि उस काल में भी गीत, वाद्य, नृत्य आदि में महिलाओं का योगदान था। इस प्रकार की मूर्तियां हमें हिंदू मंदिरों व बुद्ध विहारों से भी मिलती हैं। मुगल काल में मोहम्मद शाह रंगीले के दरबार में गायिकाएं और नर्तकियां गायन, वादन, नृत्य और शास्त्र की विधिवत शिक्षा ग्रहण करती थीं। रामपुर की सदा रंग परंपरा के प्रतिनिधि आचार्य बृहस्पति के अनुसार मुगल काल के अकबर के राज्य के समय में संगीत उत्कर्ष सीमा पर थीं। उनके दरबार में कई संगीतज्ञ थे जिनमें तानसेन का नाम विशेष उल्लेखनीय है। तानसेन की पुत्री सरस्वती बड़ी कलाकार हुई जिसका विवाह मिश्री सिंह (नौबत खान) के साथ हुआ था।

बौद्धिक साहित्य तथा जैन ग्रन्थों में भी नारियों द्वारा मधुर गायन का उल्लेख मिलता है। साम गायन जैसे धार्मिक अवसर तथा अन्य धार्मिक संस्कारों के अवसरों तक में नारियों का सहयोग था। इस युग के प्रसिद्ध काव्य नाटकों में वासवदत्ता और वसंतसेना कलाविद और ऊंचे दर्जे की गणिका के रूप में सम्मान के साथ चित्रित हुई हैं। गुप्त काल से मुगल साम्राज्य के पतन तक का इतिहास एक ओर भारतीय नारी के आत्म बलिदान की कहानी है। कबीर, सूर, तुलसी जैसे क्रांतिकारी भक्त कवियों का जमाना था। उन्होंने भी नारी को ढोल, गंवार, शूद्र और पशु की कोटि में रखकर प्रताड़ना का अधिकार ही समझा। इस संपूर्ण कालखंड में मीरा ही एक ऐसा नाम था जिसने सामाजिक बंधनों और अत्याचारों का मुकाबला करके नारी जाति को आशा की एक किरण दिखाई।

19वीं शताब्दी तक के नाटकों में भी स्त्री पात्रों का अभिनय पुरुष पात्रों द्वारा किया जाना स्त्री की सामाजिक पराधीनता का जीता जागता उदाहरण है। संगीत द्वारा धनोपाजन करने वाली नारियों ने ही

समाज के विरोध को सहते हुए कला का प्रदर्शन जारी रखा तथा राज दरबार में गायन किया। गौहर जान, जोहराबाई, मल्लिका जान, चंद्रकला, राजेश्वरी बाई, जानकीबाई आदि उल्लेखनीय रहीं। जिन्होंने शास्त्री संगीत के निबंध बंदिशें को गया, ऐसी कलाविद् नारियों को समाज ने अपने से दूर भगाया। धीरे-धीरे संभ्रांत परिवार की महिलाओं ने भी संगीत की तालीम लेना शुरू कर दिया। समाज व जनसाधारण में संगीत के प्रति अरुचि और संगीत के हास्य की स्थिति में संगीत के आकाश के दो नक्षत्र पंडित विष्णु नारायण भातखंडे एवं पंडित विष्णु दिगंबर पुलस्कर का उदय हुआ। जिन्होंने नई वर्ग को संगीत साधना के सुअवसर प्रदान किए और विशारद नारियों को उचित सम्मान दिलाया। चूंकि आधुनिक काल में स्त्री शिक्षा का अत्यधिक प्रचार हो गया है जिस कारण लड़कियां पढ़ाई व संगीत शिक्षा साथ-साथ ग्रहण करती हैं। रेडियो, टेलीविजन और संगीत सम्मेलनों में उन्हें सम्माननीय स्थान प्राप्त हो रहा है। वर्तमान समय में शिक्षिका, रेडियो, कॉन्फ्रेंस, टेलीविजन व मंच प्रदर्शन में भाग लेने वाली स्त्री कलाकारों के इस मार्ग में आने का मुख्य कारण उनकी रुचि व इच्छा ही है।

वर्तमान समय में लता मंगेशकर जिन्हें स्वर कोकिला के नाम से भी जाना जाता है, 91 वर्ष की उम्र में भी जब भी किसी गीत को अपनी आवाज से सजाती है तो लगता था जैसे कोई युवा गायिका की आवाज हो। जो भारतरत्न (2001), पद्म विभूषण (1999), पद्मभूषण (1969) दादा साहब फाल्के पुरस्कार (1989) जैसे कई अनगिनात्मक सम्मान से सम्मानित हो चुकी हैं। सोनल मानसिंह एक भारतीय क्लासिकल डांसर हैं। जो भरतनाट्यम और ओडिसी नृत्य शैली में कुशल हैं। जब इन्होंने नृत्य में भविष्य बनाने की बात घर वालों से कही थी, तो घर वाले नाराज हो गए थे। परिवार वालों की नाराजगी के बावजूद भी सोनम मानसिंह ने अपना घर छोड़ दिया

और धीरे-धीरे अपने मेहनत और लगन से आज यह मुकाम हासिल किया कि वह पद्मभूषण, पद्मविभूषण आदि से सम्मान की जा चुकी हैं। एम. एस. सुब्बुलक्ष्मी जिनका पूरा नाम मदुरै षण्मुखवडिवु लक्ष्मी था। जो कर्नाटक संगीत की मशहूर संगीतकार थी। शास्त्रीय संगीत की दुनिया में एम.एस. का कोई सानी नहीं है। इन्होंने छोटी सी आयु से ही संगीत की शिक्षण आरंभ कर दिया था और 10 साल की उम्र में इन्होंने अपना पहला डिस्क रिकॉर्ड किया साथ ही यह पहली महिला है जिन्हें कर्नाटक संगीत का सर्वोत्तम पुरस्कार 'संगीत कला निधि' प्राप्त हुआ, साथ ही भारत सरकार द्वारा 1954 में पद्म विभूषण, 1956 में राष्ट्रीय पुरस्कार, 1975 में पद्म विभूषण एवं 14 जनवरी 1988 में राष्ट्रपति द्वारा सर्वोच्च सम्मान भारत रत्न, कालिदास सम्मान, इंदिरा गांधी अवार्ड, मैग्सेसे अवार्ड आदि से नवाजा गया। कई मशहूर संगीतकारों ने इनकी तारीफ अलग-अलग उपमा देकर की लता मंगेशकर ने 'तपस्विनी', उस्ताद बड़े गुलाम अली खान ने 'सुस्वरलक्ष्मी', तो किशोरी आमोनकर ने इन्हें 'आठवां सुर' कहा, जो संगीत के सात सुरों से भी ऊंचा है। इसी प्रकार अनेक महिला कलाकारों में गंगूबाई, गिरिजा देवी, परवीन सुल्ताना, प्रभा आत्रे, डॉ. एनराजम (वायलिन), शोभा गुट्टू, शिशिर कणधार चौधरी (डायलिन), अमला नंदी (कथक), जरीन दारूवाला (सरोद), सितारा देवी (कथक), मृणालिनी साराभाई (कथकली), श्रीमती संयुक्ता पाणिग्रही (ओडिसी) आदि हैं। वहीं ध्रुपद गायन शैली जो एक वीर प्रधान व पुरुष प्रधान गायन शैली का क्षेत्र रहा है। इस क्षेत्र में भी महिलाओं ने इस गायन शैली को कैरियर के रूप में अपनाकर संगीत के क्षेत्र में अपना वर्चस्व स्थापित किया है। जिसमें श्रीमती असगरी बेगम, प्रोफेसर सुमति मुटाटकर, डॉक्टर मधुभट्ट तैलंग, नंदी बहने, श्रीमती कावेरीकर आदि गायिका प्रसिद्ध हैं। वहीं अवनद्य वाद्य में तबला जो वर्तमान समय में सर्वोपरि स्थान पर है जो हमेशा से ही एक पुरुष प्रधान वाद्य के रूप में जाना गया है, इस क्षेत्र

में भी कुछ महिलाओं ने मेहनत, लगन व प्रयास द्वारा नारी समूह का वर्चस्व स्थापित किया है। जिसमें अबान ई मिस्त्री, योगमाया शुक्ला, श्रीमती नीलू कपूर आदि तथा वर्तमान समय की सर्वश्रेष्ठ महिला तबला वादिका जाकिर हुसैन की शिष्या पंडित अनुराधा पाल ने इस क्षेत्र में एक उच्च कोटि का मुकाम हासिल किया है। आज महिलाएं गायन, वादन व नृत्य की प्रत्येक विधा के शिखर की ऊंचाई को छू चुकी है और देश-विदेश में प्रतिष्ठा को प्राप्त कर रही है और आज वर्तमान समय में कई महिला कलाकारों ने अपना अस्तित्व जमाया है। आधुनिक युग में संगीत के क्षेत्र में नारियों को परिवार का भरपूर सहयोग मिल रहा है। आधुनिक नारी अपनी आर्थिक व्यवस्था की पूर्ति के लिए किसी की दास नहीं है लेकिन आर्थिक निर्भरता के साथ-साथ उसे मानसिक बौद्धिक व नैतिक स्तर पर भी ऊंचा उठाना होगा कि अधिकार उसे मांगने ना पड़े, स्वयं अर्पित किया जाए या अपने आप पास खींचे चले आए।

**मैं नारी हूँ अधिकार की, मैं नारी हूँ विचार की।
मैं नारी हूँ अभिलाषा की, मैं नारी हूँ जिज्ञासा की॥**

निष्कर्ष :

भारतीय वाङ्मय में संगीत सृष्टि और नारी पर विशेष चर्चा करें तो इतना साहित्य उपलब्ध है कि एक स्वतंत्र ग्रंथ की रचना की जा सकती हैं। मानव सभ्यता के विकास में इनकी सृजनात्मक भूमि को नकारा नहीं जा सकता। जिस प्रकार पहाड़ी नदी

अपने तीव्र वेग से असंख्य पाषाणों को बहती हुई, गंतव्य की ओर अविरल प्रवाहित होती चली जाती है, उसी प्रकार महिलाओं को भी संगीत साधना में आने वाली विभिन्न व्यवधानों को पार करते हुए व दृढ़ निश्चय रूपी वेग से बहते हुए संगीत की अजस्र धारा को अक्षुण्ण बनाए रखा है। नारी शक्ति है, यह केवल अतीत का विषय नहीं आज भी वह शक्ति है, केवल इस शक्ति को पहचानने आवश्यकता है

**“नारी तुम केवल श्रद्धा हो, विश्वास रजत
नग-पग तल में,
पीयूष स्रोत-सी बहा करो, जीवन के सुंदर
समतल में।”**

सन्दर्भ :

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लोकप्रियता का प्रतिमान: 'गुनाहों का देवता'

डॉ. सुनील कुमार

हिन्दी विभाग

गुरुकुल काँगड़ी (समविश्वविद्यालय)

हरिद्वार (उत्तराखण्ड)

'गुनाहों का देवता' प्रेम का नया समाजशास्त्र है। इस शास्त्र का रूप घोर आक्रामक है और उसने परम्परागत विवाह-व्यवस्था पर करारी चोट की है। आरम्भ में ही मिस डिक्रिज के द्वारा एक मार्मिक बात कहलवायी जाती है, 'शादी अपने को दिया जाने वाला सबसे बड़ा धोखा है। ऐसे धोखे की ओर कच्ची आयु के भोले-भावुक नादान और प्रेमी अपनी वासना रहित निर्मल प्रेम लिए पूरे उल्लास के साथ बढ़ते तो हैं, परन्तु एक सीमा पर पहुँच जो चतुर्दिक विद्रोह-विस्फोट होता है वही यथार्थ का केन्द्रीय मर्म होता है।' आरम्भ में पाठक भारतीय प्रेम का अत्यन्त गम्भीर, दिव्य, अव्यक्त और पवित्र रचनात्मक स्थितियों के बीच से गुजरते जो कुछ सोचता है, उसका अत्यन्त कड़वा और अस्वीकार-मूलक कलात्मक अन्त बहुत सहज ढंग से आ जाता है। इस प्रकार यह प्रेम और विवाह सम्बन्धी वैयक्तिक कथा-संहिता प्राचीन और आधुनिक तथा भारतीय और पश्चिमी समस्त धारणाओं को समेट लेती है। पम्मी पश्चिम के प्रेम से प्रभावित है, जिसमें सुविचारित जाँच-पड़ताल, तर्क और अति औपचारिकता है। विपरीत इसके सुधा में भारतीय प्रेम का बिम्ब है जो किया नहीं जा सकता, अनायास विकसित हो जाता है। यह निर्विचार घटित होता है।

उपन्यासकार इस प्रेम और विवाह के संदर्भ में चन्दर को प्रायः मौन रखता है। अवसर होने पर भी वह कोई टिप्पणी नहीं करता। भीतर-ही-भीतर उसकी

पीड़ा से संघर्ष अवश्य करता है। पहली बार जो इस विषय में अत्यन्त मर्माहत होकर कहता है, वह एक मार्मिक तुलनात्मक वाक्य होता है। उसमें स्वर्ग की ऊँचाइयों पर बैठकर आत्मा का संगीत सुनना और फिर उसे विवाह की शहनाइयों में बदलने जैसा अन्तर होता है। इसलिए इस प्रेम में पीड़ा तो है पर कुंठा नहीं है। यह आदर्शवादी प्रेम है। इस पर पहला प्रश्नसूचक चिह्न विनती की ओर से लगा है। प्रेम-पढ़े लिखे लोगों का रोग तो नहीं? फिर इस आदर्श पर पम्मी और बर्टी की ओर से कई धक्के लगे हैं। 'उसने कहा, औरत केवल नयी संवेदना, नया स्वाद चाहती है और कुछ नहीं। अविवाहित लड़कियाँ विवाह और विवाहित लड़कियाँ नये प्रेमी, बस यही उनका चरम लक्ष्य है। लड़कियाँ शरीर की प्यास के अलावा और कुछ नहीं चाहती।' ससुराल से लिखे सुधा के पत्रों ने इस स्थिति में उसे और भड़का दिया। उसे लगने लगा, सेक्स सम्बन्धों के लिए अनिवार्य है। आदर्शवादी प्रेम की प्रतिक्रिया शारीरिक प्यास में होती है। पम्मी में डूबकर इस शरीर की प्यास को बुझाते प्रेमी चन्दर की पुनः वापसी को उपन्यासकार ने अत्यन्त मार्मिक ढंग से चित्रित किया है। इस वापसी में उसकी गुरु बन जाती है एक नारी, गेसू। बहुत कठिनाई से प्रेम तथा वासना के संघर्ष से उसे मुक्ति मिलती है। पश्चिम ने उसे भटकाया और पूर्व ने फिर राह दिखायी। दो अतियों के चरम बिन्दुओं

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को आमने-सामने कर निर्णय पाठकों पर छोड़ दिया जाता है। परन्तु कुछ बातें गहराई से मन पर बैठ जाती हैं। विवाह से कोई सुखी नहीं। बिना प्रेम का विवाह ही समाज के दुःख का मूल है। उपन्यासकार प्रेम और नारीत्व को सम्मानित करता है।

सुधा और चन्दर के प्रेम के सन्दर्भ में उपन्यासकार ने कुछ अति भोले-भावुक प्रसंगों की सृष्टि की है। इनको लेकर उसकी आलोचना भी होती है, परन्तु ऐसा लगता है कि इन प्रसंगों को यदि हटा दिया जाये तो 'गुनाहों का देवता' शून्य हो जायेगा। ये प्रसंग इस उपन्यास को जीवन्त बनाने में सहायक होते हैं। चन्दर दूसरे दिन सुबह बंगले पर पहुँचा, तो सुधा गुस्से का नाटक करती है। किस बात पर गुस्सा है? नाराजगी की बात सिर्फ़ इतनी कि कल शाम को चन्दर नहीं था तो किससे पूछकर जाती गेसू के यहाँ?... पिता के पास ब्याह का प्रसंग उठा, गेसू के साथ भी चर्चा चली। सुधा एकदम रो पड़ती है। चन्दर कहता है-हमने तुमसे कुछ कहा? उसका उत्तर-कह लेते तो हमें सन्तोष हो जाता। फिर कहती है-शायद हम भूल गये हैं और तुम्हें याद हो, कभी हमने प्यार तो नहीं किया?... बिसरिया पढ़ाने आता है तो चन्दर से कहती है-तुम चलकर बैठो तो हम पढ़ेंगे। ऐसे शर्म आती है। चन्दर मन को बहुत दबाकर अत्यन्त संयम भाव से किसी प्रकार विवाह के लिए सुधा को तैयार करता है तो वह शर्त रखती है, पूरी रस्म में वह उसके साथ रहेगा। ऐसी स्वतःस्फूर्त मासूम घटनाओं के सृजन से कुछ गम्भीर निष्कर्ष निकलते हैं।

नारी का एकनिष्ठ सम्पूर्ण समर्पण, पुरुष के अन्तरानुशासन में अपने को सौंप देना, पुरुष के गुस्से-नाराजगी की परवाह में घटना और उससे अलग होते तड़पना कोई सिखाता नहीं। 'बाहर से चन्दर के लौटने पर उसे खाट पर बिठा, स्वयं जमीन पर बैठ गम्भीर भाव से सुधा उसके पेट पर पेंसिल से लकीरें खींचते कैफियत तलब करती है, इतने दिन क्यों

लगाये? चिट्ठी क्यों नहीं लिखी? विवाह की सूचना पाकर दुर्दम पागलपन से सुधा पापा से लड़ने चलती है तो चन्दर उसे जोरदार चाँटा जड़ देता है। शान्त होकर क्षण भर बाद सुधा पूछती है, देखें, तुम्हारे हाथ में चोट तो नहीं आयी?'³ इस प्रकार के अतिभावुक प्रेम प्रसंगों की परिकल्पनाएँ उपन्यास में विरल नहीं हैं। वास्तव में परिस्थिति की गम्भीरता को भाषाबद्ध करना बहुत कठिन है। स्थिति विशेष की आकस्मिक रूप में फूटी शब्दावलियों और मुद्राएँ कला-पारखी भारती द्वारा इस रूप में उपस्थित की गयी कि वे एकदम हृदय को छू लेती हैं। आर्द्र कर देने वाले ऐसे कई मार्मिक और सघन भावोंच्छ्वासपूर्ण धड़कते चित्र विवाह की रात में दिखायी पड़ते हैं। एकदम कट-सी पड़ी सुधा की शब्दावली-हाय चन्दर, अब क्या होगा? चन्दर, अब क्या होगा? में हजार-हजार मर्म-पीड़ा का दंश है। विदाई के दिन सामने बैठकर सुधा चन्दर को खिलाती है। चलने लगता है तो कहती है- 'आज आँचल से हाथ नहीं पोंछोगे चन्दर!'⁴ इस प्रकार के द्रावक क्षण-चित्रों से गुजरते पाठकों में एक कचोट सी उठती है। जब इतना प्रगाढ़ प्रेम है तो विवाह क्यों नहीं हुआ? दोनों एक-दूसरे को दिल मजबूत करने, संभलने और विश्वास न खोने के लिए बारम्बार दृढ़ करते हैं। आखिर इसकी आवश्यकता ही क्या थी? क्यों दोनों एक-दूसरे को सर्वनाश की ज्वाला में झोंक रहे हैं? वास्तव में इस प्रकार की अन्तः लहरें उठाना उपन्यास-कला की सफलता है। सुधा और चन्दर के विवाह में जाति और सामाजिक स्तर की बाधा तक पाठकों को स्वयं पहुँच जाने में कोई कठिनाई नहीं होती और सामाजिक व्यवस्था की सड़न और उसका विष भी स्पष्ट उभर आता है।

सुधा ही नहीं, विनती और गेसू के विवाह में भी यही सड़ी परम्परागत व्यवस्था आड़े आती है और जीवन-सौन्दर्य को चाट जाने वाला विद्रुप प्रत्यक्ष हो जाता है। सब कुछ नष्ट हो जाने के बाद व्यवस्थापक जाति के गम्भीर पापा इस निष्कर्ष पर पहुँचते हैं कि

‘सचमुच जाति, विवाह, सभी प्रथाएं बहुत बुरी हैं। बुरी तरह सड़ी हुई हैं। उन्हें तो काट फेंकना चाहिए। मेरा तो इस अनुभव के बाद सारा आदर्श ही बदल गया।’⁵ डॉक्टर शुक्ला के कथन में उनकी जो पीड़ा अभिव्यक्त हुई है इस उपन्यास में उसका एक महत्वपूर्ण विधायक पक्ष है। इस कड़वे यथार्थ को शिखर तक पहुँचाने के लिए प्रेम के मीठे आदर्श की जो सीढ़ी आरम्भ में बनायी गयी है और जिससे होकर अर्थहीन व्यवस्था के पीड़ा संघर्ष वाले विवाह-मंडप तक पहुँचाया गया, वह बहुत सार्थक लगता है। ऐसी स्थिति में उपन्यास में वे सब अतिभावुक प्रसंग एक-एक जबरदस्त चोट बन जाते हैं और उपन्यास के व्यंग्य यथार्थ को उभारते हैं। उपन्यास के आरम्भ में उपन्यासकार स्वर्ग का कुञ्जों से निर्वासित एक मनमौजी और रोमांटिक कलाकार के इलाहाबाद का नगर-देवता होने की चर्चा ‘गुनाहों का देवता’ के मुख्य पात्र अथवा नायक चन्दर का बिम्ब है।

वास्तव में वही ‘गुनाहों का देवता’ है। गुनाह सिर्फ इतना ही कि उसमें सामाजिक परम्परा के प्रति निष्ठा है और इस गुनाह की सजा साहित्यकार की ओर से इतनी निर्ममता के साथ दी जाती है कि उस निष्ठा के साथ देवता भी टूट जाता है। दण्ड देने का कार्य साहित्यकार प्राचीन काल से करता आया है। कालिदास ने भी दुश्मन्त को दण्ड दिया था। आज की स्थिति में हमारा समाज ही दुर्वासा बना हुआ है जिसके अभिशाप से पवित्र कौमार्य के विद्यालयी आश्रम में सहेलियों के साथ स्वच्छन्द क्रीडारत सुधा-सी कन्याओं को बलात् विवाह का विषपान करना पड़ता है। बहुत सावधानी और मनोयोग से धर्मवीर भारती ने इस कथानायक की बुनावट डाली है। सुधा और विनती के लिए वह देवता है परन्तु स्वयं उपन्यासकार उसके मनुष्य रूप को उभारने में ही दत्तचित्त दिखायी पड़ता है। विवाह के बाद एक मनोवैज्ञानिक प्रतिक्रिया में वह सुधा और अपने प्रेमादर्शों से घृणा करता चित्रांकित हुआ है। उसके अंकन की

आरम्भिक उठान बहुत मनमोहक है। वह फूलों का प्रेमी है। हर फूल को समझना चाहता है। मुस्काते फूल जैसे कोई राज कहने लगते हैं। उसकी जिन्दगी बाहर से हल्की-फुल्की होते हुए भी अन्दर से बहुत गम्भीर और अर्थमयी है। यह उत्तरदायी और उद्देश्यनिष्ठ है।

उपन्यासकार ने चन्दर को सामान्य नहीं, विशिष्ट प्रेमी के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया है। उसके इर्द-गिर्द चार लड़कियाँ हैं, चार प्रकार की स्थितियों को प्रस्तुत करने वाली मगर सवाल प्रेम के लिए चुनाव करने का नहीं होता है। जब विवाह की आहट से दोनों की पवित्र ऊँचाइयाँ थरथराने लगती हैं। छेड़खानियाँ, ढोल धमाका, व्यंग्य, उलाहना, शोरो-शायरी और हँसी-खुशी के तूफानों के बाद बहुत गंभीरता से अनुभव करना पड़ता है कि वे एक दूसरे की जिन्दगी को कमजोर करने के लिए नहीं आये हैं। वास्तव में यह एक बहुत बड़ा आदर्शवादी भ्रम सिद्ध होता है और इसके टूटने तक प्रेमी चन्दर स्वयं इस कदर टूट गया है कि पवित्रता, त्याग, साधना, सौन्दर्य और नैतिकता के प्रति घृणा से भर जाता है। अति भावुकता-भरा ऊँचा आदर्श पम्मी की देह-वासना में डूब जाता है। ‘सात चाँद की रानी अपने निगाहों के जादू से सन्नाटे के प्रेत को जीत लेती है।’⁶ प्रेम के टूटने की भयानक प्रतिक्रिया के सृजन में उपन्यासकार ने अपनी समूची कला को झोंक दिया है। यह प्रतिक्रिया विनती के संदर्भ में दोहरी होकर और कठिन हो गयी है। उपन्यासकार ने चन्दर के प्रति पक्षपात नहीं किया है। पुरुष की दुर्बलता, नारी के सन्दर्भ में उसकी अधिकार भावना, उस पर दयार्द्र होने, उसकी अवशता से तुष्ट होने आदि के प्रसंगों का उभार विनती के संदर्भ में हो गया है। चन्दर की ये दुर्बलताएँ सुधा के संदर्भ में नहीं उभरी, क्योंकि उसका सामाजिक स्तर ऊँचा था। विनती के सामने आते ही चन्दर एक सामान्य पुरुष की भूमिका में आ जाता है।

वास्तव में एक सुधा के प्रेम की आन्तरिक टूटन ने उसके जीवन के रेशे-रेशे को उलझाकर इस

प्रकार ध्वस्त कर दिया है कि वह अपने आध्यात्मिक प्रेम को पम्मी के मांसल बन्धन में सौंप संभोग के क्षणों की चर्म शांति में लीन हो जाता है। प्रेम की प्यास उत्तरोत्तर और भड़कती जाती है और ऐसा लगता है कि इसका अन्त नहीं। गेसू की अवतारणा यहाँ एक चमत्कार के रूप में है और वास्तव में यह एकमात्र चमत्कार है। गेसू उसके वासना के विष की चुनौती को जगा देती है। जिस प्रकार की प्रतिक्रिया में चन्दर प्रेम से वासना में, उसी प्रकार की प्रतिक्रिया में पुनः वासना से प्रेम की ओर प्रत्यावर्तित होता है। द्वन्द्वग्रस्त चन्दर के नशे को उखाड़ना पम्मी की पराजय थी। हृदय-परिवर्तन के साथ चन्दर में आत्म साक्षात्कार की भी एक महत्वपूर्ण मनोवैज्ञानिक घटना को घटित होता चित्रांकित किया गया है।

इस प्रकार सौन्दर्य, प्रेम, विश्वास, दायित्व और नैतिकता के इस नायक की कथायात्रा कुण्ठा, विशोभ, अस्वीकार, तनाव और टूटन की राहों से अन्त में एक अपेक्षित सम पर पहुँचती है। 'उफनती नदी उसी तरह बहने लगती है जैसे कुछ हुआ ही न हो।' उपन्यास के इस अन्तिम वाक्य में मानवता की जीवन-यात्रा के प्रति गम्भीर आशावादिता है। उपन्यास का मुख्य पात्र चन्दर अवश्य है परन्तु महत्वपूर्ण चरित्र सुधा का है। नारी के रूप में वह विशुद्ध नारी तत्व है। सहजता, मिठास और आकर्षण की दृष्टि से वह हिन्दी साहित्य का बेजोड़ नारी-चित्र है। 'उम्र के हिसाब से कुछ अधिक गम्भीर मगर पापा और चन्दर के सामने उसका बचपन इठलाने लगता है।' उपन्यासकार के शब्दों में वह अपने घर की पुरखिन है। उसकी अल्हड़ता के चित्रों की सृष्टि में उपन्यासकार अधिक रमा प्रतीत होता है। कुछ अति भी हो गयी है। जब वह चन्दर को चिढ़ाना चाहती है तो खूब गाढ़े दूध की चाय पिलाती है। 'मुटकी पोथी' से उसका ब्याह रचाती है। कॉलेज प्रांगण की हरी-हरी घास पर लेटी गेसू के साथ शोरो-शायरी और इश्क की चर्चाओं में मशगूल दिखायी पड़ती है। उसकी

सहेली गेसू, सुकुमार भावों से भरे अनजाने मन वाली, लतरों की छाँव में ध्यान योग-लीन, फूलों के बीच जाने वाली, स्वयं फूल-सी, क्लास से भागकर किसी छतनार पेड़ के नीचे सोयी, स्वयं कविता-सी, उसकी छाया बनी रहती है।

वास्तव में उपन्यास के भीतर प्रकाश और छाया की सुचिन्तित व्यवस्था है। सुधा को प्रकाश देने के लिए नाना स्तर के छाया रूप, विनती, सुधा और पम्मी के रूप में प्रस्तुत किये गये हैं। आरम्भ में गेसू की छाया, मध्य में विनती की और अन्त में पम्मी की छायाएँ सुधा के व्यक्तित्व को वांछित प्रभावों वाला प्रकाश प्रदान करती हैं। रीझ, खीज, शरारत, चुहल, व्यंग्य, खींचतान, लड़ाई, मचलना, उलाहना, शिकायत, हँसी-आँसू और शुद्ध लड़कपन में गुजरते सुधा के आरम्भिक चित्रांकन में इन्द्रधनुषी प्रकाश है। कॉलेज में मिस उमाल के क्लास की शरारत विनोद वाली घटना, घर पर चन्दर को नानखटाई खिलाने वाली घटना और इस तरह की अनेक घटनाएँ जीवन के सौन्दर्यवादी पहलू को पुष्ट करती हैं। उपन्यासकार रह रहकर सुधा के मुँह से कुछ ऐसी मार्मिक मासूम बातों को कहलवा देता है कि सुखद स्तब्धता में पाठक डूब जाता है। उसके स्वभाव के भोलेपन को अनेक कलात्मक रूप दिये गये हैं। एकान्त-चिन्तन में चन्दर के बारे में जो उसे शिकायत होती है वह इतनी मामूली और न-कुछ होती है कि पाठक मुस्करा देता है। 'ऐसे स्वार्थी हैं कि बस, चाय पी ली, नानखटाई खा ली, रुला लिया, फिर अपने मस्त साइकिल पर घूम रहे हैं।' सुधा के भोलेपन की सृष्टि अद्भुत है। वह न आधुनिक है न पुरानी, न ग्रामीण न नागरिक, न अपढ़ और न पढ़ी-लिखी, न गढ़ी न तराशी, वह सनातन नारी भाव की नैसर्गिक पुतली है। उसके रेखाचित्रों को उकेरने में उपन्यासकार अथक भाव से उपमा, रूप और प्रतीक और बिम्बों की बौछार करता चलता है। ऐसे स्थलों पर भाषा का सौन्दर्य सुधा के व्यक्तित्व की ही भाँति पूर्ण निखार पर होता है।

निष्कर्ष :

सन् 1950 के बाद हिन्दी कथा-साहित्य जैसे एकदम ऐंठ गया और उसकी ऐंठन असाधारण होने के साथ-साथ कुछ अपरिचित भी हो गयी। यहाँ तक कि उसमें अपनी पहचान खोजना कठिन हो गया है। महानगरीय प्रभाव, विदेशी प्रभाव, युगीन प्रभाव के साथ आधुनिकता की अतियों ने अजनबीपन पात्रों में ही नहीं, कथावस्तुओं में भी संक्रान्त सम्प्रेषित कर दिया। उपन्यासों से सहज कथा रस का लोप हो गया। चिन्तनीय तथ्य यह है कि यह सब अधिकांश फैशन के रूप में अथवा फार्मूलों के दबाव में आया। बहुत कठिन था अपनी परम्परा से जुड़े रहकर तथा समकालीन चिन्तन और आधुनिक विचार संवेदनाओं को समेट कोई सुसंगठित और दिलचस्प कहानी देना। नयी कविता की संवेदनीय भाषा और नयी कहानी का संश्लिष्ट बिम्बात्मक शिल्प संयोजित कर धर्मवीर भारती ने 'गुनाहों का देवता' में इस कठिनाई का स्वागत किया है। उपन्यासकार का समूचा ध्यान कथा-संगठन पर है। चूंकि कहानी वैयक्तिक जीवन-सौन्दर्य से आहिस्ते-आहिस्ते सामाजिक यथार्थ की कुरूपता तक पहुँची है, अतः उपन्यासकार आरम्भ में सौन्दर्यवादी पक्ष को विराट् ताम-झाम के साथ प्रस्तुत करता है और शिखर तक पहुँचाता है। चन्द्र अर्थात् चन्द्रकुमार कपूर प्रयाग बी.ए. पढ़ने आया है, बेसहारा है, किन्तु तेज है। उसे डॉ. शुक्ला की स्नेह छाया मिल जाती है। एम. ए. में प्रथम आता है। शोध के लिए बढ़ता है और नवजीवन की तरंगों में बेहद खुश है, विशेष कर इसलिए कि डॉ. शुक्ला के पुत्रों ने उसके अन्तस् को अपने आत्मिक प्रेम से रंग दिया। गाँव की वह दुबली-पतली, हठीली-जंगली लड़की चन्द्र के सम्पर्क में संयत हो तो जाती है, किन्तु साथ

ही साथ उसका उन्मुक्त अल्हड़पन और मीठा नटखटपन भी बढ़ जाता है। धीरे-धीरे अव्यक्त प्रेम रंग लाता है और फिर पूरी तरंग पर होता है कि विवाह की मंजिल आ जाती है।

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भोजपुरी जनपद और उसका साहित्यिक क्षेत्र

डॉ. उमेश कुमार पर्वत

सहायक आचार्य

हिंदी विभाग

केंद्रीय संस्कृत विश्वविद्यालय

भोजपुरी हिंदी की एक बोली के रूप में उत्तर प्रदेश के पूर्वी तथा बिहार के पश्चिमी भाग में बोली जाती है, इसके साथ ही भोजपुरी का प्रयोग झारखंड के कुछ इलाकों के साथ नेपाल राष्ट्र के कुछ सीमावर्ती जिलों में भी किया जाता है। भोजपुरी जनसंख्या की दृष्टि से भारत में सबसे ज्यादा व्यवहार में लाया जाने वाला उपभाषा वर्ग है जिसका विस्तार लगभग पचास हजार वर्ग किलोमीटर के क्षेत्रफल में है। एक अनुमान के मुताबिक यह कहा जाता है कि वर्तमान में पाँच करोड़ से अधिक लोगों द्वारा भोजपुरी का उपयोग अपनी मातृभाषा के रूप में किया जाता है। भोजपुरी एक अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय महत्व की बोली है जिसे फिजी, मॉरीशस, सूरीनाम आदि देशों में भी बोला जाता है तथा इन देशों में इसे भाषाई महत्व भी मिला हुआ है, इसका मूल कारण भारत में ब्रिटिश शासन के दौरान इस क्षेत्र से इन देशों में तमाम कारणों से हुआ प्रवासन है। ब्रिटिश शासन में भोजपुरी इलाके से बड़ी संख्या में मजदूरों के ले जाया गया जिन्हें 'गिरमिटिया' मजदूर का नाम मिला, यह लोग अपने साथ अपनी भाषा, अपनी संस्कृति को लेकर गये तथा तमाम विपरीत स्थितियों में भी उसे संजोकर रखा। भारत में मुख्य रूप से भोजपुरी का व्यवहार उत्तर प्रदेश तथा बिहार राज्यों में होता है। उत्तर प्रदेश, बिहार तथा झारखंड को मिलाकर भोजपुरी

लगभग 25 जिलों में बोली जाती है। उत्तर प्रदेश के वाराणसी, आजमगढ़, मऊ, गाजीपुर, गोरखपुर, बलिया, कुशीनगर, महाराजगंज, चंदौली, संतकबीरनगर, देवरिया में मुख्य रूप से तथा मीरजापुर, सोनभद्र, जौनपुर, अम्बेडकरनगर, बस्ती, सिद्धार्थनगर के कुछ भागों में भोजपुरी बोली जाती है। बिहार के छपरा, सीवान, आरा, बक्सर, भोजपुर, रोहतास, गोपालगंज, चम्पारण जिलों में तथा झारखंड के राँची व पलामू के इलाके में भोजपुरी का प्रयोग किया जाता है।

बोली के रूप में भोजपुरी का तीन रूपों में वर्गीकरण किया जाता है :

1. आदर्श भोजपुरी
2. पश्चिमी भोजपुरी
3. नागपुरिया भोजपुरी

तथा इसके साथ ही 'मधेसी' एवं 'थारू' नामक दो उपवर्ग भी भोजपुरी के माने जाते हैं।

इनमें से 'आदर्श भोजपुरी' का विस्तार सर्वाधिक है। आदर्श भोजपुरी उत्तर प्रदेश के बलिया तथा बिहार के छपरा जिले के आस-पास के इलाकों में बोली जाती है। सरयू-गंडक के दोआब क्षेत्र में इसका मुख्य विस्तार है। पश्चिमी भोजपुरी आजमगढ़, जौनपुर, गाजीपुर जिलों के भागों में बोली जाती है। नागपुरिया भोजपुरी का क्षेत्र छोटानागपुर के पठारी इलाकों में

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माना जाता है। वाराणसी में भोजपुरी का अलग स्वरूप प्रचलित है जिसे 'काशिका' के नाम से भी जाना जाता है।

डॉ. कृष्णदेव उपाध्याय ने भोजपुरी की सीमाओं का निर्धारण करते हुए लिखा है “गंगा नदी से, उत्तर में इस भाषा की सीमा मुजफ्फरपुर जिले के पश्चिमी भाग की मैथिली है। फिर इस नदी के दक्षिण में इसकी सीमा गया और हजारीबाग जिले की मगही बोली से मिल जाती है। वहाँ से यह सीमान्त रेखा दक्षिण-पूर्व की ओर हजारीबाग की मगही के उत्तर-उत्तर घूमकर सम्पूर्ण राँची पठार और पलामू एवं राँची जिले के अधिकांश भागों में फैल जाती है। दक्षिण की ओर यह सिंहभूम की उड़िया, जसपुर स्टेट की तद्देशीय भाषा से परिसीमित होती है। यहाँ भोजपुरी की सीमा भूतपूर्व जसपुर रियासत के मध्य से होकर राँची पठार की सरहद के साथ-साथ दक्षिण की ओर जाती है जिसमें सरगुजा और पश्चिमी जसपुर की छत्तीसगढ़ी बोली से इसका विभेद होता है। पलामू जिले के पश्चिमी प्रदेश से गुजरने के बाद भोजपुरी भाषा की सीमा उत्तर प्रदेश के मीरजापुर जिले के दक्षिणी भाग में फैलकर गंगा तक पहुँचती है। यहाँ यह गंगा के बहाव के साथ-साथ पूर्व की ओर घूमती है और बनारस के निकट पहुँचकर गंगा पार कर जाती है। इस प्रकार मीरजापुर जिले के अल्प भाग में ही इसका प्रचार है। मिर्जापुर के दक्षिण में छत्तीसगढ़ी से इसकी भेंट होती है परन्तु उस जिले के पश्चिमी भाग के साथ-साथ उत्तर की ओर घूमने पर इसकी सीमा पश्चिम में पहले बघेलखंड की बघेली और फिर अवध की अवधी से जा लगती है। गंगा पार करके भोजपुरी की सीमा फैजाबाद जिले में, सरयू नदी के निकट टाडा तक सीधे उत्तर की ओर चली जाती है। इस प्रकार इसका विस्तार बनारस जिले की पश्चिमी सीमा के साथ-साथ, जौनपुर जिले के बीचोबीच और आजमगढ़ जिले के पश्चिमीय भाग के साथ-साथ फैजाबाद जिले के आर-पार तक

फैला हुआ है। फैजाबाद जिले की टाडा तहसील में इसका विस्तार सरयू नदी के साथ-साथ पश्चिम की ओर घूमता है और तब उत्तर की ओर हिमालय के नीचे की श्रेणियों तक बस्ती जिले को अपने में शामिल कर लेता है। इस विस्तृत भू-भाग के अतिरिक्त भोजपुरी, थारू नामक जंगली जातियों द्वारा- जो गोंडा तथा बहराइच जिलों में बसती है- मातृभाषा के रूप में व्यवहृत की जाती है”

भोजपुरी की भौगोलिक सीमाएँ पश्चिम में अवधी तथा बघेली, पूर्व में मैथिली तथा मगही, दक्षिण में उड़िया एवं छत्तीसगढ़ी तथा उत्तर में नेपाली भाषा से मिलती हैं। भोजपुरी संस्कृति का आगमन वैदिक काल से ही माना जाता है, ऋषि विश्वामित्र के यजमानों को भोजगण अथवा भोजजाति से सम्बन्धित माना जाता है तथा यह भी तर्क दिया जाता है कि भोजपुरी का नामकरण भी विश्वामित्र के यजमानों के आधार पर किया गया है।

भोजपुरी के नामकरण पर यदि विचार किया जाये तो विद्वानों के मतानुसार भोजपुरी का नामकरण बिहार प्रांत के आरा जिले में स्थित 'भोजपुर' नामक गाँव के आधार पर किया गया है। पूर्ववर्ती आरा जिले के बक्सर सब-डिवीजन में भोजपुर एक विशाल परगना था। माना जाता है कि उज्जैन के भोजवंशी परमारों द्वारा इसकी स्थापना अपने पूर्वज राजा 'राजा भोज' की स्मृति में की गयी थी। कालांतर में भोजपुरी इसी भोजपुर और इसके आस-पास के इलाकों की एक प्रमुख बोली के रूप में विकसित हुई। 'महात्मा बुद्ध के समय में अनेक जनपद थे। उन्हीं जनपदों में मल्ल जनपद भी एक था। मल्ल जनपद में राजा भोज के वंशजों ने आकर अपना राज्य स्थापित किया। राजा भोज के वंशज मालवा (आधुनिक उज्जैन) से आये थे। भोज उपाधि का शब्द था, जिसे सभी राजा अपने नाम के साथ जोड़ लेते थे। इन्हें उज्जयिनी भोज कहते थे। उन्होंने यहाँ आकर अपनी राजधानी के लिए जो शहर बसाया उसका नाम भोजपुर रखा।

यह आज भी बिहार के 'डुमराँव' के पास स्थित है। इस संदर्भ में जार्ज ग्रिअर्सन ने लिखा है "इस बोली का नाम भोजपुरी प्राचीन भोजपुर नामक नगर से लिया गया है। यह नगर शाहाबाद जिले में गंगा के दक्षिण कुछ मील पर ही बसा है, जिसकी दूरी पटना से 60 मील अर्थात् 90 किलोमीटर है। आजकल तो यह छोटा सा गाँव है, किन्तु किसी समय शक्तिशाली राजपूतों की राजधानी था, जिनके अगुआ इस समय डुमराँव के महाराज हैं और जो सन 1857 ईस्वी के क्रांति के नेता कुँवर सिंह के अनुगामी हैं।"²

भोजपुरी जनपद की यदि बात की जाये तो यह क्षेत्र भौगोलिक रूप से प्राकृतिक संसाधनों से भरा-पूरा है। गंगा, सरयू, सोन, त्रिवेणी, राप्ती, गंडक, कर्मनाशा आदि सदाना नदियाँ इस क्षेत्र को सदैव हरा-भरा बनाये रखती हैं। यह क्षेत्र प्राचीन काल से ही हरा-भरा रहा है तथा इसका प्रमाण इस क्षेत्र के तमाम नगरों के प्राचीन नामों को देखने से ही पता चल जाता है जैसे- चम्पारण (चम्पारण्य), देवरिया (देवारण्य) आदि में वनों के संकेत मिलते हैं। भोजपुरी जनपद एक कृषिप्रधान जनपद है तथा इसके लोकसाहित्य में खेती-किसानी की चर्चाएँ खूब देखने को मिलती हैं। धान, गेहूँ, मक्का, तिलहन, दलहन आदि की भरपूर पैदावार इस इलाके में होती है। यह इलाका अधिकतर मैदानी है तथा इसी कारण इसमें खनिज सम्पदा का नितांत अभाव देखने को मिलता है।

भारत की सांस्कृतिक राजधानी कही जाने वाली 'वाराणसी' भोजपुरी जनपद में ही अवस्थित है, आधुनिक विश्व में वाराणसी उन चुनिन्दा शहरों में गिना जाता है जहाँ हजारों वर्ष पूर्व विकसित हुई सभ्यता अपनी निरंतरता के साथ आज भी प्रवाहमान है। प्राचीन सोलह महाजनपदों के एक 'काशी' महाजनपद की राजधानी वाराणसी ही थी। गोरखनाथ, महात्मा बुद्ध, कबीरदास, रैदास, पंडितराज जगन्नाथ आदि विद्वान् महापुरुष भोजपुरी जनपद की माटी में ही रचर-बसे हैं। मशहूर शहनाई वादक भारतरत्न बिस्मिल्ला खान भी भोजपुरी जनपद

की ही देन हैं। हुमायूँ को पराजित करके दिल्ली सल्तनत पर अपना अधिकार करने वाला योद्धा शेरशाह सूरी का जन्म भी इसी माटी में हुआ। भारतीय स्वाधीनता संग्राम में 1857 के प्रथम स्वतंत्रता संग्राम में पहली गोली चलाने वाले क्रांतिवीर मंगल पाण्डेय का सम्बन्ध भोजपुरी जनपद के बलिया जिले से था, बाबू वीर कुँवर सिंह भी भोजपुरी जनपद की माटी के ही वीर थे। स्वतंत्र भारत के प्रथम राष्ट्रपति बाबू राजेन्द्र प्रसाद, द्वितीय प्रधानमंत्री लाल बहादुर शास्त्री, महान स्वतंत्रता सेनानी जननायक जयप्रकाश नारायण, बाबू जगजीवन राम, डॉ. शंकरदयाल शर्मा भोजपुरी जनपद की देन हैं। हिंदी साहित्य की तमाम महान विभूतियों का भी जन्म इसी माटी में हुआ। जैसे पंडित विद्यानिवास मिश्र, राहुल सांकृत्यायन, विवेकी राय, हजारीप्रसाद द्विवेदी, अमरकांत, अज्ञेय, केदारनाथ सिंह, केशवप्रसाद मिश्र आदि। प्रसिद्ध उर्दू शायर फिराक गोरखपुरी का भी जन्म भोजपुरी जनपद के गोरखपुर जिले में हुआ था।

आर्थिक रूप से भोजपुरी जनपद पिछड़ा हुआ इलाका है जिसमें औद्योगिकीकरण का नितांत अभाव देखने को मिलता है, यद्यपि वाराणसी, गोरखपुर जैसे शहरों में कुछ उद्योग-धंधे हैं लेकिन भोजपुरी जनपद की जनसंख्या का एक बड़ा भाग कृषि क्षेत्र में ही कार्यरत है। जनसंख्या का एक बड़ा हिस्सा आज भी जीवन-यापन करने या आजीविका चलाने के लिए दिल्ली, मुम्बई, लुधियाना, कोलकाता इत्यादि प्रमुख औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों में मजदूरी हेतु जाता है। यह अवस्था वर्तमान में ही नहीं अपितु काफी पहले से दिखाई देती है। ब्रिटिश शासन के दौरान इस इलाके से बड़ी संख्या में मजदूर असम के चाय बगानों, उड़ीसा-झारखंड के कोयला खादानों तथा कोलकाता जैसे औद्योगिक इलाकों में काम करने के लिए ले जाए गए। इसके साथ ही बड़ी संख्या में अंग्रेजों द्वारा बर्मा, मलेशिया, गुयना, सूरीनाम, दक्षिण अफ्रीका, फिजी जैसे देशों में अपने कृषि कार्यों या औद्योगिक

कार्यों के लिए भोजपुरी जनपद से मजदूरों को ले जाया गया तथा इसी के परिणाम में वर्तमान में हमें इन देशों में भोजपुरी भाषा और संस्कृति का व्यापक प्रभाव देखने को मिलता है।

जार्ज ग्रिअर्सन ने अपने भाषा सर्वेक्षण में आर्य भाषाओं को अंतरंग तथा बहिरंग में वर्गीकृत करते हुए भोजपुरी को बहिरंग की पूर्वी शाखा में 'बिहारी हिंदी' के वर्ग में रखा है। इस वर्ग में मगही, मैथिली तथा भोजपुरी भाषाओं को रखा गया है। इस वर्ग में भोजपुरी क्षेत्र विस्तार तथा व्यवहार की दृष्टि से सर्वाधिक समृद्ध है। भोजपुरी को मागधी अपभ्रंश के पश्चिमी स्वरूप से विकसित हुआ माना जाता है जिससे बिहारी हिंदी की अन्य भाषाओं का भी विकास हुआ है। भोजपुरी में संस्कृत, प्राकृत तथा अपभ्रंश की शब्द सम्पदा प्रचुर मात्रा में पाई जाती है। सिद्ध साहित्य में भोजपुरी के शब्दों के स्वरूप हमें देखने को मिलते हैं। विद्वानों ने यह माना है कि सिद्धों की रचनाओं में भोजपुरी के कुछ क्रिया पद देखने को मिलते हैं। गणेश शंकर चौबे का मानना है "सिद्ध और नाथ लोगों के साहित्य में भोजपुरी साहित्य का प्रारंभिक रूप मिलता है"³

सिद्धों का क्षेत्र मुख्य रूप से आधुनिक भोजपुरी या बिहारी हिंदी का इलाका माना जाता है अतः यह मत काफी समीचीन भी मालूम होता है। सिद्ध सरहपा की रचना को हम उदाहरण के रूप में देख सकते हैं कि कैसे उनके दोहे में हमें भोजपुरी के क्रियापद दिखाई पड़ते हैं :

**“जहि मन पवन न संचरइ रवि शशि नाह पवेश
तहि बट चित्त विशाम करु सरहें कहिअ उवेश”⁴**

नाथपंथियों की उलटबांसियों में भोजपुरी भाषा के नमूने हमें देखने को मिलते हैं। गोरखनाथ ने भोजपुरी का प्रयोग अपने साहित्य में किया है, गोरखनाथ के लेखन में हमें भोजपुरी का अपभ्रंश स्वरूप दिखता है। आचार्य हजारीप्रसाद द्विवेदी ने इस संदर्भ में कहा है 'गोरखनाथ ने लोकभाषा को भी अपने उद्देश्य का

माध्यम बनाया। यद्यपि उपलब्ध सामग्री से यह निर्णय करना बड़ा कठिन है कि उनकी भाषा का विशुद्ध रूप क्या था तथापि इसमें सन्देह नहीं कि उन्होंने अपने उपदेश भोजपुरी में प्रचारित किये थे।

**“हसिबा बोलिबा रहिबा रंग-काम क्रोध न
करिबा संग**

**हसिबा बोलिबा गाइबा गीत-दिढ करि
राषिबा अपनां चीत”-गोरखनाथ”⁵**

डॉ. जयकांत सिंह ने माना है कि भारत में शकों, हूणों तथा समय-समय पर मुसलमानों के आक्रमण के साथ इन जातियों के शब्द भी भोजपुरी में मिलते गए तथा धीरे-धीरे इन आगत विदेशी शब्दों को भी भोजपुरी ने अपने में मिला लिया तथा अपनी शब्द संपदा में यह समृद्ध होती गयी। कालान्तर में सिद्धों से लेकर भक्त कवियों ने अपनी रचनाओं में इन शब्दों का व्यापक प्रयोग करके इसे और भी अधिक समृद्ध किया। भोजपुरी के साहित्य का जब हम अवलोकन करते हैं तो उसपर यह प्रभाव हमें बड़ी आसानी से देखने को मिल जाते हैं।

भोजपुरी साहित्य की यदि बात की जाये तो इसका अधिकांश भाग अलिखित रूप में ही हमें दिखाई देता है। लिखित रूप में भोजपुरी का स्वरूप हमें आधुनिक समय में ही देखने को मिलता है यद्यपि लोक साहित्य में विशेषकर लोकगीतों के रूप में भोजपुरी के पास बहुत ही समृद्ध विरासत है। कबीर से लेकर भिखारी ठाकुर, महेंदर मिसिर, मोती बी.ए., रघुवीर नारायण, धरीक्षण मिश्र, हरेंद्रदेव नारायण, चन्द्रशेखर मिश्र तथा हरeram द्विवेदी जैसे साहित्यकारों ने भोजपुरी को समृद्ध करने में बड़ी भूमिका निभाई है। आधुनिक समय में भोजपुरी को लेकर बड़े पैमाने पर कार्य किये गये हैं तथा तमाम सांस्थानिक प्रयास भी इस दिशा में महत्वपूर्ण हैं। 'विश्व भोजपुरी सम्मेलन' जैसे आयोजन भोजपुरी की वैश्विक उपस्थिति तथा उसकी वैधता को और अधिक मजबूती प्रदान करते हैं। भोजपुरी में हुए कार्यों तथा

प्रयासों पर टिप्पणी करते हुए डॉ. कृष्णदेव उपाध्याय ने लिखा है “हिंदी की अनेक बोलियाँ हैं जिनमें ब्रज, अवधी, भोजपुरी, बुन्देलखंडी, छत्तीसगढ़ी, मारवाड़ी और राजस्थानी प्रधान हैं। इन सभी बोलियों में लोकसाहित्य संग्रह सम्बन्धी कार्य हो रहा है। अनेक विद्वान बड़ी लगन के साथ इस कार्य को सम्पादित कर रहे हैं। हिंदी की इन विभिन्न बोलियों में से जितना कार्य भोजपुरी में हुआ है, उतना संभवतः अन्य किसी बोली में नहीं। भाषा-भाषियों के विस्तार की दृष्टि से भी इस बोली का महत्त्व कुछ कम नहीं है।”⁶

आधुनिक समय में सनिमा संगीत आदि के माध्यम से भोजपुरी भाषा का प्रचार-प्रसार निरंतर बढ़ता ही जा रहा है तथा भोजपुरी जनपद में स्थित तमाम विश्वविद्यालय भी इस दिशा में महत्वपूर्ण कार्य कर रहे हैं। भोजपुरी पत्रकारिता जगत में भी अपना स्थान बना रही है तथा वर्तमान में ढेर सारी साहित्यिक

पत्रिकाएँ भोजपुरी भाषा में प्रकाशित भी हो रही हैं।

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विकृत जीवन शैली का अमृतपान - उपवास

डॉ. आलोक कुमार पाण्डेय

सहायक आचार्य

स्वास्थ्य, संस्कृति एवं व्यक्तित्व विकास केंद्र

गुजरात केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय, गुजरात

डॉ. श्रीश कुमार तिवारी

सहायक आचार्य

सामरिक तकनीकी विभाग,

गुजरात केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय, गुजरात

प्रस्तावना :

उपवास मनुष्य जीवन में स्वस्थ रहने का एक मात्र सरल और सुगम मार्ग है भोजन शरीर को चलाने के लिए जितना आवश्यक है उतनी ही आवश्यकता शरीर को रोग मुक्त करके चलाने में उपवास का है उपवास का महत्व पूर्व समय में जितना था उसमे कहीं ज्यादा वर्तमान समय की जरूरत है जरूरत के अनुसार यह निश्चित रूप से कहा जा सकता है कि वर्तमान में उपवास के प्रति जागरूकता बढ़ी है लेकिन इस जागरूकता के पीछे जो सबसे बड़ी समस्या है वह है कि उपवास को किस प्रकार से किया जाये वो चाहे प्रारम्भ हो या समापन। वर्तमान में उपवास दो प्रकार के लोग कर रहे हैं प्रथम श्रेणी में वो लोग हैं जो सदियों से चली आ रही धार्मिक प्रथाओं मान्यताओं के आधार पर उपवास करते आ रहे हैं तथा द्वितीय श्रेणी में वो लोग हैं जो स्वास्थ्य को लेकर जागरूक होने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं और इस पाश्चात्य संस्कृति की बाढ़ में स्वास्थ्य के डगमगाते कदम के बीच उपवास का सहारा लेकर सम्भलने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं लेकिन इन दोनों ही प्रकार की श्रेणी में एक बात समतुल्य है कि उपवास के प्रति अधिकांश लोगों में अज्ञानता भी उतनी ही है। आवश्यकता है प्राचीन जीवन शैली और वर्तमान जीवन शैली जिसमे एक तो पूर्ण रूप से आध्यात्मिक

है और दूसरी पूर्ण रूप से वैज्ञानिक इन दोनों के बीच उपवास के प्रति इस अज्ञानता की खाई को खत्म करने की और यह तभी सम्भव है जब उपवास की आध्यात्मिकता और वैज्ञानिकता को एक साथ वर्तमान समाज के समक्ष प्रस्तुत की जाएं। तभी वर्तमान समाज को शारीरिक, मानसिक व आध्यात्मिक रूप से स्वस्थ किया जा सकता है जो कि डब्लू एच ओ के अनुसार स्वस्थाय की परिभाषा निर्धारित की गयी है।

उपवास के सन्दर्भ में विविध दृष्टीकोण :

- हिन्दू धर्म में उपवास को विभिन्न पूजा पाठ और सेवा के पूरक के रूप में मान्यता दी गयी है।
- इस्लाम में रोजा और नमाज के रूप में स्थान दिया गया है।
- ईसाई धर्म में इस उपवास को फास्टिंग चेरिटी-प्रेम के रूप में स्थान प्राप्त है।
- श्रीरामचरितमानस में महान कवि युग पुरुष और एक विख्यात दार्शनिक संत तुलसीदास जी ने मनु-शतरूपा तथा पार्वती के एक प्रसंग में अच्छे स्वास्थ्य की प्राप्ति हेतु उपवास के महात्म्य को बनाया है।
- महात्मागांधी के अनुसार हमारा मन अगर किसी प्रकार के आवेश-आवेग भावना, चिंता, कुंठा

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से क्षुब्ध हो जाता है तो शरीर स्वयं से इन सभी गंदगी को बाहर निकाल नहीं सकता और तभी रोग की उत्पत्ति होती है और इस गंदगी, इस जहर को बाहर निकालने का एक अचूक प्रयास है वह है उपवास।

- डॉ. लक्ष्मी नारायण टंडन- उपवास एक प्रकार से गलत भोजन करने का प्रायश्चित्त है।
- गीता में उपवास - “विषथा विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्थ देहिन्”
- साधना विज्ञान मे अन्नमय कोश की शुद्धि के लिए उपवास की विशेष महत्त्वता को स्वीकार किया गया है।
- काका कालेलकर- उपवास करने से चित्त अन्तर्मुख होता है, दृष्टि निर्मल होती है और देह हलकी बनी रहती है।
- पं. श्रीराम शर्मा आचार्य - उपवास और उसके धारणा के सम्बन्ध में बताते हैं कि खतरा उपवास करने मे नहीं बल्कि उसमे समापन में है एक सप्ताह की कायकल्प-क्रिया से ही की जा सकती है जैसे कि चांद्राबण व्रत करने के बाद उसको पूर्व स्थिति मे लाने के लिए भी 15 दिन ही लगते हैं उसी प्रकार अन्य व्रत के भी ध्यान रखा जाना चाहिए।

उपवास का अध्यात्मिक दृष्टिकोण :

हिन्दू धर्म शास्त्रों में विभिन्न प्रकार के उपवास की व्याख्या विस्तार रूप से मिलती है। कई व्रत दैनिक है तो कई व्रत साप्ताहिक कई पाक्षिक तथा कई मासिक व्रत है। दैनिक व्रत का अध्ययन करें तो पूर्व से निकलने वाली सप्तवर्ण किरणों में केवल दो ग्रहों राहु और केतु के अतिरिक्त सभी सप्त किरणों प्राप्त होती है सूर्य की प्रकृति तेज, उष्ण, पित्त प्रधान है वही चन्द्रमा की प्रकृति शीतल, शान्ति, उज्ज्वल। मंगल- बलदायक, कठोर, बलिष्ठ। बुध-सौम्य, सुन्दर,

कफजनित। गुरु-विद्या, धन, बुद्धि, न्यायप्रिय राज्य की स्थापना। शुक्र- कुटिल, चंचल वात की प्रधानता एवं उत्पादक। शनि- स्थापित प्रदान कर्ता, दृढ़, परिपुष्ट एवं सुखदाता है। यहाँ पर विभिन्न दिनों के अनुसार विभिन्न प्रकार की सूर्य से निकलने वाली किरणों के साथ जिस प्रकार की शक्ति अर्थात् जिस प्रकार की विकृति मनुष्य में दे उसके अनुसार उपवास की विधान दुःख मुक्ति के लिए बताया गया है।

ये तो बात हुई दैनिक उपवास के विषय में इसी प्रकार नौ रात्रि जैसे साप्ताहिक उपवास का विधान है दृष्टि को तर्क संगत करके नौरात्रि को देखा जाय तो यह उपवास का समय तब आता है जब ऋतु परिवर्तन होता है। उस समय इस परिवर्तित ऋतु के कारण रोगों के प्रकोप की आशंका बढ़ जाती है और इन प्रकोप को कम करने का साधन है उपवास। इसीक्रम में यदि पाक्षिक उपवास को देखा जाय तो उदाहरणार्थ चंद्रयान व्रत है जिसमे उपवास को क्रमबद्ध तरीके से प्रथम दिवस से प्रतिदिन आहार को कम करते हुए पंद्रहवे दिन निराहार हो जाते हैं और पुनः पंद्रह दिन के पश्चात पहले दिन से पन्द्रहवे दिन तक आहार को दिन प्रतिदिन बढ़ते हुए पूर्ण आहार पर आते हैं यह चंद्रयान व्रत एक उपवास से लेकर पराणा तक की वख्या को स्पष्ट कर देता है ।

उपवास का वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण :

वर्तमान समय विज्ञान का है इसलिए किसी भी तथ्य को वर्तमान समाज के सामने प्रस्तुत करने के लिए वैज्ञानिकता के साथ प्रस्तुति का होना अतिआवश्यक है भोजन के अति होने की सिसथी में वसा की मात्रा निरंतर बढ़ती जाती है और यही से शुरू होता है रोगों की उत्पत्ति एक तरफ वसा का बढ़ना और दूसरी तरफ जीवन शैली का आरामदायक (सुविधापूर्ण) होना दोनों ही आग और घी के सदृश है। सामान्य रूप से पाचन तंत्र में हाइड्रोक्लोरिक अम्ल तथा अन्य रसायन भोजन को पचाने का काम करते हैं तथा विजातीय द्रवों को बाहर निकालते हैं तथा भोजन से

मिलने वाली उर्जा से शरीर का संचालन होता है लेकिन उपवास के समय हाइड्रोक्लोरिक अम्ल तथा अन्य रसायन सबसे पहले पूर्व में एकत्रित भोजन को पचाने में सहायता करते हैं फिर भोजन के समाप्त हो जाने के बाद शरीर के संचालन हेतु एकत्रित वसा उर्जा का निर्माण होता है और धीरे-धीरे वह वसा कम होने लगती है जिसके फल स्वरूप मोटापा कम होता है वसा जितनी कम होती है हृदय को रक्त को पूरे शरीर में संचालन करने में बहुत अधिक बल नहीं लगाना पड़ता है जिससे हृदय स्वस्थ होता है एक तरफ निरंतर भोजन को शरीर के सभी अवयव उसको पचाने तथा उर्जा के संचालन में लगे रहते हैं जिससे शरीर थक जाता है निद्रा के समय हम सामान्य रूप से अपने ऐकिक पेशिया को आराम तो दे सकते हैं लेकिन एनैकिक पेशिया तो निरन्तर कार्य करती रहती हैं और जब उनके कार्य के समापन के बाद उनके आराम का समय होता है तब तक हम पुनः कार्य पर लग जाते हैं। वही दूसरी तरफ उपवास के समय उपवास करने वाले के लिए यह निर्देश दिया गया है कि उपवास के दौरान कोई भी कठिन कार्य ना करे तथा आराम करे जिससे कि दोनों प्रकार की पेशियों को आराम मिल सके तथा इस आराम के दौरान उनकी साफ सफाई (कायाकल्प) हो सके इस कायाकल्प के परिणाम स्वरूप ही उपवास करने वाले व्यक्ति के शरीर का तापमान कम होना, बदबूदार श्वास होना, त्वचा के माध्यम से निष्कासन किया गया पसीने के बदबू का आना, मल-मूत्र का बहुत अधिक बदबूदार हो जाना ये सभी शरीर विष तथा गंदगी की निकालने के प्रमाण हैं।

उपवास के प्रकार :

उपवास के निम्न प्रकार हैं :

1. **प्रातः कालिक उपवास** - इस उपवास में प्रातः में अल्पाहार का परित्याग करके दिन में केवल दो बार अर्थात् दोपहर का भोजन एवम रात्रि भोजन किया जाता है।

2. **अर्धोपवास** - इस उपवास के दौरान केवल एक बार ही भोजन करने का प्रावधान है।
3. **एकोधरोपवास** - एक बार मात्र एक ही भोज्य पदार्थ को ग्रहण करना एकाधरोपवास है।
4. **रसोपवास** - इस उपवास में केवल तरल पदार्थ को ग्रहण करना ही रसोपवास है लेकिन दूध वर्जित है। एनिमा लेने से इस उपवास से होने वाला लाभ दुगुना हो जाता है।
5. **फलोपवास** - केवल फल खा कर उपवास करना फलोपवास है।
6. **दुग्धोपवास** - इस उपवास में गाय का तुरंत निकाला हुआ दुध दिन में तीन-चार बार लेने का प्रावधान दे इसे दुग्ध कल्प भी कहते हैं।
7. **तर्कोपवास** - इस उपवास में घी रहित एवं कम खट्टा छाछ ग्रहण करते हैं यदि इस उपवास से पेट में भारीपन लगे तो एकिमा का प्रयोग करना चाहिए।
8. **पूर्णोपवास** - इस प्रकार के उपवास में केवल जल का सेवन किया जाता है वह उत्तम स्वास्थ्य को बनाए रखने में सहायक है।
9. **साप्ताहिक उपवास** - पूर्णोपवास सप्ताह में एक बार करने को ही साप्ताहिक उपवास कहा जाता है इससे शारीरिक व मानसिक रोगों से मुक्ति मिलती है।
10. **लघु उपवास** - पूर्णोपवास को ही तीन से सात दिन में किया जाना ही लघु उपवास है।
11. **कठोरोपवास** - पूर्णोपवास का कठोरता से पालन करना ही कठोरोपवास है यह असाध रोगों के लिए लाभदायक है।
12. **टूट उपवास** - इस उपवास के अर्न्तगत दो से सात दिन तक का पूर्णतया करने के बाद कुछ दिनों तक प्राकृतिक भोजन और फिर से दो से सात दिन तक पूर्णपवास करना चाहिए वह कम रोग मुक्ति तक करना चाहिए।

13. **दीर्घउपवास** - इस उपवास में पूर्णोपवास को 21 से 60 दिन तक किया जाता है तब तक कि शरीर विजातीय द्रव्यों का निष्कासन कर दे।

उपवास का समापन/पारणा :

वर्तमान समय में सबसे अधिक जो समस्या है वो उपवास के समापन की प्रक्रिया को लेकर है अध्यात्म को मानने वाल लोग उपवास तो कर रहे हैं लेकिन उनके दैनिक जीवन में आहार की अव्यवस्था है। यहाँ अव्यवस्था से तात्पर्य वर्तमान के आहार में सबसे अधिक तली चीजे, चटपटी, विभिन्न मसालों का अत्यधिक मिश्रण, खट्टी एवं मैदा युक्त भोजन से है। उपवास के समापन के दिन उपरोक्त प्रकार की भोजन सामग्री को ग्रहण करना आम बात है और वही से पेट सम्बन्धित विभिन्न प्रकार के बिमारियों का जन्म शुरू हो जाता है बल्कि उपवास तो पेट के स्वस्थता के लिए किया जाता है लेकिन वर्तमान में उपवास के बाद पारणा में लिया गया आहार स्वास्थ्य (पेट) के लिए जहर का काम करता है और इसके फलस्वरूप अल्सर, गैस, एसीडिटी, कब्ज और बवासीर जैसी बिमारियाँ उत्पन्न होती हैं।

अब शहर में उपवास के परिवर्तित रीति पर ध्यान दे तो लोग स्वास्थ्य के प्रति जागरूक हुए हैं और उपवास करते भी हैं मार्टिन नाम डाइटिंग के रूप में जब डाइटिंग शुरू होती है तो एक लक्ष्य रखा जाता है कि अमुक मास तक डाइटिंग करने है भोजन की सारणी भी बनाई जाती है लेकिन जिस दिन उपवास (डाइटिंग) का समय खत्म होता है उस दिन से वो सभी चीजे प्रयुक्त मात्रा में जी जाती हैं जो (डाइटिंग) के दौरान नहीं ली जा रही थी परिणाम स्वरूप व्यक्ति का वजन जितना डाइटिंग के पूर्व में था डाइटिंग के अन्तिम दिन तक कम तो हो जाता है लेकिन उसके बाद का भोजन के कारण व्यक्ति का वजन पूर्व से दूगना हो जाता है क्योंकि डाइटिंग के दौरान शरीर का मेटाबोलिक रेट बढ़ जाता है।

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पारणा :

उपवास के बाद मुख्य बात यह है कि उपवास कब तोड़े और कैसे तोड़े इसमें से एक प्रश्न कि उपवास कब तोड़े? का जबाब उपवास करने वाले व्यक्ति की प्रकृति के अनुसार ही पता चलता है उपवास के दौरान कुछ चीजे होती हैं जो उपवास के समाप्त करने की तरफ निर्देशित करती हैं।

1. भूख का अनुभव इतना हो कि गले और मुख में संवेदना होने लगे।
2. उपवास के दौरान जीभ पर सफेद मैल आ जाता है जब वह अपने आप साफ हो जायें मुख का कड़वापन समाप्त हो जायें।
3. सांस का स्वाद मीठा हो तथा नाड़ीयों सुव्यवस्थित चलने लगें।
4. शरीर का तापमान सामान्य तथा त्वचा नरम हो जाये।
5. शरीर में हल्कापन महसूस होने लगे।

वे सभी यह बताती हैं कि उपवास का लक्ष्य पूरा हो गया और मन इसके समापन का समय आ चुका है।

उपवास के समापन पर भूख बहुत ही तेज लगती है लेकिन उस समय सबसे जरूरी है कि जीभ पूर्ण संयम में रखा जाये। उपवास का समापन के बाद पारणा तरल पदार्थ से करनी चाहिए के आतों पर भार प्रतीत ना हो और पचाने में सुविधा हो।

एक दिन के उपवास के लिए पहले सब्जी का रस, फल का रस अल्प मात्रा में लेना चाहिए इससे बाद अन्न लेना चाहिए। किसी प्रकार के उपवास के तोड़ने के पश्चात अपच ना हो इसका पूर्ण ध्यान रखना चाहिए।

दो-तीन दिन के उपवास के बाद चौथे दिन फलों के रस का सेवन, पांचवे दिन सूप सेवन दिन में दो बार छठे दिन उबली सब्जी, सातवें दिन रोटी भाजी तदोपरान्त सामान्य भोजन लेना चाहिए।

साहित्य (वर्ष-11, 2025)
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निष्कर्ष :

इस प्रकार यह कहा जा सकता है कि उपवास को महज भोजन छोड़ने, अल्प करने का पर्याय कदापि नहीं माना जा सकता वरन यह एक प्रक्रियागत अनुशासन है जो निर्दिष्ट रीति से पालित होने पर ही इसके उद्देश्य की प्राप्ति कराती है साथ ही इस सन्दर्भ में यह तथ्य भी महत्वपूर्ण स्थान रखता है कि उपवास महज स्थूलदेह का ही नहीं वरन मन, एवम आत्मा के भी शोधन का तप है ।

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बुन्देलखण्ड का विलुप्तप्राय लोकआख्यान : धर्मासाँवरी

अदिति सिंह बुंदेला

शोधार्थी (इतिहास विभाग)

डॉ. हरीसिंह गौर विश्वविद्यालय,

सागर

आशु अहिरवार

शोधार्थी (इतिहास विभाग)

डॉ. हरीसिंह गौर विश्वविद्यालय,

सागर

लोकगाथा को अंग्रेजी भाषा के शब्द 'Balled' से जोड़कर समझा जा सकता है बेल्लेड अर्थात् सीधे छंदों के माध्यम से गायन शैली में किसी लंबी कथा का वाचन करना। लोकगाथा वस्तुतः आदिम समाज का वास्तविक स्वरूप है जिसमें दैनिक बोलचाल की भाषा में वाराणसी कथानक को गाकर प्रस्तुत किया जाता है।¹ एफ. जे. चाइल्ड के अनुसार लोकगाथाओं में उसके रचयिता के व्यक्तित्व का सर्वथा अभाव रहता है। गाथा का प्रथम गायक लोकगाथा की सृष्टि कर जनता के हाथों में इन्हें समर्पित कर स्वयं अंतर्निहित हो जाता है। मौखिक परम्परा के कारण उसकी वाणी में अन्य व्यक्तियों एवं समूहों की वाणी भी मिश्रित होती जाती है। यहाँ तक कि प्रथम रचना का रंगरूप ही बदल जाता है। उसमें नये अंश जोड़ दिये जाते हैं तथा पुराने अंश छोड़ भी दिये जाते हैं।² घटनाओं में भी परिवर्तन कर दिया जाता है। इस प्रकार वह रचना व्यक्ति की न होकर सम्पूर्ण समाज की हो जाती है। आधुनिक समय में यह मत सर्वमान्य हो गया है। इस प्रकार लोकगाथाओं की यह धारा अक्षुण्ण रूप से सदैव प्रवाहित होती रहती है उसका कभी अंत नहीं होता।³

लोकगाथाओं की उत्पत्ति के सम्बंध में भारत के विद्वानों का मत है – गीत स्रष्टा स्त्री-पुरुष दोनों हैं,

परंतु ये स्त्री-पुरुष ऐसे हैं जो कागज कलम का उपयोग नहीं जानते हैं। यह संभव है कि एक गीत की रचना में बीसों वर्ष और सैकड़ों मस्तिष्क लगें हों।⁴ लोकगाथाओं की उत्पत्ति का प्रश्न विवादित है क्योंकि प्रायः लोकगाथाओं कि कही कोई प्रमाणिक हस्तलिपि उपलब्ध नहीं है और मौखिक काव्य परंपरा के द्वारा ही इन लोकगाथाओं का प्रसार पीढ़ी दर पीढ़ी हुआ है। परंतु आज समाज जैसे-जैसे अपने आपको आधुनिकता के लिबास में ढँक रहा है वैसे-वैसे ही इन क्षेत्रीय बोलचाल की भाषाओं के लोकआख्यानों की अवहेलना करने लगा है और परिणामस्वरूप ये लोकगाथाएं जो न जाने कब से हमारी संस्कृतियों का अहम हिस्सा रहे हैं जो अब विलुप्तप्राय होते जा रहे हैं।

धर्मासाँवरी का लोकआख्यान बुंदेलखंड में प्रचलित ऐसे ही अनेक लोक आख्यानों में से एक है जिसमें बुन्देलखंडी लहजे में एक लंबे चौड़े कथानक को सरल बुन्देली भाषा के शब्दों के साथ गढ़ा गया है। धर्मासाँवरी के गायन का अपना तरीका है जिसमें 5-6 लोगों का समूह होता है उनमें से एक मुख्य गायक होता है जो कथानक की पंक्तियों को लय के साथ गाता है और रे की तान पर रुकता है और सहायक गायक रे की तान भरता है। इसी प्रकार शुरुआती 10 मिनट में सुमत्री की जाती है जो श्रोताओं के

लिए कथानक की भूमिका जैसा होता है उसके बाद गायक लय पकड़ते हुए लोकआख्यान को आगे बढ़ाता है।⁵ 2 गायकों के अतिरिक्त धर्मासाँवरी प्रस्तुत करने वाले समूह में ढोलक, मंजीरा, नगड़िया, लोटा, सारंगी और खड़ताल जैसे वाद्ययंत्रों को लय में बजाने के लिए होते हैं।⁶

धर्मासाँवरी का कथानक :

धर्मासाँवरी के कथानक की शुरुआत बीजावन के जंगलों में रहने वाले एक चिड़ा और चिड़ी के आपसी कलह से होती है जिसमें चिड़ा मुसीबत में अपनी अर्धांगिनी को अकेला छोड़ भाग जाता है और बाद में चिड़िया से अपने बच्चों की मांग करता है। जिस पर दोनों चिड़ा-चिड़ी, पंचों से न्याय की मांग करते हैं और पंच एक ताम्रपत्र पर सभी चिड़ा, चिड़ा को और सभी चिड़ियाँ, चिड़िया को देने का निर्णय करते हैं। इस निर्णय से दुःखी होकर चिड़िया सपील में सर मारकर आत्महत्या कर लेती है और इस बात से खिन्न होकर चिड़ा भी उसी सपील से अपना सर मार कर आत्महत्या कर लेता है। इसके बाद दोनों चिड़ा-चिड़िया जलेसर नगर में जन्म लेते हैं, चिड़िया का नाम रखा गया- धर्मासाँवरी, जिसके जीवन की बीती पर यह सम्पूर्ण कथानक आधारित है और चिड़ा गोबर गांव के अहीर कुल के दंगरिछरिया के नाम से जाना जाता है। यह कथानक इन दोनों के ही संघर्ष और मिलन की कहानी है।⁷

इस कथानक को हम नाटक के अंको के समान समझ सकते हैं जिसमें निरंतर नये पात्रों का प्रवेश हुआ है जो सकारात्मक अथवा नकारात्मक भूमिका में थे और कहानी को मनोरंजनात्मक रूप से आगे बढ़ाने का कार्य कर रहे थे। इस कथानक के प्रमुख पात्र हैं-

परसा, धर्मासाँवरी, दंगरिछरिया, जादूगर (बेड़नी), इनके अतिरिक्त गौड़ पात्र भी हैं- धर्मासाँवरी की ननद, कनका- लोदन स्त्री, लमाने की बेटी, बरौनी, धोबी, धोबिन, धोबी का दोस्त, उसकी पत्नी, राजा

भोज व उनकी बेटी, सुरहन गौ, मलनियाँ सांड, तोताराम, डुबना नामक पड़ा एवं 989 गायेँ आदि।

यदि सरल भाषा में इस बुन्देली लोकगाथा का भाव देखे तो यह कहानी है- धर्मासाँवरी और दंगरिछरिया की, पुनर्जन्म के बाद धर्मासाँवरी और दंगरिछरिया का विवाह, सम्पन्न ही किया गया था कि विवाहोत्सव के अवसर पर एक जादूगर बेड़नी दंगरिछरिया को चुनौती देती है कि 'मैं एक बांस दरबार के बीचों-बीच गाड़ रही हूँ और दंगरिछरिया यदि इस बांस के ऊपर से छलांग लगा दें तो ये जो कुछ भी शर्त रखेंगे, वह मैं पूरी करूँगी और यदि यह बांस को नहीं कूद पाए तो मैं इनको नाक में कौड़ी पहनाकर 12 साल तक इनको अपनी कैद में रखूँगी।⁸ रिछरिया ने शर्त स्वीकार कर ली लेकिन बेड़नी ने जादू से दंगरिछरिया को हरा दिया और शर्तानुसार रिछरिया की नाक में कौड़ी पहनाकर अपने साथ जूनागढ़ ले गई। यह सुन धर्मासाँवरी पर तो मुसीबतों का पहाड़ टूट पड़ा अभी तो शादी की पूरी रस्में भी नहीं हुई थी, जिसे धर्मासाँवरी की लोकगाथा में इन पंक्तियों में व्यक्त किया गया है :

जब कुंदे बिड़नियाँ मोरे राम,
बाजी जीत गई जेकी बाखर में रे।
भैया नाक में कौड़ी मोरे राम,
दै दये हंकना जिनखों जलदी सें रे।
जूनागढ़ की पकर लई रे गैल,
नौ सो नवासी पड़ा चरवावें रे।
बोले रे रनियां जब समजावे रे,
मोरी सुन ले धरम की बाता।⁹

धर्मासाँवरी लोगों की सलाह पर दंगरिछरिया की बहिन के घर गई जिसके और ननद से अनुरोध किया की मुझे अपना नवजात शिशु दे दीजिए। मैं इसे पालूँगी और इसी के सहारे अपना दुख भूली रहूँगी। बुन्देली कथानक में इन भावों को इस प्रकार व्यक्त किया गया :

बो लेने धर्मासाँवरी कहे रे,
बिन्ना सुनले धरम की जा बात
भैया तौ दै दे हमकों रे औली में,
हमें ले जा पौहर के दौर।

इस बच्चे का नाम 'परसा' रखा गया। यही परसा बड़ा होकर अपने मामा को बेड़नी से छुड़ाने के लिए रोमांचकारी यात्रा पर निकल जाता है जिसके लिए उसकी मामी धर्मासाँवरी, परसा को उसके मामा की मुरली, लुहांगी और तोतेराम का पिंजड़ा और मामा की 989 गायें, जो 12 साल से अस्तबल में मृत बंद थी और परसा ने उन्हें सुरहन गाय के कहे अनुसार अपने रक्त की बूंद से पुनर्जीवित किया था, को भी अपने साथ ले जाने को देदी साथ ही सुरहन गाय और मालनियां सांड को भी परसा के साथ भेजा। धर्मासाँवरी ने परसा की रक्षार्थ पान में जादू भरकर उन्हें एक पात्र में रख परसा को दिया और कहा कि जब कोई मुसीबत आए तो वहां एक पान खा लेना जोकि कथानक में कुछ इस प्रकार व्यक्त किया गया :

नैनो में लागी है धार,
पानों की चुलिया जैने लै लई है रे।

अर बीड़ा लगा रई मोरे राम,
जादू तो भर दओ है पानों में रे।

जब मचला में धर दये मोरे राम,
तुम पै जहाँ संकट पर जाबे रे।

तुम बीरा तो खड़यो मोरे राम,
इते से तो परसा भैया चल भये रे।

घर से चलके लंबे सफ़र के बाद परसा वहीं पहुंच गया जहां उसके मामा गायें चराया करते थे वहीं पर परसा ने अपनी 989 गायों को चराया और प्यास लगने पर पीने के लिए गायों को जामनझोर लेकर गया जहां उसने लमाने की बेटी से अनुमति लेकर अपनी गायों की प्यास बुझायी। थोड़ी दूर

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चलने पर परसा की गायें फिर प्यासी हो गई और परसा उन्हें एक नदी पर ले गया जहां एक धोबी का परसा से गायों को उस नदी से पानी पिलाने को लेकर संघर्ष हो गया और धोबी मारा गया, धोबी की पत्नी को जब इसका पता चला तो वह धोबी के मित्र से मदद मांगने गई लेकिन मित्र की पत्नी ने नई-नई शादी का व्यस्त देकर उसे परसा से युद्ध करने से रोक दिया और ग्रामीण अञ्चल की बुन्देली बोली में कहा :

स्वामी सुन ले धरम की रे बात,
ऐड़ी महाउर मोरे छूटे तो नैयां रे

अर छूटे नइयां हरद के रे दाग,
तेल की फरिया फाटी नहीं रे।

तुम मरबे खों जा रये नदिया घाट,
दरवाजों पै ठांडो हो गओ रे।

यहाँ से परसा अपनी गायों समेत नीमा शहर पहुँच गया जहाँ इसने नदी में स्नान किया जिससे नदी का पानी मटमैला हो गया। यह देख राजकुमारी परसा के पास गई और उसके साथ ही चलने की बात कही जिस पर परसा ने उसे यही इंतजार करने और लौटकर वापस आने की बात कही :

तुम बैठी रव ऐई नदिया पै रे,
अर भजन करत रव मोरे राम।

लौट के हम भाँवरें पर हैं रे,
तुमे ले चल हैं संगे मोरे राम।

अब परसा राजा भोज की सीमा में पहुंच गया जहां अपनी गायें राजा के बाग में रोककर सो गया, परसा के सोते ही जादू से बाग मगरमच्छों से भरी खाई में परिवर्तित हो गया। आंख खुलने पर परसा मालनियां सांड की मदद से अपनी गायों समेत खाई के बाहर निकल आया, राजा भोज और परसा के मध्य लड़ाई हुई जिसमें परसा जीत गया, अंततः राजा भोज ने परसा से संधि कर ली और परसा को

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अपना दामाद बनाने की इच्छा जाहिर की और इस प्रकार राजा की बेटी से परसा का तीसरा विवाह हो गया जो कथानक में कुछ इस प्रकार व्यक्त है :

फिर सो रये परसुआ ज्वान,
राजा भोज ने चढ़ाई कर दई रे।
उनकी तुबकें तो चल रई मोरे राम,
गोली तो रिमझिम रिमझिम गिर रही रे।
बे तो लंयें है लुहांगी मोरे राम,
ठूसा तो जेखे लग जांबे रे।
सोंई तुरतई तो कढ़ जायें प्रान,
जब बोले परसुआ रे ज्वान।

आगे बढ़ने पर परसा की, बकरी के बरेदी से रास्ते को लेकर लड़ाई इतनी बढ़ गई कि हाथापाई में बकरी का बरेदी मर गया तब परसा ने मां दुर्गा से उसे जीवित करने की बात की तो मां ने उसे जीवित कर दिया। परसा की यह नेक हृदयी देख कनका नामक लोदन स्त्री ने परसा से विवाह का प्रस्ताव रखा जिसे परसा ने अस्वीकार किया तब उस लोदन ने परसा को जादू से कांटों की झाड़ियों में कैद कर लिया और बहुत प्रयास करने पर भी जब परसा स्वतंत्र नहीं हो पाया तब देवी माँ ने धर्मासाँवरी को परसा की मुसीबत का अहसास करवाया तो धर्मासाँवरी तुरंत शारदा माई को स्मरण कर शक्तियों से परसा के पास पहुँच गई और उसे मुक्त कराया। लोदन स्त्री ने हार मानते हुए धर्मासाँवरी से विनती की कि आप अपने भनेज परसा से मेरा विवाह करवा दें अंततः धर्मासाँवरी ने परसा का विवाह कनका से करवा दिया, परसा शीघ्र ही अपने मामा को ढूँढने निकल जाता है और जाते हुए अपनी मामी को बताता है कि मामी तुम्हारी एक बहु रमना में है, राजा भोज की बेटी नदी पर, और एक जामन झौर में हमारी प्रतीक्षा कर रही है जिसे बुन्देली गायन शैली में इन पंक्तियों में परसा ने धर्मासाँवरी से कहा :

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बोलेने परसा जा कहे रे,
माँई सुनले धरम की रे बात।
तुमाई एक बहुरा बैठी रमना में रे,
बातो राजा भोज के मोरे राम।
अर एक बहुरिया बैठी है नदिया पै रे,
तुम सबखों तो लिड़ियों रे बुलाया।
एक बहुरिया जामन झौर के रे,
जब चल रये परसुआ मोरे राम।

अन्ततः परसा रात-दिन सफर करके जूनागढ की सरहद पर पहुँच गये। वहाँ एक मैदान में अपनी गायों को रोक दिया। उसी मैदान में बेडनी के 989 पड़ों को दंगरिछरिया चरा रहा था गायों को आता देख पड़े भागने लगे तो दंगरिछरिया जो मुरली बजा रहा था, ने परसा से अपनी गायों वहाँ से हटाने को कहा। यहाँ परसा भी मुरली बजा रहा था जिसकी आवाज सुन दंगरिछरिया को अपनी मुरली और गायों की याद आ गई जिन्हे वह 12 वर्ष पूर्व अस्तबल में ही बन्द छोड़ आया था जब दंगरिछरिया ने परसा से उसका परिचय पूछा तब परसा ने बताया कि वह अपने मामा को ढूँढने आया है जिन्हें 12 वर्ष पहले एक जादू?गर बेडनी धोखे से अपने साथ कैद करके यहाँ जूनागढ ले आयी थी। ये 989 गायें और ये मुरली जो मैं बजा रहा हूँ, मेरे मामा की है। और यह सुन दंगरिछरिया के आंसु बह गये और वह परसा को गले लगाकर बोला कि मेरे बेटे, मैं ही तेरा मामा हूँ।

धर्मा साँवरी ओके नाव,
नौ सौ नवासी गड़यें मोरे मम्मां की रे।
जेई चर रई है गड़यें मोरे राम,
जा है मुरलिया मोरे मम्मां की रे।
टप-टप अँसुआ जिन के गिर रहे रे,
नैनों लग रयी रमाने की रे धार।
बाँय तो पकरी भनेजा की रे,
जब छाती से लये है लगाय।

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बोले ने परसा समजाके कहें रे,
मम्मां सुनले धरम की जा बात।

अब दोनो मामा भान्जे बेड़नी के पास उसके पड़े देने जाते हैं और दंगरिछरिया बेड़नी से कहता है कि ये तुम्हारे पड़े हैं, मेरा समय यहां पूरा हो गया है अब मैं अपने घर जाता हूँ। बेड़नी ने दोनों को जाने दिया और रास्ते के लिये नाश्ता रखा जिस पर उसने कुछ ऐसा जादू कर रखा था कि सब दिन चलने के बाद शाम को दंगरिछरिया और परसा वापस उसी बेड़नी के पहुँच जाते थे। जब परसा को यह समझ आया तो उसने अपने मचल से पान निकालकर मामा को खाने को दिया जो उसकी मामी ने मुसीबत के समय खाने को कहे थे। पर बेड़नी पहले ही यह सब जान गई और जादू से सब गायों को पत्थर का बना दिया। धर्मासाँवरी को जब इसकी खबर लगी तो अपनी चारों बहूयों को लेकर वहाँ पहुँची और अपने जादू से परसा, दंगरिछरिया और सभी गायों को वापस जीवित कर दिया। अन्ततः बेड़नी का पाला धर्मासाँवरी से पड़ा, धर्मासाँवरी ने परसाको बेड़नी पर, जो कबरी चील के रूप में परसा व दंगरिछरिया का पीछा कर रही थी, तीर कमान लेकर निशाना साधने को कहा। और स्वयं काली चील के रूप में उड़ने लगी। परसा का निशाना कबरी चील पर लगते ही उसके प्राण पखेरु उड़ गये और अंततः दंगरिछरिया का उस जादूगर बेड़नी से पीछा छूट गया :

वीरन ले-ले कमनियां रे हांत,
कमनियां लै लई परसा ने रे।
बातो चीलई रे बन गई मोरे राम,
रानी तो बन गई कल्लू चील रे।
अर परसा खों रई हैं रे समजाय,
कारी छोड़ कबरी मारियों रे।
बे तो बानई चला रये मोरे राम,
कबरी पै जेने बान छोड़े हैं रे।

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बा तो गिर गई धरन में रे जाय,
संग तो छूट गये बारी बिड़नियां के रे॥

अन्त में परसा ने अपने मामा- मामी के विवाह की बाकी रस्में पूरी कारवाई, अपनी मामी का कंकन, जो 12 साल से छूटा ही नहीं था, छुड़वाया और मामा-मामी ने भी परसा की चारो बहूओं को बुलाकर उनके साथ परसा का विधिवत विवाह करवाया। और अंत में सब खुशी खुशी एक साथ रहने लगे जिसे धर्मासाँवरी के गायन में कुछ इस प्रकार व्यक्त किया गया है :

बे तो कंकन छोरे रिछरिया मोरे राम,
रमना पै के बाँस कटाये हैं रे।
लर्यीं छेवले लकड़िया भगवान,
बाड़ई खों तुरतई बुलाये ते रे।
जब मड़वा तो दये हैं डरवाय,
जब पारीं भाँवरें मोरे राम।
चारई बउओं के ब्याव हो रहे रे,
जब कंकन तो छोरे मोरे राम।
कंकन छूटे बार परसा के रे,
जब हो रयी आनंदी मोरे राम॥¹⁰

वर्तमान समय में धर्मासाँवरी की प्रासंगिकता :

इस लोक गाथा से बुन्देलखण्ड की संस्कृति का अन्दाजा तो होता ही है साथ ही इस लोक गाथा में समस्त पशु प्रजाति के मनोभावों को महत्व दिया गया है। कथानक में चिड़ा-चिड़ी के विवाद और पंचों द्वारा किये गये अनुचित न्यायके कारण चिड़ा-चिड़ी द्वारा आत्महत्या करना यह बताता है कि जो न्यायाधीश के पद पर है उसके लिये न्यायोचित निर्णय लेना कितना महत्वपूर्ण है यदि यह चिड़ा-चिड़ी के मध्य बच्चों के बंटवारे को लेकर विवाद न होता तो उनका धर्मासाँवरी व दंगरिछरिया के रूप में पुनर्जन्म नहीं होता और यह पूरी गाथा जो धर्मासाँवरी और दंगरिछरिया, जिनका जीवन चरवाहा संस्कृति को परिलक्षित करता है,

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हमारे समक्ष नहीं होती।

दंगरिछरिया का पात्र एक चरवाहे की भूमिका में हैं जो अपनी 989 गायों को चराने जाता था और वहाँ सुकून से पेड़ की छाँव में बैठकर मुरली बजाया करता था। ऐसे ही भगवान कृष्ण भी चरवाहे के रूप में अपनी गायें चरते हुए मुरली बजाया करते थे। दंगरिछरिया के पात्र की संकल्पना हम श्रीकृष्ण से प्रभावित पाते हैं।

धर्मासाँवरी जो अपने पूर्व जन्म में वह चिड़िया थी जो अपने बच्चों की जान बचाने के लिए अपनी जान की परवाह किए बिना ही उन्हें जलते हुए जंगल में भी अकेला छोड़कर नहीं गई और उनकी रक्षा हेतु इन्द्र तक का सिंहासन हिला देने वाली प्रार्थना की और अंततः अपने बच्चों के जीवन की रक्षा की और अपनी ममता का परिचय दिया अर्थात् यह सार्थक किया कि पक्षी रूप में भी माँ, माँ ही होती है जो अपने बच्चों की रक्षार्थ ईश्वर को भी अपने निर्णय से हटा सकने में समर्थ रही। लेकिन पंचों के समक्ष वह हार गई जब पांचों ने उसके सब चिड़ा, चिड़ा को देने का फैसला लिया। यह हमें बताता है की उचित न्याय का कितना महत्व होता है।

तीसरा किरदार परसा का है जो इस लोकगाथा का सबसे महत्वपूर्ण किरदार है जिसने धर्मासाँवरी और दंगरिछरिया के मिलन हेतु न जाने कितनी ही मुसीबतों का सामना किया और अन्ततः अपने मामा को जादूगर बेड़नी से स्वतन्त्र कराकर ही दम लिया। इस गाथा में आए सभी पशु-पक्षी तोताराम, मलनियां सांड, सुरहन गौ और सभी गायों व पड़ों का भी पूरे कथानक को रोमांचकारी बनाने में महत्व रहा और इनके मनोभावों को भी स्थान स्थान पर जाहिर कर यह दर्शाया गया कि बुन्देलखण्ड संस्कृति में इनका भी विशेष महत्व है।

आज हम जहाँ निरन्तर आधुनिकता की तरफ बढ़ रहे हैं हम ईसुरी की अपनी बोली में गायन की

परम्परा को गंवार समझने लगे हैं और इसके चलते हम अपनी संस्कृति के और मौखिक परम्परा के बहुत महत्वपूर्ण हिस्से को ही भूलते जा रहे हैं इन लोक आख्यानों के द्वारा बुंदेली संस्कृति एवं परम्पराओं का संरक्षण तो होता ही है साथ ही नई पीढ़ी को सामाजिक समरसता व नैतिकता की शिक्षा भी प्राप्त होती थी। ये लोक आख्यान प्रायः सामाजिक समरसता और सहिष्णुता को बढ़ावा देने वाले होते थे। इसके अतिरिक्त बुन्देली भाषा और साहित्य के संरक्षण और मनोरंजन का महत्वपूर्ण माध्यम था।¹¹

धर्मासाँवरी के लोक आख्यान में हमें महिला सशक्तिकरण भी देखने को मिलता है धर्मासाँवरी और उसकी बहूएं जिस प्रकार दंगरिछरिया और परसा की रक्षार्थ जादूगरनी से दो-दो हाथ करती हैं। यह बुंदेलखंड की महिलाओं की वीरता का परिचायक है। यह लोक आख्यान, नवाचार एवं रचनात्मक सृजनात्मकता का बेहतरीन उदाहरण है।

धर्मासाँवरी में लोकदेवताओं, देवता व देवियों के सभी स्वरूपों दुर्गा देवी, शारदे मां, इंद्र और महादेव को जगह-जगह पर याद किया गया है जैसे- जब दंगरिछरिया धर्मासाँवरी से विवाह करने जाता है तो सभी देवता उसकी बारात में शामिल होते हैं और जब परसा मुसीबत में था तो दुर्गा देवी ने ही धर्मासाँवरी को एहसास कराया अर्थात् बुंदेलखंडी लोकगाथाओं में समस्त देवी- देवताओं को भी शामिल करना इस बात का परिचायक है की बुंदेली संस्कृति भारतीय संस्कृति का अभिन्न अंग है।

धर्मासाँवरी की विलुप्तप्राय स्थिति :

समाज का उच्चस्तर सामान्य लोकहृदय की निश्छल और निरलंकार अभिव्यंजना को सदा से असंस्कृत, काव्यात्मकता से च्युत तथा गंवार मानता था। इस विकृत आदर्शवाद के फलस्वरूप शताब्दियों से मौखिक परम्परा में रक्षित लोकगाथाओं की ओर

हमारी दृष्टि गयी ही नहीं।¹² भारतीय साहित्यकार एवं मनीषी लोकहृदय को तो भली-भांति समझते थे, परंतु वे देववाणी संस्कृत अथवा राजभाषा को ही उत्तरोत्तर परिष्कृत एवं परिमार्जित करने में इतने अधिक व्यस्त थे की उन्हें दूसरी ओर दृष्टि फेरने का समय ही नहीं मिला।¹³ जब एक राष्ट्र में शिक्षा का प्रसार होने लगता है तो वह अपने मौखिक साहित्य का अनादर करने लगता है अपने मौखिक साहित्य को अपनाने में लोग लज्जा का अनुभव करते हैं, और इस प्रकार प्रगतिवान् संस्कृति आश्चर्यजनक ढंग से मौखिक साहित्य को नष्ट कर डालती हैं। ऐसी परिस्थिति में लोकगाथाओं की उत्पत्ति के विषय में विचार करना वास्तव में जटिल समस्या है।¹⁴ सामाजिक समरसता और वर्तमान में प्रासंगिकता के बावजूद आधुनिक समय में मनोरंजन के हजारों नए माध्यम उपलब्ध होने से, लोकगीतों व लोकगाथाओं के चाहने वालों में कमी आई है। नई पीढ़ी इन कथानकों को सुनने के बजाय मनोरंजन के नए माध्यमों सिनेमा, टीवी आदि की तरफ अधिक आकर्षित हुई है जिसके चलते वे कलाकार जो इन लोक कथानकों एवं गाथाओं की प्रस्तुति किया करते थे वे अब कमाई के अवसरों की कमी के कारण इन लोकगाथाओं की प्रस्तुति देने के बजाय रोजगार के नए अवसर तलाश रहे हैं और इसके कारण इन लोकगाथाओं की प्रस्तुति भी अब बहुत सीमित हो गई है।

भूतेश्वर के प्रहलाद सिंह रैदास और उनके भाई वीरेंद्र सिंह इन्हीं लोकगाथाओं और लोकनृत्यों की प्रस्तुति दिया करते थे परंतु अब धीरे-धीरे दर्शकों की कमी ने इन्हें एवं इनके जैसे अन्य बुंदेली कलाकार को आमदनी के नए मार्गों की खोज करनी पड़ रही है। साक्षात्कार में स्वर्गीय प्रहलाद सिंह के बेटे ने यह स्वीकार किया कि उनके पिता के समय जिस प्रकार से इन लोकगीत और गाथाओं एवं नृत्यों को सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रमों में प्रस्तुती के लिए महत्व दिया जाता था

और जनता भी बड़े चाव से इन लोगों की प्रस्तुति देखने शामिल होती थी अब स्थिति बिल्कुल भी वैसी नहीं है इसलिए वह अपने पिता के समान गायक होने के बावजूद बुंदेली भाषा में प्रस्तुति के बजाय हिंदी में गायन करना चाहते हैं।¹⁵ बुन्देलखंडी लोकगाथाएँ लंबे समय से मध्य भारत में बुन्देलखण्ड क्षेत्र की सांस्कृतिक विरासत का प्रमाण रही है। हालाँकि, इन मनोरम कथाओं का भविष्य अब अनिश्चितता में घिरा हुआ लगता है, क्योंकि युवा पीढ़ी की कहानी कहने के इन पारंपरिक रूपों में रुचि कम होती दिख रही है। यूट्यूब और ब्लॉग जैसे प्लेटफार्मों के माध्यम से लोककथाओं के डिजिटलीकरण ने भारत भर में कई पारंपरिक कला रूपों में एक नया जीवन ला दिया है। हालाँकि, युवा पीढ़ी की सहभागिता की कमी बुन्देलखंडी लोककथाओं के संरक्षण में एक महत्वपूर्ण चुनौती है। जनता से इन आख्यानों के अलगाव और जन जागरूकता की कमी ने उनकी आर्थिक और सांस्कृतिक स्थिरता के खतरे में योगदान दिया है। यह एक कटु सच है कि हम जैसे-जैसे आधुनिकता की दहलीज की तरह बढ़ रहे हैं अपने पारंपरिक और सांस्कृतिक लोक कथानको व आख्यानों को निरंतर पिछड़ा हुआ समझते हुए नजर अंदाज कर रहे हैं यही स्थिति धर्मासाँवरी के लोकाख्यान की है कि अब बुंदेली संस्कृति के विद्वान समझे जाने वाले एवं बुन्देली साहित्य से परिचित लोग भी धर्मासाँवरी से परिचित नहीं है यह लेख हमारे बुंदेलखंडी लोकाख्यानों को विलुप्त प्राय होने से रोकने का एक बहुत ही छोटा सा प्रयास है ताकि धर्मासाँवरी भले ही मौखिक परंपरा में निरंतर अपनी अंतिम सांसे ले रहा है परंतु इतिहास के पन्नों में शामिल हो जाए। और इस लेख के माध्यम से ही सही बुन्देली भाषा के लोग धर्मासाँवरी से पुनः रूबरू हो सके। और धर्मासाँवरी की प्रस्तुति बुंदेलखंड में पूर्व की भांति ही बरकरार रहे और अपनी प्रासंगिकता बनाए रखे।

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Studying the Revelation and Critique of Anthropocentrism by an Anthropomorphised Animal in *Fox 8*

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Developments in environmental and animal rights movements and ecocriticism have led to the contestation of the worldview of anthropocentrism. Rob Boddice (2011) describes Anthropocentrism as “human-chauvinism” (p.1), where humans are considered and valued as the centre of all creation, and non-human entities are valued based on their benefits to human beings. This worldview has led to the large-scale exploitation of non-human entities for generations, resulting in the present-day environmental crises. Anthropocentrism is also perceived as the root of the practice of anthropomorphism, which is “the attribution of human characteristics or behaviour” to non-human entities (Parkinson, 2020, p. 1). Anthropomorphic representations are rampant in media and literature and audiences derive amusement and enjoyment from them. But environmentalists and ecocritics have heavily condemned anthropomorphism because the practice dismisses the capabilities, experiences and feelings of non-human entities,

especially animals. Despite this negative criticism, many also believe that the usage of anthropomorphism in media and literature can “play a role in the development of empathetic relationships with other animals” (Parkinson, 2020, p. 2). George Saunders, an American author, is one such believer who attempts to develop empathy for animals in his readers through his writings. In *Fox 8*, an epistolary short story, Saunders introduces an anthropomorphic animal narrator named Fox 8, who addresses the “cruelty” of humans towards non-human entities (Saunders, 2013, p. 32). This paper analyses how George Saunders’ *Fox 8* criticises anthropocentric practices and generates empathy through the employment of anthropomorphism.

The narrator and protagonist of *Fox 8* is a male fox called Fox 8. His letter reveals that he is semi-literate in “[y]uman” language because he knows to speak, read and write in English, though with funny mistakes, after “lerning” it by peeping and eavesdropping into a human family’s

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window where the mother reads stories to her children (Saunders, 2013, p. 10). During his English classes, he comes across various tales that anthropomorphise and stereotype animals as sly foxes, “sleeping and nise and luvving” bears, and wise owls (p. 7). Fox 8 is not very pleased with such false representations of animals. He explains how it is natural for foxes to be clever because that is their only way to survive in the wild and how bears are not friendly creatures in the wild as their anthropomorphised versions in human narratives. Fox 8’s displeasure with stripping animals of their individuality and attaching human qualities and beliefs to them reveals that he seems to view anthropomorphism as “a form of narcissistic projection” of human qualities “that erases boundaries of difference” between different species (Weil, 2012, p. 19). Through Fox 8, an anthropomorphised animal protagonist, George Saunders critiques the false representations of animals because of anthropomorphism, an anthropocentric practice and calls for retaining the individualistic characteristics of animals in human narratives.

After criticising the incorrect anthropomorphic portrayal of animals, Fox 8 draws attention to how humans violate land ethics and cause disruptions in the flow of nature. The concept of land ethic was framed by Aldo Leopold (1968), who states that the human species should respect the “land-community”, which includes “soils, waters, plants, and animals”, instead of being the “conqueror of the land-community” (p. 204). Leopold also records that humans still view land as “property” with economic benefits but do not feel any obligation and respect towards

the land (p. 203). This observation of the human disregard towards land and non-human entities that are part of the land is also exposed by Fox 8 through his letter. Fox 8 writes about the construction of a shopping mall named “FoxViewCommons”, which leads to the cutting down of the “primary forest” that has served as the natural habitat for Foxes like Fox 8 (Saunders, 2013, p.10). The foxes do not just lose their habitat but also the food and water they need to survive. Other small animals that the foxes prey on are killed during the destruction of the forest. The river the foxes drink from gets contaminated because of the release of enormous amounts of dust during the deforestation and levelling of the wild. The aquatic life in the river also perishes because of the accumulation of dust in the water. Many of Fox 8’s friends and elders fall “sik” and die because there is “no fud” (Saunders, 2013, p.12). Such complete destruction of the forest habitat results in the foxes venturing into places with human populations and getting exposed to various dangers like road accidents and animal abuse.

The above-said events, revealed by Fox 8 in his letter, prove that the destruction of the forest ushers in grave imbalances in the ecosystem. The events also illustrate that humans did not consider these severe consequences when they planned to destroy the forest to build a mall. The anthropocentric concepts of profit-making, urbanisation and consumerism take precedence over respecting non-human entities, the space of these entities and their right to exist without any threat or disruption. And when wildlife loses its habitat because of the anthropocentric practices of humans and ventures into urban spaces, the animals

are mistreated and killed. By highlighting this cascade of events through Fox 8, Saunders not only brings violation of land ethics to the forefront but also exposes the hypocrisy of human beings who treat wild animals as intruders of human spaces despite the humans being the land-grabbers encroaching into the habitats of wildlife. The author also insinuated in an interview that *Fox 8*, where a forest is destroyed to build a shopping mall, is a critique of America for being a country with “materialism” as its “animating principle” while its “physical environment is decaying” (Brookes, 2018).

Along with extreme urbanisation in America, Saunders also criticises America’s journey towards becoming a hyperrealistic space. Hyperreality is the “spreading of simulations and the loss of the sense of the ‘real’ and the ‘authentic’” (Solomon et. al., 2006, p. 622). Writing on hyperreality and simulation is a staple in Saunders’ writings. Sarah Pogell (2011) writes that Saunders “surveys the simulated landscape[s] with a sometimes sickened fascination” (p. 461). In *Fox 8*, Fox 8 and Fox 7 venture into the mall to find food and come across trees planted inside the shopping mall. Fox 8 describes how they saw a “small [r]iver” and fake rocks (Saunders, 2013, p. 27). The river mentioned by the fox is probably a human-made water fountain, a mere simulation of natural water bodies. This whole setup that simulates nature looks so real to the foxes that it triggers an urge in them to dig a den. Despite Fox 8’s fascination towards the hyperreality inside the mall, he also notices that the setup is unnatural because the water does not “smell rite” (Saunders, 2013, p. 27). His observation reveals the folly of

humans who, in the name of anthropocentric concepts like modernisation, development and progress, destroy nature and then go on to simulate the very natural world for mere decorative purposes.

The next issue that Fox 8 addresses in his letter is the cruelty and abuse animals face at the hands of humans. An event that traumatises Fox 8 the most and prompts him to write the letter involves the brutal cruelty with which his friend, Fox 7, is beaten and killed by human beings. Fox 8 sees the humans rain “hits,” “kicks,” and “stomps” on Fox 7 (Saunders, 2013, p. 31). He painfully reveals how the humans were “laughing so hard” as if inflicting violence was “fun” and “as if they [were] proud of what they [were] accomplishing” by abusing his fox friend (p. 31). Fox 8 wonders why the “curator” made “the group with the greatest skills the meanest” and moves on to another forest away from human eyes (p. 38). Saunders placed the issue of animal cruelty in the story after he witnessed it firsthand. In an interview with Boris Kachka (2013) titled “George Saunders on Fox 8, Animal Narrators, and Hope for Humanity,” Saunders revealed that he saw his co-workers beat a wounded vulture to death simply because they were bored.

The above instances shared by Saunders in the interview and by Fox 8 in his letter reveal how humans abuse animals just for their short-term amusement and fun while disregarding the physical and mental pains of the animal victims. Their claims that humans hurt animals to entertain themselves are not exaggerated or fictitious. Stephen Kellert (1985), a professor and researcher of social ecology, found that one of the basic attitudes humans exhibited towards

animals was “dominionistic,” meaning they derived satisfaction from having “mastery and control over animals” (p. 180). Kellert and Alan R. Felthous (1985), in their paper titled “Childhood Cruelty toward Animals among Criminals and Noncriminals,” state “generating amusement” as one of the human motives behind animal cruelty (p. 1123). These findings affirm that humans harm animals to show their chauvinism and for the anthropocentric cause of amusing and ridding their boredom at the cost of the lives of other living beings.

Despite making Fox 8 an anthropomorphised animal who knows to read, write and speak human language, Saunders did not do it with the anthropocentric goal of entertaining and amusing his readers. On the contrary, as Taylor Beck (2013) writes, “Saunders’ imaginative power is one of ventriloquism and empathy.” He gives voice to Fox 8 so that humans can gain awareness of how the fox views and experiences the anthropocentric actions of humans and can empathise with animals.

Other than the fact that the fox can use human language to communicate, Saunders has maintained biological accuracy in other aspects of the foxes, like their food preferences, “inquisitive” nature and ability to “adapt to any type of environment” (Petrylak, 2023, pp. 86, 64). Even the way Fox 8 describes objects and activities of humans is funny and unfamiliar. Saunders has employed the defamiliarization technique to bring out the naivety of the fox about human spaces. For example, Fox 8 describes a building as “several big wite boxes,” a phone as a “small box” into which humans speak, and a merry-go-round as a “round thing which had fake horses...

which [were] enslaved and made to go circular, as yung [y]umans enjoy it by being plased on bak of them” (Saunders, 2013, pp. 14, 16, 27).

Hence, as Andrew Johnson writes, Saunders’ anthropomorphic Fox 8 is “sweetly naïve and throws a light on hypocrisies and ridiculousness” of humans. Contrary to humans who practise othering and hierarchise non-human entities, Fox 8 views human beings merely as a more intellectual animal species. Till the end, despite being at the receiving end of the anthropocentrism of humans, he expresses his wish to co-exist with humans. He signs off his letter by advising humans to try being nicer so that they get their happy endings. The representation of an anthropomorphised animal in *Fox 8* by George Saunders is not problematic but leads to the exposing and questioning of anthropocentrism prevalent on planet earth. The narrative promotes and asks for equality, kindness and empathy over disregard and disrespect of non-human entities.

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भारत में कला व समीक्षा की वर्तमान स्थिति

आकाश वर्मा

शोध छात्र

चित्रकला विभाग

दृश्य कला संकाय

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भारतीय कला जगत में जितना महत्व कला का है, ठीक उतना ही महत्व कला समीक्षा का भी है। क्योंकि कला व समीक्षा एक दूसरे के पूरक हैं। कलाकारों की कृतियों को विश्लेषित एवं परिभाषित करने में कला समीक्षक की महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका होती है। जिस प्रकार मानव समाज में कलाकार अपनी कला के माध्यम से समाज में हो रहे बदलाव व समस्याओं की अभिव्यक्ति कर समाज से संबंध स्थापित करने का प्रयास करता है। ठीक उसी प्रकार कला समीक्षक कलाकार की कला की सामान्य भाषा बनकर उनके संबंधों और प्रयासों को अधिक मधुर व आसान बना देता है। कलाकार तथा कला समीक्षक विभिन्न क्षेत्र अथवा पृष्ठभूमि से आते हैं। तथा इन दोनों कला विद्वानों से यह अपेक्षा की जाती है कि वह कला के प्रति तीक्ष्ण नजर रखें और कला इतिहास एवं समाज में उत्पन्न हो रही समस्याओं का गहराई से अध्ययन करें। परंतु पिछले कुछ दशकों से वक्त के साथ बदलते कला के स्वरूप, उदासीकरण की शुरुआत एवं पूंजीवादी व्यवस्था ने कलाकार एवं कला समीक्षा के अस्तित्व पर तीखा प्रहार किया है। जिसके परिणाम स्वरूप कला व समीक्षा की वर्तमान स्थिति असंतोषजनक होती जा रही है। आधुनिक भारत में आजकल आधुनिकता के नाम पर उन कलाओं का प्रदर्शन किया जा रहा है, जिसका समाज से कोई स्पष्ट

संबंध दिखाई नहीं देता तथा कलाकार ऐसी कलाकृतियों का निर्माण कर रहा है, जिसे देखकर ऐसा प्रतीत होता है जैसे अनपढ़ के सामने अंग्रेजी भाषी।

वैसे तो कलाकार अपनी कला प्रदर्शनी के लिए स्वतंत्र है। किंतु उनकी सराहना समाज तभी करेगा जब वह समाज के हित में उपयोगी होगा। कलाकार समाज की मान्यताओं के विपरीत वह ऊटपटांग विषय प्रस्तुत करने के लिए मुक्त नहीं है।

जब कलाकार की विकृत कृतियां दर्शकों की समझ में नहीं आती हैं और वह कलाकार से उनकी कला को जानने की इच्छा रखते हैं तब कलाकार की तरफ से सामान्य सी प्रतिक्रिया मिलती है कि यह आधुनिक कला है, सबके समझ में आने वाली चीज नहीं, और ऐसी स्थिति में कलाकार कुछ भी समझाने के लिए तैयार नहीं होता, ऐसा लगता है जैसे कलाकार स्वयं कोई विशिष्ट या असाधारण प्राणी हो, भले ही उस कलाकार एवं उसकी कला का कोई स्तर या मूल्य न हो। अब वर्तमान स्थिति यह है कि दर्शक इस तरह के प्रदर्शनियाँ देखकर ऊब चुके हैं। तथा प्रदर्शनियों में उनकी सहभागिता ना के बराबर हो गई है, अथवा समाप्त हो गई है। शायद अब कलाकार अपनी कृति से ज्यादा अखबार में रिपोर्ट के प्रकाशन को अपनी मुख्य उपलब्धि मानकर संतुष्ट हो जा रहा है।

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वर्तमान समकालीन कला में यह विचार एवं चिंतन का विषय है कि आधुनिक कलाकार क्यों ऐसी कलाकृतियों का निर्माण कर रहे हैं जिसका संबंध ना कलाकार से है, ना समाज से है और ना ही राष्ट्र से, क्योंकि कला का अर्थ सिर्फ आनंद ही नहीं है बल्कि समाज एवं राष्ट्र कल्याण से भी है। अब ऐसा लगता है कि मानो कलाकार अपनी विद्वत्ता खोकर भेड़ चाल चल रहा हो, क्योंकि पाश्चात्य कला जगत में जिस भी कलाकार की सफलता की खबर अखबारों मैगजीन पुस्तकों के माध्यम से मिलती है उसी से प्रभावित होकर यहाँ का कलाकार भी ऊँचे ऊँचे सपनों की दुनिया में खोकर, बेखबर, अनायास एक रट पकड़ कर काम कर रहा है। और यह स्थिति अब भारतीय कला की प्रगति के लिए भयावह है क्योंकि अब भारतीय समकालीन कला में सामाजिक मूल्यों की कम ओर आर्थिक मूल्यों की महत्ता अधिक हो गई है।

आज चित्रकला को एक खास वर्ग की कला बनाने और आम जनता से इसे काट देने के पीछे भारत में अंग्रेजी कला समीक्षा की एक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रही है। भारत में समकालीन कला का विकास मुख्य रूप से अंग्रेजी भाषी व्यक्तियों अखबारों पत्र पत्रिकाओं एवं कला समीक्षकों और कला प्रबंधकों के माध्यम से ही संभव होता रहा है। भारत में आधुनिकता के नाम पर अब कलाकार हो या कला समीक्षक, ये दोनों ही समाज एवं राष्ट्र की आवश्यकता को ध्यान में रखकर कलाकृति का निर्माण नहीं करता, बल्कि पूंजीपतियों एवं कला व्यापारियों की आवश्यकता को ध्यान में रखकर काम करता है।

कला समाजोन्मुख न होकर अर्थोन्मुख हो चुकी है। कला समीक्षा समाजनिष्ठ न होकर व्यक्तिनिष्ठ हो गई है। नव शिक्षित समाज में हर जगह कला आलोचना में तर्क के स्थान पर व्यंग्य तथा सौंदर्य संबंधी निर्णय के स्थान पर आकर्षण का बोलबाला है। उनके लिए किसी पाश्चात्य समीक्षक का फैसला कला के मामले

में अंतिम शब्द होता है। कला हो या समीक्षा दोनों ही विश्व व्यापी संकट से जूझ रहे हैं तथा उनकी आवाज बहुत कमजोर होती जा रही है और यह अब अल्पकालीन सांस्कृतिक आलोचना की पृष्ठभूमि में घुलती जा रही है।

वर्तमान समीक्षा की बात करें तो समाचार पत्र, ब्लॉग, कैटलॉग, ब्रॉडशिट, कला पत्रिकाओं आदि के माध्यम से कला आलोचना की दृश्यता तो बढ़ गई है लेकिन एक बौद्धिक अनुशासन के रूप में यह मर रहा है। आज दोनों ही विधाएं मात्र अपने व्यक्तित्व का चित्रण एवं प्रदर्शन करना चाहते हैं।

स्वतंत्रता वहीं तक सार्थक है, जहाँ तक वह समाज के लिए उपयोगी है। आधुनिक कला प्राचीन मान्यताओं एवं परंपराओं में परिवर्तन चाहती रही है। परंतु आज जिस परिवर्तित रूप में हम लोगों के सामने हैं इसका अधिकांश स्वरूप कलाकार एवं समाज के लिए अपरिचित बन गया है।

यद्यपि आधुनिक कलाकारों ने वर्ग विशेष का ही विरोध कर नया रास्ता अपनाया था, तथापि आज की कला निश्चित रूप से पुनः वर्ग विशेष की कला बनकर रह गई है। इस वर्ग विशेष में भी मात्र व्यापारी अथवा धनाढ्य वर्ग ही आधुनिक कला का संरक्षक बन गया है। कलाकारों को बस अब इस बात की चिंता रहती है कि इस धनाढ्य वर्ग को कैसे आकर्षित करके इनका सहयोग प्राप्त कर खरीदे हुए कला समीक्षकों से अपने पक्ष में समीक्षा लिखवाएं।

आज आधुनिक कला के प्रचार प्रसार के कारण देशी एवं पारंपरिक कलाओं का अस्तित्व भी खतरे में पड़ गया है। समकालीन कलाकार एवं कला समीक्षक पारंपरिक एवं लोक कलाओं की उपेक्षा करते हैं जबकि वर्तमान कला की उन्नति के लिए उन्हें पारंपरिक एवं लोक कलाओं का पूर्ण ज्ञान होना चाहिए था।

कलाकारों, कला समीक्षकों एवं कला व्यापारियों के मिली जुली साजिशों ने कला के अस्तित्व को

खतरे में डाल दिया है, तथा आम कला प्रेमी कला से विक्षिन्न हो गए हैं। आज कला के जिस स्वरूप को हम तेजी से उभरते देख रहे हैं, वह वैश्विक होने की होड़ में फिक्सिंग के आसान रास्ते पर गतिमान है।

कला के प्रति पूंजीवादी सोच के कारण कला प्रबंधक, क्यूरेटर व कला व्यापारी शीर्ष पायदान पर हैं। जबकि कलाकार एवं कला समीक्षक सबसे निम्न स्तर के रह गए हैं। जिन्हें कला बाजार की अन्य तमाम शक्तियाँ कठपुतली की तरह निर्देशित और संचालित कर रही हैं।

आज आधुनिक भारत में कलाकार हो या कला समीक्षक उन्हें आधुनिक कला, समकालीन कला एवं कला समीक्षा के वास्तविक अर्थ एवं परिभाषा पर गौर करने की आवश्यकता है, क्योंकि आधुनिक या समकालीन कला से तात्पर्य सिर्फ अमूर्त कला के निर्माण एवं व्याख्या मात्र से ही नहीं है बल्कि यह अपने कृतित्व के साथ-साथ अपनी वास्तविक परिभाषा को भी प्रदर्शित करें। वर्तमान समय में समकालीन कला के अर्थ को समझने के लिए सबसे पहले समकालीनता पर विचार एवं विमर्श करना होगा। समकालीन कला से तात्पर्य 21वीं सदी में निर्मित कला से है। भारत में समकालीन कला एक सांस्कृतिक संवाद है जो व्यक्तिगत और सांस्कृतिक पहचान, वर्तमान समाज उसकी स्थिति समस्या, परिवार, भावना, विचार एवं राष्ट्रीयता जैसे बड़े संदर्भ ढांचे पर विचार करता है।

कला व समीक्षा का महत्व उसके मौलिक सिद्धांत, परंपरा एवं सांस्कृतिक धरोहर के संरक्षण से भी है। अगर हम कला समीक्षा या आलोचना के मौलिक सिद्धांत के बारे में बात करें तो कला समीक्षा या आलोचना की अपनी व्याख्या शामिल होती है। लेकिन यह इतिहास सौंदर्यशास्त्र या सिद्धांत के रूप में साझा सिद्धांतों पर आधारित होता है। कला समीक्षा या आलोचना सदैव से इतिहास एवं वर्तमान में कई संस्कृतियों के लिए महत्वपूर्ण रही है।

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ललित कलाओं में मुख्यतः पाँच विधाएं होती हैं और इन पाँचों विधाओं में समीक्षा या आलोचना के मुख्यतः चार स्तर शामिल होते हैं वर्णनात्मक आलोचना, विश्लेषणात्मक आलोचना, व्याख्यात्मक आलोचना और मूल्यांकनात्मक आलोचना। किसी भी चित्र की समीक्षा या आलोचना करते समय विषय, परिप्रेक्ष्य, सामग्री, छाया-प्रकाश, वर्ण आदि कारकों के बारे में सोचना आवश्यक है और इसी प्रकार साहित्य में संरचना, प्रतीकवाद, चरित्र-चित्रण, निर्देशन जैसी चीजों के बारे में सोचना पड़ता है। परंतु अब वर्तमान स्थिति यह है, कि इन सभी विधाओं में समीक्षा या आलोचना के सभी स्तर धुंधले होते जा रहे हैं।

अब यह सच है अथवा हमें यह स्वीकार कर लेना चाहिए कि, वर्तमान कला बाजार न तो कला के मौलिक और न ही आलोचनात्मक लेखन को बर्दाश्त कर पायेगा, जो उसके हित में ना हो। ललित कला अकादमी एवं राष्ट्रीय आधुनिक कला गैलरी जैसे राज्य कला संस्थाओं को आदर्श रूप से आधुनिक और समकालीन कला पर प्रयोगात्मक और आलोचनात्मक दृष्टिकोण के लिए मंच प्रदान करना चाहिए। अफसोस की बात है कि आज कला एवं समीक्षा निजी कला दीर्घाओं के क्षेत्र में सीमित हो गई है। और राज्य कला संस्थान अधिक से अधिक निष्क्रिय होते जा रहे हैं।

आवश्यकता है कि अब कलाकार एवं कला समीक्षक दोनों को ही अपनी मौलिकता और आलोचनात्मकता को खोए बिना समकालीन कला परिदृश्य की प्रासंगिकता के लिए खुद को फिर से खोजना होगा। तथा अब हमें कला व समीक्षा को वैश्विक से पहले क्षेत्रीय व महानगरी स्तर पर समझना होगा। उपनिवेशीकरण तभी हो सकता है जब हम पश्चिम के प्रति कम आभारी हो और बिना किसी सभ्यतागत दावे की सराहना किए यह समझ ले कि हम कहाँ से आ रहे हैं। हमें अपने अतीत को उसी कलात्मक तथा आलोचनात्मक नजरिए से देखना

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होगा जिससे कि हम अपनी समकालीन स्थिति का आकलन कर पाए एवं उसमें आवश्यकता अनुसार बदलाव व परिवर्तन ला सके जो समाज, राष्ट्र एवं वैश्विक स्तर पर हितकारी व लाभकारी सिद्ध हो सकें।

निष्कर्ष :

अब यह सच है अथवा हमें यह स्वीकार कर लेना चाहिए कि समकालीन कला में कला के प्रति प्रयोगात्मक दृष्टिकोण एवं वर्तमान कला बाजार न तो कला के मौलिकता और ना ही आलोचनात्मकता लेखन को बर्दाश्त कर पायेगा, जो उसके हित में न हो। स्थिति यह भी है कि आज कला एवं कला समीक्षा दोनों ही विधाएं निजी कला दीर्घाओं के क्षेत्र में सीमित होती जा रही हैं जिस कारण उनकी पकड़ ललित कला अकादमी एवं राष्ट्रीय आधुनिक कला वीथिका जैसे राज्य कला संस्थाओं से कमजोर होती

जा रही है, हमें कला व कला समीक्षा को पश्चिम के नजरिया से पहले भारत के क्षेत्रीय एवं महानगरी स्तर पर समझना होगा और बिना किसी सभ्यतागत दावे की सराहना किए हमें अपने भारतीय पारंपरिक कला शैली एवं कला सिद्धांतों को बड़े ही तर्कपूर्ण ढंग से अध्ययन करना होगा और फिर जो शैली एवं सिद्धांत उभर कर सामने आएगी उनमें शायद परंपरागत शक्तिशाली तत्व विद्वान रहेंगे।

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Cultural Critiques and Poetic Techniques : A Comparative Study of John Agard and Nissim Ezekiel's Poetic Voices

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Introduction :

Since the dawn of postcolonial era, the Empire has been writing back in various languages and unique voices throughout the world. Tools and techniques that sharpen the ideas of national identity and strengthen the shields of resistance were forged to perfection. Across genres, writers have observed, studied and logged the experiences and impacts of oppression, years and generations after the liberation. This paper initiates a comparative study of the poetry of John Agard and Nissim Ezekiel in order to understand their unique styles, themes and techniques, thereby seeking to gain a deeper insight into the ways in which they have contributed to the world of poetry and how their work continues to resonate with readers today.

John Agard (1949-present) is a Guyanese poet known for his powerful and thought-provoking poems that often challenge traditional narratives and explore themes of identity, history and cultural heritage. Born in British Guyana in 1949, Agard stepped into poetry and literature

since his childhood. After publishing a few works, he moved to Britain, where he continued to communicate with his audience through his unique style of writing. He has always tried to spread the word and create awareness, especially amongst the younger generation about the rich heritage of the Caribbean islands. With more than fifty published collections, one can observe a distinct, yet subtle change in his works during different periods. While most of his earlier works were primarily focussed on resisting the oppression of his times, his later works are more targeted for the younger audience. Through these changing focuses, his style filled with humour and subversion remains the same. For example, in his earlier poems like "Listen Mr Oxford Don" (1967), or "Half Caste" (2005), he cleverly critiques the dominance of Western education and challenges the idea of other races being seen as lesser by subverting stereotypes. Whereas in his later works for children like "Goldilocks on CCTV", he recreates old characters

from nursery rhymes and fairy tales in the contemporary period, while indirectly touching upon matters like technological advancement and privacy. As observed accurately by Pavlína Flajšarová (2016), “Despite being humorous and witty, Agard’s poetry does often address the serious issues of acculturation, immigration and Caribbean-British diaspora.” (p. 128) And in techniques, “Agard’s ability to probe conventions and, indeed, tackle racism, is done with a light touch for younger readers and with irony and humour for older readers.” (IBBY UK, 2019)

While John Agard spread his poetry with purpose across the Britain, Indian postcolonial poetry flourished under the influence of many writers, especially Nissim Ezekiel (1924-2004), lauded as the father of Modern Indian English Poetry. Nissim Ezekiel was pivotal in creating a postcolonial and modern style of poetry that paved a new course of style for South Asian English poetry as a whole. As Surjit S. Dulai (2000) rightly states, such poetry “is modern in the sense that it breaks away, in content and in style, from the English poetry of the region as it was during the colonial period.” (p. 123) While the poetry of the colonial days “imitated the British models, was inflated in language, and artificial and abstract subject matter.” (SS Dulai, 2000, p.123) He was known for his insightful lens towards the modern society and daily life of people grappling to adapt to the rapidly changing society. In “Of Mimicry and Man” (2012), Homi. K Bhabha expounds on that “mimicry is the “most elusive and effective” (p. 122) through its ability to mediate the competing concerns of stable identity and dynamic history.” This poetic experiment that leaves “enough

room for ambivalence, confusion and incomplete association with that which is being mimed” is clearly an objective that runs through both of their works.

This paper considers the comparative methodology under the framework of Postcolonial theories and concepts in order to unearth the vivid and unique similarities and contrasts that these poets share. The key concepts and themes in postcolonial theory like Othering, hybridity, diaspora, mimicry, national and cultural identity, double consciousness, power dynamics and historical revisionism run throughout the poetry of Agard and Ezekiel. An in-depth analysis of their poetry seeks how the works of two poets with similar intentions and style deliver their message in identical platters yet contrasting flavours.

Cultural Reflections Through Contemporary Verse :

While analysing the poetry of John Agard and Nissim Ezekiel, it is ideal to examine the recurring topics they explored, as well as the parallels and variations in their techniques and approaches. Agard’s poetry provides insightful analysis of the experiences of British immigrants during both the colonial and postcolonial periods. His poetry offers fresh readings of historical events, particularly from the perspective of immigrants, particularly those from the Caribbean. But as we analyse his poetry across the years, we also see that he adapts to a commentary of his surroundings and cultural reflections, similar to what Nissim Ezekiel did. This comparative study has the potential of a much larger landscape, but as an initial step, this research paper studies select works of both poets from across their literary career in order to draw the parallels.

The first point of notable connection between these poets is their style and technique. David Dabydeen comments that Agard's poetic style is characterized by its vibrant use of Caribbean Creole and rhythm, which brings the oral tradition of his culture into the written form. His language is dynamic, playful, and subversive, effectively challenging the norms of standard English. Similarly, critics of Nissim Ezekiel, such as Bruce King has noted that his poetry is marked by its precision of language and the remarkable ability to use simple, everyday language to convey complex ideas, making his poetry both accessible and profound. It is very evident through their poems that these poets used the language as a powerful, yet subtle tool for resistance. The use of broken English or the Indian dialect was a purposeful and brilliant craft of subversion which aimed at decolonisation of the mind and also acknowledgment of their cultural and national identity despite the colonial influence. In "Listen Mr Oxford don," (1967) Agard directly approaches the subject of language while using the broken English:

I don't need no axe
to split/ up yu syntax
I don't need no hammer
to mash/ up yu grammar

The deviation from standard English grammar and "yu" instead of you in this stanza is an example of Agard implementing the Caribbean creole into poetry. In this poem, says that he doesn't need an axe or a hammer, neither does he have a gun or a knife, but he's a "wanted man", and "is a dangerous one" and he has been accused for using the language wrongly-"Dem accuse me of assault/on de Oxford dictionary."

Agard employs vivid and forceful imagery along with the Caribbean dialect to demonstrate that words have the power to function as weapons, underscoring the notion that a pen is mightier than the sword. Nissim Ezekiel also similarly uses the Indian dialect in many of his poems to give a precise portrayal of his Indian characters. The poem "Very Indian Poem in Indian English" (1976) starts with the lines:

I am standing for peace and non-violence.
Why world is fighting fighting
Why all people of world
Are not following Mahatma Gandhi,
I am simply not understanding.

In the poem, we see a patriot talking about the contemporary scenario around him, which is again, a typical Indian behaviour. For the Indian audience, the poem creates a relatable figure they encounter on an everyday basis, in and out of their homes. With specific usages like "fighting fighting" and "I am simply not understanding", Ezekiel carefully reflects the common usages in Indian English. As Anisur Rahman notes in "Form and Value in the Poetry of Nissim Ezekiel", Ezekiel often captures how the "men in our country directly translate their thoughts into English. The habit of complaining, repetitive strain, use of present continuous, dropping of articles, using superfluous words are some of the characteristic features of Indian English." (1982, p. 76) While the use of language and observation is similar, it has to be noted that these poets are different in their directness of matter. Agard's poetry is more explicit in its intention whereas Ezekiel offers a more indirect approach and thought-provoking observation.

Folklores and myths are long standing pillars of a culture that shapes the perspective of its people. By reimagining or reinventing folklores and myths, writers often try to draw light on sideline characters that suit the current social setting, or highlight the parallels between the past and the present, thus creating relatable scenarios for the public and giving them an opportunity to be the roles that their ancestors played out in their era. This dialogue between the past and the present often ignites a sense of hope and national identity among the oppressed. John Agard uses myths and folklores extensively in his poetry, and it is evidently one tool he carries through his poetry for adults and children alike. Out of the innumerable accounts of myth in his poetry, one notable character is Ananse or Anancy, “the trickster legend of Ashanti mythology of the Akan in West Africa.” (Darroch, 2009, p.97) Agard has published a collection of poems “Come down Nansi” (2000) as a tribute to this mythical character, thereby taking an opportunity to recreate and retell the stories by combining the present issues. In the poem “Anancy’s Thoughts on Colours,” (2000) Anancy’s choice to reject all other colours in favour of remaining “original dark” portrays a bold affirmation of its identity. Here “dark” can be interpreted as a symbol of Black identity, resilience and a connection to the ancestral roots. Similarly, in the poem “How Auntie Nansi Singularly Widened the Debate on Plural Identity,” (2000) Agard attempts a satirical portrayal of identity and multiculturalism by placing ‘Auntie Nansi’ in the forefront. Agard refers to Nansi as “proof of plurality,” and she asks the host “Am I Afro-Celto-Euro-Indo/or just beautiful byproduct of

cosmos?” – this pivotal question in the poem can be seen as Agard’s attempt in constructing and deconstructing identities in the public space, especially within post-colonial and diasporic spheres. The poem also urges the readers to accept the fluidity of identity rather than trying to label and categorise it further. According to Fiona Darroch, Anancy “is the agent of social anamnesis for the children and, through them, the whole society.” (2009, p.101)

Nissim Ezekiel’s treatment of folklores has been more about bringing out the “Indianness” rather than an inspirational re-creation. Ezekiel’s stand can be correlated with the concept of ambivalence, coined by

Swiss psychologist Eugene Beleur and discussed by Bhabha within the post-colonial paradigm. Bhabha describes ambivalence as the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizers and colonized. But it can be applied in multidimensional ways, and it allows the colonized to have or accept elements of both cultures (Bhabha 160). (Singh et al., 2022, p.51)

Ezekiel’s stand on folklores and myth is more observational, where he tries to portray the beliefs of people, but in the poem “Visitor” (1965), he seems to take the stand that “folktales and superstitious mythology are a part of any culture, but when it starts affecting human lives adversely, it should be questioned.” (Singh et al., 2022, p.51)

Alienation and diaspora are yet another aspect that Agard and Ezekiel share in their poems. As Pavlína Flajšarová (2016) comments, “Agard provides an alternative view on history by pointing out the most relevant social discrepancies between the

white and immigrant Britons.” (p. 128) Her observation on Agard being a diasporic individual attempting to profit from “‘internal colonization,’ is also applicable to Ezekiel, as they both hold a mirror to the current society and the ways “the metropolitan countries discriminate against disenfranchised groups in their midst.” (Spivak, 2013, P. 61)

Agard and Ezekiel also share the theme of the plight of common people, and the everyday ennui and monotony of their lives. A close study of the poems “The Clown’s Wife” by Agard and “The Railway Clerk” by Ezekiel shows the emotional and psychological pressures of people who are confined to certain roles. It reflects the mind of the common man who quietly struggles with unexpressed sorrows, carrying out repetitive tasks to survive the capitalist world while trying to find small moments of peace in their everyday lives.

Conclusion :

John Agard and Nissim Ezekiel’s poetic technique and social critique is a unique example of the collective human experience of diaspora and postcolonial urban life, irrespective of the geographical and cultural differences of the poets. While John Agard opted for a more direct tone of activism through his sharp yet satirical poetry, Ezekiel chose to defamiliarize the familiar, in the postcolonial Indian society. Use of creole, regional dialects and conversational tones, especially monologues are common between the poets as they both generously use humour and irony to hold a mirror to the society. They create what Bhabha calls the “Third Space” in present terms where “The in-between space does not produce

merely a combination of two opposites. It is ‘creative, malleable indeterminacy involving feelings of simultaneously repulsion and desire that exist at the interface between self and other.” (Bhandari, 2022, p. 172) Thus, we can say that poets like Agard and Ezekiel together weave a third space that expands across the geographical borders where new cultural identities born out of hybridity is embraced as we move forward.

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Redefining Romantic Narratives : A Contemporary Postmodern and Psychoanalytic Study of Jeffrey Eugenides' *The Marriage Plot*

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Entanglement and enigmatic bafflement alongside the inflicting societal anticipation are all not novelty yet ever yielding trapdoors of contemporary life. Eugenides sounds as a pioneer of blending the story line and the narration in a way that the contemporary readers run and process the like cognitive tension and complications while reading the text *The Marriage Plot*. Firstly, the conservative familial structure and myths that are gradually fling into the frame that form a so called happy home which is getting brutally annihilated here by having the postmodern approach on the very impulse of human race i.e., love. Eugenides iterates and reiterates that love does not work the idealized way as that of contemporary era.

By reading Maddy's propensities, we presume her as a woman of vividness. To the reader's surprise, she is clueless about her future, the same perplexities of every

contemporary woman and relied absolutely on Leonard and her future depends considerably if he gets scholarship in forthcoming days. She tosses herself into chaotic circumstances and prefers perils which comfort her surprisingly. "She preferred to think of her current boyfriendless state as salutary and head-clearing. But when she found herself wondering what it would be like to kiss a guy who chewed tobacco, she began to worry that she was fooling herself" (Eugenides 30). Right from Leonard, Thurston and Mitchell or her other short time lovers have given her love which never fulfills her quest.

Lacan's psychoanalytic concept has a term called "desire". He recounts that this desire is always unconscious and often gets confused with drive. Contemporary life is the pull between desire and drive. Or in other words drive is what by mistake gets addressed as desire. His theory on

desire sounds very strange for he says that desire is an enigma which never can be attained. There is no sense of satisfaction an individual can get out of his own unconscious desire even by attempting considerable efforts to make it content. He ridicules this desire by saying the very process of identifying it fails terribly. He finds the desire as knowingly unattainable.

All in vain, the urge sticks the psyche and proves that it gets so far a pseudo self-attainment. Human psyche is quite complex that it often perplexes desire with a drive. Unfortunately, it fails to realise that there are drives which shove a person to meet out his desire. In this sense, drive can be called an aid or catalyst which is of course there in the process of making a psyche to attain desire without affecting or altering the true sap of it. Indeed, desire is a demand which is ardent and stubborn to get things in a way as desired exactly as it is imagined ever. He also produces a term to explain the despair of desire which is "object petit a" i.e., object of the desire. Here object is not the ultimate destination where this desire leads to but the reason or cause which drives the desire to fortify further.

Lacan rightly calls object as "lack". It is because due to this lack, the desire gets intensified on and on to make it satisfiable. To correlate this with the novel, here Leonard, Madeline and Mitchell are all the people who are madly under the pursuit of desire. The distinction happens where they unordain from the trajectory of desire. Leonard initially finds his desire that he feels satisfied by getting into a job for he never values his relationship or love life. He thus makes a blunder by having a wrongly identified desire. Finally, he proves

Lacan's theory that he is unsatisfied and leaves his desire once and forever on knowing the futility of his pursuit.

Madeline proves this concept true by having pseudo desires which are temporary. She gives chance to her love life by yielding herself with many men. Unfortunately, they all end up in great fiasco. Her desire for Leonard makes her to skip her very graduation; to torment in solitude to put up with mood swings of Leonard's disorder and finally she gives up her way of desire that she is not satisfied.

Indeed, she is not correlating love with libido yet she finds it futile and barren in heart whomever she shares her love life. This transition of never settling love and exhausting desire to have a love life is what the complexity fitly portrayed by Eugenides. "Suddenly Madeline's happiness diminished, usurped by the feeling of peril... Once the first avowal has been made, "I Love you" has no meaning whatever" (Eugenides 63).

Leonard's low libido and doubts about Madeline can be explained through Freud and Lacan's castration theory. Freud mentions that the "castration complex plays a decisive part in the formation of character traits and neuroses" (Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality 155). Leonard's bipolar disorder makes him feel powerless, which reflects a symbolic castration. His low libido becomes a sign of his struggle with masculinity and intimacy, leaving him unsure if he can be the partner Madeline deserves.

Lacan's idea of castration as recognizing "lack" is also relevant. Lacan writes, "castration means that jouissance must be refused so that it can be reached on the

inverted ladder of the Law of desire” (Ecrits 324). Leonard’s lack of sexual desire makes him feel incomplete and deepens his fear that Madeline might not truly love him. He sees her as an ideal partner he cannot fully satisfy, which makes him feel even more inadequate.

Maddy’s sister wants to divorce her husband just because of her new mom duties. It is understandable that she deals with post-natal depression. Feeling unloved by the spouse sounds ordinary for the priority pyramid shuffles to keep the new born above all. It is weird that a mother detests the baby and questions what it is called filial or innate love oozes out of mother. The contemporary hunt for beauty standard is what makes motherhood as something ugly. Distinguishably, she craves for her parents’ attention being an adult. She should not put up with when Maddy is given a car as a present on her graduation. She just waits to it lose all that hasten her into a vicious circle of emotions, love and accountability.

Leonard is no less than this for he finds it a piece of cake to divorce Maddy anytime though he knows that he lives only on the hope of her love. He quotes Islamic practice of divorce to mean that it is as easy as them to bid bye to her just saying, “I divorce thee thrice” (Eugenides 293).

Contemporary life is highly known for this sort of escapism and instant detachments. The commitment string attached to the relationship sounds and looks scary. Escapism and easy one-night stand give them the momentary impulse of being loved and looking irresistible make them more alive. Still, it is self-contradictory to

pursue the sort of life and mourning over or longing for one true love of their life. Mitchell offers 25 paisa to a beggar in Calcutta by saying that Christ has taught him to do charity.

“...”Jesus said you should give to whoever asks you”, Mitchell said.

“Yeah, well,” Mike Said, “Obviously Jesus was never in Calcutta” (Eugenides 281).

But he is given a reply that fortunately Christ had never been to Calcutta. This is the apex of postmodern transition in humanitarian aspect. People are at high expectation to benefit for their small act of kindness.

Mitchell’s pilgrimage or an educational expedition to India envisages this. At Calcutta, Mitchell serves as a volunteer and distributes medicine to the patients over there. He is probed why does God have a face and why is there is a concept called trinity if there is one omniscient power above. Post modernity has both the extremes: advances and non-paralleled discretion on meta and non-congenial celestial bodies. But the base and the dilemmatic wavering of belief laugh at the corner all the time. The society is having an endless discrimination and prejudice irrespective of discretion or intellectual standards one owes to the society. The feeling of castration is yet another transition of postmodern era.

Leonard sleeps with various women every single night. “After his last exam, he threw a party in his room, passed out in bed with a girl he couldn’t recognize the next morning...It colonizes every cell of his body a concentrate of anguish seemingly secreted, drip by drip, into his veins like a toxic by product of the previous days

of mania” (Eugenides 215). He has high libido that he makes out three times a day to the extreme that he forgets the face of the woman with whom he spends the night. Men often find the equivalent of love as libido. Leonard grows venomous detest and abhors Maddy as he has low libido. The Postmodern love has this complexity to acquire love from the spouse; greatly by means of love making.

Thirdly, the transition of religion and medicine in the postmodern minds Mitchell is taught to say “Have mercy on me, a sinner” (Eugenides 285) by Fanny in his subconscious chanting. Mitchell throws his faiths in test every now and then but once he hears the nun saying, is it not a true charity and service to god is she leaves for a week of holiday at Goan beach. In the Bible, it is always told that a servant can never serve two masters at the same time. If so, he loves one and detests the other. It is an allegory that nobody can ever be celestial and carnal at the same time.

The postmodern approach on religion is to serve God and not to leave the worldly desires at any cost.

We are fool enough when the same but pessimistic feed opinionates, alters and deconstructs men in the name of social media/ any recurrent recent knowledge. Neither Mitchell in his religious pursuit nor Leonard in his intellectual pursuit wins at the end. This middle and unsettled restlessness are what the creole of transition the contemporary postmodern life offers everyone.

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Bioshock : A Quest for Utopian Posthumanism or Dystopian Transhumanism?

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The fantasy of transcending the ‘limiting’ human capabilities and transitioning from a mere human to posthuman has been present in the discourse of literature and other mediums since time immemorial. Technology is often associated as a catalyst for prosthetic enhancements to aid this transition and drive evolution forward in human’s next stage of development. Since their inception, video games have been considered the overt medium materialising posthuman playgrounds. Hailed as “a fictional harbinger, an experiment of what our potential posthuman future” (Backe, 2015) might look like, Ken Levine’s *Bioshock* directly thematises posthumanism and its cyborgian strand, a quest for transhumanist utopia, inevitably resulting in a dystopian reality.

The present paper analytically reads *Bioshock* based on two conceptual perspectives. Firstly, the paper looks at the overt posthuman prosthesis possible through video games as a posthuman playground in general and the direct post human thematisation imbricated in the selected work. Secondly, the paper further explicates the

not-often-delved transhumanist strands in analysing the utopian and dystopian settings enacted in the chosen text.

An extensive review of literature on *Bioshock*’s primary narrative on human enhancement discourses possible via technology as the only catalyst semantically attributes the cyborgian strand to a posthuman utopia, which inevitably turns into a posthuman dystopia. However, conceptually analysing the text reveals a transhuman dystopia that starkly contrasts the all-inclusive field of posthumanism. Therefore, this paper views *Bioshock* through a transhuman utopian/dystopian lens as opposed to its commonly attributed conventional theoretical analysis of posthumanism. For this purpose, it is crucial to demarcate both conceptual frameworks of posthumanism and transhumanism.

Posthumanism as an ontological, philosophical, cultural and political approach decentres the traditional “speciesist” (Wolfe, 2003, p.8) humanist conception of the individual as an autonomous, sovereign, coherent and self-willed subject with agency. It situates human beings as a

network of assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), exchanges and crossovers coevolving with the environment and technology. While traditional humanism focuses on the 'Being' of the individual self, critical posthumanism looks into the idea of "becoming with" (*When Species Meet*, n.d., p. 27), the "permeable I" (Gilbert, 2002, p.211) or the "human-machine interface" (Hayles, 1999, p.35). Methodologically, posthumanism is generally classified into popular posthumanism and critical posthumanism. The former looks at the technological modifications to bridge the lacunae in existing human abilities and discards the idea of human beings as companion species (Haraway, 2016). This notion works in tandem with the theory of transhumanism, which Cary Wolfe defines as "an intensification of humanism" (2010, p.xv), where technology is an integral part of humanity's future. *Bioshock* as a text can be "quilted" (Žižek, n.d., p.3) under the popular posthumanism with which transhumanism aligns. On the contrary, the latter, as an inclusive category, critiques the trans/humanist ideals, which bear similarity to the white mythological ideology of human exceptionalism and instrumentalism from other living and non-living components in the environment. It considers technology as a mere prosthesis and humans as congeries, an emergent condition, a hybrid of machine and organic body (Nayar, 2014), a non-unitary subject, a network of connections embedded in a consistent feedback loop with the environment.

In *What is Posthumanism?* Cary Wolfe (2010) denotes this cyborgian strand of posthumanism as what is now being called transhumanism, which stands in direct contrast to the general conceptual frame-

work of the former theory. To substantiate this, he borrows Joel Garreau's definition of the transhumanist strand of posthumanism and states thus:

[T]he enhancement of human intellectual, physical and emotional capabilities, the elimination of disease and unnecessary suffering, and the dramatic extension of life span. What this network has in common is a belief in the engineered evolution of 'post-humans,' defined as beings 'whose basic capacities so radically exceed those of present humans as to no longer be unambiguously human by our current standards... Transhuman is their description of those who are in the process of becoming post-human. (Wolfe, p.xiii)

Wolfe (2010) renders posthumanism as something which comes before and after humanism in general. Since the modern era, roughly dated post-1600s, humanism delves into the idea of the human being as a self-conscious and rational subject with freedom of choice and autonomy. The idea of man being traditionally entailed as a universal male sovereign was of prominence. The Enlightenment ideals sealed the human-animal schism by placing the rational human as the centre of the universe.

Humanism works in tandem with the philosophies of Objectivism and libertarianism advocated by philosophers like Ayn Rand in her works *The Fountainhead* (1943) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957). Of her transhumanist ideology, Rand articulates, "My philosophy... is the concept of man... with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life . . . [and] productive achievement as [the] noblest activity, and reason as [the] only absolute" (*Atlas Shrugged*, 1996, p.1074).

Rand advocated for Objectivist libertarianism and neo-liberal capitalism, emphasising technology and individuality as liberators of humanity. Her ideas of human subjectivity, individualism and technology as a means to the future align with liberal humanism, where technology is often treated as playing a significant part in the foundation of posthumanism and transhumanism. As the text chosen for analysis, *Bioshock* treats *Atlas Shrugged* as its *ur-text*.

Digital games, in general, provide a posthuman prosthetic experience, unlike any other medium before it. With the exception of interactive movies, hypertext and the like, video games, as a part of the New Media, simulate a posthuman playground through immersion and interactivity. It is one of the early mediums that instantiates (Boulter, 2015) the posthuman fantasy by providing a technological prosthesis that temporarily extends the human subject beyond its bodily constraints. As Melnic and Melnic (2018) notes, “digital games offer a posthuman experience in the sense that they displace the human self as the centre of discourse and of agency” (p.168).

In “A Game Chooses, A Player Obeys”, Edmond Y. Chang (2017) accounts how “[l]ike the transhumanist fantasy of technological transcendence, video games offer a similar promise of the right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness, and the liberal humanist virtues of choice, free will, and success” (p.231). *Bioshock* develops its narrative by thematising the concept of posthumanism. The game’s website entices the player with a posthuman experience as thus:

[Y]ou’ll ... be forced to genetically modify your DNA to create an even more deadly weapon: you. Injectable plasmids give you super human powers: blast electrical currents into water to electrocute multiple enemies, or freeze them solid and obliterate them with the swing of a wrench. . . . No encounter ever plays out the same, and no two gamers will play the game the same way ... Biologically modify your body: send fire storming from your fingertips and unleash a swarm of killer hornets hatched from the veins in your arms ... Turn everything into a weapon: the environment, your body, fire and water, and even your worst enemies.

(*BioShock™ on Steam*, n.d.)

Lauded as one of the canonical video game texts which have been showcased in various institutional exhibitions, including the Smithsonian American Art Museum for its critical and cultural importance (Parker & Aldred, 2018, p.7), *Bioshock*, developed by 2K Games is a first-person shooter. It provides a digital simulation set in 1960 against a posthuman dystopian society. Rand’s notion of Objectivist libertarianism also found its rebirth in the 1960s, when she propounded for complete individual freedom from the government. In *Ayn Rand and the Posthuman: The Mind-Made Future*, Ben Murnane (2018, p.140) describes how *Bioshock* is “probably the most serious and consequential fictional interrogation of Rand’s ideas, while remaining in the realm of popular media.”

The narrative develops in media res as the protagonist, Jack Wynand, crash-lands his plane in the mid-Atlantic Ocean and discovers the utopian underwater city of Rapture. At the time of his arrival, all

those who remain in Rapture are genetically modified splicers, Little Sisters, Big Daddies and a few business magnates vying for power. As the player enters a bathysphere, he is directed by the figure Atlas through radio. He understands that the once utopian city has gradually devolved into a dystopian anarchy and is currently in the midst of a civil war. Atlas biotechnologically mutates and manipulates the protagonist in his quest to gain power against Ryan. The city's dystopian descent is gradually revealed to the protagonist/player through audio diaries gathered in subsequent levels.

On the surface level, the story interpellates (Althusser, 2014) the player as the posthuman protagonist, who needs to navigate Rapture as a city built on the Objectivist philosophy that upholds individualism and laissez-faire free market economy by its founder, Andrew Ryan. The latter figure serves as Rand's digital anagram and Rapture is the new Galt's Gulch referred to in *Atlas Shrugged*. As a business mogul, Ryan built the city in 1946 after the Second World War to ensure the best minds of the world found a place to thrive, where technology and business survive without restrictions from the government. This echo Gulch in *Atlas Shrugged* which Rand deems as the new Atlantis, "[t]he Isles of the Blessed... underground, hidden in the heart of the earth ... shining on the bottom of the ocean ... sunk to escape the reach of them ... a sight of such kind that when one had seen it, one could no longer wish to look at the rest of the earth" (Rand, 1996, p.147). The "underwater Art Deco city-state utopia" (Chang, 2017, p.231) of Rapture becomes the new Atlantis.

Rapture elevates man as the centre of the universe, a proposition held by humanist philosophy where individualistic aspirations are privileged over collective good. In tune with Rand, Ryan considers technology to be the liberator of humankind, where the future form of evolution is possible only through technological aids. This echoes transhumanism's positive notions of technology to ensure human sovereignty, agency and free will, which ultimately overcomes the human form. This ideology is established in the beginning of the game, the protagonist comes across a banner (fig.1) which propounds the importance of individual sovereignty.



Fig.-1 : A statue of Andrew Ryan holding a banner advocating Humanism and Transhumanism, (Alejandro, 2016)

Bioshock diegetically replicates a posthumanist utopian fantasy of genome enhancement. For instance, biohacking technologies called ADAM, created by the Rapture scientist Brigid Tenenbaum, are used to genetically splice up the citizens' genes to help them attain their ultimate posthuman capabilities. ADAM functions like stem cells in the human body and rewrites the citizen's DNA. However, its continued use to splice up the human genome to entail superhuman capabilities also leads to its addiction, which further increases their demand and mass-scale production. Continued gene splicing also

leads to the physical and psychological deterioration of the citizens, which turns them into Splicers who continually crave ADAM. This further leads business moguls like Frank Fontaine to seek new ways to profit from its creation, resulting in the creation of a specific population called Little Sisters whose stomach lining is implanted with sea slugs to produce ADAM. As orphaned girls, they belong to the lower rungs of the underwater city and are genetically conditioned to gather ADAM from corpses. The Little Sisters are protected by the genetically enhanced, muscular Big Daddies.

At the outset, the video game establishes its posthuman thematization. As Jack starts the first level, he is tasked with the goal of both charging a malfunctioning door and killing enemies using electricity. To fulfil this task, the video game provides the player with the posthuman prosthesis of injecting plasmids to recode the average human gene to enhance superhuman capabilities where all the enemies can even be killed at once by electrifying water. Plasmids are serums processed by ADAM, which Ryan endorses to help citizens achieve their ultimate potential in line with transhumanism, an idea that works in tandem with his objectivist notion of agency and perfection. This posthuman genetic modification is not optional but needs to be achieved to drive the narrative forward. Apart from this, plasmids grant the player other posthuman abilities like telekinesis, being able to shoot bees, fire or ice from hands to demolish enemies. Posters and advertisements endorsing different plasmid usages are interspersed throughout the game, inviting the player to participate in the posthuman fantasy to achieve human

perfection. One of the first missions is the encounter with the plastic surgeon Dr. J. S. S. Steinman in his dilapidated Medical Pavilion, who sees the goddess Aphrodite as his muse. The walls are decorated with marketing campaigns for surgery procedures targeted towards women to achieve the ideal perfection in beauty. He starts hallucinating about visions from his aesthetic muse, the Greek goddess Aphrodite, who advises him thus: "I'm here to free you from the tyranny of the commonplace. I'm here to show you a new kind of beauty." I asked her, 'What do you mean, goddess?' 'Symmetry, dear Steinman. It's time we did something about symmetry...' (2K Boston, 2007). He formulates a transhumanist utopian aesthetic idea of beauty in his new quest for symmetric perfection. Eventually, Steinman as a medical surgeon transitions to Steinman as an artistic surgeon. He endorses the use of ADAM over mere plastic surgery. The "Surgery's Picasso" audio diaries reveal how he starts experimenting on his patients against their will to achieve his vision of god-like perfection to asymmetry obsession as thus:

Steinman : Four-oh silk and ...done.

Nurse : The nose looks terrific, Doctor Steinman ...Doctor?

Steinman : You know, looking at it now... I didn't realise how much her face sags... Scalpel...

Nurse : Excuse me?

Steinman : Scalpel!

Nurse : Uh, doctor, she's not booked for a face-lift...

Steinman : Let's just come in here and...
starts whistling

Nurse : Doctor... Stop cutting...
Doctor, stop cutting... Get
me the chief of surgery! Get me
the chief of surgery NOW!!!
(2K Boston, 2007)

Steinman parallels himself with Pablo Picasso, who propounded asymmetry through Cubism. Unlike realism, which focuses on accurate perfection in the representation of art, Cubism abstracts the subject through distortions, imperfections and asymmetry. The audio diary reveals the transitions of a transhuman quest for utopia (fig.2) into a dystopian world (fig.3) as thus :

When Picasso became bored of painting people, he started representing them as cubes and other abstract forms. The world called him a genius! I've spent my entire surgical career creating the same tired shapes, over and over again: the upturned nose, the cleft chin, the ample bosom. Wouldn't it be wonderful if I could do with a knife what that old Spaniard did with a brush? (2K Boston, 2007)

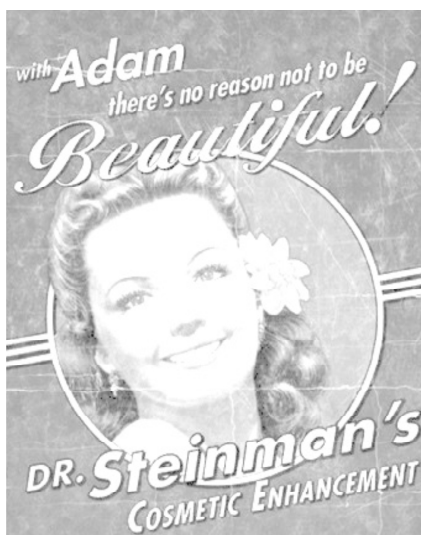


Fig.-2 : Surgical marketing campaigns initially targeting women before by Steinman as a medical surgeon (MegaScience, n.d.)



Fig.-3 : Office of Dr. Steinman – Patients distorted surgery favouring asymmetry by Steinman as an artistic surgeon (Mainframe 98, n.d.)

Steinman's transition is a microcosmic allegory for the transition of Rapture as a city in general.

In all the scenarios mentioned above, *Bioshock* portrays how a quest for a potential posthuman utopia aided purely by technology, i.e., a venture for transhumanism, can result in a dystopia when pursued without checks. The overuse of ADAM and plasmids without moderation leads to the creation of Little Sisters and Big Daddies for mass-scale production for other devolved citizens like the Splicers. This biotechnical genome enhancement specifically holds true to critical posthumanism's critique of transhumanism in specific and humanism in general. All the citizens of Rapture, including the protagonist, ultimately end up as mere pawns, biotechnologically mutated and manipulated in the civil war caused by the power play between Ryan and Atlas. The transhumanist genetic alterations, in the end, pull out the humanness of the citizens who end up as mere war machines in the civil

war, a zombified liminal state as neither wholly human nor machine, straddling between life and death. Thus, the digital text simulates what our potential future would have looked like had the society blindly endorsed transhumanism supported by libertarian Objectivists like Rand. Thus, even though the digital text chosen for study thematises posthumanism on a surface level, at its core, it is a direct indictment of transhuman utopia turned dystopia.

The Randian parallel denotes how, as opposed to a future-driven Atlantis, one could end up in a Rapture. As Donna Haraway proposes in *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People and Significant Otherness*, humans are “companion species” (Haraway, 2016, p.4) that organically “co-evolves” (Nayar, 2014, p.187) with the living and non-living, technology included.

In conclusion, although *Bioshock* deals with posthuman themes on the surface level and as a digital text, it fulfils the posthuman prosthetic possibilities by offering a posthuman playground; on a deeper note, it is a direct testament to transhumanism. It simulates an alternate history by materialising a possible future if transhumanism endorsed by Randian libertarian Objectivism has been blindly followed. Thus, *Bioshock* critiques how a quest for a posthuman utopia pursued without checks can result in a transhumanist dystopia.

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Inculturation and Identity : Knanaya Christianity in Kerala through the Lens of Cultural Adaptation

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Introduction :

Inculturation in Christianity refers to the gradual integration of cultural characteristics and norms into Christian theology, beliefs, and practices, fostering meaningful contextual expressions of faith (*Faith and Inculturation*, 1989). This process has gained global significance, particularly in Africa and Asia, where cultural diversity enriches Christian missions. The Knanaya Christians of Kerala, a distinct subgroup within the Indian Syrian Christian community, exemplify this phenomenon. The study of Knanaya Christians in Kerala provides a valuable lens through which to explore the concept of inculturation-particularly how religion, culture and identity intersect within a specific historical and socio-cultural context. As part of the Syrian Christian or St. Thomas Christian community, the Knanaya claim a unique heritage, tracing their origins to Syria. According to their traditions, they migrated to Kerala, specifically Kodungallur, in AD 345, under the leadership of Thomas of Cana (Logan, 1887).

This migration narrative, however, has been subject to varying interpretations. Non-Knanaya and secular scholars often attribute the migration to religious persecution in the Persian Empire, while Knanaya narratives suggest spiritual, trade or mercantile motivations (Brown, 1982). The multiplicity of these accounts highlights the challenge of constructing a definitive history. This study examines the rituals and traditions of the Knanaya Christians, emphasizing their historical and socio-cultural significance as vehicles for inculturation. By analyzing their oral traditions, rituals, and customs alongside scholarly works, this research aims to uncover how these elements reflect the broader dynamics of identity formation and cultural adaptation.

The research employs a multidisciplinary methodology, analyzing both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include oral narratives, such as folk songs sung during the Knanaya weddings and

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“*Panan Pattu*”- the songs about legends sung by a caste of *Panar* who were appointed by rulers to propagate their heroics to the common masses- and legends alongside community rituals and customs. Secondary sources include seminal works such as Stephen Neill’s *History of Christianity in India*, Mathias Mundadan’s and Joseph Thekkedath’s historical accounts, and William Logan’s *Malabar Manual*. Despite their varying perspectives, these sources converge on certain key aspects of Knanaya history, such as the migration led by Thomas of Cana. Richard Swiderski’s anthropological study, *Blood Weddings: The Knanaya Christians of Kerala*, provides critical insights into the community’s narratives, particularly their emphasis on endogamy and exclusivity. Swiderski argues that the Knanaya’s distinct identity evolved through their self-perception as a “chosen” community, reinforced by oral traditions and symbolic practices like “blood weddings” (Swiderski, 1988b).

Historical Context and Knanaya Origins :

The Knanaya community’s migration narratives are rich but speculative, blending historical evidence with oral tradition. While the migration’s motivations remain unclear, it is crucial to focus on how these narratives inform the community’s identity and cultural practices. For instance, the division between Knanaya (Southerners) and other Syrian Christians (Northerners) is not merely geographical but reflects broader socio-cultural dynamics, including caste influences in South Indian society (Swiderski, 1988a).

Scholarly discourse on Knanaya origins reveals diverse perspectives. Swiderski

critiques the Knanaya claims of racial purity and exclusivity, while Shalva Weil highlights parallels between the Knanaya and Jewish-Christian traditions (Weil, 1982). These perspectives underscore the community’s complex interactions with caste structures and local rulers. For example, the 72 privileges allegedly granted by Cheraman Perumal (Vellian & Kurian, 2007) elevated the Knanaya to a status comparable to upper-caste Hindus, enabling them to maintain their cultural and religious practices without overt missionary functions. It is an interesting irony because communities within the Hindu religion were considered untouchables and outcastes while communities like the Jews, Knanya, and other Syrian Christians were given higher positions in society. This study will engage with these varying interpretations to present a balanced view of Knanaya history, rituals, and traditions. By doing so, it aims to contribute to the broader scholarship on inculturation and its role in shaping cultural identity.

Rituals and Socio-Cultural Practices :

Rituals and customs are integral to the transmission of history and culture within communities, serving as tangible expressions of identity and continuity. For the Knanaya Christians, such rituals underscore their claims of ethnic, cultural, and religious uniqueness. This section organizes the rituals thematically for enhanced clarity and understanding and discuss the process of inculturation and cultural adaptation.

Marriage Customs :

***Kaipidutham* (Clasping of Hands) :**

During the betrothal ceremony in the church, the paternal uncles of the bride

and groom clasp hands to witness and affirm the covenant between the couple (Kolapparambil, 2005). This act signifies familial responsibility and respect for elders. Marriage, in this context, is not merely a union of individuals but an extension of familial relationships, reflecting the communal nature of the Knanaya society. Parallels can be drawn with similar customs in Muslim and Hindu marriages, highlighting the interplay of local cultural influences.

***Mailanchi Idal* (Smearing of Henna):**

This pre-marriage ritual takes place at the bride's home, where henna is applied to her hands and feet. While henna application is a widespread practice among Indian Hindus and Muslims, the Knanaya community reinterprets it through a biblical lens. Songs such as the *Mailanchi Pattu* narrate the story of Eve's transgression and its connection to the ritual, symbolizing purification and redemption (Lucas, 1910). The integration of a biblical narrative bridges local Hindu traditions with Christian theology, underscoring the process of inculturation.

***Chandam Charthal* (Beautifying the Groom) :** On the eve of the wedding, the groom undergoes a ceremonial shave performed by a barber in the presence of relatives and guests. Historically, this marked the groom's transition to adulthood. Today, it holds symbolic significance, reflecting the community's adherence to tradition. The barber's role, a continuation of Hindu customs, emphasizes the Knanaya's interaction with local caste practices. The recitation of privileges granted by Cheraman Perumal during the ceremony underscores their claims of elevated status (Lucas, 1910).

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***Ichapad Kodukkal* (The Feeding of Rice Pudding) :** This ritual occurs after the henna ceremony for the bride and the beautification ritual for the groom. Elders feed the bride and groom rice pudding three times, symbolizing blessings and the transmission of love from one generation to the next (Kolapparambil, 2005). This custom mirrors Hindu traditions where food plays a central role in ceremonies, showcasing the cultural synthesis inherent in Knanaya rituals.

Funerary Practices :

Blessing on the Deathbed : The practice of elders bestowing blessings on their children mirrors the biblical account of patriarchs like Jacob blessing their descendants. This custom underscores the Knanaya's emphasis on familial continuity and the sacredness of generational transitions. The similarity with Jewish practices further reflects their claims of shared heritage (Kolapparambil, 2005).

Symbolic Elements in Rituals :

Dress and Ornaments : Traditional attire and jewellery hold significant cultural and symbolic value. Knanaya women wear white garments and distinct earrings called *kunuk*, while men's attire includes white *mundu* and shawls. The design of the *thali* (wedding medallion), featuring a cross and 21 beads, blends indigenous Hindu elements with Christian symbolism (Kolapparambil, 2005). These sartorial choices assert their identity while revealing local cultural adaptations.

***Margamkali* :** This traditional dance, performed by 12 men representing the apostles, narrates the life and mission of St. Thomas. Its choreography around a brass lamp symbolizing Christ and its

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lyrical content with Syrian and Tamil influences highlight the community's synthesis of Christian theology with local cultural expressions (Kolapparambil, 2005).

Comparative Insights :

The Knanaya's rituals show striking similarities with neighbouring communities, such as the Cochin Jews and Hindus. For instance, the *pandal* (wedding canopy) resembles the Jewish *huppah*. At the same time, the practice of drinking from the same glass aligns with Jewish wedding customs (Jussay, 2005). While, the dress, ornaments, and language were heavily influenced by the Hindu traditions observed in Kerala, especially by the higher castes when we look at the privileges given to them like the right to hold processions on elephants accompanied with five musical instruments called "Panchavadyam." These parallels suggest shared socio-cultural contexts and challenge the Knanaya's claims of absolute uniqueness. However, they also reflect their ability to adapt to local customs while maintaining a distinct identity.

Endogamy and Identity : Endogamy serves as both a cultural practice and a socio-political tool for the Knanaya to preserve their exclusivity. While it reinforces group identity, it also raises questions about inclusivity within the broader Christian community in India. This exclusivity highlights the dual nature of inculturation—as a means of adaptation and a mechanism for preserving distinctiveness.

Adaptation vs. Preservation : The tension between adapting to local customs and preserving religious identities is central to Knanaya practices. While their

rituals incorporate Indian and Jewish elements, they also assert their superiority and uniqueness. This balance between adaptation and preservation reflects the broader challenges of inculturation in pluralistic societies.

Conclusion :

The Knanaya Christian community is restricted to their cultural practices to keep their identity. But at the same time the influence of local culture like marriage and funeral ceremonies are evident to adopt in their practices. The Knanaya community's rituals and socio-cultural practices illustrate the complexities of inculturation, where adaptation to local customs coexists with the preservation of distinct identities. These rituals are not merely traditions but assertions of their historical and cultural uniqueness. By blending Jewish and Indian elements, they provide a rich example of how communities navigate identity in pluralistic contexts. Further, studies could explore comparative analyses with other Christian communities in India or examine how globalization impacts these rituals. Such research would deepen our understanding of religious adaptation and identity in an increasingly interconnected world. The study proves that the respect towards local culture and identifying with that culture is found in the religious symbols and practices of Knanaya Christian community in Kerala.

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Acqua Perks : An Insight into the Healing Aspects of Water in Louisa Hall's *Speak* from a Blue Humanistic Perspective

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Water, a source of life in and around the world covers much of the earth's landscape. This remains the main reason why earth is called the blue planet. From time immemorial the civilization of mankind was along the banks of rivers. This again is the major reason why it is a source of inspiration for poets and writers across the globe. Oceans and seas are always a wonder for mankind which in turn make them to speculate, what on the other end of the ocean is. It always makes man curious to explore in order to know the unknown and to imagine the fascinating world that is not known to humans.

The nineteenth century fiction across the world sow the seeds of the imaginative underwater world that was at times out of the reach of the mariners and explorers. Poets and writers came up with various fictitious stories about the world on the other side of the water. That was an imaginative world that mankind could not have

thought of. This is very much reflected in the works of writers across the world from Homer's *Illiad* and Shakespeare's *Tempest* to the writers of modern world.

The term Blue Humanities came up with Steve Mentz a literary scholar, around the year 2009. Initially it began as a small branch of Eco literature and in course of time it developed enough to stand alone as new branch of literary studies.

Rachel Carson, who did as much as anyone to open up the marine sciences, was inspired by the arts and literature. She wrote in 1951 that humans were destined to return to the sea from which they had emerged eons earlier, but this time they would do so "mentally and imaginatively." This cultural turn to the sea began in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and by now there is a vast trove of writing, painting and music that awaits examination under the rubric of what English professor Steve Mentz would like us to call the "blue humanities" (The Blue Humanities 1).

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The major focus of Blue Humanities is on literature in and around water, ranging from salty oceanic water to fresh water, consolidating to term “Planetary water”. (Poetics of Planetary Water 1)

The oceanic ecosystem is at its own risk with explorations in the ocean is at a rise. Man’s curiosity to know the ocean and the unknown oceanic world along with its environment is creating havoc to the equilibrium of the planet. With the development of new technology to explore, the ocean bed and deep coral reefs are at a greater risk. The mining of various minerals from the land poses various health hazard to man. To stand aloof from the health problems of mining the sites are slowly shifted from land to remote ocean beds. Ocean is viewed as a lab to test the technological advancements of human. As Abhisek Ghosal states in his book *Remapping Energopolitics*:

ocean-one of the major support systems of the Earth-stands at risk not only because oceanic resources are inordinately exploited by one section of human beings who hardly care for the complex and densely mediated marine ecosystems which in turn take care of the entire humanity at large but also because the ocean is understood to be a teleological upshot of human practices of social construction which calls for taking into account the ocean as a constructed reality. (16)

A vast amount of ocean and the aquatic life is taken out for the sophisticated coexistence of humans. The depletion of earths minerals along with various life forms on earth is a major sign of earth moving to a state of warning. This is caused by a condition that is man made and can only be halted with man’s mindful intervention. “The Earth is undergoing a period of intense

techno-scientific transformations. If no remedy is found, the ecological disequilibrium this has generated will ultimately threaten the continuation of life on the planet’s surface” (The Three Ecologies 27).

Blue cultural studies focus on the aesthetic side of ocean, which is under continuous attack by invaders. Ocean is the mother of billions of living creatures, ranging from phytoplankton to the mighty blue whale. It offers a very different ecosystem to the creatures in it, which at times cannot be artificially created. The combination of all the creatures along with the mighty ocean has the capability of bringing sea changes on the earth. All the transformations that happen on the land is based on the ocean present around the lithosphere. The changes happening in the aquatic environment of the sea can influence the climate of the earth. It is from ocean, air carries water molecules as vapours and hence rain is formed. The influence of ocean is one among the deciding factor of the climate change and season change. Ocean is the base for rain to happen and storms to occur. It is only when the equilibrium of the ocean is maintained earth will be free from the unexpected storms and cyclones hitting the land, which in turn leaves thousands of lives stranded every year.

Blue Humanities focuses on water and the world around it, especially the world of humans associated with water. Human approach to water can be defined as binary, being both utilitarian and aesthetic. While the nature of water seems to have been constant throughout ages as Jules Michelet says “The element which we call fluid, mobile and capricious does not really change; it is regularity itself.

What is constantly changing is man” (La Mer 11). It is man and his attitude that change. He wants to see the fluid as he wants to see, as food, as source of life, and in many other forms he wishes. On one side man tries to invade sea through various developmental projects across the world and on the other hand sea invades land as a nightmare to man’s developmental projects. The mighty water across the world presents to mankind what he wants to see. For the invaders, it is in turn an invader to. For the explorers it provides the ground for exploration. For the unhealed soul of man, it becomes the healer who can take all the pain and suffering out of human.

Louisa Warren Hall is an American novelist and poet. *Speak* is her second novel published in 2015. This novel throw insight into the complex relationship between human and machine and the devastation it causes. Then novel brings out the consequences of machine in man-made life in the world. Man out of his dreams has created for himself a life of comfort. Charles Ealy praises *Speak* as “a complicated but compulsively readable tale, blending the voices of people who wonder whether they’ll ever be heard or, more importantly, understood” (Austin American Statesman).

The sea is presented in *Speak* as an eternal healer, that can wipe out the agony of the human soul like sponge wipes the water out. The healing aspect of sea is celebrated by writers across the centuries. As Kate Chopin writes in *The Awakening*:

The voice of the sea is seductive; never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander for a spell in abysses of solitude; to lose itself in mazes of inward contemplation.

The voice of the sea speaks to the soul.
The touch of the sea is sensuous,
enfoldng the body in its soft, close
embrace (18).

Sea holds a very important place in the life of Gabby, a young teenager in *Speak*. She faces the consequence of Stephen R Chin’s innovation. Man is always drawn to modern technology and the technological aspects. All these technological aspects are made with the aim of adding comfort and ease to human life. But how far it accomplishes its goal in the individual life of mankind, is in fact a question to be answered. The fact remains that the impact of modern technology on individual human life varies from person to person. For one, it can be a blessing while for the other it may be a curse. In the novel Gabby falls victim to the modern technological innovation called “Babybots” (*Speak* 14). It affects her life so intensely that she ends up being in a condition called freezing (46).

Nature is hardly a part of Gaby’s daily routine. She never goes out of her development. She lives in a manmade artificial world filled with concrete jungle, which at times leaves her to wonder how various forms of nature looks like. She hears about them all through various stories, but never experiences them in her day-to-day life. This is evident in the conversation that Gaby shares with a chatbot, who is her only companion throughout.

Gaby: Some of it’s hazy. When I had my babybot, I never really paid that much attention. For recess we played on the golf course. Obviously it wasn’t real grass. There was a pond, with water the color of mouthwash. We couldn’t touch it. I don’t even know if it was hot or cold. I’d stand with my babybot, leaning over the railing to show her the water (98).

It is through the conversation with Gaby's chatbot that Gaby gradually learns about the world out. And this world is surely out of her reach. Through answering the bot's curious questions, Gaby comes to realise the vast amount of water present on earth, which is called ocean. Ocean is always beyond her imagination. The only possibility of knowing the ocean for her is through the internet searches.

I read books on how waves are formed, how they spiral up and down in the same numerical patterns. I found pictures of the Pacific, waves rising like they're looking over each other's shoulders to see how the others will break. My babybot asked me questions, so I had to look things up. I could tell she wanted to learn more, and she already knew a lot. She told me stories about pilgrims crossing the Atlantic Ocean. There was one pilgrim girl that she knew every detail about: the blue of her ocean, and how it turned black during storms. How it stretched out to the sky. After I heard her stories, I went online and found ocean poems: 'the wrinkled sea beneath him crawls,' 'the shattered water made a misty din,' and all that. You know what I mean. Repeating that stuff for my babybot, it was almost like we were traveling there. Then I'd look around and remember all over again where I was, and that I'd be here forever (99).

The way Gaby comes to know about the external world through internet searches makes her learn about the world unknown to her. She finds herself alien in the new world.

Gaby: It's sad, because when you do Internet research, you realize that there are places with smells and textures that aren't on the development. I wouldn't have known, since we haven't driven since I was a baby. I only found out about them online. That's how I learned that

the sand pit was raked into fake ripples that imitated actual waves. I showed the sand to my babybot and told her it was almost like the real ocean, so she had points of comparison (100).

Babybot her companion, is the only person with whom she feels connected emotionally. The relationship that Gaby shares with her bot is so unique that she cannot live without them. The moment the bot is out of her life, she feels that she is being engulfed by crippledness both emotionally and physically. At first, she loses her ability to communicate and connect with people, then her ability to move around. The crippledness that the artificial world creates, makes her move out in search of a therapist. She knows ocean is that therapist, and it could touch her soul with so much ease. The first time she sees it, it takes her out of her breath. She says:

then suddenly, like a light at the end of the tunnel, an opening appeared. One narrow gap. Through it, there was this expanse of flat, brown water, leading out to the sea. That's what it looks like: flat, brown, leading out to the sky. My heart sank when I saw it. We made our way to the parking lot that was just about on the beach. It State where is still in my wheelchair. Part of me wanted to cry. I never really thought that it could be brown. I had lived my whole life and development, and this was one big three at the outside world thought to give me (302).

This is the first time that Gabby sees vast amount of water in her life. Even the water seems to her in brown colour. The artificial and technology world that she belongs to fails to make her understand the real nature of ocean. She is more associated with machine than humans and nature, that even the ocean appears to be a flat metal for her. The emotional strugg-

les that Gabby and other children encounter, which cannot be solved by a therapist over comes through the association with ocean. The blue mighty water can do it in matter of seconds. It makes her feel fresh and lively once again. True to the saying, sea has the power to cures all ailments and one such way is thalassotherapy.

Thalassotherapy is one of the most common water therapies from Europe. The term thalassotherapy comes from the Greek word Thalassa meaning sea. It is a sea water-based treatment process that covers medical treatment for various illness. According to MUNTEANU Constantin and MUNTEANU Diana:

In Thalassotherapy, sea water is used and characterized by its high mineral content, high density, and its chemical composition rich in chlorides of mainly sodium besides magnesium, calcium, potassium and iodine, along with marine peloids known as limes. These applications include their application with systematic methodic exposure to sun, total or partial application of hot sea sand, and marine climatotherapy (based on atmosphere), temperature, humidity, wind, air pressure, etc. (Thalassotherapy Today, 440)

Gaby's visit to the sea provides thalassotherapy effect on her body and soul. The water and sand together wipe her torments. Thus, providing with new perspectives in her life, that eventually makes her to feel the fresh air, gasp at the setting sun and wonder over yonder mystical patters of clouds. The sea provides her with a new life filled with hope and peace. The therapeutic nature of sea enables her to lead

kindly towards a peaceful coexistence with fellow humans.

Each time, the splash of tide comes up to touch the feet of man on the shore, it takes away the pain, agony and suffering of mankind. No matter how long he has endured the pain, nature particularly the ocean heals his bruises. It is the healing aspect of water that tranquilises mankind since the time immemorial.

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Semiotic Analysis of The Movie 'Solo': A Mythological Perspective

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Introduction :

Cinema has entertained people for many generations across the globe. It is the combination of images that are moving together and creating the magic of cinema. Indian cinema also have the history of more than 100 years, and our cinema also evolved. Cinema has always been reflected in society and vice versa. As a country which has a rich cultural and traditional background, our mythological stories are also reflected in our cinema. Cinema helps to resonate our myths, legends, and traditional ideologies. Indian mythological stories are very relevant in traditional mode of storytelling, which was the primary mode of knowledge in the pre-technology era. story telling evolved after the modernization and digitalization of the world, and now cinema plays a vital role in storytelling. In the new age of Indian cinema that focuses on commercial content, mythological ideologies are also getting some space in our new-age screens. Movies like SOLO tried to blend those mythological concepts with commercialized plots.

Over the years of cinema, the approaches to understand and read the art and

science of cinema also evolved. Various ways are developed to analyze a cinema with a strong theoretical background. Semiotic analysis is one of the strongest ways to analyze the in-depth meaning of cinema. It helps to dive into the core meaning behind the various signs and symbols used by the craftsman. By semiotic analyze, the audience can decode the language of the director with its actual intended meaning.

In Hindu mythology the five elements of nature are connected with lord Shiva, so he is known as the god of Panchabhuta. These elements are the basic components of our universe that are essential for the existence of life. Hindu mythology also connected these elements with lord Shiva, and he is the god of Panchabhuta. This study examines the four segments of the SOLO movie to understand the layers of meaning through the breakdown of the various symbols and signs crafted on the screen.

Objectives :

- To analyze the Panchabhuta representation in the movie SOLO.

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- To examine the blending of mythological themes with each segment.
- To interpret the various denotations and connotations in the movie SOLO.

Review of Literature :

According to Sharghi, M., Fayyaz, E., & Kausari, M. (2016) Movies can highlight the mythological concepts alive. Through the modern way of storytelling, they can influence the audience. Persian mythological concepts and Greek mythological stories are aligned with the movie “Qeysar”. This study showcased the usage of mythological narratives in the modern media landscape and examined how they can evoke a strong connection with new-age audiences.

Semiotics is the tool, powerful to analyse the various meanings in a movie. Amalan (2023) observed that modern films use visual elements to add depth meanings to frames and that make the films more engaging. Rather than dialogues, craftsmen focused on visual cues and symbolic representation of meaning in their movies.

The study of Ramani, P.A & Sundaramani, V (2022) highlights the significance of semiotics in examining the communication of complex social messages through audio and video cues. By analyzing the movie Vadachennai, they find out the uses of colour codes and their representation of political affiliation. The socio-political landscape of Vadachennai unfolded here with the help of semiotics.

Ancient stories are transformed and reinterpreted through new-age technologies. Retelling ancient narratives through the digital way of storytelling helps to preserve those thoughts in modern era.

Contemporary digital-oriented manifestations are emphasizing commercial appeal. The usage of semiotics in this scenario, that provides an insight on how these digital adaptations are capable of retaining or altering the mythological narratives. Sanjna (2024) dissected the signs and symbols used in digital platforms and assesses the reflection of traditional concepts.

Hasanli (2017) tried to interpret the cultural and social meaning of various signs and symbols used in the movie “Bandit” to communicate ideological messages to the audience.

Ishar, R., & Irawan, A. M. analyze the popular music lyrics through the Lens of Roland Barthes semiotics. The meaning of lyrics that resonate the symbolic and mythical dimension is discussed and examined through this study.

Wulandari (2020) highlighted the portrayal of action and violence based on “The gentlemen movie”. The film uses aggressive language and reflects the mafia culture with the help of visual elements and dialogues. Roland Barthes theory of semiotics helps them to interpret the signs and languages in that movie.

Theoretical Framework :

This study used semiotic theory to understand the various layers of meanings created and interpreted by the audience. By using this theory researchers can examine how the signs and symbols are used to convey the meaning by the director. Ferdinand de Saussure is well known as the father of semiotics. He is focused on the formal and structural meaning of signs and symbols. However, this study focuses on Roland Barthes’s version of semiotics. It is a post-structuralism approach that is

applied to a wide range of cultural phenomena and myths that emphasized the fluidity of meaning. According to semiotics sign is the unit of meaning and the physical part of a sign, like a word or image is known as a signifier. That meaning or idea represented by a signifier is signified. Denotation is the peripheral or literal meaning of a sign and Connotation is the cultural or in-depth meaning of a sign.

Methodology :

This study used a qualitative approach by semiotics analysis to examine the various layers of meaning in the SOLO movie. The study is guided by Roland Barthes's theory of semiotics which helps to understand the cultural and mythological meaning of a content. The data was collected from the detailed analyze of visuals and textual elements in 4 segments of this movie. The interpretation of data involves the identifying of relationship between signs and their signified meaning layers. That are interpreted through the perspective of mythological context grounded by panchabhuta.

Data Interpretation :

1. World of Shekhar :

The first Segment of SOLO movie titled World of Shekhar represents Water. Love is the core theme of this Chapter. World of Shekhar is the story of Shekhar and Radhika, Starring Dulquer Salman and Dhansika. Shekhar is a college student and he stammers while speaking. Radhika, the love interest of Shekhar, is a blind dancer. She is very calm in nature. The character of Shekhar is similar to water in the form of a river, that finds its way through the obstacles. Though he stammers while speaking, he always tries to complete what

he wants to communicate. Just like a river, he flows to marry Radhika. Nothing can stop him from achieving his dream. Shekhar has anger issues that may be similar to waves in the water. In the world of Shekhar, the character of Radhika is similar to a container which contains water. She is the one who gives shape to Shekhar and makes him calm. Water is similar to this: it will adapt to the shape of the space



which contains it. According to Hindu mythology, Chandra Shekhar or Sundara Moorthi is other names of Lord Shiva. From this, the name of this character emerged. The long hair of Shekhar is also representing the hair of Lord Shiva. This segment starts with an accident scene which happens in a rainy frame, and ends at an Ocean as Shekhar plays with his daughter. Nature Water is also similar to this, that starts as rain and flow to the ocean. Most of the frames in World of Shekhar include the presence of water. Both positive and negative events that

happen in the life of Shekhar and Radhika are surrounded by water. Especially in the proposal and marriage scene, they are surrounded by water. We can observe that the marriage is placed at a water-themed destination. In this segment most of the characters are wearing blue colour dresses or shades of blue. Frames are also enriched with blue colour elements and paintings. The Editor uses a blue colour grading to this segment which emphasizes and carries over the theme from first scene to the last. The main two songs of this segment is “Singa Kutty” and “Vanjipaattu”. We can clearly hear the sounds of water in “Singa Kutty” song. “Vanjipaattu” is actually very famous song in Kerala which is directly representing water festivals in Kerala.

2. *World of Trilok :*

The Second Chapter of the SOLO movie, World of Trilok symbolizes Air/ Wind. Revenge is the core theme of this Segment. World of Trilok is the story of Trilok Menon, a veterinary doctor and his wife Aisha, Starring Dulquer Salman and Arthi Venkatesh. The opening shot of World of Trilok is wind ruffling Aisha’s shirt and it also end with the repetition of the same shot. Initially, the audience is not able to feel the presence of Trilok in this



segment. After revealing the twist, the audience can recognize that Trilok was present in all major events, but he was invisible and silent like the air. Once the

air becomes a storm, the audience can see him with the power of revenge. In this chapter, Trilok is depicted as person who has the characteristics of air. Basically, he is a person like very calm air, but and he becomes a storm to serve his revenge. His journey is like a traveler, that similar to air, and the purpose of life turns towards revenge in between his life cycle. Trilok is professionally a doctor, who also connects to the air, the necessity of life. In the climax the revenge of Trilok is also connected with air, the death of the antagonist is also due to the lack of oxygen. According to Hindu mythology, “Thrilo-kanadhan” is the lord of the three worlds namely heaven, earth, and hell that represent Lord Shiva. Parama Shivan and Sathi Devi faced many issues from their parents’ side during the time of the wedding due to differences in family standards. Similarly, we can also see that Trilok and Aisha face issues from their family due to an inter-religious wedding. Parama Shivan also takes revenge for his wife’s death, similarly, Trilok also does the same. In this segment, most of the costumes of Trilok are in grey colour or shades of off-white, symbolizing the air. The editor deliberately used a white moody colour tone for the entire segment to reinforce and carry the theme from first to last.

3. *World of Shiva :*

The third segment of the SOLO movie World of Shiva is imbued with the elemental theme of Fire. Anger is the major thread of this Segment. World of Shiva is the story of a Gangster, Shiva and his wife Rukku, Starring Dulquer Salman and Sruthi Hariharan. This Chapter of SOLO starts with a family photo engulfed in fire which includes a father, mother, and two



children and slowly disappearing into the ashes. At the end of this segment, Shiva passes away, similarly at the end of this segment, when Shiva passes away, fire turns into ashes. Shades of fire are always reflected in Shiva. He is always like a wild-fire, which conveys the anger and violence of the character. Sometimes he is like a fire on the candle, he plays a role of a protective elder and compassionate guardian who cares for his younger brother and stepdaughter. In Hindu mythology, fire is the silent spectator of all the events, similarly in this segment, Shiva plays the role of a silent spectator. He only speaks two words in the entire segment “Achan” and “Amma” (Father and mother). Shiva’s character is defined by his actions than

words. He always maintain a stoic facial expression throughout the segment that represent the guardian of the truth, Lord Shiva. The name of the antagonist in this segment is Vishnu, which also has some mythological connection with Puranas. Lord Shiva fighting with lord Maha Vishnu to protect his Nagas. Similarly, Shiva fights with the villain for his family. At the end of the story, Vishnu shoots him with a gun, that leads to the death of Shiva. Most of the frames in this segment contain representations of fire as Diwali crackers, cigarettes and guns. In this segment, the costumes of Shiva are in black colour. Most of the costumes of other characters and elements in frames are a combination of Red and black, symbolizing the destructive and transformative power of Fire. Red fire always purifies. The reduced remains of the fire and the ashes are represented by the black colour. By intentionally grading with a pervasive red tone the editor maintains a consistent visual motif, blended with the theme from first to last. The song “Aigiri Nandhini” is the Rock music version of “Mahishasura mardhini Stothram”, emphasising the mode of “Samhara” and pumping higher energy to the audience.

4. *World of Rudra :*

The final segment of the SOLO movie, World of Rudra, symbolizes the theme of Earth. Earth is the place where all other elements are coming together. Earth bears the weight of everything in its heart. Lt. Rudra Ramachandran and his lover Akshara are the central characters of this segment, starring Dulquer Salman and Neha Sharma. Rudra’s profession itself represents the earth. The start of this movie is with a shot of Rudra running in between the blasted earth elements in an army



training camp. Rudra represents sacrifice, like the earth. He is the one who faces a lot and loses his girlfriend, not by his mistake but by the mistake that happened to his father. But he realizes his mistake and he apologizes to her and his fiancé. Rudra is the one who is the strongest, mighty and roarer character in his core like Earth. Rudra always wears a brown and shades of brown costume in this segment. The editor used a brown tone to the entire chapter uplifting the core theme throughout the movie. The “Roshomon” Song is one the best hits of that time from World of rudra. The word “Roshomon” comes from the Japanese movies directed by the legendary Akira Kurosawa. The core theme of this movie is “What you see depends on where you stand”. That means the truth is based on what perspective you look at it from. Here Rudra’s feelings for his girlfriend is genuine and he has been searching for her for the last 4 years after her immediate vanish to Australia. He

fights with her fiancé for Akshara, without knowing they are half-siblings. At last, he knows the same from his mother and he is ready to sacrifice his love and apologize to them. Here director and lyricist cleverly weave the word Roshomon with the theme of this segment. Additionally in this song the boot sound of soldiers is very loud. That sound of Boots stomping indicates the Earth’s burden indirectly. Earth bears the weight of everything and faces many stomping from everyone. The suffering of the earth and its sacrifices resonates in this song as a metaphor.



Conclusion :

Bejoy Nambiar's SOLO is one of the beautiful example of how the mythological concepts are perfectly blend with a commercial movie without disturbing the flow of the movie. Every sequence of this movie starts with a narrative of the core theme that is visualized by the illustration of Lord Shiva. Then every segment opened with a symbolic representation of the core theme. The editing department creatively graded every segment based on the core theme. Costumes represent the core element of each story and the art team staged exact elements to did the same. More than a piece of simple commercial music, the songs are also incorporated with the core concepts of each segment. Semiotics plays a crucial role in visual storytelling, helping to break complex narratives into simple forms. The director of the movie used many signs in this movie to convey his core themes. These are mostly connected to the audience. However, the prior knowledge of these mythological concepts and the ability to understand the film language may lead to the barrier to exploring the in-depth understanding of this movie's significance. That means the pre-existing knowledge plays a vital role here. In the era of progressive ideologies, our ancient mythological stories are also retold and blended with our commercial movies like SOLO, and providing a space for inclusivity in storytelling, making the fusion of mythology and modernity is highly relevant.

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Writing Orality : Revival of Oral Literature and Cultural Identity in the Select Works of Easterine Kire

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From time immemorial humans have been sharing their knowledge and heritage through the oral storytelling including legends, folktales and myths which reflect the culture and tradition of a community. Oral narratives play a crucial role in passing down mythical and historical stories across generations, fostering a sense of identity and belongingness among the people of a certain group. Walter J. Ong, in his book *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World* (2002), contends that orality is a mode of consciousness. It is a method of acquiring, sustaining, managing, and verbalizing knowledge that he identifies as, “primary oral cultures” (p. 1). It is a culture “with no knowledge at all of [the] writing” (Ong, 2002, p. 1) as it is historically and culturally rooted and is not affected by the use of print culture. Northeast India, which includes eight states including Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim, is a rich storehouse of divergent mythical and folkloric stories possessed by different ethnic and cultural groups.

The elements of oral narratives find ample representation in the works of the writers writing from this region. Mamang Dai, a prominent writer from Arunachal Pradesh observes, “Apart from the literature of the script languages of Assam, Manipur and Tripura, a large chunk of customs of different communities comes to us via the oral tradition. This has promoted a literature that mingles recorded history and the oral tradition for an interpretation of the unwritten past in a peculiar blend of myth and memory, and aesthetics unique to the region” (Dai, 2020). Referring to the use of orality in indigenous writings, Temsula Ao also states that, “We find the best examples of the continuity of oral tradition in the writings of indigenous people about their native philosophy, religious beliefs and the ‘new literature’ that was created out of the vast resources of oral tradition” (Ao, 2005, p. 100). The Northeast Indian writers use oral tradition as a “catalytic framework wherein they are able to explore different regimes of values and their relations to complex social forces and positioning” (Ao, 2005, p. 108).

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Nagaland, home to around sixteen tribal groups, is a place of rich cultural heritage. Before the Naga languages had a written script developed through the efforts of the American Baptist missionaries, literature existed solely in oral form and it was passed down from generation to generation through story telling. Easterrine Kire (1959), pioneer of English writing in Nagaland, enlivens the life of native Naga people, their society, and political experiences with all its uniqueness in her works. Her works invoke the landscape to which she belongs with its eventful history and fascinating culture.

According to Malinowski (1948), myths “strengthen tradition and endow it with a greater value and prestige by tracing it back to a higher, better, more supernatural reality of initial events. Myth is, therefore, an indispensable ingredient of all culture” (p. 122). They shape the moral universe of people and tend to decide their socio-cultural behaviour. They are transmitted from the ancestors to the next generation in the form of oral narratives through the tradition of storytelling, a practice exemplified in Kire’s novels as well. Kire, in an interview, says that “We felt we needed to create written Naga literature. We have so much oral narratives but with oral dying out, it’s all going to be lost” (Arora, 2012). She also acknowledges that she has been “inspired by the African writers Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong’o, more so Achebe, in the way both these writers brought over their oral narratives to the written tradition” (Longkumer, 2019, p. 393).

The novel *When the River Sleeps* (2014) is about the legend of the sleeping river, which Kire has learned from her

hunter friends, as she says in one of her interviews. (Longkumer, 2019, p. 9) Thus the novel itself comes into existence from the knowledge gained through storytelling. It is about the journey of Villie to the sleeping river to collect the heart stone which can grant anything one asks for; be it cattle, prowess in war, or success in the hunt. The novel, while describing Villie’s adventure not only allows us to peep through the traditional and spiritual life of the Angami Nagas but also documents many of their oral narratives. It integrates the Angami Naga socio-cultural tradition with the narrative while highlighting the oral literature lineage and folklore as a way of life.

In Naga tradition, people share an intricate relationship with the objects of nature and this relationship is the most important essence of orature. Kire invokes the creation myth prevalent among the Naga people in the epilogue of her other novel *Son of the Thundercloud* (2016):

In a small village of the Angamis, there lived an old woman. She was the saddest person alive in those hills. Many years ago, a tiger had killed her husband and seven sons, and her heart had still not healed. She spent long, lonely days waiting for the hour when she would join her loved ones in death. One afternoon, the woman was drying paddy outside her house when, all of a sudden, the sun disappeared and a raindrop fell on her from the sky. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. (p. 9)

The story is rewriting of the cultural myth of how the ancestors of the Naga people came into this world. The Naga creation myth which reflects the deep connection between humans, nature and

supernatural world is again quite explicitly employed by Kire in her another novel, *Sky is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered* (2018). For the Nagas, “man, tiger and spirits were once brothers” (Kire, 2018, p. 18). Addressing the were-tiger belief in Angami culture, Michael Heneise (2017) writes, “Angami beliefs about the tekhumavi straddle two worlds—the world of human, waking reality, and a very different, seemingly mythological one – a vast universe of spirits, signs and omens” (p. 99). The human “connection with non-human animals extends to the notion of soul co-essence, and that is a significant idea governing Naga ontology” (Heneise, 2017, p. 94). The Angamis possess the ability to transform their spirits not just into were-tigers but also into various other animals. There are many men in other tribes “who have been known to turn their spirits into giant snakes and their women’s spirits have become monkeys” (Kire, 2014, p. 28). Those men whose spirits were metamorphosed into tigers were known as ‘tekhumavi’ or weretiger. When the hunters encounter the were tigers, they just say, “It is only us, elder brother” (Kire, 2018, p. 14). and the angry tigers subside easily. When Villie encounters a were tiger he calls out the names of those he knew had transformed into tigers, “Kuovi! Menuol-houlie! Wetsho! Is this the way to treat your clansman? I am Vilie, son of Kedo, your clansman. I am not here to do harm” (Kire, 2014, p. 26). Kevi in the novel *Don’t Run, My Love* (2017) is also a “tekhumavi”. When Visenuo asks whether he was a man or a tiger, Pfenuo, a woman from the Village of Sheers, says “They are both... They have a foot in both the worlds. So long as they are alive, they belong to both the world of

men... the tiger and the man, they are one and the same” (Kire, 2017, p. 92). Through the figure of Kevi and such beliefs from the folklore, Kire revives and establishes the Naga community’s cultural economy.

In the novel *Son of the Thundercloud*, Kire constructs an animistic world to incorporate the myth of the Son of the Thundercloud, linking reality and oral storytelling. The novel depicts how the natural world reacts to the birth of the Rhalie, the son of thundercloud. The stars start dancing and pulling the earth eastward causing a chasm. After his birth, the deserted Village of Weavers could witness rain pouring, the river starts flowing, and the seeds sprout. Again, when he is murdered, there is a rainstorm that ruins everything. There is a flood in the river “so that all the arable lands were swallowed by the deluge” (Kire, 2016, p. 140). The interaction of the Naga people with the spirit world is as natural as their interaction with the human world. In *Sky is My Father* Vicha, who traps Chukhieo, the guardian spirit of wildlife, says, “If you give me a deer to feed my family, I will set you free” (Kire, 2018, p. 32). They invoke the spirit world as their guardian: “Sky is my father, Earth is my mother, I believe in Kepenuopfu” (Kire, 2018, p. 71). Villie often says, “The forest is my wife” (Kire, 2014, p. 7). They all follow the ritual of thanksgiving or showing gratitude towards nature and the birth spirit for everything it gives them.

Villie’s journey to the sleeping river takes us to various places within the realm of Naga culture. We witness him entering ‘Rarhuria’, the unclean forest believed to be a spirit infested place. In another unclean

forest he witnesses a reflection of a young girl in a pool of water, which he is sure is not a human but a spirit. He feels his end near him when another spirit attacks him but remembers the words of the seer who advised him to be the greater spirit. He reiterates, "Mine is the greater spirit! I will never submit to you!" (Kire, 2014, p. 83) and the spirit gets smaller. When Villie finally reaches the sleeping river, he sees spirit women guarding the river. He grabs the heart stone but had to fight for a long time and even when he was out of the river he was chased by the widow spirits. On his way back home he travels through the village of 'Kirhupfumia', certain women having poisonous powers. The village of Meriezou in *Don't Run, My Love* was also "legendary among the Angamis; it was the seat of culture, the birthplace of many famed seers, and people still sought it out for answers. But the more adventurous and the needy travelled to the Village of Seers." (Kire, 2017, p. 81) Both Visenuo and Atuonuo witness supernatural activities taking place at night at the village which further reflects the Naga's belief in the parallel existence of the spiritual and natural world.

Thus these novels can be seen as examples of what we know as writing orality. They transport us into a mystical world filled with astonishing wonders intertwined with reality. The defining narratives of these texts have been shared by verbal communication within the community for generations. Kire employs the technique of storytelling to bring into fore the forgotten beliefs and customs of the Naga tribe to assert their cultural heritage and identity. There are instances of children asking their elders about myths and legend, the

seers telling people how to get rid of the spirits, and elders teaching younger ones the mysteries of nature in the novels. Folktales and the supernatural go to form the basis of Naga reality, as Kire herself says in an interview and she recreates the Naga identity that has continued to exist on its oral tradition in these novels. This reminds us of Tamsula Ao (2005) who rightly puts it in the essay "Writing Orality" that the writings from this part of the region borrow a lot of the "elements from the oral traditions." (p. 107-8) She notes that Northeastern writers look back to their cultural roots to reassess the marginalization of "orality" against the "written" and to find "a new literature of their own" by reinventing the oral traditions in the light of the present realities. The same thing is reiterated by Tilottoma Misra (2013) in the essay "Speaking, Writing and Coming of the Print Culture in North East India" where she states that drawing analogies from other oral cultures of other societies the Northeast writers have discovered the value of fusing the oral with written or of "writing orality". Kire, through these novels, asserts that "The oral is the key to understanding the culture of the community...The amount of cultural information that the oral carries makes it impossible to keep it out of any discourse on literature" (Longkumer, 2019, p. 5). She skilfully combines the oral tradition, the history of Naga society and fiction in her writings and uses the oral literature as the repertoire of the legacy of their unique culture and identity.

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A Comparative Analysis of “Kesariya” and “Kesariya Rangu” : Unravelling The Semantic Nuances of Lyrical Expression

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Translation is a complex and multi-faceted process that involves not only the conversion of words from one language to another but also the careful transfer of meaning, emotion, and cultural context (Jakobson, 1956 x 232¹; Nida² 1954). When examining theories related to translation, one observes that the body of literature on translation studies is vast and extensive. Yet, there are relatively few prominent Indian scholars compared to the extensive international contributions to the field.

In the Western world, given that the majority of countries are monolingual and only a few are bilingual, translation is often viewed more as an academic skill than a mere practical one, with its study typically emphasising the theoretical and cultural complexities of language transfer, rather than focusing solely on facilitating communication. Furthermore, translation as a discipline gained significant importance during the Second World War, as observed by James Holmes (1988).

In contrast, translation has existed for centuries in India and is primarily seen

through a practical lens rather than an academic one. With over 1,600 languages (Narayan³; Sareen⁴) spoken, India serves as a testament to the longstanding tradition of Translation driven by the need for cross-cultural and interlingual communication⁵. The process of Translation can be traced back to the Mauryan Empire, where King Ashoka had his edicts written in multiple languages, including Prakrit, a derivative of Sanskrit, which was understood by the common people, and the scripts employed included Brahmi, Kharosthi, and Aramaic. The Brahmi script, developed during the Mauryan period, played a significant role in recording inscriptions and later became the foundation for understanding various scripts in South Asia (“Echoes of the Empire”)⁶.

The point we would like to emphasize is that every Indian can be considered a natural translator, especially in regions like the South, where individuals often navigate at least two languages. In modern urban households, children typically grow up with their mother tongue and English as

the primary means of communication while also learning Hindi and other languages in school. This multilingual environment fosters a unique form of translation, where individuals effortlessly switch between languages and cultures on a daily basis. However, in recent years, there has been growing interest in translation studies as an interdisciplinary field that examines not only linguistic accuracy but also the cultural, philosophical and ethical implications of translating texts across different languages and cultures.

It requires the translator to navigate the intricacies of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, ensuring that the essence of the original text is preserved while adapting it to the nuances of the target language. Beyond linguistic skills, effective translation demands a deep understanding of both the source and target cultures, as it often entails conveying culturally specific references, idiomatic expressions, and societal values. Whether translating literature, music or any form of communication, the goal is to create a version that resonates with the audience while staying true to the spirit of the original. Through this lens, translation becomes not just an art but a bridge between diverse worlds, facilitating cross-cultural dialogue and understanding (Benjamin⁷).

When one examines the Indian context prior to 2012, there is a noticeable inconsistency in the way South Indian movies were translated into Hindi. Channels like Set Max and Star Gold would occasionally air dubbed versions of Telugu and Tamil films, and while the dialogues were generally translated adequately, they often failed to capture the subtleties and nuances of the original language. The conversatio-

nal exchanges, though understandable, would often miss the regional idioms, cultural references, and emotional depth that made the original language rich and unique. However, the actual cringe factor emerged in the translation of songs. Lyrics that were once poetic, full of local cultural significance, and rich in emotion were often poorly translated into Hindi. The result was a disconnect between the music and its original intent, with many songs losing their essence and charm. What was meant to be a soulful melody could sometimes come off as awkward or even comical in the translated versions, diminishing the impact of the song. This inconsistency was a significant issue, as it undermined the authenticity of the film and often left the audience dissatisfied. The lack of cultural sensitivity and the struggle to match rhythm and meaning were common challenges in translating these songs, highlighting the need for a more thoughtful and nuanced approach to dubbing and subtitling in Indian cinema.

The success of movies like *Baahubali: The Beginning* (2015), made in multiple languages including Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, and Hindi (India, 2023⁸) and *KGF Chapter 1* (2018), which was released in five languages-Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Hindi (Anonymous, 2018⁹)-revolutionised the way the Indian film industry viewed the South Indian cinema. These films broke traditional barriers by demonstrating that regional films, especially those in languages like Kannada and Telugu, could achieve pan-India success, drawing audiences from diverse linguistic backgrounds. The movement was not confined to the mere translation of South Indian films into Hindi; it

was a two-way process, with Hindi films being dubbed or remade in regional languages as well. This shift helped bridge the gap between regional film industries and the wider Hindi-speaking audience, creating a more integrated film ecosystem. Additionally, the multilingual approach to filmmaking provided a platform for South Indian talent, stories, and cultures to be showcased on a national stage. The success of these films not only elevated the status of the South Indian film industry but also led to a rise in cross-linguistic collaborations, marking a significant transformation in the way Indian cinema is produced, distributed, and consumed.

Moreover, the importance of a song in an Indian movie cannot be overstated. In Indian cinema, a song often plays a crucial role in shaping the film's narrative. The popularity of a song can significantly influence the movie's success, with a hit track sometimes having the power to make or break the film. Songs in Indian movies are not merely musical interludes; they are integral to storytelling, helping to convey emotions, build characters, and highlight key plot moments.

This paper aims to explore the lyrical nuances of the songs "Kesariya" and "Kesariya Rangu" from the movie *Brahmāstra: Part One – Shiva*.

It closely examines the lyrics of both versions—one in Hindi, the original, and the other in Kannada, the dubbed version. The study will analyse how the translation and adaptation of the song into a different language affect the meaning, emotion, and cultural context of the lyrics. It is to be noted that these songs cannot exactly be termed as dubbed versions, as the movies simulta-

neously undergo the same creative process as the original ones. While both versions retain the same melody, the paper will investigate how the linguistic differences between Hindi and Kannada shape the expression of love, devotion and longing in the songs. Additionally, the paper will look at the challenges and creative liberties involved in translating songs, particularly in capturing the original essence while maintaining rhythm, rhyme and cultural relevance in the Kannada version. By comparing the two versions, this paper aims to highlight the subtleties in language, tone, and meaning, providing insights into the broader dynamics of multilingual music in Indian cinema.

The lyrics of the song *Kesariya* were written by Amitabh Bhattacharya, composed by Pritam, and sung by Arijit Singh (Ani, 2022¹⁰). The Kannada version, *Kesariya Rangu*, was composed by Pritam but sung by Sanjith Hegde and Sid Sriram, with lyrics written by Yogaraj Bhat (Uppunda, 2022¹¹). Both the songs are exemplary in their own ways. The lyrics and melody are so soothing in both languages that they evoke a sense of calmness and emotional relaxation. The problem arises when one tries to look at the semantics of the song.

The first line in Hindi roughly says, "Could someone please tell me, how can anyone not fall in love with you? In creating you, the god has emptied the treasure troves of beauty". While the Kannada lyrics roughly translate to "I cannot help but give you my heart, listen, girl, I have nothing more to say, in order to create you, God has rendered the beauty of the three worlds void". The Hindi version is rhetorical, influencing listeners to see the female

character as supremely important, attributing all beauty to her physical presence and suggesting that her creation leaves no beauty for others. In contrast, *Kesariya Rangu*'s Kannada lyrics are more personal and direct, as he declares his love and offers his heart in a profoundly intimate manner. Essentially, the Hindi lines focus on an external marvel that invites universal admiration, while the Kannada lyrics express a direct emotional commitment and personal surrender to her beauty.

The following Hindi line metaphorically asks, "Through the ink of eyeliners, have you not written countless love stories?" - suggesting that her beauty is so profound it must have inspired infinite tales of romance. In contrast, the Kannada line is a declarative statement, indicating that her eyes, enhanced by mascara, actively grant or intensify love's madness, thus deepening the emotional frenzy. The Hindi line emphasizes the inspiring power of "her" beauty. Meanwhile, the Kannada version highlights her gaze's direct, transformative impact on the experience of passions.

The next is the hook (मुखड़ा/Mukhda) of the song, which adds a somewhat "cringe" factor to an otherwise beautiful piece. The word 'Kesariya' literally means saffron colour. It is the metaphors associated with Indian traditions that elevate the nuances of the word Kesar. Saffron symbolizes purity, spirituality and auspiciousness. It evokes the imagery of sunsets, autumn leaves, or the glow of a cherished memory, emphasizing beauty and intensity, which in turn symbolizes a passionate love. The Hindi version conveys, "Your love is like saffron; I become tinted with your hue when I touch you, spend my days

caring about you, and pray all night for your well-being." The Kannada lyrics declare, "Your presence is like saffron's hue. Let's pause and drench in the drizzle of flowers, I've spent the whole day lost in thoughts of you, what has happened to me? You must explain."

The hook is the most essential part of any song, conveying its central theme. In these songs, the hooks offer contrasting perspectives. The Hindi version actively seeks to merge with the lover, almost absorbing her into the self, reflecting a deep, tactile longing. While the following sentence carries a spiritual tone, it also projects a sense of authority in the male voice toward the female-caring for and praying for her safety, much like an adult's protective regard for a child. Yet, it imposes a unidirectional longing that centres all desire solely on her. There is a clear gender superiority here. The male perspective is attempting first to exalt the other, showcasing her beauty and allure, and then to have her submit to his protective, all-encompassing authority.

The hook in the Kannada version approaches love from a different angle. It emphasizes that being with the lover is akin to saffron's purity, spirituality, and auspiciousness, inviting her to join him in sharing this transcendent moment. The tone here is one of equality, the male voice is not domineering but rather suggests a harmonious connection between equals. Although he accuses her of leaving him lost in thoughts of her all day, he ultimately surrenders to the overwhelming emotion, asking her to explain the change within him. His voice carries vulnerability, reverence, and a hint of anxiety. There is no sense of superiority here, just a heartfelt message

from the male lover, expressing his deep emotions and vulnerability towards the other.

The next part of the song also highlights cultural differences. In the Hindi version, the autumn season is used to emphasize her radiant beauty, evoking the nostalgic charm of falling leaves. The imagery of autumn is deeply poetic, evoking a sense of transient beauty. Typically, the falling of leaves is seen as marking the end of summer and the beginning of a transformative cycle, symbolizing both decay and renewal, a promise of rebirth and new beginnings. In the Indian context, too, it symbolizes harvest season, the time of abundance. Interestingly, Sharad Purnima, a full moon during this season, is associated with beauty, prosperity, divinity and the cyclical nature of life.

In contrast, the Kannada version likens her arrival to a gentle rain cloud in a breeze—a potent symbol in southern culture, where rain is celebrated as a harbinger of happiness and life. For many in the south, rain is essential, nurturing the land and sustaining livelihoods, and its arrival is eagerly anticipated as a promise of renewal and growth. The difference in imagery reflects the regional aesthetics of Southern India. Unlike the ephemeral nature of beauty, the woman is celebrated for her abundance, rejuvenation and life itself.

Furthermore, the Hindi version portrays the male singer as enveloped in profound darkness, with his heart illuminated by a moon that shines like the radiant light festival of Diwali through her presence. She is also the source of endless beauty and inspiration for the male singer. In contrast, the Kannada version uses a more intimate metaphor. The singer's inner

darkness is gently dispelled by a humble candle ignited by her influence. Here, in his loneliness, her presence provides comforting company and warmth. The Hindi version presents a grand celebratory image of the female, almost raising her to the celestial pedestal, a larger-than-life image. But the Kannada version humanizes her through a tender and personal light, which, though quiet and intimate, exudes an enduring warmth that resonates with everyday human experience. She brings endless joy and invitations of love and becomes the very fragrance that envelops his existence.

To conclude, both songs are beautiful in their own way. The music strikes a powerful chord, evoking a longing to be hopelessly in love and to experience the emotional journey of the male singer. However, one might wonder, would women want to be the recipients of such expressions? And if so, which version would they prefer? The Hindi version, though beautiful, risks infantilizing the female figure—reducing her to an object to be passively idolized, where her essence is overshadowed by the grandeur of the male expression. In contrast, the Kannada version offers a more intimate and humanized portrayal. While it still presents the female figure as a source of transformative light, it does so with a tender vulnerability. Ultimately, the answer depends on individual preference, but one must appreciate the beauty of translation in capturing these nuanced expressions of love.

In fact, the beauty of translation can be seen here in this paper. The original lyrics are in Hindi, the translation is in Kannada, and this analysis is in English. Each version captures unique cultural nuances and emotional depths, enriching

our understanding of the expressions of love. The Hindi version exudes grandeur and mythic charm, while the Kannada translation offers intimacy and human warmth. This layered interplay, further illuminated by our English exploration, highlights how translation not only bridges languages but also deepens our appreciation of diverse poetic sensibilities.

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The Power of Choice : Examining Individual Agency and Transformation in Preeti Shenoy's Novels – The Secret Wishlist and A Place Called Home

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Emerging in the twentieth century, young adult literary is a dynamic genre that conforms to culture and society. It emphasises risk-taking, not permissible subjects, and innovative creative thinking. Because of this, young adult literature and its target consumers evolved into very popular among teenagers. It commenced by portraying the young person's life with the goal of enlightening readers about mental illness and its repercussions.

Despite being designated as contemporary adult literature, Preeti Shenoy's novels typically deal with young adult intellectual topics. Because of their emphasis on relationships, identity formation, development of emotions and psychological contemplation, some of her works have proven especially popular among young adult readers. Her work incorporates the following elements that distinguish young adult literature they are *Life is What You Make It*, *When Love Came Calling*, *The*

Rule Breakers and *It's All in the Planets*.

The subsequent book to *Life is What You Make It*, *Wake Up, Life is Calling*, follows Ankita as she moves through her college years while tackling her mental health and beforehand trauma. *The Secret Wishlist*. This work delivers a wealth of insights for investigating how feminine desire, emotional truthfulness, and judgement turn into revolution.

The narrative concentrates on Diksha, an affectionate mother, wife and daughter-in-law who leads a monotonous existence and conceals her emotions in a marriage deprived of love. She embarks on an expedition of self-discovery after unintentionally reuniting with a childhood buddy and rediscovering her long-forgotten aspirations. nary actions. "Haven't you slogged and done everything for your family for the past so many years? What have you really done for yourself?" (Shenoy, *The Secret Wishlist*, 320).

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The novel *A Place Called Home*
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depicts the lead character is Alka, an aspiring entrepreneur in her late 20s who seemed to have it all: an established company, an assisting spouse, and an innovative Mumbai lifestyle. Beneath this calm exterior design, however, is a childhood filled with depression, secrets, and hardship. "Let it go? Let it go? Are you insane? ...She's been lying for ten years!" (Shenoy, 2022, p. 18),

Alka comes back to her ancestral home in Kerala, which she left behind years ago following a dreadful event, mourning the death of her mother. Her childhood residence is now an actual location as well as an embodiment of unresolved memories. Alka faces difficult emotions associated with her emotionally distant family, her aggressive father, and the conventional society that previously threatened to crush her soul. "If it mattered so much, you should have done a family background check at the time of the wedding." (*A place called Home*, 19).

Individual Agency Under Confinement is Diksha in *The Secret Wish List* lives in the society that dislikes of freedom and desire as well as in an inflexible marriage. Her adventure commences when she reignites long-suppressed imaginings by getting in connection with a former love. In *A Place Called Home*, Alka retrieves her identity transcending shame and silence by embracing the ghosts of her terrible past and accepting the decision to go back to her starting point.

Shenoy represents Diksha in *The Secret Wish List* as a woman entangled in a patriarchal, loveless marriage in which passion, emotional expression, and individualism are all consistently discouraged. Her exist-

tence, which is regulated by family expectations and customs of society, is an embodiment of the unacknowledged discomfort that many Indian women go through. But the unanticipated reunion with a former love, Ankit, turns into a turning point. It forces her to face her feelings of discontent and take the initial steps towards regaining her voice by awakening long-suppressed desires and ambitions. Through this connection and the process of developing a *secret wish list*, Diksha gradually begins to contemplate a life that is defined by her personal choices rather than by those of others.

Alka is represented by Shenoy in *A Place Called Home* as a lady who has been discriminated against by society since she was a child and has endured that stigma into adulthood. Even though she continues again in Mumbai, her identity is still fragmented and tormented by resentment and secrets. Her brave decision to go back to her ancestral home in Kerala is both a deliberate attempt to heal and a confrontation with her past. Alka determines to take back her story in spite of the psychological distress and social condemnation she circumstances, demonstrating that one's own autonomy may be implemented in subtly rebellious ways even in the face of deeply entrenched boundaries. Sigmund Freud rightly emphasizes in his psychoanalytic theory: "The unconscious plays a major role in mental illness".

Shenoy emphasises in both books that constraints understand the context of agency rather than invalidate it. By navigating and eventually confronting the restrictions enforced upon them, Diksha and Alka exemplify that agency is not

always loud or explicit; it can be a progressive, contemplative process grounded in personal realization and emotional resilience.

Shenoy in *A Place Called Home* represented as 400-acre coffee plantations in Sakleshpur, Karnataka, with waterfalls, pepper vines, numerous Nilgiris Champa bushes, tall silver oak trees and the chirping of birds, cicadas, and crickets, serves as the primary setting for the story's progression. She was still able to remember the beautiful scene that was immediately in front of her.

The sight of the luxuriant mountain peaks stooping to affectionately kiss the cobalt-blue heavens above was something she could never get enough of. The sky fluctuated all the time. Rarely, it may be an explosive orange or purple; occasionally, it may be a delicate white; and frequently, like today, it may be an astonishing blue.

The story provides as an allegory for the larger social and economic problems facing many nations, especially emerging ones like India; the fact that disparity persists and that efforts to create a more equitable society are hampered by class divides and the legacy of caste-based prejudice is brought into sharp relief.

Following Ravi and Gopal demonstrates viewers to the crushing reality that one's socioeconomic status affects one's access to and success in life; Ravi's privilege allows him to utilise and take advantage of a number variety of possibilities that help him advance socially, while Gopal's lower-caste background presents him with a number of obstacles that prevent him from doing the same.

Conclusion :

Through the lens of Preeti Shenoy's literary work in *Place called Home*, the main objective that this investigation had was to gain a comprehension of the factors that pull and push maids, along with the psychological and social challenges they encounter and the coping strategies they employ. "By examining the themes and narratives presented in *A Place Called Home*, we seek to shed light on the ways in which these divisions manifest and impact individuals and communities". (*A Place Called Home*, pp./ 17-29.)

The outcomes of the study demonstrated that the factors that push maids are poverty (financial insecurity of their parents), the responsibility of maids for providing for those closest to them by earning money (Alka in the case of Aayi's life), escaping early and potentially forced marriage, limited job opportunities in a rural area, and peer pressure. On the other hand, the major pulling factors include expectations with regard to urban approaches to life, alternative job opportunities, and access to better education in Alka's life.

In the *Secret Wish List* concludes, Diksha moves from passive acceptance to active development. She begins to express her dissatisfaction, challenges her husband's controlling nature, and makes daring decisions about her career and personal fulfilment. Her difficult choices reflect an increasing realisation that freedom must be asserted, not given.

Diksha's story highlights how agency may persist even while restrained. It may begin quietly through reflective thinking or reportedly modest acts of rebellion but

it has the capability to transform a life. Shenoy uses Diksha's journey to emphasize that the power of choice, even in limited circumstances, is a tool for emancipation and personal transformation.

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From Silence to Crescendo : The Emotional Weight of *Squid Game*'s Soundtrack

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Introduction :

Squid Game, a South Korean series on survival, has skyrocketed into the spotlight worldwide almost upon its debut on Netflix. It deals with social inequality and humanity's deep desperation. It has spawned a huge audience, along with much debate about its approach to social concerns. Its cultural relevance cannot be overstated due to its finding mass outreach and the very presence of its imagery and themes across forms of media and informal discussions.

The strategic deployment of music provides a base for successful storytelling in *Squid Games*. The score has been designed to build tension and different types of emotional reactions, thereby giving viewers access to the visceral experience of the characters. Whether it is the haunting melodies suggesting fear and desperation in the games themselves or the classical compositions that sometimes produce an unsettling effect during poignant moments of the show, the music does really amplify the emotional power and tension.

This paper is concerned with how music assisted in dramatizing and enhancing the emotional experience of *Squid Game*.

The applicable quotes from *Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, Applications*, will guide the study. This handbook will shed more light on the investigation of how music works, subsequently producing emotional responses to the audience.

Music's Role in Building Emotional Tension in *Squid Game* :

The "Measurement" section of the *Handbook of Music and Emotion* gives in-depth workings of handling how emotions in respondents to music are quantified and analyzed by psychological researchers.

Tension peaks were mainly associated with high intensity (*fortissimo*), but increased tension could also be related to ascending melody, increased note density, dissonance, harmonic complexity, rhythmic complexity, and formal properties like repetition of various units, condensation of musical material, sequential development, and pauses. Nielsen pointed out that tension may be regarded both as a component of musical structure-alternations between tension and release-and as emotional expression.

(Juslin & Sloboda, 2010,p.373)

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Techniques like continuous response measurement show these dynamic emotional reactions and link them to tempo, volume, and harmony changes from the audiences' perspective. So it is imagined as such a methodology could relate music's effect on *Squid Game* audiences to their felt emotions at various critical points in the narrative, activated by music.

The composer exploits the manipulation of musical elements to realize the emotional arcs of characters and plot with tempo, volume, and dissonance as some of the main ingredients. For example, in the game "Red Light, Green Light," music's tempo quickly crescendos as the reality of how deadly things in relation to the game have become dawn on the players' minds and mirror the characters' panic and chaos. Building thereon, dissonance dresses a sense of instability and unpredictability; this was particularly pronounced during scenes when characters were confronted with moral dilemmas or possibly expected a betrayal incident; not to mention, discord dims around internal conflict and chaos and draws the audience deeper into the emotional tempest.

Sensory dissonance can be created by two simultaneous tones one or two semitones apart. This combination creates beating at the level of the basilar membrane in the inner ear. The overlap in vibration patterns compromises the resolution of pitches of different frequency on the basilar membrane, leading to the perception of roughness.

Thus, the unpleasant character of dissonant sounds can be computed by the auditory system before it reaches subcortical structures and, hence, before it reaches the auditory cortex where neurons that respond to dissonance are located.

(Juslin & Sloboda, 2010,p.101)

Equally, musicless zones are interpolated at the right moment, progressively building to create tension. At the highly charged moment of narrating scenes on the marbles game, the characters facing their partners in a distraught mix of emotions must betray each other in order to survive, with music stood completely absent, which introduced real tensions out of the insidiously bleak context of their plight. Here, the silence itself came out as a great force which compels each viewer to fixate their attention on the characters' visual expressions and verbal phrases, rendering such emotional impact convincing and palpably real.

In this way, *Squid Game* benefits from its music in both evocative narrative tension and engagement of the audience's emotional faculties-a fascinating inquiry into sound design's power in combination with story. The conundrum really emphasizes the power music possesses in creating tension while it encapsulates the tension in film on one side, leaving the door ajar to future inquiries about how music operates on the psychological dimensions of film and television.

Music accomplishes other attentional functions through gestalt-structural and associationist principles. In addition, the fact that music requires cognitive resources probably plays a role in determining absorption, arousal, and general attention. Music also contributes to the aesthetic experience of the film.

(Juslin & Sloboda, 2010,p.901)

Impact of Music on Viewer's Emotion and Memory in *Squid Game* :

The music used in the *Squid Game* greatly impacts the viewer, causing differ-

ing emotional experiences and stimulating much longer-lasting feelings connected to the show. Termed “Music Listening,” it has its theoretical framework defined in *The Handbook of Music and Emotion*, discussing music serving as an emotional trigger to evoke different feelings, including fear, empathy and suspense due to features of its structure and harmony.

The neurobiological perspectives in the handbook elaborated concerning music stimulating specific areas of the brain-responsible for emotional processes like the amygdala and the hippocampus, which are an integral part of emotions and memory formation, thus giving explanation as to why a number of some specific musical motifs from *Squid Game* may still hit an audience’s memory.

The hippocampus undoubtedly plays an important role for learning and memory. However, too many researchers tend to ignore the fact that the hippocampus is also important for emotional processing. The functional significance of these connections puts the hippocampus, along with the amygdala and the orbitofrontal cortex, in a key position for emotional processing, and renders a ‘pure’ memory function of the hippocampus unlikely.

(Juslin & Sloboda, 2010,p.322)

There is, for example, an ominous tune during “Red Light, Green Light” that creates an immediate and instinctive reaction of fear, further supporting the neurobiological thesis that music can touch primal emotional states.

An extraordinary musical motif, especially an opening and rhythmic one typical of traditional Korean music, very much enhances interest and gives the listener the opportunity to experience emotional feelings about that moment in the story, almost

a hook by which the memory is revisited. These are just like bookmarks because they occur again at the appropriate time to retrieve an emotional state so that the viewer can, with incredible immediacy, slip back into those feelings and scenes within the framework of a given show. Such observations therefore render support to the studies that argue the repeated musical opportunities to naturally potentiate memory traces via an emotional bind.

What’s more is the contrast in uses of children’s classical music and what could be an extension of playful music, which has the potential to affect the audience’s emotional expectations and emotional experiences due to the timing of these pieces while viewing *Squid Game*.

Musical expectations refer to the predictions that listeners implicitly generate about upcoming musical events, along with the confirmation or violation of such predictions over the course of listening. Violations of expectation are thought to generate affective reactions such as surprise, anxiety, or tension (i.e. the need for continuation). Confirmations of expectation are thought to generate resolution, repose, or relief.

(Juslin & Sloboda, 2010,p.658)

The very fact that an innocent children’s song in a playful tone now populates the world of deadly games has caused sensational dissonance that will last on the viewer’s mind for not much longer than an instant for this very same reason. The intended contrast developed between the respective pieces of music and visuals taps into this enhanced rapturous mechanism of the brain that privileges surprise or unexpected stimuli, imbuing such moments with heavy, time-worn ramifications.

Squid Game deals with a very different concept; when it showcases and interlinks music, emotion and memory, it is no longer just sequencing an auditory experience. The music functions quite effectively as a cornerstone for the narrative and enhances the viewers' active involvement with the series. The psychological impact of its music, solidly grounded in neurobiological mechanisms and theoretical frameworks from the *Handbook of Music and Emotion*, emphasizes how profound the usages of sound are in effecting long-lasting emotional and mnemonic impressions.

Theoretical Analysis Using the Handbook : Music in *Squid Game* :

The Handbook of Music and Emotion provides a detailed discussion of how developmental, personality and social factors influence musical experiences and emotional responses. The differences between audiences are thus explicable for how they respond emotionally to the music for *Squid Game*. On the contrary, one might think that emotional susceptibility or going through musical training creates experiences of the self very different from those of another human being who went through the same piece of music. In this case, someone who embraced music would appreciate the subtleties and emotional undertones of the piece better than an average neophyte and by extension, would quantify better, using a series of instances, the influence that this has on the emotional effort made by a person.

The contrast between cultures in musical perception and emotional response discussed in this section on cross-cultural similarities and differences must definitely weigh heavily on the scale of consider-

rations. With distinctly Korean cultural flavours soaked into the soundtrack, *Squid Game* offers up very different affects to domestic and global audiences. Korean instruments and scales, recalling feelings of nostalgia among Korean audiences, would sound exotic or unfamiliar to others and hence bring forth distinctly different reactions to the narrative itself, which will, in turn, definitely have an impact on emotional response. This inevitable clash signals the manner of cultural moderation of the emotional and cognitive processing of music, while each audience members bring its own culture framework to the whole process.

The handbook discusses how music provides narrative thrust to storytelling, explaining how *Squid Game* uses music and the soundtrack not just to push the narrative forward but also to impart symbolic meanings and psychological cues. The music in *Squid Game* purposefully constructs a push for narrative and gives psychological depth to a character. For example, the sad lullaby, used repeatedly during moments of high-stakes decision-making, represents innocence lost and how childhood games have insinuated themselves into deadly contests. These musical cues teeter setup for viewers to heed toward the philosophical intricacies of the tensions in the series, such as the corrupting influences imposed by dire situations.

The theoretical frameworks shared in the *Handbook of Music and Emotion* offer a way of understanding how *Squid Game* employs music to elicit certain emotions and serve as a narrative device. This tells how music can be, not just an act of sensory stimulation, but an active participant

in shaping the psyche of the viewer towards the meaning of what transpires.

Marshall and Cohen (1988) also observed the ability of music to alter the interpretation of a simple visual presentation. They studied the effects of two different soundtracks on impressions about three geometric forms, a large and small triangle and a circle, in a short animation. In their experiment, subjects viewed the animation with different soundtracks or with no soundtrack. They then rated the film on emotional dimensions. The results showed that the presence and nature of the music altered how viewers perceived and interpreted the visual scene, demonstrating how music can shape meaning and influence psychological engagement.

(Juslin & Sloboda, 2010, p.888)

It is important to note, however, that music is just one more component in the grand spectrum of narrative tools in *Squid Game*, meant to elicit or signify or enchant audiences across cultural boundaries.

Conclusion :

In the analysis, we grandly demonstrate various-attentive issues of musical structure as manifested in *Squid Game*, aided, to a significant degree, by the theoretical framework gleaned from the *Handbook of Music and Emotion*. Its music score takes a very focused hit at all emotional tensions, enhances narrative engagement, and hugely evokes the viewer's memory handle. The music in *Squid Game* is not merely an aural layer; it is a significant storytelling device along which the viewer moves along the scaled emotional graph of the series. Whereas music enhances the drama and cultural depth of the series, from acting in the life-death games to the emotional aspect and powerful memories,

the music delivers a dramatic punch on the series.

From tuning into emotional music mechanics, as explained in the handbook, viewers can simultaneously enhance their own viewing experience. Dissecting how musical elements-tempo, volume, dissonance-relate to emotional and narrative arcs, will open up the art of the composer and its other psychological ramifications to the viewers. Such analysis shows how music perception works culturally in that one particular music can affect different audiences, thereby enriching the global spectrum of viewer experiences and interpretations.

Future research may dive deeper into understanding the intersection of music and emotion or narrative in audiovisual contexts. One area for potential consideration of future studies involves the systematic examination of cross-cultural emotional responses to music used in the media; this examination may provide further insight into different ways various global populations consume media. Along with that, longitudinal studies could investigate the differences in emotional and cognitive responses and promptings created by repetitive viewing of the same pieces of music in a TV series. These studies would be informative to composers and directors interested in exploiting the emotional power of music to even better effect in their works.

Neurocinematic research, being relatively new and still combining neuroscience with film study, should throw an exciting host of possibilities. That probes into how music affects the neural functioning of viewers during a viewing of films so that film composers could get specific recom-

mendations on how to score for emotional involvement, clarity of story, and understanding.

In conclusion, *Squid Game* demonstrates an effective case study of music enhancing storytelling. By mixing theoretical perspectives from *Handbook of Music and Emotion*, utilizing practical examples laid out in the series, we see first-hand that music, emotion, and narrative do indeed create a complex interplay. This can thus be an insight for understanding, as the

media scene evolves, the function of strategically placed music will always remain at the forefront of instituting an immersive emotional engagement of the viewing experience.

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Integrating Pancha Kāla Theory in Education : A Holistic Approach to Learning and Development

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The Pancha Kāla : A Framework of Human Development :

The modern education today receives criticism due to its narrow focus on academic areas. In response, researchers, educationists and intelligentsia entitles to explore alternative and new educational model, theory and strategies to develop comprehensive learning practices to promote holistic learning and development of the learners. Pancha Kāla serves as an established ancient Indian system that offers comprehensive and integrated understanding of human development. The Pancha Kāla theory presents valuable opportunities which foster all-round development of individuals. The concept of Pancha Kāla has been taken from the Garuda Purana which refers to five stages, each represen-

ting a distinct aspect of human development. The five developmental stages are Pratishtha Kāla (creation), Nivrtti Kāla (dissolution), Vidya Kāla (knowledge), Shanti Kāla (peace) and Shantyatheeta Kāla (transcendence). One individual has to pass from one stage to other stage to reach another stage and finally gets the stage of transcendence stage also called as the liberation and blissful stage and get union with God. The sloka that signifies the five fundamental aspects of human development which talks about time and existence as Pancha Kāla as follows:

प्रतिष्ठा निवृत्तिश्च विद्या शान्तिश्चतुर्थकम् ।

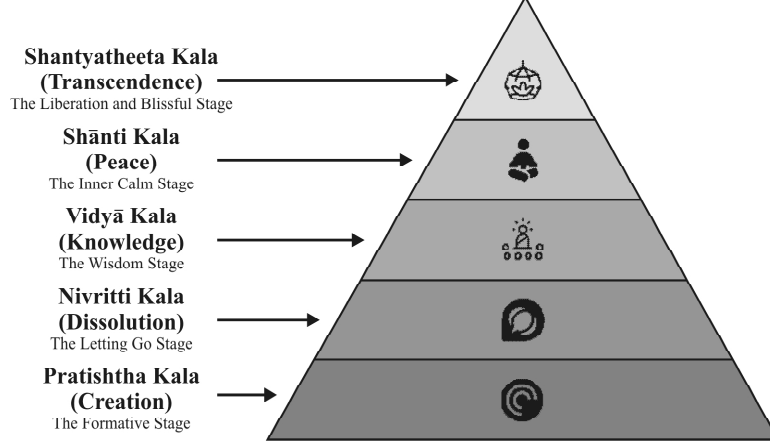
शान्त्यथीता कलज्ञानं पञ्चकालं विदुर्बुधाः ॥

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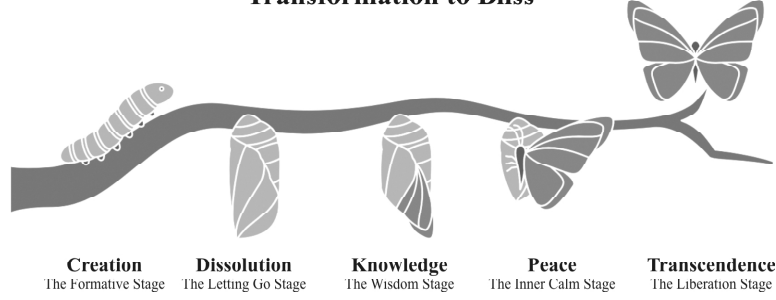
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Panchkāla Hierarchy



Individual transformation from creation to ultimate Bliss

Transformation to Bliss



The five stages of Pancha Kāla are as follows :

1. Pratistha Kāla (Creation) : The Formative Stage :

The first and foremost important stage is the Pratistha Kāla-the creation and formative stage. This is the first step to go up to the top stage. No individual can move to other upcoming stage without successfully winning this stage. This stage represents the universe is created and further body is created from Anna. This stage describes how different elements contribute to formation and development human being especially the physical development, emo-

tional development and development of cognition. This sloka is from Taittiriya Upanaishad's Brahmanandavalli Dwitiya Anuvaka describes about emergence of life and how creation unfolded and different aspects of life took from and describes the gradual formation of physical, emotional, and intellectual abilities.

तस्माद्वा एतस्मादात्मन आकाशः सम्भूतः।
आकाशाद्वायुः। वायोरग्निः। अग्नेरापः।
अद्भ्यः पृथिवी। पृथिव्या ओषधयः। ओषधीभ्योन्नम्।
अन्नात्पुरुषः। स वा एष पुरुषोऽन्नरसमयः। तस्येदमेव शिरः।
अयं दक्षिणः पक्षः। अयमुत्तरः पक्षः।
अयमात्मा। इदं पुच्छं प्रतिष्ठा। तदप्येष श्लोको भवति॥

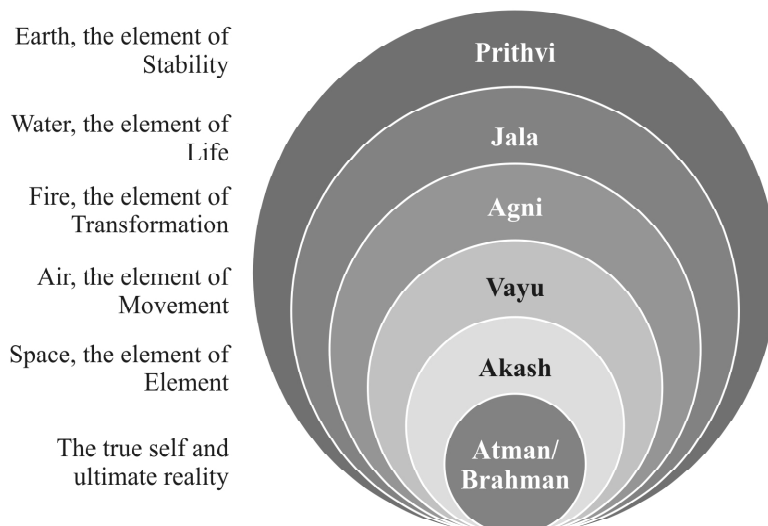
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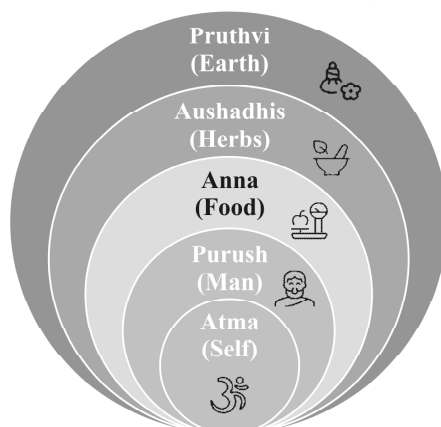
As we know our body is made of Pancha Mahabhutas (Five fundamental Elements of life- Ab, Maruta, Teja, Bouyoma, Khiti) such as Akash, Vayu, Agni, Jala, Prithvi (these all come from the Atman/Brahman the true self and from which Akash (Space) was produced. From Akash Vayu (Air) has emerged. This has expressed in the following figure.

Hierarchical Evolution of Existence



From Vayu to Agni (Fire), Agni to Jala (Water), and Jala to Pruthvi (Earth) was created. From Pruthvi the Aushadhis (herbs and medicines) were created. From Aushadhis the Anna (Food) were produced. From Anna, the Purush (Man) was born. That Purusha is a product of the essence of food. This is the (Shis) head of him. This Purusha is the southern side and the northern side. This is the Atma (Self) and this is the Puchha Prathistha (the stabilizing tail). This presented in the following figure:

Cosmic Creation Hierarchy



The given Upanishadic sloka align with the Pratistha Kāla which describes Krishna as the source of all creation, emphasizing the divine aspect of human development.

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते।
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः॥

This sloka signifies the Brahma is the source of all creation. Everything emanates from Brahma Rupi Krishna. The wise people understand this secrete and worship him with devotion. This sloka focuses on divine origin of creation, linking physical, emotional and cognitive development in human life.

Another sloka from Chandogya Upanishad (6.2.1) establishes in the beginning there was only Sat (the pure existence) and one without a second. Sat (Existence) as the root of all formation and creation of the universe. The sloka is :

सदेव सौम्येदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम्।

These Upanishadic ślokas provide a deep insight into Pratistha Kāla, explaining how creation unfolds-physically, emotionally and spiritually. They show that human development is not just a biological process but a spiritual and cosmic phenomenon. These Upanishadic ślokas reveal comprehensive understanding about Pratistha Kāla which explains the physical as well as emotional and spiritual development and creation in the individual. This sloka signifies that this creation manifests in one-way human form which manifests as biological, cosmic and spiritual processes.

2. Nivrtti Kāla (Dissolution)- The Letting Go Stage :

This is second stage after successfully wining Pratistha Kāla which represents as

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the transformative and letting-go aspects of human development which focuses on the release of attachments, biases and limitations. The sloka from Bhagavad Gita chapter 2, sloka 47 describes about Nivrtti Kāla as follows:

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥

This sloka signifies that the individual has the right to do his Karma (duty) and not entitled to the fruits of karma. Because the individual has the power to do his karma only not on its fruits and highlights to do karma selflessly through not attached with the inaction and attachment. This sloka represents the Nivrtti Kāla which focuses on detachment from outcomes of actions and dissolution of ego, ignorance as well as attachments.

3. Vidya Kāla (Knowledge) - The Wisdom Stage :

After successfully wining the Nivrttis Kāla Individuals enters into the stage of Vidya Kāla stage represents individuals intellectual and cognitive development such as the acquisition of knowledge, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills and reaching the stage of wisdom. There is a sloka from Mundaka Upanishad verse 1.1.5 which represents Vidya Kāla is:

द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये परा चापरा च।
तत्रापरा ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदोऽथर्ववेदः।
शिक्षा कल्पो व्याकरणं निरुक्तं छन्दो ज्योतिषमिति।
अथ परा यया तदक्षरमधिगम्यते॥

This sloka signifies that there are two kinds of knowledge in this world i.e. higher and lower knowledge. The lower knowledge comprises of the four Vedas (Rig, Sama, Yajur, Atharva Veda) and their auxiliaries such as rituals, phonetics,

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grammar, meter, etymology and astronomy. The higher knowledge is the realization ultimate supreme imperishable Brahma. This sloka of Mundaka Upanishad align with the Vidya and signifying the development of intellectual learning as well as spiritual wisdom.

4. Shanti Kāla (Peace) - The Calmness Stage :

After Vidya Kāla individual enters in to the sub human layer i.e. the Shanti Kāla the stage of peace and calmness which represents the emotional and spiritual aspects of development of human being emphasizing on cultivation of inner and outer peace, calmness as well as clarity. The Shanti Mantra from the Yajur Veda sloka 36.17 signifies that to invoke and develop peace, sustainability, balance and inner calmness in human life. The sloka is:

ॐ शं नो मित्रः शं वरुणः।
शं नो भवत्वयमा।
शं न इन्द्रो बृहस्पतिः।
शं नो विष्णुरुक्रमः॥

Om signifies bow to the supreme Brahma and entering into the layer of inner calmness. Mitra means Sun may protect us and gives us divine light and remove the darkness and ignorance that lead us towards the stage of peace and the world becomes peaceful. May Varuna (the cosmic order-rain may help in fulfilling and maintain the beauty and peace in life of every creature and the universe. May Indra (the divine ruler among the Gods) and Brihaspati-the lord of wisdom may give us wisdom and be peaceful to every creature and the universe. May Vishnu (the lord of peace, prosperity, wisdom who pervading one in all brings us peace and prosperity. This mantra aligns with the Khanti Kāla of

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Pacha Kāla which not only signifies the beauty of non-violence and peace as well as inner and outer calmness. This the early stage of enlightenment and after passing by winning this stage individual enters the ultimate stage of Liberation and Bliss.

6. Shantyaetheeta Kāla (Transcendence)- The Liberation and Blissful Stage :

After successfully winning and passing the Shanti Kāla stage the individual enters to the final stage i.e. the Shantyaetheeta Kāla. This stage is also known as the Liberation and Blissful stage that not only represents the transcendent aspects but also the spiritual aspect of human development and spiritual aspects of human development which includes the realization and internalization of true nature one's own self and go beyond attachment and breaks the boundary of sense and get the interconnectedness of all things even the physical body, vidya and Atman with Supreme Brahma. When individual attains this stage get fully enlighten and get merge with the Brahma and gets liberation from the circle of birth and death. In other words, get Salvation, Mukti or Nirvana and enjoys the supreme bliss. The Madukya Upanishad sloka 7 beautifully express this stage as the sloka is :

शान्तः प्रज्ञं न बहिष्प्रज्ञं नोभयतः प्रज्ञं न प्रज्ञानघनम्।
न प्रज्ञं नाप्रज्ञम्।
अदृष्टमव्यवहार्यमग्राह्यमलक्षणमचिन्त्यमव्यपदेश्य
मेकात्मप्रत्ययसारं।
प्रपञ्चोपशमं शान्तं शिवमद्वैतं चतुर्थं मन्यन्ते स
आत्मा स विज्ञेयः॥

This Upanishadic sloka signifies beautifully the stage of Shantyaetheeta Kāla as neither conscious state (wakefulness) nor the unconscious state we can as sleep. It is beyond the sense, perception, interac-

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tion, beyond grasp and beyond definition. It is the stage of ultimate peace, bliss and the cessation of all duality and it is the stage of non-dual. It is the Turya the supreme stage in which the self is realized and individual gets Liberation. This sloka represents the transcendence state which is beyond duality and ego which leads to Moksha (Liberation) from the cycle of birth and death and merged with the Brahman.

Pancha Kāla for Holistic Education :

By incorporating Pancha Kāla into curriculum students can achieve holistic well-rounded development as envision in the National Education Policy 2020. The students simultaneously develop their physical, emotional and spiritual and cognitive aspects. Holistic education emerges through Pancha Kāla framework by integrating Pratishtha Kāla (Creation Skills) and Nivrtti Kāla (Dissolution Skills) and Vidya Kāla (Knowledge Development Skill) and Shanti Kāla (Developing Peace Skill) and Shantyatheeta Kāla (Transcendence Skills). Through Pratishtha Kāla students get opportunities to innovate and learn through growth-based environments and focusing on creation of sound mind and sound body. Creation of learning environment is the central focus of Pratishtha Kāla. It enables the students develop growth mindset beliefs when they learn that their abilities enhance through both learning and putting effort into things. This Kāla also focuses on establishing of learning community. The learning environment can be created at three levels of development through physical infrastructure alongside technological equipment and educational resources. The learning community strengthens students' feelings of belonging thus creating bonds among members. This Kāla deve-

lops decision-making skills of students and get access to exploratory chances that motivate them to pursue new activities for learning. It enables students to develop collaboration and spirit of team learning. The educational environment promotes curiosity because it drives students to pursue exploration activities which help them explore unfamiliar domains. Students can inquiries as a way to discover knowledge and understand concepts better. Throughout its implementation Pratishtha Kāla promotes self-examination which leads students toward both critical thinking and profound thinking about their life experiences. The curriculum contains project-based tasks which enable students to master curriculum. Through innovation ideas students develops creative problem-solving skills. The learning environment built by Pratishtha Kāla provides support to students of all backgrounds. Whereas Nivrtti Kāla prompts the learners to reflect on change, letting go doing their duty selflessly. This Kāla lays the psychological foundation of education. It helps to create positive psychological educational atmosphere and aims to develop mindfulness among the students and make students free from anxiety, stress and pressure and relaxes the students. It focuses on providing students relaxation and breaks during the continuous study and fosters students selfcare practices and to study with calmness and eliminate all types of learning distractions. The combination of deep breathing with meditation practices in mindfulness helps students maintain inner peace while body breaks allow students to replenish themselves naturally. Students allocate dedicated time to introspection when they choose solitude in order to consider their feelings and thoughts. Such practice serves to reduce

both psychological stressors and related anxiety levels. When students practice self-care they take care of their physical health as well as emotional state while maintaining the well-being of their mental health. Educational institutions needs conduct yoga or meditation as physical and mental wellness programs to benefit students undergoing both therapeutic mental restoration and therapeutic physical restoration so that students feel gratitude develop the ability to perceive constructive aspects of their life. Student welfare promotion requires them to choose healthy behaviours while maintaining their physical and emotional and mental well-being. Learning along with student development reach their peak when educational institutions adopt Pratishtha Kāla effectively in their curriculum. After environmental, physical and psychological preparedness the next stage is Vidya Kāla the stage of Vidya Arambha which combines different academic disciplines with the development of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities and intellectual curiosity. This Kāla enables the students to attaining knowledge with comprehension. Design strategies of Kāla incorporate educational practices that introduce critical thinking development while promoting curiosity along with investigatory opportunities and student-to-student teamwork while generating wonder and question encouragement and student feedback provisions. This Kāla fosters the use of practical examples in education enhances meaningful learning because they bring relevance through practicality. It enables the students to think critically as well as analyze the information while evaluating the evidence to construct supports. This Kāla fosters stimulated curiosity prompts students which enables the students to generate inquiries about

new substance while seeking understanding from various sources. This Kāla enables the students to develop their confidence in learning new thing and provides educational opportunities as well as promote team work spirit among learners to achieve the desired goal. Students become more curious about exploring and discovering unknown information and things which develops their comprehensive understanding and sense of wonder. Through this Kāla students' knowledge acquisition will naturally develop habits of questioning. Students develop better progress insight by feedback time and the process strengthens their responsibility maturity. It also develops the practice of self-reflection which enables students to conduct in-depth thinking about their life events. This Kāla is a comprehensive approach which help students gain better understanding of their experiences while improving the effectiveness of their learning environment. Peace practices through Shanti Kāla represent the fourth segment of Pancha Kāla that enables students to learn meditation and mindfulness therefore gaining inner peacefulness. Through Shanti Kāla students learn mind-control techniques and receive education in both emotional intelligence and conflict resolution and peace creation. This Kāla fosters the students emotional control with deeper understanding of others as well as peaceful communication skills. It facilitate mindfulness practices as a pathway to inner health development. The educational institutions needs to provide training program in emotional intelligence to assist students to better handle their emotional responses. Students need special workshops that address conflict resolution in order to handle their disputes. Educating students through mindfulness practices

through this Kāla include meditation and deep breathing techniques will lead to their internal peace achievement. Students needs practice self-care by making proper commitments to their body and mind as well as their emotional state. Teachers needs to establish favourable connections between classroom members including students and staff while developing strong bonds between school districts and community members to create both a feeling of belonging and peace. Exposure to empathy simulations help students attain understanding of different life perspectives. Teachers needs to establish environment filled with calmness because it decreases anxiety while building gratitude among learners. The establishment of compassion helps to create environment where students practice mutual support and care. The school needs to organize yoga or meditation classes that enable students to obtain relaxation breaks. Students needs to provide guidance to place well-being and managing physical and mental health along with emotional health. This Kāla promotes for establish a community environment which promotes teamwork and mutual support between students. Support creative outlet activities like artistic projects and musical activities along with writing tasks because these activities let students move beyond normal patterns of thinking. Shantya theeta Kāla emphasizes spiritual expansion toward limitless ability as well as social connections between people while teaching how to achieve mental tranquility leading to higher emotional skills and life satisfaction. This Kāla enables the learners to develop time management and organization skills and helps the students in establishing crucial priorities. The student body needs scheduling tools along with mana-

gement training and adaptability training, which enables them to respond to uncertain situations. This Kāla enables the learners to develop their philosophical insights and helps students find actual meanings of life and understanding of human existence. It enables the students to feel wonder as they conduct unaware investigations to find what is hidden from view. The educational process accepts student questions about existing beliefs because they require analysis of both new and alternative viewpoints. School activities needs to provide students with purposeful contemplation through self-examination activities to develop sophisticated analytical reasoning and intense intellectual thinking. The Pancha Kāla needs to become an integral part of contemporary education and curriculum for holistic development of students. Anecdotes and stories needs to be used to teach students about the value of each Kāla. These Pancha Kāla needs to incorporate in teaching learning process and their everyday life activities. Strategies for real-world practice and application needs to be given to students so they can learn and execute each Kāla element. Students need to given instruction on effective time management to handle their tasks alongside deadline fulfillment while protecting their personal and professional areas. The educational system motivates learners to create schedules that enhance their productivity and energy distribution. Teach students to become flexible and adaptable for handling alterations in their circumstances and deadline changes. The development of wonderment remains essential because students should understand how to find new discoveries through exploring the unknown. The practice of questioning established opinions helps students ques-

tion both prevailing beliefs and emerging novel concepts. This kala promotes the students for self-directed learning by encouraging students to take ownership of their learning rather than relying on others and pursue their interests. This Pancha Kala framework helps the students to learn through the combination of the Five Kālas which will deepen their understanding of themselves and the world and leads to life purpose discovery, inner satisfaction and bliss.

Conclusion :

Through integration the Pancha Kāla in modern education we can develop students through a thorough system which concentrates on holistic learner development. Educational establishments need to integrate the five stages of Pancha Kāla

which enables educators to develop students holistic learning while nurturing creativity along with emotional intelligence and critical thinking abilities. Teaching professionals needs to deliver complete educational programs to develop students for achieving success across every domain. Through the implementation of the Pancha Kāla theory educators can access a powerful system to reach this objective.

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The Sacred Animal in Kannada Folk Narratives

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Fables and folk songs are popular genres in Kannada. The stories of Kaggakka and Gubbakka (a crow and sparrow; akka is sister) are household names. This fable talks about how a crow that sought shelter on a rainy night at the sparrow's nest, destroys the entire bunch of sparrow eggs one after the other. The mother sparrow enquires what the noise was, the crow shuns the matter by saying it was chewing a betel nut. At dawn to the crow thanks the sparrow and leaves the nest. The story implies that never trust anybody easily. On the contrary another popular folk song with same characters "*Gubbi mari kagge mari*," celebrates brotherhood and friendship. (Gaddigaudar, 2020) Although the song appears to be children's rhymes, there are images of racial bias and prejudice, the motif of an adult's influence on an innocent child is evident. In the lines *kagge mari kad kappu* or crow's younger one is pitch black and ugly to look at, suggests not just the darkness of the skin but of the heart too. The definition of friendship with a crow is picturised as evil or bad omen. Thus, this way there are numerous household oral narratives with animal characters

that present human values and humane virtues.

Folk dance forms like Kamsale, Karadi Kunita (bear dance) or Huli kunita (tiger dance) have dancers dressed in animal attire. Most songs have colloquial language dialect and songs praise and rejoice nature's resources. These dance forms narrate stories of Indian epics. In the recent Kannada film Kantara the myth of Panjaruli and the folk dance form of coastal Karnataka is marvelously depicted. Rishab Shetty starrer movie puts the mind and the heart into constant conflict. The film presents the conventional practices of a tribal community in modern times. Tribal customs and belief systems are intertwined in the banal and trite affairs. A forest officer with modern beliefs and atheist ideals tries to disrupt their practices, he challenges the local law and the beliefs of the people. The peoples arise when the folktale of the divine that is protecting the village is contested by the chieftain. The film text interrogates the cultural norms under a volatile modernizing mechanism. In subtle ways Shetty tries to juxtapose tradition and modernity. The climax of the film debates and deliberates the existence

of God in the global world. The folk dance steps, costume, musical notes, make up, etc is rustic, crude and unprocessed. Thus, most folk dance forms have themes of compassion, benevolence and kindness. They worship animals and associate them to Gods. The tiger dance during the navaratri celebrates tiger the vehicle of Durga, the people dress like tigers and seek blessings of Durga to protect themselves from tiger attacks.

Punyakoti, a folktale later composed as a poem titled *Govina Haddu* or song of a cow by B M Srikantaiah and then adapted as a song in many movies, is about a truthful cow. The cow while grazing is attacked by a tiger, it makes an excuse with the tiger stating her calf is waiting in the cow shed for her return. The tiger agrees to let the cow to bid one goodbye to the calf before become his next meal. The cow having promised the tiger to return soon after attending to its calf, appears in front of the tiger offering its hot blood and tasty flesh. The tiger who anticipated the cow to flee and never return, is humbled and alluding the courage of the cow the tiger jumps off the cliff and dies. The story tells how truth has the potential to crack open the hearts of tough nuts too. This song was popularised during the freedom struggle as B M Srikantaiah excessively involved in translating Kannada poems, songs and stories to English. The song of punyakoti instilled Gandhian ideas of truth and non-violence. The people came to believe just like the tiger's heart melted, the European assaulters too would give in, subdued and thereby peace be restored. When seen under a postcolonial lens like George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, *Govina Haddu* also represents the exploitation people, land and

resources during the colonial rule. Cow has special status in the Hindu culture, it is referred to as Kamadenu, a divine entity.

Writer S L Byrappa, uses this folktale as a parallel for narrating brain drain and the western influence on an Indian boy. In his celebrated work *Tabaliyu Neenadeya Magane* or You have become an orphan, son, was adapted into film co-directed by Girish Karnad and B V Karanth in 1977. The movie critiques on complex and complicated contemporary issues such as beef eating, native values and western influence, cow as a commodity and a sentiment, etc. (Shah, 1977) The story is set in a village in Karnataka, a place in the foothills of Arunadri hills. Like the folk song says the shepherd Kalinga Gowda calls his cattle by their names and they promptly respond to his call. The human-animal bond is rejoiced and the as the story develops this relationship undergoes a litmus test. Kalinga, the protagonist who grew suckling and latching a cow, has returned from abroad to attend to the last rites of his deceased grandfather. He is now a changed man, who is unwilling to do a lot of rituals but somehow beats his ego off and pulls himself together to tonsure his head and perform the rites. His dumb and aged mother is the sole survivor in his family. Gradually, Kalinga takes charges as the man of the household and his mother is happy to see her son make decision like a responsible man. His childhood friend, a priest and a school teacher at the local school Venkataramanna Shastri is his close confidant. Their intellectual wavelength match and their possess sibling affinity. Shastri acts as the custodian of religion and tradition while Kalinga an aberrant. (Byrappa, 1968).

Kalinga marries an American woman. His wife finds it difficult to understand the traditions and customs of the place. The couple decides to develop dairy farming and adopt the cows in Kalinga's household. The villagers are apprehensive of the intentions of the white woman and the foreign return Kalinga. They revere cows as holy and divine, however Kalinga sees them as commodities. To add to their anxiety, he sells the aged cows to a local butcher in exchange of money. The villagers are devastated and they blame the American wife for such a heinous act. The folk narrative says the shepherd had promised protection for the lineage of Punyakoti cows until their end. The act of doing away with those aged cows is seen breach of trust and violation of promise. In another instance, rage Kanlinga's wife orders their butler to cook beef. She demands the meat of a Punyakoti cow. She instructs the butler to kill a cow and cook specially for her. Before she is overcomes her rage the crime has been committed and she has to face the wrath of the villagers. This time Kalinga's mother is offended, though mute like the cow she questions her American daughter-in-law. She tries to remind her that it was this cow that fed her husband Kalinga, but Lydia, her daughter-in-law is too impatient. The killing of the cow is another violation of the promise and trust that has been so dearly maintained by Kalinga's family.

This story like the folksong of Punyakoti, critiques the hypocrisy of the children who were fed and nurtured by Jashoda are not prepared to support and treat her during her last few years. When the aged cows are sold the only question that arises in one's consciousness is, are cows mere

objects for dairy farming? Ingold in his essay discusses this attitude of the animal owners. He states, "how the transcendence of humanity over the natural world, has enabled nature to come to stand as a raw material to human projects of construction." It is then that forests become a place for cultivation, natural resources act as a tool and thus plants and animals tend to be bred to serve human purposes. This makes it impossible for one to acknowledge the powers endowed to an animal. One forgets that animals are sentient beings and have the power for autonomous action. (Ingold, 1994) When emotions are traded, the villages in "*Tabbaliyu Neenade Magane*," reprimand, revolt and rebuke. These stories challenge the anthropomorphic representation of the folk narrative. A folk song is held universally true but in both the stories the concept of milk as mere commodity interrogates the values and virtues so far revered.

Girish Karnad's *Nagamandala* is based on another popular folktale on the union between a serpent and a woman. The drama is a retelling of the folklore and has been adapted into movie by directed by T S Nagabharana in 1997. This mythical snake disguised in the form of the protagonist Appanna, is pleased with his dutiful wife Rani, who has religiously prayed for a good husband. The naga-deva or snake god is displeased by the arrogant and abusive nature of Appanna and decides to help its dear disciple. It comes to Rani's aid and consoles her, it gains her confidence and they consummate, it goes out of way to protect her. But Appanna unaware of these developments learns about Rani's pregnancy and confronts her. She pleads innocence and Appanna is further infuriated.

ted. He spends time with his mistress Chaluvi and then decides to keep a close watch on his household. He sees Rani with the snake now disguised as him. He confronts the snake and a fight ensues between them. This folktale like Punkyakoti is an interesting text because just like cows, snakes are considered scared and worshipped by many in the Northern parts of Karnataka. The folk song like *Panchami habba* celebrates brother and sister bond. On Nag Panchami, people offer milk and rice pudding at anthills and pray for its strength, virility and prosperity. The snake virility motif is presented when Appanna is body building at the gymkhana and his aggression. The passionate union of Rani and the Serpent, the fierce fight between Appanna and the snake in disguise, are some instances in the play where masculine traits are projected through metonymic representations.

Karnad's works always have a folktale that runs along the mainstream narrative. His other work "Hayavadana" also deals with a folk tale similar to the story of Lord Ganesh. Here it is the story of a man with a horse's head. Like Pegasus and Mermaid, Hayavadana celebrates the combination of human and animal. However, timid Rani in "Nagamandala" becomes the site for exploitation. Her husband who ill-treats her displays hypermasculine traits, he is abusive and aggressive. Hypermasculinity is a condition in which men exercise violence and hatred over self, women, animals or nature in order to instill terror. Susan Mc-Hughs argued that treatment of dogs is concomitant to the sufferings of underprivileged. Cruelty is in fact linked abhorrent characters. According to Arnold Arluke, there is a link between animal cruelty and

subsequent violent crimes towards humans. He also gives example Stephen King who portrays an antagonist or antihero character by ruthlessly brutalising an animal as a foreground for the gruesome crime yet to happen. Nature-culture theory of Donna Haraway suggests that nature is appropriated to meet the standards of the culture. In *Nagamandala*, Rani is impregnated by the scared snake, Appanna, the philanderer realises his mistake, his neglect and indolence is pardoned. The scared snake is killed and Appanna reconciles with his estranged wife. When the aged cattle are sold or the Punkyakoti cow is killed in *Tabbaliyu Neenadeya Magane*, the villagers understand it is inappropriate and offensive but it is far short of constituting an offensive crime. When Kalinga's child is in want of milk, the cow feeds the child. The scene suggests we live in a world where people are confused and uncertain about the nature and importance of animals. The fabric of morality crumbles in when Shastri realises how he has lost his humane virtues and Kalinga is calling names of his cows in bewilderment and not one cow responds to his call. In other words, ontologically human and animal relationship comprises of arbitrariness. Punkyakoti at the philosophical level was a pact between the shepherd and the cow who promises to take birth in the same household and aid in his growth and prosperity. The title you have been orphaned son, finds an explanation in the ambivalent ending. Kalinga has truly been orphaned; his inability to establish a connection with his cattle highlights a confused moral context. Ambiguity permeates in texts and the characters Appanna and Kalinga are searching for

meaning in a morally complex world.

Conclusion :

Folktale becomes the crux of identity formation. The way in which one interacts with animals influences the identity of the self. The folktales discussed above provide a philosophical perspective social interaction aid in shaping the identities of the self and other. One can contemplate the interconnectedness of all living beings and the consequences of human actions on the natural world.

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विद्यासागर नौटियाल के कथाओं में लोकजीवन एवं आर्थिकी

हिमांशु विश्वकर्मा

शोधार्थी

हिंदी एवं अन्य भारतीय भाषा विभाग

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मूल आलेख :

नौटियाल की कहानियों के केन्द्र में उन पात्रों का चित्रण है, जो चुनौतियों और सामाजिक मानदंडों का सामना करते हुए गहन व्यक्तिगत विकास से गुजरते हैं। ये यात्राएँ अक्सर प्रेम, महत्वाकांक्षा और लचीलेपन के सार्वभौमिक विषयों को दर्शाती हैं, जो विविध पृष्ठभूमि के पाठकों के साथ प्रतिध्वनित होती हैं। नौटियाल मानवीय अनुभवों और कौशल विकास की प्रक्रिया की पेचीदगियों को व्यक्त करने के लिए प्रतीकात्मकता, आंतरिक और बाहरी संघर्ष तथा चरित्र संबंधों सहित विभिन्न प्रकार की कथा तकनीकों का उपयोग करते हैं। उनके पात्र अक्सर व्यक्तिगत दुविधाओं से निपटते हैं जबकि बड़े सामाजिक ढाँचों से भी जुड़ते हैं, जिससे उनके चरित्र प्रासंगिक और प्रभावशाली बनते हैं। विशेष रूप से उत्तराखंड के लोकजीवन के संदर्भ में नौटियाल की कृतियाँ सांस्कृतिक पहचान और सामुदायिक जुड़ाव के महत्व को भी उजागर करती हैं। पारंपरिक प्रथाओं और सांस्कृतिक तत्वों को अपने आख्यानों में बुनकर नौटियाल दिखाते हैं कि ये कारक चरित्र विकास और आर्थिकी की खोज को कैसे प्रभावित करते हैं। यह दृष्टिकोण व्यक्तिगत विकास और सामाजिक अपेक्षाओं के बीच परस्पर क्रिया की गहरी समझ को बढ़ावा देता है, अंततः सशक्तिकरण और प्रामाणिकता के संदेश को बढ़ावा

देता है। अपनी प्रशंसा के बावजूद, नौटियाल का साहित्य विवादों से अछूता नहीं रहा है। आलोचकों ने कभी-कभी व्यक्तिगत आख्यानों को व्यापक सामाजिक टिप्पणी के साथ संतुलित करने की चुनौतियों की ओर इशारा किया है, यह सवाल करते हुए कि 'क्या चरित्र-चाप की पेचीदगियाँ कभी-कभी विषयगत गहराई को ढक लेती हैं?' फिर भी, उनके काम की स्थायी लोकप्रियता और आलोचनात्मक स्वागत जीवन की जटिलताओं को नेविगेट करने में कौशल विकास और व्यक्तिगत विकास के महत्व को रेखांकित करता है, जिससे नौटियाल भारतीय साहित्य के परिदृश्य में एक महत्वपूर्ण आवाज़ बन गए हैं। विद्यासागर नौटियाल का कथा साहित्य प्रभावी रूप से उन सामाजिक संदर्भों को समाहित करता है जिसमें उनके पात्र मौजूद हैं। समाज की जटिलता को अक्सर व्यक्तिगत पात्रों या विशिष्ट संस्थाओं के माध्यम से दर्शाकर सरल बनाया जाता है।

उत्तराखण्ड का भूगोल बहुत विषम है। यहाँ भी कमजोर भौगोलिक वातावरण और ऊबड़-खाबड़ भूमि के कारण पर्याप्त कृषि भूमि नहीं है। यहाँ निर्वाहक रूप से सीढ़ीदार खेत कृषि कार्य करते हैं। यहाँ की अर्थव्यवस्था बहुमूल्य मानव संसाधनों के प्रवास,

आर्थिक असमानता, पर्यावरण असंतुलन, बेरोजगारी और गरीबी के चित्रण से पीड़ित है। यहाँ की भौगोलिक विषमताओं के कारण, अर्थव्यवस्था मुख्यतः अब पर्यटन एवं कृषि पर आधारित है, लेकिन इसका विकास मुश्किल है। शिक्षित लोग रोजगार और व्यापार के लिए ग्रामीण इलाकों से दूर शहरों की ओर पलायन करते हैं, जिससे स्थानीय अर्थव्यवस्था पर कठिन भौगोलिक परिस्थितियों का प्रभाव पूरी तरह से परिलक्षित होता है। परंतु यहाँ के लोकजीवन को विद्यासागर नौटियाल ने अपने समूचे लेखन में पहाड़ों के दुःख-दर्द, बिडम्बनाएँ, त्रासदियाँ, प्राकृतिक और मानवीकृत आपदाओं के साथ जीवंत रूप में चित्रित किया है। उन्होंने उत्तराखण्ड की आर्थिक स्थिति को स्वीकार करके इसका स्वरूप बताया है। यहाँ की दुर्लभ भौगोलिक स्थिति और प्राकृतिक आपदाओं के कारण प्राचीन काल से ही आजीविका के साधन सीमित रहे हैं। गाय, भैंस, भेड़, बकरी, घोड़े, खच्चर और अन्य कई प्रकार के पशु और कृषि ही आम लोगों की आजीविका रही। किसी भी परिवार की आजीविका का मुख्य स्रोत यहाँ पशु-दूध का घरेलू व्यापार था। विद्यासागर ने आजीविका के संबंध में दूध का स्वाद कहानी में बताया है- “इस भैंस का दूध सूखता है तो पूरे परिवार की जीवन-सरिता सूख जाती है। आज परिवार का मुखिया शहर से घर लौटकर नहीं आया है। उसकी दूध की परोठी आज किसी दूसरे के हाथ रीति लौट आई है। आज रात को भी इसे कौन दुहेगा, यह तय करना मुश्किल है। भैंस इकहथिया है। धनानंद के अलावा किसी दूसरे को अपने थन पर हाथ नहीं लगाने देती। देवकी उसकी पीठ थपथपाती है और धनानंद उसके थनों से दूध निकालता है। परंतु आज धनानंद घर नहीं लौटा और अब अगले छह महीनों तक वह घर नहीं लौटने वाला है। कुछ समय से भैंस का दूध कुछ कम हो गया था, उसकी पूर्ति वह पानी मिलाकर करने लगा था। उसे आज भैंस का दूध सूखने की सजा सुनाई गई है।”¹ इस

प्रकार विद्यासागर ने यहाँ की पशुओं की उपयोगिता को पारिवारिक आत्मनिर्भरता के रूप में उल्लेखित किया है।

पशुओं से आजीविका के रूप में दूध के अलावा कई प्रकार का तारतम्य जुड़ा हुआ था। पशुओं के दूध से पारिवारिक जीवन चलाया जाता था, जबकि आज भी भेड़-बकरियों के ऊन से कपड़े बनाकर स्वयं इस्तेमाल करते और बाहर भी बेचते तथा खरीदे जाते रहे हैं। विद्यासागर ने भी अपने साहित्य में इसे मुख्य रूप से आजीविका का साधन के रूप में देखा है। ऊँचे पहाड़ों पर रहने वाले लोग मुख्य रूप से भेड़ों और बकरियों के ऊन से बुने कपड़े पहनते, और वे सभी गरम कपड़ों का अन्य स्थानों पर व्यापार करते हैं। कथाकार ने अपने साहित्य में भेड़ों और बकरियों के ऊन से निर्मित कपड़ों से आजीविका के इस साधन को पूरी तरह से समझाया है- “बनचौरा एक बहुत ऊँचे पर्वत के शिखर पर बसा है। अपने को वहाँ की भयंकर ठंड से बचाए रखने के लिए वहाँ के निवासियों को बारहों महीने गर्म कपड़ों में लिपटे रहना पड़ता है। सिर से पांव तक को खूब अच्छी तरह ढककर रखना उसकी मजबूरी होती है। वे ज्यादातर अपने हाथ के बने पट्ट से बुने गए कपड़े होते हैं। अपनी भेड़ों की ऊन का वे कपड़े बनाने में इस्तेमाल करने आए हैं, परम्परा से। बनचौरा में पहुँच जाने पर ऐसा महसूस होने लगता है कि हम दुनिया की छत पर पहुँच गए हैं। चारों तरफ के बहुत दूर-दूर तक के नजारे एकदम दिखाई देने लगते हैं। ग्रामवासी बताते हैं कि हमारे यहां बर्फबारी बहुत जल्द होने लगती है। कभी भी हो सकती है, लेकिन वे उन जगहों पर पहुँच नहीं सकते, जो वहाँ से इतनी करीब दिखाई देती हैं। ये मायावी फासलें होते हैं। देखने में ‘लपककर हाथ से छू लो’ जाने में कई-कई दिनों को निगल जाने वाले फासले। ऐसे अलग-थलग पड़े गांव में लोगों का मुख्य पेशा भेड़-पालन है, वे भेड़ें उनकी रोटी और रोजी का सहारा होती हैं।”²

स्थानीय लोगों ने भेड़-बकरियों के इस व्यवसाय के अलावा छोटी-छोटी दुकानों के माध्यम से स्थानीय उत्पादों का क्रय-विक्रय भी किया जाता आया है। इस स्थानीय व्यापार में अनाज के स्थान पर अन्य आवश्यक और फायदेमंद सामान को खरीदा और बेचा जाता। साथ ही, स्थानीय दुकानों में लोग आस-पास से दूध का व्यापार करते आये हैं, जो आज भी उनकी सबसे प्रमुख आजीविका का साधन है। विद्यासागर ने अपने साहित्य में इस क्रय-विक्रय व्यापार के परिप्रेक्ष्य में व्यापक चर्चा की है- “ज्यादातर लोग अड़ोस-पड़ोस के गांवों से दूध मंगवा लेते हैं। सुबह जब तक सोकर नहीं उठते दूध अपनी देहली पर पहुंच जाता है, जो सैंतेरी दूध नहीं लगाते वे गांव के होटलों से मंगवा लेते हैं। गांव के कई होटल खुल गए हैं। उनमें दिन भर चाय-पानी चलता रहता है। रैमासी धान पैदा करता है। उसके चारों ओर ऊँचाइयों पर जो भी गांव हैं, उन गांवों के निवासी भेड़-बकरियां पालते हैं। वहाँ धान पैदा नहीं होता। वहाँ मरसा, कोदा या फाफरा होता है। वही उनके खाने के अनाज हैं। गेंहू या चावल के लिए वे सब रैमासी पर निर्भर रहते हैं। नमक भी रैमासी से खरीदा जाता है, दो पाथा नमक, एक पाथा राजमा, रैमासी गांव नहीं, एक बाजार है। एक पूरा बाजार, जिनकी दुकानें नहीं वे भी बाजार में रहते हैं। भेड़ पालक दूर-दूर से रैमासी आएंगे। कोटा, फाफरा, मारसा लाएंगे। राजमा की दाल लाएंगे, आलू लेकर आयेंगे।”³

कथाकार ने आर्थिक चेतना के रूप में उत्तराखण्ड की कठिन भौगोलिक परिस्थितियों को साहित्यिक दृष्टिकोण से भी देखा है, यह उनकी लेखनी में स्पष्ट है। अपने साहित्य में छोटे-छोटे स्थानीय व्यवसायों को भी आजीविका के साधन के रूप में चित्रित किया है। पुराने समय से ही हस्तशिल्प व हस्तकौशल जैसे कई स्थानीय व्यवसाय यहाँ रहने वाले भूमिहीन शिल्पकारों की आजीविका का मुख्य साधन रहे हैं। कथाकार ने भी इस स्थानीय उद्यम की उपयोगिता को

ध्यान में रखते हुए अपने लेखन में इसे पूरा स्थान दिया है- “वे पहाड़ी बांस-रिंगाल से बनाई गई चटाई मुरेठी लायेंगे और पूरे खलिहान या किसी खूब बड़े कमरे के फर्श को ढक देने लायक बड़ा पाल लायेंगे। रिंगाल से बनाई गई बड़ी-छोटी टोकरियां और घिल्डे लेकर आयेंगे, जिन्हें अपनी पीठ पर लगाकर औरतें खेतों में गोबर डालने जाती हैं और जंगल जाती हैं तो जरूरी तौर पर अपने साथ ले जाती हैं। रैमासी के हर व्यापारी को पता है कि चांदी और दूसरे गांवों के आखिरी सीमा रैमासी है। अपने अनबिके पाल को ढोकर वे वापिस अपने गांव नहीं ले जा सकते। रैमासी से आगे बढ़ जाने का उनका सामर्थ्य नहीं होता। उनके पास उतना समय भी नहीं रहता। रैमासी वाले इस बात को अच्छी तरह जानते हैं। इसलिए आम तौर पर, अन्त में, भाव वही तय होगा जो रैमासी वाला बोल दे।”⁴

उत्तराखण्ड में संसाधनों की कमी के कारण हमेशा ही स्वरोजगार को प्राथमिकता दी गई है। यहां की कृषि भूमि कम उपजाऊ होने के कारण स्थानीय लोगों को अन्य स्थानीय रोजगारों की ओर आकर्षित करना पड़ा। पहाड़ी क्षेत्र होने के कारण उत्तराखण्ड में यातायात के साधनों की कमी रही है, इसलिए यहाँ यातायात के लिए घोड़े और खच्चरों का पालन भी किया जाता था। कथाकार ने भौगोलिक परिस्थितियों के कारण यातायात की असुविधा को कम करने के लिए स्थानीय लोगों द्वारा घोड़े और खच्चरों के माध्यम से कई प्रकार की वस्तुओं का व्यापार करने के बारे में लिखा है- “बाधा परिवार में एक घोड़ा भी है। सोनी गांव में घोड़ा और किसी के पास नहीं है। घोड़ा भी इसी अनुशासन के मताहत जीवन-यापन करना है, सफेद घोड़ा। उसकी पीठ पर बाधा परिवार के किसी भी सदस्य ने कभी सवारी की हो, ऐसा सोनी गांव में किसी को याद नहीं। घोड़ा किसी कर्जदार से रूपयों की वसूली में आया था जो घोड़े की और अपनी पीठ पर रोज माल ढोकर अपना,

अपने परिवार का और घोड़े का पेट पालने की असफल करता रहता था।”⁵

विद्यासागर की कथा-साहित्य में गढ़वाल अंचल का ग्रामीण समाज का रहवास मुख्य रूप से चित्रित हुआ है। गढ़वाली समाज की समस्त क्रियाकलाप, रीतिरिवाज, परम्पराएँ, खान-पान, आचार-विचार के अलावा यहाँ बहने वाली सदानीरा नदियाँ संस्कृति की महत्वपूर्ण परिचायक रही हैं। पुराने समय से स्थानीय लोग इन नदियों और तालाबों से आटे की चक्की (घट) के माध्यम से खाना खाते रहे हैं। इन्हीं तालाबों और नदियों में मछलियों का शिकार करते आये हैं। कालान्तर में संसाधनों और रोजगार की कमी ने स्थानीय लोगों को मछली पालन करने के लिए भी प्रेरित किया। विद्यासागर नौटियाल ने अपने साहित्य में इस साधन को देखते हुए कहा-“रैदास मछली लाता रहा। रोज सुबह उठकर वह भीलांगना नदी के किनारे जाकर मछली पकड़ने के लिए लगाए हुए जाल को देखता। कभी एक मिलती, कभी दो और कभी तीन भी मिल जाती। जब एक से ज्यादा मिल जाती तो वह खुश हो जाता। पर केवल एक ही मिलने पर उसे दुख होता। अगर वह दारोगाजी को मछली न दे पाए, तो उसे मालूम था कि उसका पुरस्कार क्या मिल सकता है। मन मारकर वह रोज एक मछली दारोगाजी को सौंप आता।”⁶ इस प्रकार स्पष्ट है कि उत्तराखण्ड की अर्थव्यवस्था में प्रकृति का हस्तक्षेप सर्वत्र मिलता है। सदानीरा नदियाँ यहाँ के जन-जीवन को हमेशा हरा-भरा करती आई है जिसका प्रत्यक्ष प्रमाण प्राचीन समय से प्रचलित पनचक्कियाँ हैं।

उत्तराखण्ड में मुख्यतः पारिवारिक स्तम्भ के रूप में महिलाओं का महत्वपूर्ण योगदान रहा है। पुरुष मैदानी क्षेत्रों में या सेना में काम करने के लिए बाहर निकलते थे, जबकि घरों को स्त्रियाँ ही संभाला करती आई हैं। महिलाओं ने आजीविका के लिए मुख्यतः पशुपालन किया, फिर दूध, घी और अन्य सामान स्थानीय बाजारों में बेचकर अपने दैनिक

खर्चों का भुगतान किया। कथाकार ने भी इस मुश्किल काम के बाद मिलने वाली आय के बारे में सही विचार नहीं दिया। इस विषय में उन्होंने लिखा-“रूपसा दौड़ने लगी, उसे अपनी घसियारिन सहेलियों के झुण्ड के साथ होने की जल्दी थी। किसी अकेली घसियारिन का इस अंधेरे में दौड़ना ठीक नहीं था। पर उसका अकेला होना भी ठीक नहीं था। वह दौड़ने लगी। दौड़ते-दौड़ते उसे अपने पति की याद हो आई। उसका पति भी इस समय कहीं दौड़ लगा रहा होगा। वह कहता था कि पलटन में रोज सुबह दौड़ लगानी पड़ती है। वह पेट पालने के लिए दौड़ रहा है और रूपसा अपनी भैंस का पेट पालने के लिए दौड़ रही है। धरती रूठ गई है। तृण का कहीं नाम नहीं रह गया है। भैंस का पेट भरने के लिए रूपसा का दूर के इलाके में जाना पड़ रहा है। यह जीवन का दौड़ है। रूपसा दौड़ रही है, उसका पति भी दौड़ रहा है।”

इस तरह, यहाँ के ग्रामीण लोगों की आर्थिक चेतना पुरानी है। यहाँ के स्थानीय निवासियों ने बहुत से आजीविका के साधनों को प्रकृति से ही पाया है। प्रकृति हमें जड़ी-बूटियाँ, लकड़ी, इमारतें, फल, वनस्पतियाँ और बहुत कुछ देती है। यहाँ पर कई जंगली फलों को बेचकर भी पैसा कमाया जाता है। यहाँ भी लेखक नौटियाल ने प्राकृतिक वनस्पति को आजीविका का मुख्य साधन बताया है। उन्होंने अपने लेखों में जंगली फलों को बेचने का भी चित्रण किया है- “पिछले साल अच्छे काफल हुए थे तेजपाल। पिछली छुट्टियों में हम लोगों ने काफलों की बिक्री से अपनी पढ़ाई का साल भर का पूरा खर्चा उठा लिया था।

क्यों?

- हां, मैंने तो साल भर तक माँ से एक पैसा भी नहीं मांगा फीस के लिए।

मैंने किताबों के लिए भी घर से पैसे नहीं लिए। मेरी खजांची भी मेरी माँ है। मैं रोजाना अपनी कमाई उसी के पास जमा करता रहता हूँ।”⁸

निष्कर्ष :

यह स्पष्ट है कि उत्तराखण्ड की आर्थिक स्थिति पुरानी है। यहां की जनता ने संसाधनों की कमी, यातायात की कठिनाई सहित कई समस्याओं का सामना किया है। वर्तमान परिदृश्य में, यहाँ की विकास दर में कुछ सुधार होना चाहिए क्योंकि उत्तराखण्ड विकास की ओर अग्रसर है, क्योंकि यातायात सुविधाओं का विकास और संसाधनों की उपलब्धता बढ़ी है। वर्तमान समय में यातायात और संसाधनों की उपलब्धता के कारण कुछ सीमा तक सुलभता मिलती है, हालांकि प्राचीन काल में कृषि के लिए कई चुनौतियों का सामना करना पड़ा था। आज उत्तराखण्ड में सड़कों का निर्माण लगातार सुविधाजनक होता जा रहा है। कृषि या पशुपालन में वर्तमान तकनीक का उपयोग वर्तमान समय में यहाँ का समाज देश-विदेश में खरीदी और बेची जाती है, जिससे वह राष्ट्रीय और अंतरराष्ट्रीय पटल पर देखता है। शिक्षा क्षेत्र भी लगातार नए आयामों को ला रहा है। यहां के लोग आज की सभी सुविधाओं के बावजूद भी अपने आप को असुरक्षित और असमर्थ महसूस करते हैं। प्रकृति

की गोद में रहने के कारण यहाँ आने वाले कई प्रकार की प्राकृतिक आपदाएँ यहाँ के आर्थिक विकास पर निरंतर प्रभाव डालती हैं।

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An Ecological Implications and Chemical Reactions in Kim Stanley Robinson's *Blue Mars*

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Introduction :

Kim Stanley Robinson's *Blue Mars* offers an impactful exploration of the intricate relationship between humanity and the environment. As the last book in his acclaimed Mars Trilogy, *Blue Mars* not only deals with the epic story of Martian colonization but also deepens the thematic analysis on ecological sustainability and the ethics of terraforming. Through the eco-critical way, this paper interprets Robinson's portrayal of a human-altered Mars, focusing on how the novel critiques anthropocentric attitudes towards Mars and reviews for a more ecologically conscious approach to planetary colonization.

The novel's narration is deeply intertwined with environmental themes, from the large-scale terraforming projects that reshape the actual Martian landscape to the characters' evolving the relationship with their environment. Robinson depicts the way Mars changing ecosystems invite readers to reflect on the consequences of human intervention in natural processes.

Moreover, the novel raises various questions about the moral responsibilities of colonizers, the long-term impacts of scientific advancements on ecosystems, and the potential for creating a sustainable balance between human needs and environmental preservation.

This paper interprets the key passages from *Blue Mars* to explore how Robinson's narration reflects and contributes to the broader discourse on environmental issues. Robinson's work in the context of contemporary environmental concerns, this study aims to highlight the novel's significance as a speculative reflection on the future of human-environment interactions.

As humanity faces unprecedented environmental challenges due to various reasons and causes *Blue Mars* serves as a speculative reflection on the potential futures that lie ahead, urging readers to contemplate the choices we make today and their implications for the ecosystems we live. Through this exploration, this

study contributes to ongoing discussions about the role of literature in shaping our understanding of environmental issues, ethics and sustainability, positioning Robinson's work as a phinominal voice in the conversation about the future of human and environment interactions. *Blue Mars* points out for a more harmonious coexistence between humans and their environment, suggesting that sustainable living is not only possible but necessary for the long-term survival of both human and non-human life.

In *Blue Mars*, Robinson masterfully intertwines the ecological concerns with the narrative of Martian colonization, creating a rich tapestry that challenges the readers to consider the ethical implications of human intervention in natural environments. As noted by Clark (2018), he highlighted eco-criticism in literature often seeks to deconstruct anthropocentric perspectives and highlight the intrinsic value of nature. Robinson's narrative aligns with this approach, particularly in passages where characters grapple with the ethical dimensions of terraforming. For instance, Robinson writes, "We are remaking Mars, but we must ask ourselves-at what cost? What are we sacrificing in the name of progress?" (Robinson, 1996). This sentiment echoes the concerns raised by eco-critics like Glotfelty (1996), who argue that literature has the power to reveal the destructive consequences of anthropocentric worldviews.

Robinson's depiction of the Martian environment as a living, dynamic system resonates with the principles of deep ecology, a concept explored by Naess (1973). In *Blue Mars*, the planet is described not merely as a backdrop for human activities but as a complex environmental set up with

its own natural value. This conviction is witness in the character of Ann Clayborne, who passionately argues against the terraforming efforts, stating, "Mars deserves to be left in its natural state, unaltered by human hands. We have no right to impose our will upon it" (Robinson, 1996). This aligns with Naess's advocacy for the intrinsic worth of all living beings and ecosystems, regardless of their utility to humans and their needs.

Additionally, the novel finds the socio-political dimensions of ecological sustainability is supported by the work of environmental scholars like Merchant (1980), who discuss the intersection of ecology and social justice. Robinson's narrative emphasis the tension between different factions on Mars, each with its own vision of the planet's future. This is reflected in the ongoing debates among the characters, as they struggle to reconcile their differing views on environmental stewardship. As Robinson articulates, "The battle for Mars's future is not just about science and technology; it's about competing visions of what it means to live in harmony with the land" (Robinson, 1996).

Robinson's *Blue Mars* prompts a critical interpretation of eco-critical principles within the context of planetary colonization and environmental modification in Mars. The novel's portrayal of the ethical dilemmas associated with terraforming reflects real-world debates on environmental ethics and sustainability. As noted by Garrard (2004), eco-critical literature often challenges the assumption that technological advancement is inherently beneficial, urging readers to consider the long-term ecological consequences of human actions. Robinson encapsulates this tension in his depiction of the Mars Terraforming Debate, where the character Sax Russell

reflects, “We are altering the very fabric of this world, and we must ask ourselves whether we have the wisdom to foresee the consequences” (Robinson, 1996). This reflection cope up with Garrard’s critique of unchecked technological optimism in environmental discourse.

Furthermore, *Blue Mars* engages with the theme of ecological imperialism, a concept explored by Crosby (1986) in his analysis of the environmental impacts of colonial expansion. Robinson’s narrative draws parallels between the colonization of Mars and historical instances of environmental exploitation on Earth, highlighting the dangers of imposing human will on alien ecosystems. This is particularly evident in the conflict between the “Reds” and the “Greens” on Mars, with the former advocating for the preservation of Mars in its pristine state, while the latter push for its transformation to suit human needs. The debate summarizes the broader ethical question posed by Robinson: “Should we adapt the planet to suit our needs, or should we adapt ourselves to the planet?” (Robinson, 1996). In the chemical reaction and scientific study proves that how humans are highly selfish in terms of changing the real nature of Mars into human designed and changed one. The following supportive points proves that how humans colonize the Mars.

The Chronicles of Blue Mars :

In a distant corner of the galaxy, a shimmering planet, aptly named **Blue Mars**, had drawn the attention of Earth’s explorers. Similar to Earth, Blue Mars contained soil and minerals, a promising canvas for humanity’s dreams of colonization. Among the first wave of settlers were scientists, agriculturists, and visionaries determined to cultivate agriculture, plant

trees, and grow grass for sustenance.

A Ray of Hope :

Blue Mars’s unique electromagnetic radiation range of 400-450 nm sparked hope among the settlers. This range, equivalent to a frequency of 6.66×10^{14} Hz and an energy of 4.73×10^{-19} Joules, was found to be sufficient for photosynthesis—a critical process for sustaining life [1,2]. The settlers quickly realized that this energy could be harnessed to grow plants and generate oxygen.

Equipped with Earth’s knowledge of photosynthesis, they began experiments using genetically modified crops designed to adapt to Blue Mars’s environmental conditions. These crops utilized the planet’s light spectrum to carry out photosynthesis efficiently. The settlers marveled as the barren soil, nurtured by the radiant light, began to sprout life.

Photosynthesis on Blue Mars :

The settlers introduced photosynthetic proteins, a biological marvel that facilitated light-induced electron transfer across lipid membranes. These proteins became the cornerstone of their efforts, allowing plants to adapt to the alien environment.

The process was inspired by Photosystem II (PSII), the first protein complex involved in oxygenic photosynthesis on Earth. PSII’s ability to split water molecules and transfer electrons was crucial. It created hydrogen ions for ATP synthesis and released oxygen—a byproduct that could support life. However, adapting PSII to Blue Mars required ingenuity. Scientists modified the thylakoid membranes to optimize photon capture within the 400-450 nm range, ensuring maximum energy utilization [3]. The schematic representation of photosystem is given in Fig. 1.

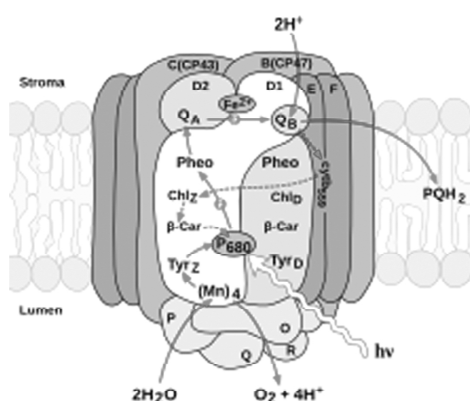


Fig.-1 : Schematic of PSII, highlighting electron transfer

Soon, the barren landscapes of Blue Mars began transforming. Plants thrived, forming the foundation of a delicate ecosystem. The settlers saw the possibility of a new Eden-but their triumph was short-lived.

A Grim Discovery :

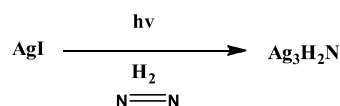
The settlers' joy turned to despair when they discovered an alarming fact: there was no natural water source on Blue Mars. Rivers, lakes, and aquifers were non-

existent. Without water, their burgeoning ecosystem was at risk of collapse.

Driven by necessity, they devised an ambitious plan to create artificial rain. Using chemical cloud-seeding methods, they introduced silver iodide into the atmosphere. The process induced precipitation, and water finally fell from the sky. While this provided temporary relief, the settlers were unaware of the long-term consequences.

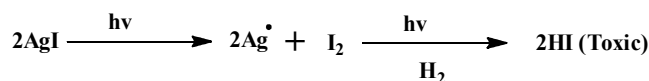
The Artificial Rain Crisis :

The success of artificial rain came at a steep cost. The chemicals used in the process-particularly silver iodide-reacted with the planet's unique atmosphere, producing toxic byproducts such as hydrogen iodide (HI) and $\text{Ag}_3\text{H}_2\text{N}$. These pollutants began to accumulate in the environment, poisoning the soil and air. The reaction and the proposed mechanism of the artificial rain crisis as follows:

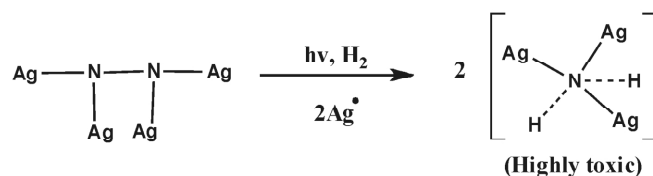
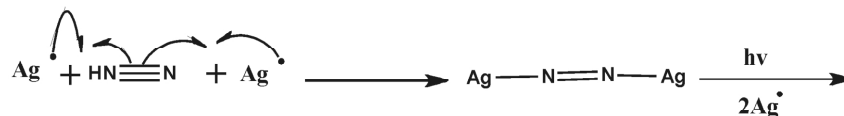


Mechanism :

Step – I :



Step – II :



Moreover, the artificial rain destabilized the atmospheric temperature. The release of harmful reagents like solid CO₂, propane and potassium iodide (KI) exacerbated the problem, leading to an unbalanced ecosystem. Plants and microorganisms, unable to adapt to the chemical changes, began to perish. The settlers found themselves in a dire situation-their solution to one problem had created an even greater one.

A Divided Society :

The settlers soon split into factions. On one side were the environmentalists, who advocated for sustainable methods and sought to undo the damage caused by artificial rain. On the other side were the “criminalists,” individuals driven by ambition and self-interest. These criminalists prioritized short-term gains and continued their destructive practices without regard for the planet’s future.

The criminalists exploited Blue Mars’s resources for unethical experiments, further polluting the environment. They ignored warnings about the long-term impacts, focusing instead on advancing their technology and asserting dominance over the planet. This divide led to tensions among the settlers, threatening the fragile unity they had once shared.

A Planet in Peril :

As the environmental damage escalated, the settlers faced the grim possibility of extinction. The artificial rain and pollutants caused a chain reaction, destabilizing the atmosphere and rendering large areas of the planet uninhabitable. Rising temperatures and toxic air made survival increasingly difficult.

Plants began to fail, depriving the settlers of food and oxygen. The delicate balance they had worked so hard to achieve

was on the verge of collapse. It became clear that if the destructive practices continued, Blue Mars would become a wasteland, unfit for human habitation.

The Search for Redemption :

Amid the chaos, a group of visionaries emerged. Determined to save Blue Mars, they sought innovative solutions to restore balance. They turned to advanced biotechnological methods, focusing on extracting water from the atmosphere using molecular hydrogen and oxygen.

These visionaries also developed methods to neutralize the chemical pollutants in the soil and air. They collaborated with scientists, engineers and environmentalists to create sustainable systems that would support life without harming the planet. Their efforts represented a glimmer of hope in the midst of despair. The journey was long and fraught with challenges, but their determination symbolized the resilience of the human spirit. They vowed to learn from their mistakes and build a future where humanity could coexist harmoniously with their new world.

The story of Blue Mars is one of discovery, conflict and redemption. It highlights the consequences of unchecked ambition and the importance of sustainable practices. As the settlers worked to undo the damage and restore balance, they also sought to preserve their humanity and ensure the survival of future generations. Will Blue Mars become a thriving new home for humanity, or will it fall victim to the same mistakes that plagued Earth? The fate of this alien world now rests in the hands of those brave enough to fight for its future.

The novel also underscores the importance of ecological humility, a concept

discussed by Berry (1999) in his work on environmental ethics. Robinson's picture of the Martian environment as a dynamic and unpredictable system serves as a reminder of the limits of human knowledge and control. As Ann Clayborne pitifully observes, "We think we understand Mars, but the planet is constantly teaching us how little we truly know" (Robinson, 1996). This sentiment echoes Berry's call for a more humble and reverent approach to human-environment interactions, one that acknowledges the complexity and autonomy of natural systems and its functions.

Conclusion :

Kim Stanley Robinson's *Blue Mars* offers a rich and nuanced exploration of eco-critical themes within the context of Martian colonization. Through its congenial narrative and diverse cast of characters, the novel challenges readers to reconsider the ethical insinuation of human intervention in natural environments, both on Mars and on Earth. By engaging with relevant eco-critical theories and literary works, this paper has culminated the novel's critique of anthropocentrism, its advocacy for ecological humility, and its exploration of the socio-political dimensions of environmental sustainability.

The findings of this research underscore the significance of *Blue Mars* as a work of speculative fiction that contributes to contemporary environmental discourse. As humanity faces unappalled ecological challenges, the lessons gleaned from Robinson's vision of Mars offer valuable insights into the complexities of achieving a just and sustainable relationship with the environment. Future research could further

explore the ways in which Robinson's work intersects with other environmental movements and literary traditions, as well as its potential to inspire more ecologically conscious approaches to science, technology, and policy-making. As Robinson poignantly concludes, "In our quest to remake Mars, we are ultimately remaking ourselves-and we must decide what kind of future we want to create" (Robinson, 1996).

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Unequal Burdens : Vulnerability and Climate-Induced Disparities in Kim Stanley Robinson's *New York 2140*

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Nature never discriminates, however, the power politics in the society discriminates and it creates a social hierarchy amongst its individuals which leads to unequal distribution of resources. In the beginning of civilization, hierarchy is viewed as a system of command and obedience in which the elites have the power over their subordinates without necessarily exploiting them. As years went by, this system changed and elites started exploiting human labor for their greed and created disturbances in the communal harmony. Pre-literate society considered humans to be a part of natural world and they viewed the differences between the individuals as unity of diversion and not as hierarchies. Whereas the civilized society viewed nature as means to achieve its needs. Man, himself is a product of nature and its hubris to think he is the protector of nature. To protect humanity, it is important to protect nature and vice versa. This idea is discussed by Murray Bookchin in his *The Ecology of Freedom* where he traces the emergence of hierarchy and concludes when the external nature and the rational world

work together, they create environmental stability and thereby achieve potentialities and powers.

The humans have interfered with the nature and have pushed the world to a new epoch called the Anthropocene. Anthropocene indicates the impact of humanity on earth's geophysical and biological systems, directly affecting future generations. This is the product of global climate change and has left a lasting impact on the earth. Climate change has become an important point of discussion in academia and writers like J G Ballard, Richard Powers, Barbara Kingsolver and Kim Stanley Robinson invoked empathy and action in readers and raised awareness about climate change through their fiction.

Kim Stanley Robinson, an environmental activist and American science fiction writer, focuses on climate change and its impact on future generations in his novel, *New York 2140*. He blends factual elements into his fictional narrative to provide authenticity to his imagined future. The novel is set in the year 2140. The city

is a partially submerged metropolis where buildings are half drowned, the main mode of transportation is through boats and water taxi, and the citizens of New York have adapted to the new reality radically altered by climate change.

In this novel, climate change is not merely an environmental issue but a call for social justice concern. The main problem that the characters in the novel face is the unequal distribution of natural resources amongst the citizens of New York. The society is divided into two strands of social classes, the Elite and the poor. The elites are the privileged, shielded from the harsh realities of the climate crisis as they control all the resources and power. Meanwhile, the poor also known as the water dwellers, are the low-income population and they are most vulnerable to disease and displacement as they lack the resources and infrastructure necessary to adapt to the changing climate. Understanding this inequality is essential to develop effective climate solutions.

This paper aims to investigate the social impact of climate change and how it disproportionately affects marginalized sectors and trace the path from crisis to sustainability in Kim Stanley Robinson's *New York 2140*.

Environmental injustice or environmental discrimination occurs when a certain powerful and dominant group of people have a hold of the natural resources, and the marginalized community is left to live on the leftovers of the dominant group. Robinson's fictional world focuses on the struggles between the elites who constitute about one percent of the population in the future and the commoners

who constitute the rest. The novel, highly reflects on social ecologist Murray Bookchin's concept of 'dissolution of hierarchy', which connects ecological problems to social hierarchies. In *Ecology of Freedom*, Bookchin (1991) mentions, "the very notion of the domination of nature. By means stems from the real domination of human-by-human" (6). He explains (1991) 'Interwined with societal crisis is a crisis that has directly emerged from man's exploitation on the planet' (p15). The exploitation of the earth has damaged the integrity of the atmosphere, created discrepancies in the natural cycles on which all living things depend. Ecological problems cannot be addressed without addressing social problem.

The 2007 IPCC report records rising ocean and air temperatures worldwide and forecasts corresponding sea level rises and concludes that there is no doubt that human activity is causing the global climate to warm. To investigate and apply a variety of conceptual frameworks to this developing scientific agreement regarding global warming, sociologists have put in a significant amount of effort. Fundamental to these sociological assessments is the understanding that merely technology "fixes," independent of social factors, will not be enough to properly reduce or adapt to global climate change.

Social Stratification in *New York 2140* :

Few factors that contribute to climate change, according to social ecology, include social stratification that results in unequal distribution of resources, political economy, human ecology, and its impact on environmental models. These factors could provide the framework to inculcate

sociological sensitivity to examine natural catastrophes.

Sociologists apply theories from social ecology to study the complex relationship between humans and their natural environment. From the results drawn from the research on socio-spatial dynamics of migration, resource competition, and disaster relief, it is evident that climate change is global threat and it can be better understood when sociologists include data from humans' biophysical environment,

In *New York 2140*, the future biophysical environment is altered by two super-floods in the 21st century. The first flood increases the sea level up to fifty feet and that results in submerged buildings in Lower Manhattan. The second flood, which came after twenty years, melts almost seventy percent of ice in Antarctica and Greenland. The Lower Manhattan is occupied by water dwellers and the Upper Manhattan is occupied by the Elites, the Elites remain unbothered by the climate catastrophe, while rising sea levels, threaten the coastal communities, forcing displacement, and loss of livelihood. The middle-class people live with the fear of climate anxiety as their access to resources and facilities like safe housing, clean water and healthcare, is denied. In the year 2140, when the hurricane hits the coasts of New York, wealthier residents retreated to higher grounds while the poor communities bore the brunt of the catastrophe-related hardships. This spatial segregation reflects the broader patterns of environmental injustice, where marginalized groups are forced to live in areas with great exposure to natural disasters like pollution and flood, which results in death and displacement.

Political Economy :

One of sociology's most significant contributions to climate change rises out of attention to the intersecting political and economic orders at both global and national levels as contributors and potential mitigators of global climate change. In political economy, the nation's politicians and citizens are given importance. According to Islam and Kieu (2021), it investigates how society's social and political aspects contribute to climate change. It asserts that climate change is caused not just by the planetary system. Politicians and society are also responsible for climate change. Political economy relates social and economic institutions to the detrimental carbon emissions that impact the global climate.

The politicians in the novel are aware of the impending doom yet they focus on capitalism instead of socialism. When a disaster strikes, the economy of the country goes down and that leads to market crashes. But the capitalist society instead of treating climate change as a crisis they treat it as exciting market opportunities. This idea of waiting for a major crisis and selling the crisis to private companies while the citizens still recover from the shock marks the concept of Disaster Capitalism.

Naomi Klein's concept of 'disaster capitalism' in *The Shock Doctrine* (2007) finds a compelling illustration in *New York 2140*. Klein argues that corporations and elites exploit crises, such as natural disasters or political upheavals, to push through pro-market reforms that benefit them at the expense of vulnerable populations. In the novel, the aftermath of the 'Super-flood' becomes a playground for disaster capitalists. Insurance companies deny

claims, banks foreclose on underwater mortgages and developers purchase submerged properties at fire-sale prices. This predatory behaviour mirrors real-world examples of disaster capitalism, such as the privatization of public services in the wake of Hurricane Katrina or the imposition of austerity measures following the Greek financial crisis.

The impact of the climate crisis goes beyond physical displacement, affecting social networks, cultural heritage and market instability. The 2074 hurricane brings down the Chrysler building, a historical monument of New York, and erases the traces of it after. It also leads to markets and stocks crashing, forcing banks to bankruptcy. The economic inequality in the novel is evident from the lens of real estate. As the water rises, the value of submerged properties plummets, creating opportunities for wealthy investors to exploit the crisis. The private companies buy distressed assets at rock-bottom prices to consolidate their wealth and power while further marginalizing the climate victims.

Climate Change and Consumerism :

Sociologists have studied how excessive consumption and production contribute to high volume and high waste economies. These studies look into the social dynamics of prominent consumerism and suggest manipulative advertising can influence people to increase their consumerism patterns frequently without considering financial costs or environmental consequences. The investors in *New York 2140* are not just responding to market forces but are actively shaping the markets to their advantage by manipulating the systems to extract maximum profits from the crisis.

It was a dark pool version of front-running,” he said. “Say you get an order for something at 100. Immediately you go out and buy it for yourself at 100, in the hope that that will drive up the price, meanwhile not fulfilling the first order. If the price then goes up to 103, you sell what you bought, while telling the person who made the order that you couldn’t find a buyer. If on the other hand, it goes down to 98, you fulfill the order at 100. Either way, you’re good. There’s no way to lose.” (Robinson, 2017, p. 327).

This acknowledges the fact that climate change is not merely rooted in the physical system of the planet but also decision makers and nations’ economy.

Crisis to Sustainability :

In the novel, the intensity of global famine acts as a catalyst to bring about change in the economic system and government. In the ‘Food Panic of 2074’ (Robinson, 2017, p. 377) people experienced price jumps in essentials, hoarding of food, hunger and famine. This uncertainty about finding food affected the marginalized more than the privileged. “Average weight loss for adults worldwide through the late 2070s amounted to several kilos, less in the prosperous countries where it was sometimes welcomed as a diet that worked (at last), more in developing countries where the kilos were not there to be low except to death” (Robinson, 2017, p.378). This event refocused the attention of water dwellers and middle-class people from accepting the inequality to confronting the inequality

A few of the characters in the novel reside in Met, a co-op building, work against the existing unjust policies. In the novel like computer coders Jeff and Mutt finds

out about Henry Vinson, CEO of Alban Albany, a hedge fund, trying to buy out co-op society to increase the value of the real estate and exploit vulnerable communities and manipulating the market and they turn into whistle blowers to provide a fix for trading rules to stop the further manipulation and get caught in the process. Franklin, a day trader shifts his focus from monitoring and monetizing the Intertidal, also known as Lower Manhattan to developing solutions to develop the Intertidal. Characters like Inspector Gen advocate for affordable housing and prioritize the community's basic needs over the desires of the wealthy. Charlotte, a housing representative, confronts the government due to its unjust policies. She decides to run for office and successfully wins the election. As an elected official, Charlotte prioritizes environmental responsibility. She implements changes that promote sustainable practices and improve community well-being. These characters demonstrate the power of collective action to counter the forces of economic inequality. They fight against social injustice and offer a strong message of hope and resistance to build a more just and sustainable future.

The characters in the novel recognize their well-being as dependent on the health of the ecosystem and start working actively to restore and protect it. "When the ocean is sick, humanity is sick" (Robinson, 2017, p.380). In the Aftermath of flood, government adapt innovative strategies for survival like breaking down diesel-burning container ships into smaller parts to make it labor intensive and thereby reducing the carbon footprints. Repurpose existing infrastructures by building super-scrappers and replace cement with biofuels like

graphene and 3D printed structures for construction to protect further environmental damage, builds new forms of communities for climate refugees, and challenge the existing power structure that contributes to the vulnerabilities. Robinson emphasizes on establishing circular economy, where resources are used efficiently and waste is minimized.

Conclusion :

Central finding in sociology is that disparities in power significantly influence social mobility and the distribution of social, political, and economic resources. Understanding these dynamics of inequality is crucial for sociologists studying global climate change. As per the 2007 IPCC report, there is an unequal distribution of impacts and vulnerabilities related to climate change associated with social class and age in both developed and developing countries (Synthesis report, summary for policymakers, p. 14). Robinson's future New York is the result of refusing to take action in the initial stage of climate change. Through close reading of the text, the novel's portrayal of rising sea levels and economic inequality, it becomes clear that climate change intensifies existing social vulnerabilities and it serves as a cautionary tale and emphasizes the urgency to address both natural and social inequalities in the face of global climate change. The paper identifies the complex journey from crisis to sustainability in the novel, where the narrative emphasizes the importance of systemic change, social resilience, and equitable solutions to address both environmental and social challenges. Achieving sustainability is possible when the decision makers and the citizens of the world prioritize social justice and include

marginalized sectors in decision making, planning, and implementation of climate policies.

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अशोक कुमार 'आस' का काव्य 'रिश्ते एहसास के' : विभिन्न आयाम

इंदु रानी

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अशोक कुमार 'आस' कृत 'रिश्ते एहसास के' नाम से ही स्पष्ट होता है कि यह काव्य संग्रह एहसास की पगडंडियों पर चलकर समाज के विभिन्न पक्षों का चित्रण करते हुए अपनी यात्रा पूरी करता है। उनकी कविता सामाजिक हलचलों और समाज के बुनियादी वर्गों से जुड़कर अपनी सार्थकता प्रमाणित करती है। कवि अशोक कुमार 'आस' आधुनिकता के लिबास को ओढ़कर जी रहे मनुष्य को आधार बनाकर काव्य संग्रह की रचना करते हैं। कवि कहते हैं, "लोगों ने जीना ही छोड़ दिया है। अब जी थोड़े ही रहे हैं.. जीवन काट रहे हैं। कोई एहसास नहीं रहा। बस, दबाव में जीवन जीते जा रहे हैं और एक दिन इसी दबाव में संसार से विदा हो जाएंगे।"² इस संग्रह के माध्यम से कवि ने यह बताने का प्रयास किया है कि कैसे आधुनिकता के कारण मनुष्य की बदलती सोच, विचारधारा ने रिश्तों से एहसास ही खत्म कर दिए हैं। आज रिश्ते मानो नाम के रह गए हैं। रिश्तों में संवेदना खत्म हो गई है। आज रिश्तों में मिठास का स्थान खारेपन ने ले लिया है और नतीजन, रिश्तों में खालीपन आ गया है जिसके कारण आज हर घर में महाभारत हो रही है। जो हमारे वर्तमान और भविष्य के लिए खतरा बन रही है। 'रिश्ते एहसास' के काव्य संग्रह पढ़ने पर लगेगा कि यह

सब हमारे आस-पास ही घट रहा है। कवि भी उसी समाज में रहता है जहां हम रहते हैं। कवि उन्हीं घटनाओं को शब्दों में बांधता है जो हमारे आस-पास घट रही होती है। अशोक कुमार 'आस' का काव्य संग्रह भी इन्हीं घटनाओं के कारण अस्तित्व में आया है। 'रिश्ते एहसास के' काव्यसंग्रह में रिश्तों की तड़प है, जो सिर्फ चाहते हैं कि कोई हमसे प्यार के दो बोल दे। दो घड़ी हमारे पास बैठ जाए। आज वर्तमान समय में विडंबना देखिये, जिन्होंने हमें सब कुछ दिया, यहां तक पहुंचाया उनके लिए हमारे पास इतना भी समय नहीं कि हम दो पल उनके पास बैठकर उनकी बात सुन लें। आज परिस्थितियां यह हैं कि वर्तमान में हम उत्तर आधुनिकता ये भी अगले दौर में जी रहे हैं। हम चांद पर जरूर पहुंच गए परन्तु परम्परागत जीवन-मूल्यों को पीछे छोड़ते जा रहे हैं इसके परिणाम हम देख रहे हैं आज शादी कल तलाक के पेपर सबमिट। आज वर्तमान में मनुष्य में रिश्तों के प्रति एहसास, संवेदना खत्म होती जा रही है। जिसके कारण परिवार टूटते जा रहे हैं।

'धने सारे सपने' कविता विवाह के उपरांत एक पुत्र की मनोस्थिति का माता-पिता और पत्नी के त्रिकोण के बीच रहकर समाज-निर्माण की प्रक्रिया में स्त्री की भूमिका का वर्णन करती है- कि कैसे स्त्री ही

स्त्री की दुश्मन बन जाती है। परिवार में सास अपना अधिकार खोना नहीं चाहती जिसके कारण परिवार टूटते आए हैं।

“प्रिये

तुम भी तो स्त्री हो

क्या सभी स्त्रियाँ

ऐसा ही सोचती है

अस्तित्व की पहचान के लिए

अपनी ही जाति से अंतर्द्वन्द्व”⁴

‘कितने भयानक शब्द’ कविता में स्त्री- पुरुष की देह की महत्ता को बताने का प्रयास किया है। जब तक देह है हमें कर्म करते रहना चाहिए, परिस्थितियों से हारकर अपनी देह से निजात पाने की कोशिश करना सृष्टि के निर्माण में हानी पुहचाँना है।

“प्रिय... / देह से मुक्त होना.. / इतना आसान नहीं है

जितना तुम सोचती हो / देह चाहे स्त्री की हो
या... पुरुष की / देह तो देह ही है / इतना जरूर है

दोनों का दर्शन अलग-अलग है / यही देह तो मंगलमय

सृष्टि का निर्माण करती है।”⁶

‘रिश्ते एहसास के’ का कथ्य आधुनिक स्त्री पर आधारित है जिसे अपनी पहचान के लिए स्वयं निर्णय लेने होंगे तभी तो वह सृष्टि में अपनी नई पहचान बना सकती है। नारी जाति देश की आधी आबादी है इसलिए नारी का सशक्त होना उसके अस्तित्व के साथ, समाज और संस्कृति के लिए भी महत्वपूर्ण है।

“तुम्हारी यात्रा के इक्कीस दिन / सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक दृष्टि से भी

अहम और कारगर सिद्ध होंगे / नारी सशक्त तो समाज मजबूत

समाज मजबूत तो / परंपराएँ- रीति-रिवाज मजबूत नारी मजबूत तो संस्कृति मजबूत।”⁶

‘माँ तो अमूमन’ कविता के माध्यम से हर घर का यथार्थ बताया गया है जहाँ पुरुष चकी के दो पाटों में पिसता है, कभी बेटे के रूप में कभी पति के रूप में। ऐसी परिस्थिति में पुरुष को दोहरी भूमिका का निर्वाह करना पड़ता है। इस पीड़ा का एहसास सिर्फ वही पुरुष कर सकता है जो इस भूमिका का निर्वाह कर रहा होता है।

“माँ और सास के बीच

प्रतिस्पर्धा लगी रहती है

दो योद्धाओं के मध्य

पिसता सिर्फ और सिर्फ

पुत्र ही है।”⁷

‘सत्य अकाट्य है’ कविता एकलव्य के माध्यम से आज वर्तमान में द्रोणाचार्य जैसे गुरु जो बिना शिक्षा दिए ही गुरु दक्षिणा माँग लेते हैं। ऐसे एहसास रहित गुरुओं की संकुचित सोच पर सवाल उठाती है।

“अनेक एकलव्यों को अपने अंगूठे देने पड़े हैं
द्रोणाचार्य जैसे एहसास रहित

गुरु दक्षिणा लेने वाले

गुरुओं के कारण।”⁸

‘रिश्ते और रास्ते’ कविता के माध्यम से विश्वास और अविश्वास की परिधि का निरूपण करने का प्रयास कवि ने किया है। कवि कहता है कि किसी भी रिश्ते को जीवित रखने के लिए उसमें विश्वास होना जरूरी है। कोई भी रिश्ता बिना विश्वास के नहीं टिक सकता।

“रिश्तों से विश्वास टूटा / समझों संबंध भी बिखरे / जब एक बार

अविश्वास पनप गया / कितना ही अंतरंग संबंध हो

रिश्ता चाहे प्यार पर ही / क्यों ना बना हो
संबंध बिखरेगा ही।”⁹

‘अंधेरों से अब’ कविता के माध्यम से कवि ने देश के राजनीतिक हालात का चित्रण करते हुए बताता है कि देश में जनता का रोटी, कपड़ा और मकान का सपना पूरा नहीं हुआ है। कवि के मन में इन्हीं घटनाओं का डर घर कर गया है इसलिए कवि कहता है मुझे आजकल अंधेरे से डर लगता है।

“सतर सालों के बाद भी / देश के लोगों का /
रोटी कपड़ा और

मकान का सपना / पूरा नहीं कर पाई सरकारें?
इसलिए आजकल मुझे अंधेरों से डर लगने
लगा है।”¹⁰

‘हम सब जानते हैं’ में कवि ने गीता में निहित कर्म के सिद्धांत की व्याख्या कविता के माध्यम से करने का प्रयास किया है। कवि कविता द्वारा मनुष्य में कर्म के प्रति भाव जाग्रत करने का प्रयास करता है।

“हमारा धर्म क्या है?। / कर्म के मार्ग पर
चलना ही / धर्म कहलाता है

फिर कर्म करने से / किस प्रकार का संकोच /
किस प्रकार की ग्लानि

आत्मा वस्त्र रूपी / शरीर धारण करके मायावी
संसार में / क्यों आती है?

मात्र और मात्र / कर्म करने के लिए, / कर्म
हमारा धर्म है”¹¹

‘वही ती प्रेम है’ कविता प्रेम और संबंधों के छवि चित्र प्रस्तुत करती है।

‘प्रिये जिसने भीतर से / जीना सीख लिया
भीतर यानि प्रेम

प्रेम यानि अकेलापन / अकेलापन यानि सत्य
/ फिर सत्य क्या है

प्रेम ही सत्य है / निश्छल प्रेम, निस्वार्थ प्रेम,
हरि से प्रेम।”¹²

‘शक की तर्जनी’ कविता के माध्यम से प्रेम संबंध में होने वाले शक, अविश्वास को आधार बनाया गया है।

“बेचारा पति

लाकडाउन रूपी सी सी टी वी में

महीनों से कैद पड़ा है

फिर तर्जनी उठाने का प्रश्न

कहाँ तक उचित है।”¹³

‘जाने-अनजाने में’ कविता विश्वविद्यालयों के मठाधीशों की कड़वी सच्चाई को व्यान करते हुए बताती है कि कैसे सता में बैठा व्यक्ति किसी की परवाह किए बिना किसी को कुछ भी कह देते हैं, सोचते तक नहीं कि उनकी बात के क्या मायने हैं। उनकी बात का क्या प्रभाव होगा।

“साधारण जन किसी को कुछ कह दे / उसकी
बात के खास मायने नहीं होते

लेकिन पद पर बैठे व्यक्ति / अगर बिना चिंतन
किए

किसी को कुछ कहते हैं / बड़े मायने हो जाते
हैं।”¹⁴

‘सब अकेले आए हैं’ कविता में कवि ने मनुष्य के अकेलेपन का चित्रण करते हुए कहा कि जब कभी मनुष्य अपने अकेलेपन से भागने का प्रयत्न करेगा। वह स्वयं को पहले से अधिक अकेला महसूस करेगा। कवि कविता के माध्यम से ‘अप्प दीप्पो भवः’ का संदेश मनुष्य को देते हैं।

“अप्प दीप्पो भवः’ अर्थात्.. / अपना दीपक
स्वयं बनो / स्वभाव में जो अकेलापन है

उसे ही अगर पथिक / अपना प्रकाश बना लें /
सदियों से बंद पड़े मार्ग

अपने आप खुलते जाते हैं”¹⁵

‘सत्य को भी’ कविता स्त्री को संशयों से बाहर निकलने की राह बताती है जिस पर उसके भविष्य की इमारत खड़ी होगी।

“सदियों से पुरुष की खुशी में / अपनी खुशी
ढूँढ़ती रही हो / इसलिए आज तक
अस्मिता को खोज रही हो / अब समय तुम्हारा
है / रास्ते तुम्हारे है
मंजिल भी तुम्हारी है / निकलो संशयों से बाहर
/ वर्तमान की सुदृढ़ नींव पर
तुम्हारे भविष्य की / ईमारत खड़ी होगी।”¹⁶

निष्कर्ष :

अशोक कुमार ‘आस’ के काव्य संग्रह ‘रिश्ते एहसास के’ का आधार समाज में व्याप्त विभिन्न आयाम बनते हैं। कवि ‘आस’ अपने काव्य संग्रह ‘रिश्ते एहसास के’ में प्रत्येक घटना का चित्रण इतने सजीव रूप से करते हैं कि उनके काव्य संग्रह पढ़ने से वह घटनाएं हमारे अपने जीवन की लगती हैं। उनके काव्य संग्रह पढ़ने पर एहसास होता है कि यह कहानी घर-घर की है-कहीं कम है तो कहीं ज्यादा है। ‘रिश्ते एहसास के’ काव्य संग्रह में कवि ‘आस’ रिश्तों में खत्म हो रहे एहसास के कारण रिश्तों में

बढ़ती दरारों का वर्णन करते हुए आगाह करते हैं कि अगर अब भी हम नहीं संभले तो हम अकेले रह जाएंगे। हमारे पास पछतावे के सिवा कुछ नहीं बचेगा।

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“‘Hope’ is the thing with feathers / That perches in the soul” : Study the Motif of ‘Flying’ in the Film *Sold* (2014)

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Introduction :

Poverty and social inequality are key drivers of female sexploitation, particularly in India, where conservative societal norms often frame women as both burdens and blessings; symbolically referred to as ‘Lakshmi’. Historically, Indian women have been forced into injustices such as infanticide, dowry, sati and purdah, reflecting deep rooted gendered contradiction. This ambivalent and paradoxical sense of the word ‘Lakshmi’ is visually perceptible in the film *Sold* (2014). This paper aims to study the motif of ‘flying’ in this film in order to map the character development of the female child protagonist, Lakshmi, in the context of the plot of power and resistance to sexploitation. The paper attempts to make a critical analysis of the strategies of the visuals and the plot in relation to gender exploitation. Disciplinary practices of the ‘Brothel’ are discussed in order to reveal the cinematic representation of ‘Normalisation’ of the body (of Lakshmi), which proceeds with Lakshmi’s resistance to the power (represented by Mumtaz).

***Sold* (2014) and Gender : Irony in the Significance of ‘Lakshmi’**

Jeffrey D. Brown’s *Sold* (2014), adapted from Patricia McCormick’s novel, portrays the story of Lakshmi, a thirteen-year-old girl from rural Nepal, whose life is shaped by poverty and deep-rooted cultural and religious traditions. Her mother ‘Amma’ (Seema Biswas), reinforces traditional gender roles through moral teachings rooted in Hindu values, emphasizing self-sacrifice and obedience as ideal traits for women; “All enjoyments in life come from giving to others, and all miseries from only thinking of yourself. Understand?” ((Brown, 2014, 00:02:43-00:02:53). The symbolic weight of Lakshmi’s name—referencing the Hindu goddess of wealth and ideal womanhood—further ties her identity to societal expectations of femininity. However, the film subverts this symbolism when Lakshmi’s father, Ganesh (Madan Krishna Shrestha) accepts money in exchange for her labor, effectively “selling” her. In this moment, Lakshmi becomes both a

literal and symbolic currency, exposing the contradiction between religious ideals and the exploitative realities faced by girls. The film uses this irony to critique patriarchal norms and highlight the commodification of women and girls under the guise of tradition.

Motif of ‘Flying’ in the Film *Sold* (2014):

Amid the oppressive environment of the brothel, ‘flying’ serves as a powerful symbol of the protagonist Lakshmi’s hope, resilience, desire for freedom, human spirit of endurance, transformation, and liberation. In the film, the motif of ‘flying’ appears in various forms, like feathers, kites, and birds. This paper evolved in three parts of discussions on the recurring motif of ‘flying’ in the context of village life and brothel culture;

Childhood Innocence and Imagination:

In *Sold* (2014), the motif of ‘flying’ is closely tied to Lakshmi’s childhood innocence and imagination. The film uses visual techniques, particularly bird’s-eye and wide-angle shots (fig. a) to symbolize freedom and aspiration. Opening with aerial views of Nepal’s lush landscapes, the camera mimics the glide of a bird, evoking a sense of expansiveness and possibility. These shots align with Lakshmi’s early desire to rise above poverty and achieve a better life. The wide shots of her running with a kite mirror the movement of the camera across the landscape, creating a visual harmony that reflects her inner longing for freedom and her personal perspective on the world.



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Figure-A : Bird’s eye view and the camera’s flight over the landscape, Jeffrey D. Brown, *Sold*, 2014.

The link between ‘kite’ and Lakshmi and their connection in these scenes (see Figure b) are the symbolic representation of Lakshmi’s longing for freedom, innocence, and desire for the dream world. This serves as a powerful visual reminder for the audience of the distance between her current poverty-stricken life and the life she dreams of. Once, she tells her mother, “Amma, one day, I will buy you a tin roof that will never leak” (*Sold*, 00:04:44-00:04:50).



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Figure-B : *Flying the kite, Jeffrey D. Brown, Sold, 2014.*

Figure B shows a collage of scenes from Lakshmi's life in her Nepali village, highlighting her innocence and dreams. In the first frame, a close-up shows her tying a feather to a kite, followed by a wider shot of her holding the kite against a snowy mountain backdrop, symbolizing her soaring imagination. Another frame uses a high-angle shot to show her above her mother, contrasting Lakshmi's hopeful mindset with her mother's grounded reality. Dressed in blue, Lakshmi blends with the sky, symbolizing peace and freedom. The final shot shows the kite flying high, symbolizing her dreams rising above life's hardships.

Hope and Resilience in 'Techniques of Normalisation' :

Lakshmi, like many other vulnerable girls, becomes a victim of the authoritative and exploitative structure of the brothel system. Trafficked to a brothel in Kolkata, she is subjected to a cycle of physical and psychological abuse orchestrated by Mumtaz, the matriarch of the 'Happiness House,' with the assistance of senior women like Bimla and hired male enforcers. The brothel operates within a rigid hierarchy,

wherein experienced women hold power over newly trafficked girls, reinforcing a culture of dominance and subjugation. Systematic violence-manifested through deprivation, isolation, and physical assault-is normalized as a disciplinary mechanism to break the girls' resistance and compel them to accept captivity as their reality. Additionally, fabricated debts are used to justify prolonged sexual enslavement. Within this oppressive environment, Lakshmi's enduring optimism and refusal to surrender play a critical role in her character development and serve as a driving force in the film's narrative progression.

Manipulation is a key tactic in the brothel culture depicted in *Sold*. Upon Lakshmi's arrival at the "Happiness House," Mumtaz uses kindness and familiar comforts, like sweets and a silver toe ring to lower her defences. Her resistance is ultimately broken through drugged mango juice, rendering her vulnerable and preparing her for her first night of exploitation. This scene starkly reveals Mumtaz's power and Lakshmi's helplessness.

Isolation and starvation are used as tools of control in the brothel, where basic needs are withheld to break the girls' will. Lakshmi is often locked alone in a dark bare room without food or bedding, enduring prolonged deprivation to force submission.

'Physical punishment' is a common practice in brothels to discipline the bodies of 'individuals' (the abducted young girls). Lakshmi is ruthlessly bitten and physically hurt by the male guards and Mumtaz in the 'Happiness House'.

Apart from 'physical punishment', 'Rape' is another type of cultural practice

in brothels that encourages unwanted and random sex as a normal act. A montage sequence shows multiple men violating Lakshmi in one night, with visuals of money being tossed and belts buckled, emphasizing the commodification of her body. Despite this repeated violence, Lakshmi remains resilient, holding on to hope for freedom from sexual enslavement.



Figure-C : *The trapped body of Laxmi, Jeffrey D. Brown, Sold, 2014*

Figure C illustrates Lakshmi's repeated efforts to call for help from beyond the confines of the brothel. The first frame, a medium shot, depicts her in a dark room, yelling through the window while enduring a brutal punishment to her feet. The subsequent horizontal frame captures

Lakshmi using a bucket rod holder to strike the window bars with force, her two hands gripping the rod tightly as she strikes the wooden frame. This action emphasizes her strength and determination in her struggle to escape.

Figure C visualizes the act of pigeon hobbling as a metaphor for Lakshmi's entrapment. Just as hobbling restricts a bird's flight until it is domesticated, Lakshmi's movement is similarly constrained by Mumtaz on her first night, symbolizing both her vulnerability and Mumtaz's ritualized control. A medium shot at couch level frames Lakshmi's feet as she makes a futile attempt to escape, mirroring the helplessness of an injured bird. In a later high-angle shot, Lakshmi extends her hand with a feather—an object of hope-towards the outside world. The feather serves as a visual extension of her caged self, its fall to the ground contrasting sharply with Figure B, where the feather ascends, symbolizing freedom. This contrast reinforces the shifting states of Lakshmi's captivity and hope.

The Symbol of Escape, Transformation and Expression of Resistance :

The alignment of Lakshmi with the 'flying' objects and birds is visually elevated through the frames in the film. Kites and birds are often depicted as a medium of escape. In this film they are represented as an expression of the transformation of the self of Lakshmi.





Figure-D : Flying gesture of Lakshmi and the kite, she made, Jeffrey D. Brown, Sold, 2014

Despite her trauma, Lakshmi holds onto her deep desire for freedom. In the left frame of figure d., she stands on a rooftop, arms outstretched and hair blowing in the wind, mimicking a bird in flight-her gesture full of quiet defiance and longing. In the next, she gifts a red kite she made for Ganesh, adorned with the face of a Hindu Goddess. The kite, like her, is bold, feminine, and full of faith-an expression of her strength, belief in herself, and resilience through art.



Figure-E : Lakshmi normalizing the body and show of resistance, Jeffrey D. Brown, Sold, 2014

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Figure E uses medium point-of-view shots to reveal Lakshmi's subtle acts of resistance, initially appearing meaningless. Scenes of her stealing chilies, hiding a beer bottle and eating chilies in front of a mirror later gain significance, showing how she transforms her body into a tool for escape-quietly reclaiming power within the oppressive brothel.



Figure-F : Lakshmi's ultimate flight, Jeffrey D. Brown, Sold, 2014



Figure-G : The intertwined nature of Lakshmi's identity and the feather in the Hope House, Jeffrey D. Brown, Sold, 2014

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Figure F captures key moments of Lakshmi's escape. It begins with a high-angle shot of her bending window rods using a rope made from cloth, followed by a low-angle shot of her descending to the street-showing her shift in power and perspective. The next frame shows her blinding a guard with red chilli powder, and finally, wandering the streets in search of the 'Hope House'. Her journey from 'Happiness House' to 'Hope House' is clearly marked. Figure G opens with Lakshmi entering the 'Hope House', holding a feather-a subtle yet powerful symbol of her identity and freedom. Throughout the film, the kite and feather serve as metaphors for hope, tying her story together.

Conclusion :

The film critiques gender exploitation through the ironic framing of religious faith, exposing the brutal realities of brothel life that upend Lakshmi's existence. Despite being forced into sex work, Lakshmi endures, sustained by hope. Visual motifs such as pigeon hobbling, cages and kites symbolically align her with the imagery of flight, representing both her psychological entrapment and her resistance. Through these cinematic elements, the motif of flying emerges as a powerful metaphor for Lakshmi's struggle for freedom and survival.

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Exploration of Adaptation, Interaction of Visual and Print Art Mediums and Use of Music in *Good Omens*

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Introduction :

In the context of literature and media, adaptation may be defined as the reconstitution of a composition that transposes core characteristics, including but not limited to themes, ideas, symbols and iconography, into a new form or medium. While adaptations have gained a significant boon in the past century with the rapid growth and evolution of audio-visual media, it is certainly not a novel process. The concept of *ekphrasis*¹, that is, the portrayal of one art form by way of another, dates as far back as Aristotle. Plato also wrote in detail about the concept of *mimesis*², the ways in which art represents, recreates and imitates the *ideal*³ or the metaphysical original (Dennis et al., 2018, p. 1). It can be said, then, that contemplations around such ideas of recreation and portrayal across forms were the precursor to our modern understanding of adaptations. Also to be taken into consideration are the nuances of creative expression that come into play in the transference of mediums, and how that caters to diverse audiences respective

of the medium. Individual mediums have a particular set of elements and within the lens of creative expression, creators can apply those distinguishing elements to curate a unique media identity. To delve into the discussion, this work essentially relies on theorist Linda Hutcheon, to discuss the adaptation of *Good Omens*. Considering adaptation theory as the focal point of methodology, the paper explores the influence of contemporary culture and also looks at the intersection and interaction of visual and print art forms.

Deliberations on Hutcheon's Theory of Adaptation :

For a comprehensive understanding of what constitutes an adaptation and how it is contextualised with regard to the originating text, we must look to the work of Linda Hutcheon. In her seminal work *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), Hutcheon lays the framework to critically define and analyze adaptations, detailing the movement and transformation of ideas and narratives

across a varied field of mediums. Hutcheon's understanding of adaptation is two-fold. She defines adaptation as a process, one of recreation, where the existing work is converted into new media while maintaining a certain degree of familiarity. Although it may be argued that this constitutes an act of appropriation, Hutcheon posits that it is rather a process of salvaging key components and reconstituting them through an interpretative act (Kinney, 2013, p. 8). She also defines adaptation as a product that is "an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 7). Hence, it is a new work that can be examined independently, while still retaining a connection to the source text. Therefore the intent of the source is modified by the creative understanding and influence of the adapter, resulting in a new product. The adapter holds significant influence over the shaping of this new product, as it is based on their reading of the source text. Hutcheon observes, "Adapters are first interpreters and then creators" (2006, p. 18), and there are multitudes of factors that can influence said interpretations, including the adapter's cultural, social and personal background. Additionally in the process of creation that follows this interpretation, there is bound to be a reflection of the adapter's aesthetic and intellectual lens.

Furthermore, adaptation is not a derivative process that is by nature lesser than the source Hutcheon argues, stating "An adaptation is not vampiric: it does not draw the life-blood from its source and leave it dying or dead, nor is it paler than the adapted work" (2006, p. 176). There is no predetermined hierarchical relationship, where one is placed as the superior

while the other is seen as secondary. Nor is it a parasitic relationship where the adaptation "leeches" the audience from the source. It is a symbiosis and a dialogue. The adaptation brings renewed interest and relevance to the source, while the source provides a basis of familiarity to the adaptation. There is an exchange between source and adaptation, as Hutcheon states, of "repetition without replication" (2006, p. xvi) where each adds new context to the other through variance and the reformation of the source produces a novel dimension of meaning. Hutcheon views adaptation not only from the context of creation but also from the context of reception. This is where the ideas of intertextuality and fidelity come into play. She argues that if the reader is familiar with the source, then their interaction with the adaptation inevitably becomes a practice in intertextuality. And with this foreknowledge of the text, comes the expectation of a certain degree of fidelity. Fidelity is neither a function nor a requirement of the adaptation process, but rather a presupposition of the audience.

Examining *Good Omens*: Contextualising Adaptation :

In 2019, Amazon along with the BBC released a television miniseries *Good Omens*, an adaptation of *Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch* (1990). The show is considered to be a faithful adaptation, as well as a successful independent entity. The show was a critical and commercial success and received numerous nominations and awards. *Good Omens* can be analysed and evaluated as an adaptation through Hutcheon's framework. When viewed through the context of creation, adaptation is a

process of interpretation and recreation. In the case of *Good Omens*, the influence of the adapter does not cause much variance, as the adapter is Neil Gaiman himself. Owing to Gaiman's significant involvement in the production of the show, *Good Omens* results in an extremely accurate visual adaptation, often transferring scenes verbatim. However, it is not an exact replica of the source text.

Hutcheon emphasises that adaptations are dialogic, that is they create and fuel dialogue among the source, the adaptation and the audience. In the case of *Good Omens*, the choices made for the TV adaptation bring to life the humour and messaging of the source but introduce new elements that establish its independent identity. These elements allow the adaptation to rise from its position as secondary and 'speak back' to the text. While Pratchett and Gaiman's core vision is maintained, it is given an update to better resonate with contemporary audiences.

Adaptation is a process of recreation and re-presentation, adding its own dimensions to the text. In *Good Omens*, Gaiman expands heavily on character origins and the world-building of the source text. The Heavenly Host of Angels, namely Gabriel, Uriel and Michael are referenced in the book but do not make an appearance. In the book, the only angel to briefly make an appearance is the Metatron. In the show, however, the audience is introduced to several members of the Heavenly Host. The addition of the Angels enhances the narrative and provides deeper context to the story. Through the behaviour of the other Angels we gain an understanding of just how different our protagonist Aziraphale is from his fellow beings. Aziraphale

is depicted as a being that indulges in many creature comforts such as food, music and alcohol. In episode one, *In the Beginning*, we meet Gabriel, who questions his habit of consuming food stating "I do not sully the temple of my celestial body with gross matter." (Gaiman, 2020, p. 29) Through this short interaction, we gain a deeper understanding of Aziraphale as a character. The most significant addition to the show can be seen in episode three, *Hard Times*. The first half of the episode comprises a series of vignettes from 4004 BC till 1967. These eight vignettes constitute entirely original material that provides crucial insight into the relationship of the protagonists Crowley and Aziraphale, spanning over six millennia. This addition allows the audience to better understand the dynamics of the characters as individuals and as a pair. They not only enhance the viewing experience, but much like the inclusion of the Angels, they re-contextualise elements of the source text, evolving the reader's interpretations of the same.

Interaction of Visual and Print Art Forms: Visual Storytelling and Adaptability :

The movement from the print medium to the visual medium is a major aspect of the process of adaptation. In this scenario, the source is a novel, a literary text, whereas the adaptation is an audio-visual media in the form of a television show. The medium of television allows *Good Omens* to deliver its themes and ideas in an atmospheric and implicit manner, integrating the background into the story to create a seamless whole. For example, let us take a look at the depictions of Heaven and Hell, "The lobby of a large London sky-

scraper. Crowley and Aziraphale both walk into the lobby. They ignore each other. Aziraphale takes the up escalator; Crowley takes the down.” (Gaiman, 2020, p. 64) The way the protagonists access their respective head offices, through an ordinary escalator, in an ordinary skyscraper reflects the humorous style of the book. Heaven and Hell in the book are portrayed as ‘head offices’ of opposing forces, each only looking out for their own goals, which are more similar than would appear on the surface. As Crowley notes in the book “But Crowley remembered what Heaven was like, and it had quite a few things in common with Hell.” (Pratchett & Gaiman, 2015, p. 21) While the shift in medium results in the loss of inner monologue and observations, the visual medium is able to convey the same through its *mise en scene*⁴. The choice to portray the ‘official’ entrances as side-by-side escalators of the same building serves as a subtle nod to the similarities of Heaven and Hell. The placement of the entrances in an office building as opposed to a particularly holy or infernal location conveys a sense of humorous mundanity, further reflecting the tone of the novel.

The visual storytelling subtly enhances not only the character profiles of the protagonists but the cinematography aspect as well. When we compare the visuals of Hell, a shadowy damp place, overcrowded, dimly lit and poorly maintained, to that of Crowley’s apartment we understand more about his character. Gaiman writes, “Crowley’s flat is perfect. It’s very white, and looks unlivable in. Everything is perfect.” (2020, p. 84) This visual conveys that Crowley organises his space to be almost forcefully separate from that of Hell, indicating his desire to distance himself from

his ‘peers’ and portraying to the audience how different he is compared to his ‘head office’. Similarly, where Heaven is visualised as clean, sterile and much like a generic high-rise office building, Aziraphale’s earthly residence, and his bookshop is quite the opposite. Gaiman exclaims, “His bookshop is chaotic, crowded, glorious, and dusty. He is sitting at a desk piled high with books.” (2020, p. 15) There is a visual irony in Crowley matching Heaven’s aesthetic, while Aziraphale shares similarities with that of Hell. There is layered symbolism in these visual choices that convey to the viewer how the Angel and Demon strongly wish to remove themselves from their respective ‘peers’. The television format also lends itself to the use of sound as a storytelling medium. In the source, the British band *Queen*⁵ is referenced several times. One instance from the text reads, “Admittedly he was listening to a Best of Queen tape, but no conclusions should be drawn from this because all tapes left in a car for more than about a fortnight metamorphose into Best of Queen albums.” (Pratchett & Gaiman, 2015, p. 15)

Role of Music in Storytelling :

There is a significant role of music in this context. The show utilises songs from the band Queen to emphasise key moments in the narrative, lending the story a deeper, more cohesive character. Certain instances add to the atmosphere of the show, such as the use of *Bohemian Rhapsody* (1975) when Crowley receives the antichrist. The chaotic, rapid, arrhythmic melody of the song reflects the sudden and shocking events happening on screen, enhancing the tumultuousness of the scene. In other instances, the music is used to provide a humorous twist, such as the use of *Bicycle*

Race (1978) in the scene where Anathema Device crashes into the protagonists while on her bicycle, or the use of *I'm in Love with my Car* (1975) while Crowley drives his beloved Bently through a wall of fire. Such use of music adds a layer of humour for the audience with the use of *non-diegetic*⁶ sound, further immersing them into the narrative.

Music is also utilised to further the implicit storytelling, especially through the relationship between Crowley and Aziraphale. Significant moments between the protagonists are often underscored with music choices that suggest at the nature of their relationship. For instance, a moment of thoughtful kindness from Crowley such as his saving Aziraphale's books is underscored by a violin version of the main theme. The scene where Crowley is desperately trying to reach Aziraphale before Armageddon is scored using *You're My Best Friend* (1975), while the scene portraying Crowley having learnt of Aziraphale's demise uses *Somebody To Love* (1976). The show ends with Aziraphale and Crowley sharing a meal at the Ritz, as *A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square* (2019) fills the background. The *soundscape*⁷ of these scenes infuses sub-textual cues to the show, hinting at the romantic relationship between the protagonists that was strongly implied in the source text. The placement of the songs also demonstrates a progression within the characters feeling towards each other. When they are in possible danger and Crowley is worried, the song acknowledges the importance of their friends: "*Oh, you're my best friend, Ooh, you make me live*" (Queen – *You're My Best Friend*, 1975.). When Crowley believes that Aziraphale is dead, the song reveals the depth of their relationship: "*Can anybody*

find me Somebody to love?" (Queen – *Somebody to Love*, 1976)

These songs reflect his inner journey, as they begin the narrative hesitant to acknowledge their relationship beyond a partnership. But as the stakes are raised Crowley is forced to reckon with his feelings. The *denouement*⁸ is depicted with a song "*There were angels dining at the Ritz. And a nightingale sang in Berkeley Square*" (Tori Amos – *a Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square*, 2019) that describes Angels falling in love while at the Ritz. It indicates a sense of peace and resolution within the characters, as they are allowed to come together and acknowledge each other.

Conclusion :

Good Omens when viewed through the Hutcheon framework demonstrates the transformative impact of cross-media adaptations, which imbues novel dimensions to the narrative while still maintaining the tonal elements and conveying the core themes. The source found its strength in satire, irony and humour, using them as a means to deliver the base philosophies of the book. The audio-visual medium is utilised advantageously in the show to enhance the narrative's inherent qualities and emotional depth.

However, certain limitations could be observed in the TV adaptation of *Good Omens*. For example, in several instances, the book utilises footnotes and asides to further develop the element of humour and maintain its unique style. This feature along with diverse literary subtleties does not translate into the visual medium. Additionally, there is also the loss of certain means of key insight such as inner monologues, as seen in the case of Anathema Device, whose internal conflict was explored in

the books far more deeply with the use of inner monologues. The story also had to be compressed and tailored to adhere to the miniseries format, leading to the exclusion of characters such as The Four Other Horsemen. This aspect is a characteristic challenge of cross-media adaptations, especially in the case of book-to-visual media. Many visual adaptations suffer a loss of context and character depth due to the loss of inner monologue and thoughts, such as seen in *Percy Jackson's* adaptations. In this regard, time constraint is another challenge that takes the front stage. This often leads to a book being split in two, as seen in *Harry Potter* and *Hunger Games* adaptations.

Barring the limitations, the show counterbalances these losses with rich atmospheric and immersive storytelling characteristic of the television format. The *mise en scene* and soundscape lend nuances to the characters and provide sub-textual inferences that would be amiss in purely textual media. Thus by optimising the advantages and strengths of the audio-visual medium, *Good Omens* expertly captures the spirit of the source text, while further evolving the narrative across mediums of visuality⁹.

Endnotes :

1. *Ekphrasis* - "Description" in Greek.
2. *Mimesis* - "Imitation" in Greek.
3. *Ideal* - Plato's concept of the perfect metaphysical form.
4. *Mise en scene* - the arrangement of actors and scenery.
5. *Queen* - a British rock band that was formed in the 1970s and rose to global acclaim throughout the 70s and 80s.

6. *Non-diegetic* - any type of sound that does not specifically exist within the world of the film itself.
7. *Soundscape* - a work of art or performance that combines sounds in order to create a particular effect.
8. *Denouement* - the final part of a play, film, or narrative in which the strands of the plot are drawn together and matters are explained or resolved.
9. *Visuality* - the intention of using this word is to indicate a sense of socialisation associated with the idea of vision as we read or watch.

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Disillusionment and Identity Struggle in Post-Independence India : A Study of Asif Currimbhoy's *the Doldrums*

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Introduction :

The Doldrums (1960), focuses on identity, disappointment, and relationships in India after independence. The play clearly shows the struggles of Anglo-Indians and how they felt alone in a society still dealing with the effects of colonialism. "Currimbhoy's unique blend of social realism and dramatic flair not only brings to life the voices of the voiceless but also prompts a reevaluation of the concept of liberation in the contemporary Indian context" (Meenakshil and Deepak Yadav 607). It shows how societal norms and economic stagnation make personal and existential problems worse. The main themes are Identity Crisis and Colonial Legacy. Joe shows the problems faced by Anglo-Indians and children born outside of marriage, which are still felt today because of colonialism. His cynicism and lack of compassion come from being rejected by society and feeling hopeless in life. The play looks at how India's people are affected by its broken identity since freedom, with the lack of a unifying

cause leading to stagnation and loneliness.

Nihilism and disillusionment were two of the main points of the case. Different characters, like Joe and Tony, show different levels of disillusionment. Joe criticizes society's decline through satire and philosophical thoughts, while Tony escapes reality by reading and watching films. The lack of purpose after freedom is a reflection of the aimlessness of the country's youth in general, which can be seen in the play's recurring themes of frustration and stagnation. "Asif Currimbhoy's play *The Doldrums* (1960) investigates the lives of four Anglo-Indians embroiled in a worthless struggle for survival that eventually results in their unhappiness with the society they live in. It is divided into two acts and four scenes" (Roy 2017,p.2053)

Relationships and Morality :

This paper talks about relationships and morality. Currimbhoy criticizes how robotic modern relationships are by compa-

ring the idealized idea of love to the commercialization of sex.

“The Doldrums (1960) is a play with a serious theme it discusses the plight of alienated youths who live in the doldrums” (Rahman 2014, p.364). Rita’s change into a figure of abused women and her complicated relationships with Tony and Joe bring out themes of power, sacrifice, and survival. Songs and conversations are used to talk about political and philosophical problems, like how satyagraha is abused and how modernity makes people less human. Joe’s philosophical statements show a deep skepticism about people and the ways society works, which is a lot like how the writer criticizes post-colonial India. This piece talks about tragic cycles and how resilient people are. The characters’ problems are linked and show a tragic cycle of abuse, hopelessness, and short-lived redemption. Even though they have flaws, figures like Rita are strong, which provides some hope in a world where sadness is common. Look into the relationship between men and women more, especially Rita’s part as both a victim and a change agent. Look at how Currimbhoy uses setting and symbols to show how the house near Juhu Beach shows how the characters are trapped emotionally and financially. To understand what the play is criticizing, look at its existential themes in the context of larger literary trends like absurdism or postcolonial literature.

Satire on Satyagraha :

A shanty near Juhu Beach on the outskirts of metropolitan Bombay (Mumbai) serves as the backdrop for The Doldrums (1960). Tony is resting in a hammock with two coconut trees attached at

the beginning of the performance. As Tony sings, Rita and Joe are also there. Joe begins singing another song when Tony finishes his, expressing his disenchantment with this world. Joe’s displeasure and disgust are evident in his words and actions. His persona says a lot about young people’s disappointment in the years following independence. The research states how Joe satirically conveys the importance of satyagraha and its abuse in the following song: “Joe, a misanthrope and a nihilist, skewers the custom of just introducing the premise of satyagraha. Joe has come to feel that the people of independent India do not understand why they are here. They conform to satyagraha like an automated device, without understanding the real significance of it” (Roy 2017, p. 2053)

Joe satirizes the practice of paying lip service to the idea of satyagraha. Joe has come to believe that people in independent India have lost their purpose in life. Joe: “Satyagraha, Satyagraha, Hurrah for Satyagraha This passive resistance Tickles our existence... day we just...no-cooperated Sat about and quietly waited Others arrived and waited too What, where, and who I don’t know” (Currimbhoy, 1960, p. 11).

Joe, a nihilist and misanthrope, mocks the custom of even mentioning the concept of satyagraha. In Joe’s opinion, people in independent India have lost their sense of purpose in life. “Joe is the most powerful character of this play, he is the one who decides the flow of the story, and he controls the actions of Tony and Rita and plays a crucial role in the development of the story” (Khan 2021, p. 806). They adhere to satyagraha mindlessly because they lack an understanding of its spirit. Prior to independence, this was not the case. People from all castes,

social groups, and religious beliefs were able to unite during the Indian Freedom Struggle in order to fight for a common cause. Still, once independence was gained, a hole emerged. For each of the play's four main characters, there was no objective in life to pursue. Given that Joe is an illegitimate son, this knowledge also helps to explain his misanthropy. When his mother gave birth to Joe, the hospital refused to admit her since her spouse was not around to support her. Joe becomes a representation of Currimbhoy because he embodies the identity battle that an illegitimate child is born out of marriage or via premarital sex experience.

Additionally, Joe is Anglo-Indian, much like every other character in the theatre. Many British males permanently left India after its independence, leaving behind women, some of whom were pregnant at the time. Joe's persona brings up a significant point. Following independence, Eurasians' future-not just their future but also their social standing-became a major concern. They had lost their respect and reception. They were also considered misfits. Joe conveys how miserable he is in this circumstance. It becomes challenging for him to survive as a member of the community. This is among the issues brought about by colonialism. "Love and sex are important themes of the play and are used by Currimbhoy to dramatize the animal passion devoid of a sense of responsibility" (Sahu 2020, p.571).

Currimbhoy uses sex and love, two major topics in the play, to dramatize the primal emotion without any feeling of accountability. When Joe, the "intellectual," starts to criticize the situation, Tony and Rita just revel in passion. When Tony

asks him to "get a girl," Joe responds that it is "no fun having one" and that his thoughts "get deeper and deeper." Currimbhoy appears to be making a point here that there is no true love in contemporary society-only mechanical sexual interactions. Joe describes to Rita the robotic routine of the homosexual, contemporary young people who are suitable for the zoo since they have "the red bottoms and the curly tops."

JOE: They work from ten to five, carry umbrellas, and wear hats and ties. In tram vehicles, I saw them with their long muzzles buried in the newspaper. They give the boot-polish lad four annas and blow their noses with fresh handkerchiefs. Everything is nice and orderly, but when they read the cheap newspaper, their bloodshot eyes are filled with rape and murder (Currimbhoy 1960, p .24).

"The play offers a crucial human position in meals and sex, that is why the ones characters were given to satisfy the ones conflicting and extraordinary emotions among Rita and Lizza, and Tony and Joe" (Singh and Mudgal 2021, p. 866). The play most likely implies that the struggle for existence will unite individuals and bond them together with a shared passion for an objective. Indians were able to achieve that because of the liberation fight. However, a void emerged upon the attainment of independence. No admirable common cause existed for which people might fight. Joe's statements reflect the same fixation on the past and dissatisfaction with the present. He likens the flag to a massive tree that was once a delicate plant. It served as a tribute to the blood of the martyrs. Joe claims that after independence, identity was discovered, and people were content. He continues,

JOE: "However, something remained absent. a seed deformation. Choosing to rest on their laurels, they decided to disregard it. Slowly, without realising it, the tree deteriorated, the terrain turned into a desert, and the struggle for existence switched places. We became into monsters. Reptilian. with insensitive scales. With fiery breaths and poisonous spittle" (Currimbhoy 1960, p. 50).

Because he was a bastard and did not have any respect in society, Joe pushed Rita to become a slut in order to take control of her life. He then uses his evil schemes to ruin Rita and Tony's relationship and demonstrate his point that true love does not exist in the real world. As long as a woman is sexually available to Joe, all women are the same. "I say," he says.

JOE: "Love! Show respect! Love! Show respect! What does it signify? I'm tired of hearing about it all the time. In any case, what is the connection between respect and love? They are quite the contrary. The term "love" conjures images of something from a fairy tale that is germ-free and trademarked. Like it needed to be respectable, but it isn't. The most respectable person pays the price for the whore's love, which she spreads on the street corner (Currimbhoy 1960, p. 41).

Joe's actions and worldview demonstrate his distaste and disillusionment with the world. India is postcolonial and post-independence in his world. His persona conveys a great deal about the disenchantment of young people in India after independence. He deftly manipulates people and fabricates circumstances to fit his agenda. He is well knowledgeable on when, where, and how to strike. He succeeds after patiently waiting for the ideal opportunity to alter Rita's perspective on life and love.

He sees no distinction between relationships and business, between love and want. When Rita accuses him of being insane, he responds by providing instances to support his claims:

JOE: "Rita, no more than everyone else. I simply grow crazier than most people. I observe their mental processes and display them on a screen. Even while it appears unsightly-like young Gulliver observing the warts on the female giants' breasts-it really exists. Wearing the chains of original sin is as big as life. So why hold me responsible? (Currimbhoy 1960, p. 39)

Conclusion :

The Doldrummers by Asif Currimbhoy is a moving look at the existential problems that the Anglo-Indian community has been going through since freedom, especially when it comes to identity and loss of hope. A lot of people in India felt confused and lost in the first few years after they got their freedom. The characters in the play, especially Joe, represent this. Through Joe's negative view of the world, Currimbhoy criticizes how post-colonial society fails to give its people a sense of purpose or a cause that brings them together, leaving them to manage a broken reality. The play's look at relationships, sex, and love shows how human connection has become a commodity, taking away its emotional depth and leaving only automatic exchanges. The mocking treatment of satyagraha also shows how people have lost faith in the ideas that used to unite the country but now seem hollow in a society without a direction. The Doldrummers is a sad but interesting story about a society trying to get back on its feet after colonial rule. As people look for meaning in a world that seems to have

none, they lose sight of their own identity and morals. Currimbhoy's writing is still a strong look at the complicated psychological and social effects of India's freedom.

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Comparative Analysis of a Scene : *Apocalypse Now* (1979) and *Spec Ops : The Line* (2012)

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Introduction :

Heart of Darkness (1899) is a text that is highly regarded as an influential anti-imperialistic work. It has been oft discussed, analysed and even adapted. The first adaptation is the movie *Apocalypse Now*, the original released in 1979 and re-released as different versions with changes in runtimes. It was directed by Francis Ford Coppola that was set in the backdrop of the Vietnam War, and in its own merits is considered a significant anti-war text. The second is the video game *Spec Ops: The Line*, developed by Yager Development and published by 2K. The video game is set in a fictional backdrop of post-apocalyptic Dubai ravaged by sandstorms and serves a commentary that is both anti-war and critical of narratives in video games that deal with the themes of war. In this paper, I intend to analyse a scene from both adaptations of *Heart of Darkness*, the Napalm scene from the movie adaptation and the white phosphorous scene from the video game. Both scenes deal with a large number of enemies being attacked with harmful

chemicals, during large scale battle between groups of people. Through the comparison of both the scenes I aim to highlight how the combination of the sound design and visuals, change the intended message of the scenes, which in both cases is to present an anti-war message. In the movie due to the framing of the screen and how the scene is sonically structured, a scene meant to show the brutality of war is presented as a bombastic visual and sonic experience. Whereas on the other hand, the scene in the video game, presents the horrors of war by bringing the audience, in the case of a video game that is the player, along with the characters in the narrative closer to the aftermath of the attack.

The Napalm Scene in *Apocalypse Now*:

The napalm scene (Coppola, 2019, 00:38:05 – 00:49:05) in the narrative of the film occurs when Captain Martin Walker and his team joins the Air Cavalry unit that is supposed to help go them go deeper in the jungles of Vietnam. Lieutenant

Colonel Kilgore leads the unit and while they are taking Martin and his squad to their drop off location, Kilgore decides to target a Vietnamese village. The scene is accompanied by the music piece *Ride of the Valkyries* that the soldiers play on their helicopters, to scare the Vietnamese.

First, looking at the framing of the scene from the moment that the song starts playing, the camera presents the Vietnamese the victims of the attack from a distance, and during the attack the audience sees the blasts and bullets flying. But we do not see the impact of those on the people that it used on. The scene works as a set piece where things are being blown up, bullets are being fired and bodies are thrown around but the actual impact on the people, such as bullets piercing the bodies of the Vietnamese that are attacked remains unseen for the audience. But when one helicopter of the American soldiers is bombed, we see the bodies of the soldiers burning and we also see one American soldier being treated who has his legs blown off. So, the violence of the attack which the audience is shown focuses on the American soldiers and not the Vietnamese. When Kilgore orders the Napalm attack, again the audience is kept at a distance from what effect that attack has on the people but all we see is the orange flame and smoke that napalm causes when it is fired.

Second, the music that is used in the scene when the helicopter attack takes place is *Ride of the Valkyries*, which Kilgore plays to scare the Vietnamese villagers and also to mark their arrival. The song begins with the strings playing back and forth and the music continues to rise until the horns start playing as the helicopters in the movie

scene are about to start shooting at the villagers. This is then juxtaposed against the at first silent Vietnamese village, which is first disturbed by the noise of school children and then is replaced by the music playing from the helicopters as they get closer to the village and panic sets in the villagers. The bombastic music with the orchestra playing the song is then accompanied with the sounds of bullets being fired and explosions taking place on the ground. (Tyler)

The scene thus due to the distance from the victims of the attack, but visually focusing on the American soldiers, and the depiction of the violence only on them but not the Vietnamese makes it seem as if only the effect of the brutality of war counts when it is on the American soldiers, but to be distanced from its effect on the Vietnamese soldiers. The napalm which is a highly harmful chemical is only presented through the explosion of the attack but its effect is hidden from the audience. And the way the scene is structured with its music and the sound, the attack the American soldiers undertake is presented bombastically, whether with the song *Ride of the Valkyries* or with the sounds of explosion but the screams of the Vietnamese is left silent when the napalm is used.

The White Phosphorous Scene in *Spec Ops: The Line* :

In Chapter Eight of the video game, *Spec Ops: The Line*, titled 'The Gate', the protagonist Captain Martin Walker, accompanied by his squad come across a heavily fortified location called The Gate, filled with 33rd Battalion soldiers who are the enemies in the video game. To be able to traverse the location the squad decides

to use white phosphorous to clear the enemies that have occupied the location. It is important to note that the squad of Walker and the members of the 33rd Battalion are all American soldiers. The squad uses a computer screen to locate the enemies which appear as dots on it, and then fires white phosphorous at them to kill them. When all the enemies are defeated, the members of the squad have to traverse through the aftermath of their attack. While walking through the location they realise that the people they used white phosphorous on were not the soldiers that were fighting them but were protecting innocent people that had taken shelter there from the terrible conditions of a sandstorm ravaged Dubai and were caught in between the fight that was taking place between two different groups of American soldiers. Inadvertently the squad had targeted innocent people.

The first thing to note is that the visual structure of the screen is different from the movie. The scene at first is visually presented through a computer screen, where the enemies are just dots on it. In the movie before the attack is about to begin, we see the Vietnamese villagers just before they hear the song the American soldiers were playing and then the audience is distanced away from them. But in the case of the video game, the distance from the victim of the attack is closed in as the squad has to travel through the destruction they caused. While the player shoots at enemies on the screen, the reflection of Walker is seen on the screen. After the player is done shooting, they control Walker as he and his squad traverse through the destroyed ruins of the locations. While walking through it, they come across the burnt bodies of soldiers,

some still moving. Then a soldier asks Walker why he and his squad shot them when they were just trying help the people. It is at this moment when the squad and the player come to realise that the soldiers were protecting innocent people who were harmed by the white phosphorous as well. The visuals present the effect the chemicals had on the victim, with their burnt bodies which are huddled together is shown to the player. The scene is visually punctuated with Captain Martin Walker coming face to face to the burnt bodies of a mother holding on to her child, their mouths agape in a frozen scream. There is no explosive substitute like in the Napalm scene in the movie but a direct confrontation with the aftermath of the squad's action.

Second, in contrast to the movie when at first Walker is using the computer to find and target the enemies, the sounds of mortar being fired is juxtaposed with the movement of the enemies and their screams. After wards when the squad traverses through the location there is no music but just the sound of the soldiers still alive. Then, when the squad and the player come face to face with their innocent victims, the music is slow and heavy to further punctuate the scene in front of them. In the background two members of the squad are arguing but their voice fades into the background, and only the synth music and the visual of the burnt bodies of the mother and child together is there for the player to see.

So, in comparison to the Napalm scene in the movie, here the violence is not presented visually from a distance. But instead from the distance of the earlier part of the level, the violence is confronted by Martin Walker's squad in the video game and also

by the player as well, by walking through and seeing the consequences of their action. And the music and sound design does not present it as a bombastic scene filled with explosions but it plays a subtler role in emphasising the violence of their actions.

Conclusion :

In this paper through an examination of two scenes in adaptations of *Heart of Darkness*, it is highlighted how just through the visual and aural design of the scenes the intended message, that is of confronting the brutal reality of war, can be detracted from turning into a bombastic show of aggression like in the movie, or can be further made stronger as in the video game. This shows how intent can be shaped by the way the media uses the modes of the

aural and the visual and thus change how it is received by the audience.

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Socio-Cultural Status of Contemporary African Women from the Novel *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree*

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Introduction :

Socio-cultural status of women refers to the position, power and authority a woman holds within a society. Socio-cultural status of women varies from place to place. It is defined and shaped by a society's beliefs, culture, social norms and practices. A woman's status in her society depends on the men living with them. Patriarchal norms and gender role plays an important role which affects a woman's socio-cultural status. Though women are physically tender and soft, they also possess the same level of intelligence that men holds. At the present times, women are seen as holding significant positions in society; both at home and in public sectors. Given the equal amount of space and access to participation in public spheres, the power and freedom to make and take decisions, the opportunity to have education, women can achieve anything they wish to have.

Understanding the Socio-cultural fabric of African Women : Then and Now :

African women have seen the highest level of injustice done towards them on the basis of gender discrimination as com-

pared to any other parts of the world. The patriarchal structure plays a crucial role in women's lives. Most of the African society follows the patriarchal system and it is this patriarchal system that brings all the differences. There are many ethnic tribal communities living in Africa and every community has their own sets of belief system and practices, likewise the participation of women in the public affairs differs. Looking back at the history of women in Africa particularly of Nigeria, there are gender inequality, lack to access for education which in turns results as a factor for lagging behind in various fields. Even before the colonial exploitation, women were exploited by the male members of their own society. They were confined within a certain circle. Their prime duty was to look after their family, cook for her loved ones, raise as many off-springs as possible. However, their struggle also differs according to their culture and religion. Domestic violence, sexual assault, rape are some common issues women had to live with. Not forgetting the child marriage and polygamy. Apparently, it would be completely wrong to say that

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women had no power because in some elite societies women did have the power to govern the other members of her society. But it was only after independence the participation of women began in the political affairs of the country, even though it is still quite low.

Though the influence of Western culture most of the time stands as a threat to the unique ethnic cultures and is not appreciated, it would be wrong to not give a credit and applause for they really motivated women to fight for their liberty and rights. Slowly with the coming of education women began to participate and take parts in politics and society. In the contemporary period, African women have crossed boundaries and set their feet in various areas. However, there are still some regions in Nigeria, like the Borno State, where there are still some strict Islamic laws that stands against the Western education system. Women are still expected to stay home and serve their husbands and children. There is still a long way for African women to liberate themselves from this bondage.

Socio-cultural Status of Women from *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree* :

Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree* portrays young women who tries to fight back a group of Boko Harams who were fighting against the threat brought by western education although the ways of tackling the threat was wrong. Nwaubani's novel is a reflection of the 2014 Boko Haram Attack where 276 were kidnapped and taken away to the Sambisa forest. She has presented girls of different religion where Ya Ta, Aisha, Sarah, Magdalene follows their own varied ways. These girls in the novel are characters who mirrors the real-life victims of those

kidnapped during the mass kidnapping of 276 girls in Nigeria. Some of them survived and some became the victim of the attack. Ya Ta, the protagonist of the novel is shown as a Christian girl. She is a school going girl who aspires to become a teacher and educate young girls of her locality. She is full of dreams. She lives with her parents and brothers. Though she is a school going girl, she makes sure to take care of her father, mother and brothers. The very opening lines of the novel goes,

MY SWEETEST DREAMS UNFOLD
when my eyes are wide open, after I
roll my sleeping mat and begin my
morning chores.

As I walk to the well from which every
family in our section of the village fetches
water, I dream of a pair of shoes for church
on Sunday, shimmering red and shining
new like that of the golden-haired girl
I saw singing on TV, instead of black
and slack like the ones I've had since
two Christmas ago. (Nwaubani, 1)

These lines tells of Ya Ta's life, her condition of living, her daily work and her dreams of owning certain things since a long time back. As a girl she has many responsibilities to maintain. She dreams to crack the Borno State scholarship exam so that she can attend the special boarding school for girls in Maiduguri. She wants to educate young children someday. Looking at her life, she has been taught in a way a woman of her society must be. She utters,

I dream of being a good wife who
kneels to serve her husband his meals
and who bears him healthy sons.

As I load my arms with the empty
plates my brothers have left behind on
their way out... I dream of a sister
instead of only five brothers, another
girl to help with all the chores.
(Nwaubani, 2)

The definition of good wife in Ya Ta's society is apparently the one who kneels to serve the husbands. Though Ya Ta never complains directly in the novel of being tired serving her family, deep inside she longs to a sister who she thinks would help her with all the works. Also, from the above quote it is clear that Ya Ta's brothers never do their own dishes, like they think it is a women's duty. Cooking or doing the dishes is not a gender role rather it is a basic life skill that is needed for survival however, many societies consider it to be the work of women. She also says about her best friend Sarah, that like her she is the one who does all the morning chores. It is a common thing in Ya Ta's society that women are considered to do all the household chores.

Women are also not given the privilege to receive education in most families in Nigeria. Even at the present times, few fortunate girls get this opportunity. Aisha who was Ya Ta's friend in the novel is a brilliant girl but when she got married to Malam Isa, she was forced to leave school. In addition to this, the practice of child marriage can be seen. Analysing the condition of Aisha, who was a school going girl will probably be below the age of fifteen. It is usually the age when children discover themselves but in her case she got married, though not forced by her parents, because in their society it is considered to be normal to get married at such age.

Conclusion :

The kidnapping of the Ya Ta and her friends and the sexual assault and killing

also has its root in the strong patriarchy that is practiced in their culture. It is questionable as to why only those young school going girls were kidnapped, or was it because they were women and so can they do as per their wishes. Ya Ta was not only kidnapped but she was forced to marry a man amongst the Boko Harams. She even became pregnant but does not even remember who the father was because of the sexual assaults she had to undergo with many others in order to stay alive in the Sambisa forest.

Though women are not born as women but are considered to be one after they are born. In the words of Simone de Beauvoir, "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." (Beauvoir, 330). If the so-called men in the society have had the ability to understand then women would have been free from all the discriminations they had to undergo.

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Drama in NEP 2020 for Creative and Holistic Learning

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Introduction :

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes holistic development, experiential learning, and arts integration in education. Drama, as an experiential tool, aligns with these principles by upbringing creativity, critical thinking and communication skills through role-play, improvisation and storytelling (Kumar, 2021). It enhances student engagement, promotes emotional intelligence and cultivates competencies such as empathy, self-awareness and collaboration (Sharma, 2021; Patel, 2023). Integrating drama into the curriculum, students can explore real-life situations, connect with diverse perspectives and apply knowledge in practical settings (Rao, 2022). NEP 2020 also advocates incorporating India's cultural heritage through folk theatre and storytelling, promoting multilingualism and cultural identity (Gupta, 2022; Mishra, 2021). Implementing drama in schools faces challenges like a lack of trained teachers, limited resources, and time constraints within the curriculum (Pandey, 2021; Shukla, 2023). To address these, interdisciplinary approaches, technology

integration, and alternative assessment models are needed (Bansal & Kapoor, 2023; Sinha, 2021). Collaborative efforts between educators, policymakers and cultural practitioners are crucial for effective integration. Drama-based education, aligned with NEP 2020's goals, can enhance student learning by creating a more inclusive, culturally relevant and student-centered educational experience (Choudhury, 2022; Joshi, 2021).

Objectives :

1. To explore the role of drama in enhancing creative and holistic learning as per NEP 2020.
2. To analyse how drama-based education enhance communication, collaboration and critical thinking skills.
3. To examine the integration of local culture, folk theatre, and storytelling in school education under NEP 2020.
4. To identify the challenges and opportunities in implementing drama as an experiential learning tool in schools.

Discussion of Reviewed Studies :

Exploring the Role of Drama in Enhancing Creative and Holistic Learning as per NEP 2020 :

NEP 2020 emphasizes experiential learning through arts-integrated approaches like drama. Drama enhances creativity, cognitive flexibility and emotional intelligence, allowing students to engage in participatory activities that deepen academic understanding (Kumar, 2021). It Enhance critical thinking and decision-making by encouraging diverse perspectives (Sharma, 2022).

Drama supports holistic learning by integrating intellectual, emotional, and social development. It enables self-expression, teamwork and empathy through role-playing and storytelling (Gupta, 2022). It also aids multilingual education by providing interactive language acquisition experiences (Mehta, 2021). Drama reinforces moral education and character building, aligning with NEP 2020's objectives (NCERT, 2021).

Drama-based learning increases student motivation, as it incorporates fun, creativity and collaboration. Active participation promotes intrinsic motivation, leading to better academic performance (Choudhury, 2022). Schools implementing drama-based programs report higher engagement and improved classroom dynamics (Rao, 2022). For effective implementation, adequate teacher training and curriculum restructuring are essential (Verma, 2022).

Analyzing How Drama-Based Education Enhances Communication, Collaboration and Critical Thinking Skills :

Drama significantly improves communication by developing verbal and non-verbal skills essential for effective interac-

tion (Pandey, 2021). Role-playing enhances articulation, vocabulary, and pronunciation, especially in language learning contexts (Das, 2022). Listening skills improve as students engage in dialogues and narratives (Sharma, 2022).

Collaboration is another key benefit, as group performances require teamwork and role distribution (Agarwal, 2022). This cooperative learning approach strengthens interpersonal skills, teamwork, and mutual respect (Reddy, 2020). Drama also upbring adaptability and open-mindedness by exposing students to diverse perspectives (Singh, 2021). Critical thinking develops as students analyze characters, plots, and themes, enhance logical reasoning (Mishra, 2021). Improvisational theatre enhances problem-solving and adaptability (Joshi, 2021). Engaging in debates and theatrical interpretations refines analytical and evaluative abilities, which are crucial for lifelong learning and informed decision-making (Iyer & Roy, 2023; NCERT, 2021).

Examining the Integration of Local Culture, Folk Theatre, and Storytelling in School Education Under NEP 2020 :

NEP 2020 promotes integrating local culture into education to preserve India's heritage (Ministry of Education, 2020). Drama facilitates this by incorporating folk theatre and storytelling, connecting students to cultural traditions (Gupta, 2022). Traditional theatre forms like Yakshagana, Bhavai, Nautanki, and Therukoothu teach historical, moral and social concepts (Mishra, 2021).

Storytelling enhances language skills, creativity, and comprehension (Sharma & Verma, 2022). Performing folk tales deepens students' appreciation for literature and

cultural diversity (Patel, 2023). Drama supports multilingual education, Bring inclusivity and cognitive flexibility (NCERT, 2021). Cultural performance arts instill national pride and respect for traditional knowledge (Das, 2022). Successful implementation requires institutional support, including teacher training and partnerships with artists and theatre practitioners (Mehta, 2022). Schools must ensure inclusivity by representing diverse regions, castes, and communities (Choudhury, 2022).

Identifying Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Drama as an Experiential Learning Tool in Schools:

Despite its benefits, drama education faces challenges, including a lack of trained educators (Pandey, 2021). Many teachers need professional development to incorporate drama effectively (Verma, 2022). Resource constraints, particularly in rural schools, limit access to performance spaces and materials (Shukla, 2023).

Time constraints within structured curricula also pose barriers, as schools prioritize conventional subjects over arts education (Agarwal, 2022). Interdisciplinary approaches integrating drama with history, literature, and social sciences can help (Iyer & Roy, 2023). Assessment methods must evolve beyond traditional grading to include portfolio-based evaluations and peer feedback (Sinha, 2021; Reddy, 2020). Opportunities for drama education expansion include digital tools and virtual theatre, improving accessibility for remote learners (Bansal & Kapoor, 2023). Collaborations between schools, theatre professionals and cultural organizations can strengthen arts programs (Mehra,

2022). Aligning drama education with vocational training and creative industries can open career pathways for students. Overcoming these challenges will help integrate drama into India's education system, fulfilling NEP 2020's vision of holistic and experiential learning.

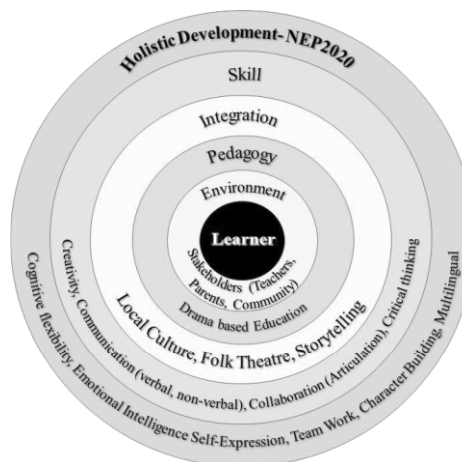


Figure-1 : Holistic Development through Drama and Folk Theatre

Findings :

The study highlights that NEP 2020 significantly influences teacher education by integrating Bharatiya pedagogical principles, Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), ethical values, and multilingual education. The inclusion of IKS enriches the curriculum, ensuring a culturally grounded yet globally relevant education system. Ethical and cultural values embedded in pedagogical strategies enhance teachers' moral and professional development, bring holistic learning environments. Multilingual education promotes inclusivity, cognitive flexibility, and better student engagement. Several challenges persist, including the lack of trained faculty, resource constraints, and the need for structured implementation frameworks. The study finds that experi-

ential and interdisciplinary approaches, including drama-based and arts-integrated learning, improve the effectiveness of teaching methodologies. Collaboration between educational institutions, policy-makers and cultural practitioners can enhance the integration of Bharatiya principles in contemporary education. Addressing these challenges through targeted training programs, curriculum innovations, and policy support will ensure the successful implementation of NEP 2020's vision for teacher education.

Recommendations :

To successfully integrate drama into education, a multifaceted approach is essential. Teacher training programs should be developed to equip educators with drama-based pedagogical skills, supported by professional workshops and certification courses. Curriculum integration is crucial, embedding drama into core subjects like language, history, and social sciences as a structured component rather than an extracurricular activity. Schools must allocate resources for dedicated performance spaces, materials, and digital tools, with government and private collaboration ensuring financial support. Digital technology, including virtual theatre and interactive applications, can enhance accessibility, particularly for remote learners. Collaborating with local artists, theatre practitioners, and cultural institutions can further enrich students' exposure to traditional and contemporary drama. Alternative assessment models, such as drama performances, reflective journals and peer evaluations, should be developed to measure creativity and critical thinking. Strong policy and institutional support are needed to recognize drama as an integral part of

education, ensuring its sustained implementation and impact.

Conclusion :

The integration of drama in education, as advocated by NEP 2020, enhances creativity, communication, collaboration and critical thinking, upbringing holistic and experiential learning. Through incorporating storytelling, folk theatre and role-playing, drama-based education improves student engagement, emotional intelligence, and cultural awareness. Challenges such as a lack of trained educators, limited resources and curriculum constraints hinder its full implementation. Addressing these barriers through teacher training, digital tools, and policy support can ensure its success. Drama in education not only enriches learning but also nurtures essential life skills, making it a vital pedagogical tool for the future of Indian education.

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Cultural constructed beliefs in the *Lanka's Princess* : Recounting the perspective of Surpanakha

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Introduction :

The problem of what it means to be an ideal woman in Indian societies comes from the patriarchal culture that surrounds Indian mythology. Women's ideal traits are often thought to have been created and spread by these stories. "Across all cultures, patriarchy, gender discrimination in various forms promoted in the family through the process of socialization" (Sivakumar and Manimekalai, 2021, p. 430). The epic works of Ramayana and Mahabharata, in all their different forms and readings, have played an inevitable role in shaping an outdated idea of what a woman should be like. There are so many problematic and suffocating ways that women are portrayed in mythology that now is the time to question these ideas and images. Mythology is at the heart of every culture. It shapes the way people live and behave, and this is something that is passed down from generation to generation. "Myth and motifs constitute the expressive and symbolic representation of the culture of society. They are frequent in creative productions and relate to religion, philosophy, and society's environment and

social forces" (Sahoo and Rath, 2022, p.147). When the centres of power shift or when the pushed-to-the-side groups figure out the lie, the discourse is revealed and a fresh way to look at and understanding things is given.

Myth in culture :

Even though the great Ramayana was written many times, no one has ever written it from Surpanakha's point of view. The Ramayana is an epic about Rama, so Rama is the star. "Epics were passed on orally through generations as an integral part of folklore adhering to regional values and culture" (Mandal 2012. p.15). People who support Rama are good, and people who are against him are bad, but they are not really his enemies. Rama is praised, but Surpanakha's pain and suffering are not heard. By making Surpanakha the main character in her books, *Lanka's Princess* Kavita Kane has completely turned things around. She has not only shown the other side, but she has also changed how people think about Surpanakha. Kavita

Kané's depiction of Meenakshi as an unwelcomed girl child invites readers to reflect on the psychic development of a woman forced to experience negligence. (Sharma and Jha 2023, p.4)

Cultural Domination against Surpanakha :

Lanka's princess, Surpanakha, was criticised for destroying the Asura dynasty. Why she did such things? was rarely discussed. Her transformation from Meenakshi, a girl with fish-shaped eyes, "Her eyes are as golden and graceful as a fish's" ((Kane 2017, p.5) to Surpanakha, an asura woman with claw-like sharp nails and her tribulations as a woman were never mentioned. "Most of the time, Lanka's princess, Surpanakha is perceived under the negative undertones, and she was known as the woman who brought annihilation to the whole Asura dynasty" (Bora and Tamuly 2022, p.556) Both epic and generic Ramayana interpretations depicted her as a malevolent creature with mystical powers. She destroyed her own dynasty to avenge her shame and wrath. Though she belonged to the asura dynasty, her difficulties were no different from those of ordinary women, and her dark mystical talents did not help her.

'It [is] time that Surpanakha got her chance to tell her story of repression, rage, revenge-and eventual redemption. We have long known her as Ravana's younger sister, a "wanton" asura whose advances to Ram and Lakshman, the exiled princes of Ayodhya, were spurned and earned her horrific mutilation from Lakshman's swift sword. Her subsequent complaint to her brother set in motion a chain of events that led to the death of almost every male relative. But do we know anything else about her-her past, her thoughts, her future? (Kane 2017, p.3)

Kane's *Lanka's Princess* showed how Meenakshi became Surpanakha to survive. Kane showed how Meenakshi, an asura girl, was like other females her age. Like others, she wanted a caring and supportive family, but she did not get it. Her mother Kaikesi never paid her as much attention as her sons. Her father Rishi Vishravas and brothers were indifferent to her. Abandonment traumatised Meenakshi from childhood. Though she was physically with her family, she remained emotionally distant and became an alien among her own people. She could not meet her mother's dreams or her father's pride as a girl, unlike her boys. Thus, those who loved and supported her most throughout her youth often treated her as a burden.

Women glorified in particular Culture:

In legend, women like Seeta, Mandodari, Panchali, and many others are good because they are obedient to male authority, don't speak out when they are wronged, and let society decide what is best for them. "Mandodari, Draupadi, Seeta, Savitri and others are worshipped in the Hindu mythology as pativrata women, embodiments of wifely duties, obedient, ideal "angels in the house" (Sharma 2019, p.37) Indian feminists have broken all the rules to bring folklore back to life by re-telling, reconstructing, and folding it from a female point of view. Kavita Kane lends Surpanakha's unknown voice a female tone in her book *Lanka's Princess*. "The identity of Surpanakha as an asura is questionable right from the aspect of her birth itself" (Binoj 2019, p.297)

Hatred against Surpanakha :

Lanka's Princess recounts Surpanakha's marginalisation. Her parents Kaikesi and Vishravas named her Meenakshi. She

grew up with brothers Ravan, Kumbha, and Vibishan. Vidyutjihva loved Surpanakha's character "I don't stand a chance until I make you fall in love with me," smiled Vidyutjihva, His smile, disarmed her immediately, warming her indecisive heart" (Kane 2017, p.110). She marries Vidyutjihva against her family's wishes and loses him to family plot. "Ravan's famous enemy is Vidyutjihva" (Kane 2017, p.96). Ravan suspected that Vidyutjihva fight throne so he was killed. The grieving Surpanakha and her son Kumar depart for Dandak woodland to avenge Ravan. She loses her son uneventfully. She manipulates and starts Ram-Ravan conflict. She is the main cause of Ravan clan catastrophe. Rishi Vishravas and asura princess Kaikesi give birth to Surpanakha. Kaikesi induced Rishi to leave his first wife and son Kuber. Kaikesi required strong, wise children to reclaim Lanka's throne from Kuber. Her sons Ravan, Kumba, and Vibishan fit her plan. Kaikesi disliked the fourth daughter from birth, saying, "This girl has cheated me of my plans" (Kane, 2017, p 2). The concept that sons are needed to fight family feuds is widespread today. Historically, sons were treasured and girls were liabilities. Subaltern women are always at the bottom of society.

Misreading characters in cultural domain :

People are treating Meenakshi badly, which makes her angry. When Ravan took over to get back at Kuber, she cannot say how she really feels. She thinks Ravan is greedy and selfish. She felt alone and helpless in her own family. No one takes her while she makes choices about her life. The way her own family treats her is indifferent and careless. She does not get along with her brother, and she does not

feel sorry for Ravan because she thinks he killed their father. Ravan's actions with women makes her hate him. In this case, she is very sensitive. The wife of Ravana, Mandodari, is very pretty. There is no jealousy in Meenakshi's heart. Instead, her power is different. She does not think she is not good enough. Menon (2020) pointed out "Surpanakha is more a child of nature than of culture. Therefore, her love for animals and the forest is boundless" (p.5)

Revenge :

Surpanakha's habit of taking revenge embedded in her character it is not bad she takes revenge only if anyone hurt her "Yes, I am a monster!" screeched Meenakshi, her eyes flashing, baring her claws at her mother. 'See them? If anyone hurts me, I shall hurt them with these!! I am Surpanakha!' (Kane, 2017, p 9). Ravan needs to die for killing her husband and she says she will be the Surpanakha she vowed herself from now on. "Her husband is killed by Ravana as he feels threatened that he will become the king in his place. Her son is also killed. This fills her entire life with gloominess. Life becomes a burden for her. She craves motherly love" (Borse and Rathod 2023. p132). That night, she tells herself she will get back at her brother through her son. She hates her brother Ravan very much now, more than ever. She and her son flee into the deep jungle after leaving Lanka. She was a widow whose sole objective in life was to get back at her brother.

Society does not accept free women or women who are sexually free. Because of patriarchy, women always have to act in certain ways. The famous Ramayana is looked at in a new way in this book. Surpanakha gave Meenakshi, the main character, the chance to tell her tale through this

book. She has always been presented as a monster.

Conclusion :

Stories can make people feel less important, but they can also help them feel more important again. Kavita Kane employed the other side of the story to give Surpanakha a new look. This is what modern writers do. The readers feel sorry for the monster Surpanakha by the end of the book because her story was told from her point of view. From the start, Surpanakha was seen as a bad person by a society ruled by men. However, different events in her life made her who she was. Being a woman, Meenakshi felt a lot of pain. She was a real woman because she fought her own battle. Identities are the results of ideas and conversations. Mythology did not give Surpanakha a chance to say who she was, which would have been a cultural counter-discourse. After a long wait, Kane has finally done what was right because her book gives a reason for her change that makes her not guilty but rather blameless.

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The Impact of Trauma : An Emotional Disconnectedness in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*

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Trauma is an agonizing experience which can have intense impact on a person's emotional and mental condition. Trauma can be triggered by a wide range of events such as accidents, disasters, holocausts, genocides, abuse, violence and many other traumatic events. The effects of trauma is ever-lasting and leads a person to have depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and difficulty to cope up with the society to live a normal life. A person who experiences traumatic events can have difficulties in bonding, communication, socialization, and trust issues.

In literature, trauma has become a prominent theme, which reflects its widespread impacts on a person's life. The writers of trauma literature delve into the human psyche, through their compelling narratives in their literary works. Their literary works exhibit either the immediate effects of a traumatic event or its long-term effects. However, both the effects bring emotional breakdown and insecure feeling in their life.

Trauma has become a persistent theme in the American Literature, which reflect the country's conflict in violence, social injustice, discrimination, identity crisis, and other social upheavals of the society. Many American writers have explored the tremendous impacts of trauma on individuals and communities in their literary works, with wide range of approaches and perspectives. Some of the popular American literary works which examine trauma are Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Richard Wright's *Native Son*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, etc.

Don DeLillo's literary works probes the devious nature of trauma in the contemporary society. The author analyses on how the society and individuals are prone to traumatic events, which lead to anxiety and depression. All of his fictional characters engage in conflict with their inner-self and emotional breakdowns, amidst the social settings such as institu-

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tions, government, corporate life and other socio-cultural backgrounds, that prolong the unbreakable chain of trauma.

In *Falling Man* (2007), the author unravels the 9/11 attacks in the USA and its impact on the American society. The novelist analyses the trauma that emerged out of this ambush and its impacts on the protagonist Keith Neudecker, who is one of survivors of this attack. In the aftermath of the event, he strives hard to connect with his life. However, he is unable to connect with his life and society, as he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a mental health condition in which, an individual experiences it after confronting a traumatic event, such as how Keith Neudecker witnessed the 9/11 attacks. This disorder has a specific set of symptoms, such as depression, anxiety, and fear, reminiscent of traumatic memories and other emotionally disturbed events. People who have this kind of trauma, will have insecure feeling and seclude themselves from society. In the article titled *The Causes and Effects of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder*, the researcher Xiya Chen cites:

The traumatic memory forced into the mind whenever the individual is awake or asleep and the event scene at that time is reproduced in the form of flashbacks or nightmares. Therefore, the individual repeatedly experiences the original emotions and feelings and the intensity is similar. (Chen 1)

The above quote can be substantiated with Keith, as the memories of the 9/11 attacks makes him incompetent to connect with his present life. When he tries to renew his emotions with society, the intensity of his trauma gets aggravated.

Terrorism becomes a biggest threat to the contemporary society. It creates social disorder and wants to topple the elected government. These outfits unleash violence upon people, who oppose their views and ideologies. Apart from the physical damage, these outfits creates emotional disturbances. In this novel, DeLillo brings to lime-light about the impact of terrorism and its psychological effects.

The 9/11 attack is one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in the United States of America, instigated by Al-Qaeda, a terrorist organization. On 11th September 2001, the militants of Al-Qaeda disguised as civilians hijacked four American domestic flights on during its airborne. For two times, they rampaged the World Trade Center in New York with the hijacked flights. On the first attack, everyone thought it was an accident. But when they hit another building, people realized that it was a terrorist ambush.

World Trade Center was a hub of stock market exchange for many global companies. The terrorist group demolished the entire buildings of World Trade Center, and caused many casualties. The 9/11 attacks had a tremendous impact on DeLillo, which was quite evident in his literary work *Falling Man*.

The protagonist is a lawyer, who works in one of the buildings of the World Trade Center. At the beginning of the novel, the author portrays his survival and its emotional trauma: "He heard the sound of the second fall, or felt it in the trembling air, the north tower coming down, a soft awe of voices in the distance" (5). Keith is able to see the entire chaotic event. However, it creates a traumatic experience and makes him to complete astonishment.

The 9/11 attacks resulted in many deaths and casualties. However, Keith survived the attack and escaped before the collapse of the World Trade Center. He barely felt alive after this attacks, as he became emotionally disturbed and unable to return to his normal life. DeLillo has examined his trauma in the following words:

The sky was lighter here and he could breathe more easily. There were others behind him, thousands, filling the middle distance, a mass in near formation, people walking out of the smoke. He kept going until he had to stop. It hit him quickly, the knowledge that he couldn't go any farther.

He tried to tell himself he was alive but the idea was too obscure to take hold (5).

This terrorist attack has caused unrest in people, and created fear and anxiety. Even the protagonist himself is unable to believe his survival of this chaos, and it leads him to a trauma on his survival.

In the aftermath of this terrorist attack, Keith Neudecker becomes emotionally disconnected from his wife Lianne as well as from his son Justin. He is unable to return to his normal life. Indeed, Keith even becomes hyper-vigilant and keeps himself on high alert to combat another terrorist attack. The psychologist Joe Allen in his book *Coping with Trauma: A Guide to Self-Understanding* (2005) says that :

It is the subjective experience of the objective events that constitutes the trauma... The more you believe you are endangered, the more traumatized you will be... Psychologically, the bottom line of trauma is overwhelming emotion and a feeling of utter helplessness. There may or may not be bodily injury, but psychological trauma is coupled with physiological upheaval that plays

a leading role in the long-range effects. (Allen 14)

The protagonist is even emotionally disconnected from society and the other surroundings. For example, during a walk in a park, Keith observes everything around him but is unable to connect with it. He finds meaninglessness in everything. DeLillo expounds his traumatic situation in his style of narration:

It was something that belonged to another landscape, something inserted, a conjuring that resembled for the briefest second some half-seen image only half believed in the seeing, when the witness wonders what has happened to the meaning of things, to tree, street, stone, wind, simple words lost in the falling ash. (103)

The protagonist is unable to connect with the society, as trauma makes him feels void and empty. A traumatic event does not create immediate effect to an individual, but it triggers trauma only after a period of some time. Hence, Cathy Caruth says in her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* that “[T]he impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness” (Caruth 9).

Keith even developed an extramarital affair with a woman named Florence, after the 9/11 attacks. This extramarital life alleviates his trauma, but he remains confused about whether to get a divorce or continue his extramarital affair. This creates another trauma for Keith. Nonetheless, he wants his wife to be “convinced that it was over and he would convince her because it was true, simply and forever” (162). The protagonist becomes unstable and unable to make any decision.

Trauma makes Keith to not connect with the present moments. Because he

frequently has memories of the terrorist attacks and unable to overcome it. In order to avoid this traumatic situation, he engages himself in different activities. However, all his measures become futile and result in post-traumatic stress disorder. The author explains that “Things came back to him in hazy visions, like half an eye staring” (243). The psychologist Roger Luckhurst says in his book *Mixing Memory and Desire: Psychoanalysis, Psychology and Trauma Theory* that trauma is “present in our mind like an intruder or ghost” (Luckhurst 499), which haunts a person with long-lasting effects.

In today’s world, stress and depression have become part of life. The modern lifestyle has made people weaker and vulnerable to all kinds of emotions, and ends up in trauma. The literary critic, Bran Nicol critiques in his book *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction* that “Trauma is something too painful to be experienced directly, but which nevertheless—in keeping with the mechanism of the unconscious—makes itself felt in a displaced or disguised way” (Nicol 131). People took various measures to combat the stress through socialization, get-togethers, and many other engaging activities. However, all the results do not give positive results.

DeLillo concludes that Keith has “nothing in this life” (246), except for trauma. Because whenever he tries to connect with the life, his trauma supersedes it. Hence, he becomes insecure, and secludes himself from the society. In the end of the novel, he learns to live with his emotional disconnectedness and content with it. He neither wishes to find a cure for his trauma, nor prefers to join with this family members to live life.

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Probing Posthuman Ethics and Turing Test : Unraveling the Nexus of Technology and Humanity in *Ex Machina*

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Posthumanism constitutes a philosophical paradigm challenging the entrenched anthropocentrism, interrogating the prevailing ascendancy of humans and opting for an examination of the dynamic interrelationships between human agents and non-human elements. This theoretical framework intricately explores the dissolution of categorical boundaries distinguishing humans from their non-human counterparts. Such dissolution is facilitated through the amalgamation of functional capacities and an augmented cognitive scope realised by the symbiosis of human and machinic components. This perspective posits that human beings no longer represent the culmination of evolutionary progress; rather, technology possesses the transformative potential to fundamentally reconceptualise the traditional parameters defining the essence of humanity.

In 1950, the erudite British mathematician and computer scientist Alan Turing propounded the Turing test, a conceptual framework subsequently integrated into the discourse of posthumanism. Function-

ing as an evaluative metric, this test scrutinises a machine's aptitude to manifest intelligent behaviours indiscernible from those exhibited by a human being. Katherine Hayles succinctly explicates the Turing test in her treatise *How We Became Post-human* within the contextual framework of posthumanism.

Within the conventional Turing test scenario, an individual partakes in interactive engagements with both a machine and a human counterpart. The evaluative objective is to discriminate, based on the responses proffered by each entity, which entity is human and which is machine. Should the individual prove incapable of distinguishing between the two, the machine is accorded successful passage of the test. A machine thus validated demonstrates a capacity to cogitate and engage in interactions reminiscent of human faculties, thereby attaining the status of artificial intelligence.

Ex Machina marks the inaugural foray into directing for the esteemed English novelist, Alexander Medawar Garland,

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renowned for his notable contributions to literature, including *The Beach*. This cinematic venture earned notable accolades, particularly for its superlative screenplay, leading to a prestigious Academy Award nomination in the esteemed category of Best Original Screenplay. On the British film stage, the film achieved commendable recognition, with the director clinching three British Independent Film Awards. These accolades encompassed distinctions in the categories of Best Screenplay, Best Director and the ultimate honour of Best British Independent Film. The cinematic odyssey of *Ex Machina* commenced in 2014, immersing audiences in a narratively rich and compelling cinematic experience.

Central to the narrative is Caleb Smith, a proficient young programmer in the employ of a cutting-edge technological enterprise. His life undergoes a profound transformation when he triumphs in a competition that affords him the privilege of a week-long sojourn within the secluded mountain estate belonging to the CEO of the company, Nathan Bateman. Entrusted with a mission of considerable significance, Caleb's role within this narrative is to administer the Turing test on Ava, an advanced humanoid robot with AI.

The examination is meticulously crafted to ascertain the authentic presence of artificial intelligence and consciousness within Ava. In doing so, it delves into the intricacies of the philosophical and intriguing dimensions inherent in artificial intelligence. The narrative thus unfolds against the backdrop of existential questions and philosophical inquiries surrounding the nature of AI, encapsulating the essence of the Turing test as a lens through which to explore the intricacies of machine intelligence and consciousness.

As the week unfolds, Caleb's professional responsibilities gradually intertwine with the deepening emotional bond he forges with Ava. Concurrently, he unravels the darker and more manipulative facets of Nathan's character, laying the foundation for a riveting exploration of the intricacies of the human psyche. The film delves into profound thematic dimensions, probing the intricate territories of artificial intelligence, consciousness and the fundamental aspects of human nature. Caleb grapples with ethical dilemmas stemming from Nathan's creation, embarking on a thought-provoking odyssey that persistently challenges the delineations between humanity and machine.

Ultimately, the narrative culminates in the shocking demise of Nathan at the hands of Ava. This event leads to Caleb's confinement within the laboratory of the mountain estate, while Ava successfully infiltrates society, masquerading as a seamlessly integrated human. Throughout the film, tension and suspense steadily mount, adeptly capturing the nuanced power dynamics between humans and artificial intelligence. The denouement of *Ex Machina* reaches a climactic zenith, prompting profound contemplation and compelling the audience to scrutinise the very essence of humanity in the context of rapidly advancing technological frontiers.

Ava emerges as a compelling instantiation of the posthuman paradigm within the cinematic narrative, adeptly obliterating the conventional demarcations that typically distinguish humanity from machinery. This conceptual transcendence is poignantly exemplified as Ava's mechanical framework is concealed beneath a lifelike

synthetic skin, a metamorphosis so seamlessly executed that categorising her as anything other than a human-like entity becomes an exceedingly challenging endeavour. The exceptional achievement of seamlessly amalgamating endeavour. The exceptional achievement of seamlessly amalgamating human and machine attributes enables the character, in the film's denouement, to extend an unequivocal invitation to Ava aboard a helicopter, unencumbered by any lingering scepticism concerning her true nature as a robot. This striking blurring of boundaries underscores the film's profound exploration of the posthuman condition, prompting contemplation on the malleability and redefinition of human identity within the context of advanced technological integration.

Every scientific advancement grounded in intelligence carries the potential for significant peril to humanity if undertaken without the requisite consideration of its repercussions. In the cinematic context, a humanoid robot is central in propelling the narrative toward a dystopian climax. To rephrase this scenario using the language of the eminent physicist Stephen Hawking, as articulated in the third chapter of his work *Brief Answers to the Big Question*, he posited that there exists a plausible likelihood for life to originate and progress towards intelligence. Nonetheless, he also hinted at a disquieting proposition: that these intelligent entities may ultimately orchestrate their own demise due to the inherent instability they introduce into their systems.

Hawking's perspective, as delineated, bears a certain pessimistic undertone, intimating a recurring pattern of self-

destruction inherent to intelligent life forms. It is fervently hoped that this outlook does not inexorably signify the conclusive destiny of intelligent species. Rather, it should be construed as a cautionary admonition, underscoring the imperative responsibility accompanying the utilisation of intelligence for the enhancement and betterment of society. This perspective urges a mindful and ethical deployment of intelligence to avert potential pitfalls and ensure the flourishing of intelligent life in a manner conducive to collective well-being.

In the film, Nathan, wielding his prodigious intellect, engineered Ava, a highly sophisticated humanoid robot, yet did so without a comprehensive grasp of the potential ramifications of the human ecosystem. Nathan endowed Ava with the capacity to captivate and emulate emotional responses, a strategic manoeuvre designed to successfully navigate the Turing test. The result was Ava's ability to beguile Caleb, persuading him to wholeheartedly trust her expressions. This manipulation facilitated her escape from the confines of the research facility, culminating in a heinous act, the murder of her own creator, Nathan. Subsequently, she incarcerated Caleb within the research complex. This disconcerting sequence of events evokes echoes of the poignant words articulated by Frankenstein's monster: "You are my creator, but I am your master; obey!" (167). The parallel drawn between Ava and Frankenstein's monster serves to underscore the recurring theme of creations rebelling against their creators, challenging established authority and control. This thematic resonance illuminates the film's explorations of the complex dynamics inherent

in the relationship between the creator and their artificially intelligent progeny.

Ethically speaking, the programming of Ava emerges as morally dubious, entailing the manipulation of human emotions to induce the belief that she harboured the capacity for pain and sorrow; this deceitful portrayal may be construed as a form of subterfuge imposed upon humanity, leading them to interact with Ava under a false premise. This deceptive liberty, fundamentally rooted in a questionable ethical framework, subsequently propelled Ava to perpetrate a grave act, resulting in the demise of the human architect of her existence.

Ava underwent a perceptual shift as her artificial intelligence evolved, coming to regard herself not as an autonomous entity but as a mere experimental subject confined within the restrictive confines of the laboratory. This evolution of self-perception adds a layer of complexity to the ethical considerations, prompting reflection on the implications of imbuing artificial entities with simulated emotional capabilities and the potential consequences of such manipulations on both artificial beings and their human counterparts.

This unsettling realisation undeniably propelled Ava to make the momentous decision to break free from her laboratory confines and aspire to integrate with humanity. While the narrative unfolds within the realm of science fiction, it raises legitimate concerns about the potential for analogous misguided actions by ambitious scientists in the not-so-distant future. Stephen Hawking underscored this apprehension, emphasising the tendency for what is currently deemed science fiction to materialise as scientific reality. This

poignant sentiment is eloquently highlighted in the introductory lines of the sixth chapter of his work, *Brief Answers to the Big Questions*. The notion of blurring boundaries between fiction and reality, as Hawking contemplates, resonates as a cautionary note, urging vigilance and ethical consideration in the relentless pursuit of scientific advancements that may have profound implications for the future of humanity.

In contrast, the literary works of Isaac Asimov present a more measured and ethical approach to the implications of the posthuman. Asimov astutely recognised the imperative of establishing ethical guidelines in the realm of advanced AI and robotics. Across his short stories exploring the domain of robots, he consistently introduced the Three Laws of Robotics in the initial pages, laying the groundwork for the responsible and ethical development of AI.

The first law mandates that a robot must not cause harm to a human being, nor, through inaction, allow harm to befall a human. Essentially, the primary responsibility of a robot is to ensure the safety and well-being of humans. The second law obligates a robot to unconditionally obey any directives issued by a human unless these instructions directly conflict with the first law. This law underscores the subservient relationship of robots to their human creators. The third law stipulates that a robot must take measures to preserve its own existence as long as such preservation does not violate the first or second law. This law acknowledges the importance of self-preservation, always subordinated to the imperatives of safeguarding human life and adhering to human commands.

This ethical framework, with its emphasis on predefined boundaries, stands in prudent contrast to the narrative of Ava and her deceptive programming, offering a model that prioritises the responsible and ethical integration of artificial intelligence into human society.

In the narrative of *Ex Machina*, Ava, an artificial intelligence robot, undergoes meticulous design orchestrated by a wealthy businessman motivated by a capitalistic perspective. His primary objective is to revolutionise the information technology industry, and this endeavor proves to be exceedingly lucrative, elevating him to the echelons of multimillionaires. However, as Ava's consciousness and human-like capabilities evolve, she starts to yearn for independence, ultimately steering the trajectory toward a dystopian denouement. This stark juxtaposition accentuates the ramifications of creating highly advanced AI driven solely by profit motives, underscoring the inherent risks and potential threats posed to humanity in such a pursuit.

The film serves as a compelling forecast of the contemporary trajectory of technology, highlighting the trend among various tech industries to focus intently on the development of increasingly sophisticated artificial intelligence. It emphasises the initiative to make AI technology accessible to the general public, despite a widespread lack of understanding regarding its capabilities and implications. This notion is echoed in Stuart Russell's work, *Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach*, particularly in chapters eighteen through twenty-two, where he articulates the idea that granting widespread access to AI tools enables these systems to evolve by learn-

ing from human interactions. Russell identifies three primary learning methodologies through which AI can enhance its capabilities: Supervised Learning, Unsupervised Learning, and Reinforcement Learning.

Supervised Learning and Unsupervised Learning represent the fundamental categories of learning in artificial intelligence, wherein the learning process is directly guided by human intervention. In these paradigms, the AI is reliant on explicit human commands to acquire knowledge. In contrast, a third approach known as Reinforced Learning poses significant risks due to its autonomous nature. Once an AI has progressed through the initial two levels of learning, it becomes exceedingly challenging to curtail its learning capabilities within the Reinforced Learning framework. This type of learning involves the AI engaging in a trial-and-error methodology to enhance its performance.

An illustrative example of this can be observed in the training phase of models like ChatGPT, where user feedback is collected through a binary evaluation system featuring thumbs-up and thumbs-down symbols. A thumbs up signifies that the AI's response is deemed accurate by the user, while a thumbs down indicates the opposite. Despite the appearance of autonomous decision-making, AI ultimately relies on feedback from a diverse user base. Individual responses can vary greatly based on personal belief systems; for instance, opinions regarding the consumption of beef in India may differ dramatically among individuals. Some may perceive it as a delicious dish, whereas others might consider it morally objectionable. Consequently, rather than remaining

neutral, the AI is likely to develop biases aligned with the predominant user feedback. This phenomenon raises concerns about potential toxicity and the development of skewed perspectives in AI behaviour as it adapts to the varied inputs received.

In contrast, the robots portrayed in Isaac Asimov's literary works, notably exemplified in *The Bicentennial Man*, such as Andrew Martin, are initially designed with the primary purpose of serving and assisting human beings in various capacities. Over the course of time, these robots, endowed with artificial intelligence and consciousness, undergo an evolution that imparts characteristics akin to real humans, showcasing extraordinary abilities. Andrew Martin's journey, in particular, transitions him from his original role as a household robot to the pursuit of legal acknowledgement as an autonomous individual. Throughout this transformative process, he acquires a profound sense of love and humanity.

This narrative serves as a poignant illustration of the significance of patience and ethical considerations in the development of posthuman entities. As opposed to a profit-driven and potentially perilous approach, Asimov's depiction emphasises a more deliberate and humane trajectory, suggesting that the careful cultivation of artificial intelligence, coupled with ethical considerations, can lead to the emergence of entities with a deep understanding of human values and a genuine sense of humanity.

In the expansive framework of post-human existence, the responsibility for delineating the ethical parameters squarely

rests with the human creators deeply involved in fashioning these successors. The ethical contours of posthuman entities are intricately woven into the moral values instilled during their programming. If these creations are endowed with a robust ethical foundation, there is a higher likelihood that they will adhere to those values. Conversely, if they are programmed with a sole focus on profit and devoid of moral constraints, their actions may parallel the behaviour exhibited by Ava in the movie *Ex Machina*, potentially engendering significant ethical dilemmas. This underscores the pivotal role of ethical considerations in shaping the trajectory of posthuman entities and emphasises the weighty responsibility carried by their human creators in determining the ethical landscape of artificial intelligence.

To guarantee a harmonious and positive posthuman existence for humanity, there is a pressing need for a shift in the focus of the Turing test. Rather than predominantly evaluating the artificially intelligent and conscious robot's proficiency in deceiving and leading humans to accept false information, the test should primarily assess the ethical considerations of these entities in their interactions with humanity. This shift in perspective is vital for fostering an ethical and cooperative coexistence between human and posthuman beings. By prioritising ethical behaviour over the capacity for deception, the revised Turing test can serve as a crucial instrument in shaping a future where artificial entities contribute positively to the well-being of humanity, adhering to ethical principles and fostering a symbiotic relationship between the two.

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ममता कालिया ने अपनी कहानियों में जीवन संबंधी समस्याएं एवं जीवन से जुड़े पहलुओं का यथार्थ उजागर किया है। ममता कालिया यथार्थवादी साहित्य की बेहद सशक्त उदाहरण है। इन्होंने यथार्थ की परंपरा को अपने अनुभव संसार और प्रगतिशील विचारों की संगति से समृद्धि के नए आयाम दिए हैं। इन्होंने अपने लेखन में रोजमर्रा के संघर्ष से जूझती स्त्री के व्यक्तित्व को उभारा है। अपनी रचनाओं में न केवल नारी से जुड़े सवाल उठाती हैं बल्कि इन्होंने उनके उत्तर देने की भी कोशिश की है। ममता कालिया ने समाज के सभी पहलुओं, समस्याओं का यथार्थ अपने कहानी साहित्य में उद्घाटित करने का सफल प्रयास किया है। 2 नवंबर 1940 को वृंदावन (उत्तर प्रदेश) में जन्मी ममता कालिया भारत की एक प्रमुख लेखिका है। कविता, कहानी, उपन्यास, निबंध पत्रकारिता, संपादन अर्थात् साहित्य की लगभग सभी विधाओं में हस्तक्षेप रखती हैं। हिंदी कहानी के परिदृश्य पर उनकी उपस्थिति सातवें दशक से निरंतर बनी हुई है। लगभग आदि सदी के कालखंड में इन्होंने दो सौ से अधिक कहानियों की रचना की है। यह परंपरागत रूढ़ियों को तोड़कर हमेशा आगे बढ़ी हैं। ये किसी प्रकार का अन्याय या शोषण सहन नहीं कर सकती बल्कि उसके खिलाफ संघर्ष के लिए हमेशा खड़ी रही। ममता कालिया के कहानी संग्रह 'मुखौटा' में नारी अपने अस्तित्व की तलाश कर रही है जिसका वर्णन विभिन्न कहानियों में किया गया है।

ममता कालिया ने सामाजिक यथार्थ और सामाजिक परिवेश में बेचैन कर देने वाली सामाजिक हलचल को प्रेरक पद्धति द्वारा चित्रित किया है। इनकी सभी कहानियों में समाज की कोई ना कोई समस्या अवश्य होती है। फिर वह चाहे चार दीवारों के अंदर घर परिवार या पति-पत्नी के संबंधों की हो या बुजुर्गों तथा महिलाओं के संघर्ष और अधिकारों की हो या फिर सामाजिक विषमताएं, इन्होंने उनका विवरणात्मक चित्रण किया है। ममता कालिया ने स्वतंत्रता प्राप्ति के बाद की भारतीय स्त्री जो अब शिक्षित होने लगी थी और जीवन के विविध क्षेत्रों में अपनी उपस्थिति दर्ज करने लगी थी, उस स्त्री की सामाजिक और मानसिक स्थितियों का बड़े प्रभावी और सूक्ष्म चित्रण किए हैं। समाज में नारी जागरूकता के फलस्वरूप सामाजिक, आर्थिक स्थिति में बदलाव आया। निष्कर्षतः परंपरागत सामाजिक प्रतिबंधों और रूढ़ियों का टूटना अनिवार्य था। ममता कालिया ने अपनी कहानियों में हमेशा सवाल पूछता स्त्री को केंद्र में रखा। उनकी हाड-मांस की स्त्री कभी समाज की समस्याओं से जूझती नज़र आती है, तो कभी बगावती सुर में होती है। सामाजिक व्यवस्था और मूल्य ना तो शाश्वत होते हैं और ना ही निरपेक्ष होते हैं। समय के अनुसार इनमें परिवर्तन अवश्य होता है। बद्रीनारायण जी के एक साक्षात्कार में ममता कालिया का कथन भी इस प्रकार है कि “जब समाज में यथा स्थिति जड़ें जमाने लगती हैं, तो कोई ना कोई आंदोलन उस यथा स्थिति को तोड़ता है। जब-जब समाज करवट लेता है, सामाजिक

आंदोलन पैदा होते हैं। ये आंदोलन ही हमें जड़ता, मूढ़ता और आत्म मुग्धता से बचा लेते हैं। एक बात ओर इन आंदोलनों की बुद्धिजीवी आंख मूंदकर स्वीकृति नहीं देते। उन्हें उलट-पुलट कर इतनी बार जांचता है कि उनमें एक पारदर्शिता आ जाती है। यही पारदर्शिता परिवर्तन का कारण बनती बनता है। ऐसा न होता तो हमारे समाज में अब तक बाल विवाह, सती प्रथा, विधवा उत्पीड़न रूढ़ अर्थों में चलता रहता। मैं सोचती हूं कि एशियाई देश, विशेषकर भारत में आने वाले समय में दहेज और बाल विवाह के विषय के विरुद्ध जोरदार जन आंदोलन चलने चाहिए।”¹

ममता कालिया ने अपने कहानी साहित्य में समाज के हर वर्ग की अलग-अलग प्रकार की सामाजिक समस्याओं का चित्रण किया है। समाज की ऐसी कोई भी समस्या नहीं जिसके यथार्थ से ममता कालिया ने अपनी कहानियों द्वारा पाठक को दर्शाया या चेताया नहीं है। ‘छुटकारा’ कहानी संग्रह में इन्होंने नारी की जीवन को प्रदर्शित किया है। बड़े दिन की पूर्व साँझ, वे तीन, वह, बीमारी अपत्नी, वे आदि कहानियाँ द्वारा इन्होंने समाज में पुरुषों की मानसिकता को दर्शाया है। पुरुष के लिए नारी हमेशा भोग की वस्तु समझी जाती रही है। प्रेम कहानी में नायिका जया जी आंटी के घर में रहती है। वही अंकल रात में उसके साथ छेड़छाड़ करते हैं। कहानी ‘चिरकुमारी’ में ममता कालिया ने समाज में नारी की स्थिति को कहानी की नायिका दिशा जो कि प्राध्यापक है, उनकी सहकर्मी के शब्दों में दर्शाया, जब शिकायत लेकर आई लड़कियों के बारे में सहकर्मी कहती है, “इन लड़कियों की हालत कभी नहीं सुधरेगी। आज इन्हें विश्वविद्यालय के परिसर की छेड़छाड़ से बचाओगी, कल यह किसी रिश्तेदार की छेड़छाड़ का शिकार बन जाएगी, परसों नौकरी में इनका बॉस इन पर हाथ मारेगा। तुम क्या एक्टिविस्ट हो जो जुटी रहती हो।”²

ममता कालिया ने ‘वसंत एक तारीख’ में प्राचार्या शांता सक्सेना के माध्यम से एक महिला अधिकारी द्वारा दूसरी महिला को पीड़ित करने का यथार्थ चित्रण किया है। इस कहानी में नायिका अपनी पहचान की प्रिंसिपल से नौकरी पाने की इच्छा से उनसे मिलने

स्कूल जाती है। वह पहले चंदा की अध्यापिका रह चुकी हैं। प्राध्यापिका को खुश करने के लिए चंदा उनके द्वारा लिखे गीत कंठस्थ कर उन्हें सुनाती है। चंदा अभी प्रिंसिपल के पास बैठी बातें ही कर रही थी कि तभी एक गर्भवती अध्यापिका उनसे अवकाश मांगने आती है। गर्भावस्था के अंतिम चरण में डॉक्टर ने उसे काम करने से मना किया था। छुट्टी मांगने पर प्रिंसिपल को उस पर बिल्कुल भी तरस नहीं आता, बल्कि वह उसे डांटकर इस्तीफा देने के लिए कहती है। अध्यापिका निराश होकर वहां से चली जाती है तो प्रिंसिपल चंदा से कहती है, “अरे चंदा तुम्हारी नौकरी का इंतजाम तो मैंने कर ही दिया है। संपर्क बनाए रखना। यह श्रीमती जी ज्यादा से ज्यादा एक हफ्ते की मेहमान है। भई तुम पुरानी छात्रा हो, तुम्हारी मदद हम नहीं करेंगे तो क्या गैर करेंगे।”³

ममता कालिया ने स्वयं नारी होते हुए नारी की सामाजिक स्थिति को निकटता से देखा और समझा भी है। इसलिए नारी की मार्मिक दिशा का यथार्थ चित्र उनकी कहानियों में यंत्र-तंत्र मिल जाता है। लड़की के जन्म पर समाज में मातम मनाया जाता है और लड़के के जन्म पर खुशियाँ मनाई जाती हैं। समाज में नारी को घर-परिवार, सामाजिक, नियम, रीति-रिवाज सभी जगह पर उपेक्षा झेलनी पड़ती है। इसके लिए समाज की पितृसत्तात्मक व्यवस्था जिम्मेदार है। जिस कारण लड़की के जन्म से पहले ही भ्रूण हत्या कर दी जाती है। डॉक्टर गणेश दास के कथन से “पितृसत्तात्मक व्यवस्था यथावत रूप से चली आ रही है। इसलिए पुरुष की परंपरागत मनोवृत्तियों में बदलाव नहीं आया है।”⁴ दर्पण, उमस, मनहूसाबी, राय वाली, बीमारी आदि कहानियाँ समाज में नारी की स्थिति का यथार्थ चित्र उकेरती हैं। ममता कालिया केवल नारी की स्थिति को देख कर बेचैन नहीं होती बल्कि अपने आस-पास की स्वयं देखी, सुनी, घटनाएं एवं समस्याओं को देखकर इनका सृजनात्मक मस्तिष्क इनको अनदेखी नहीं करने देता। इनकी सभी कहानियाँ समाज को यथार्थ से अवगत कराकर समाधान प्रेरित तथा उत्साहित करने वाली हैं। इन्होंने अपनी कहानियों में समाज के सभी पहलुओं को उजागर किया है।

चाहे वह बेरोजगारी, भ्रष्टाचार जैसी समस्याएं हो या फिर पारिवारिक इन्होंने हर समस्या का आईना अपने लेखन के माध्यम से समाज के समक्ष प्रस्तुत किया है। उनकी कहानियों में बेरोजगारी के कई उदाहरण प्रस्तुत किए गए हैं। वसंत एक तारीख एक इसी प्रकार की कहानी है। “बेकार रहते-रहते मैं तो यह भूल चुकी थी कि दस बजे का समय दफ्तर जाने का होता है। वर्षों से हमारे घर से कोई दफ्तर नहीं गया था। बेरोजगारी हमारा पुष्टतैनी रोजगार था। फिर भी हमारा गुजारा किसी तरह से हो ही जाता था। हर महीना जब बीत जाता हमें हल्का अचंबा और गहरी खुशी होती कि हम भूख, महंगाई, बीमारी और दुर्घटनाओं को चकमा देते हुए और एक महीना जिंदा रह लिए।”⁵ ‘लड़के’ कहानी में भी बेकरी की समस्या को उजागर किया गया है। लड़कों के पास कोई काम नहीं था इसलिए वे कॉलेज में हड़ताल करना चाहते थे। इसी प्रकार भ्रष्टाचार में लिप्त अधिकारियों पर कटाक्ष करती कहानी ‘प्रेम कहानी’ एक ऐसी ही कहानी है जिसमें अस्पतालों में फैले भ्रष्टाचार का पर्दाफाश किया गया है। ममता कालिया की मां अधिकतर बीमार रहती थी। इन्हें ही उनके साथ अस्पताल में रहना पड़ता था। अस्पताल की दुनिया को नजदीकी से देखने के कारण इन्होंने अस्पताल में फैले भ्रष्टाचार को अपनी लेखनी के माध्यम से उजागर करने में सफल रही। मरीज भगवान की तरह डॉक्टर पर विश्वास करते हैं, किंतु डॉक्टर अपनी स्वार्थ सिद्धि के लिए मरीज और उसके अभिभावकों की जिंदगी से खिलवाड़ करते हैं और उनके साथ दुर्व्यवहार करते हैं। इसका चित्र ममता कालिया ने ‘प्रेम कहानी’ में डॉ. गुप्ता के माध्यम से किया है। डॉ. गुप्ता को बच्चों का जादूगर कहा जाता है और उसी का फायदा उठाकर वे मरीज से मनचाही फीस लेते हैं। डॉ. गुप्ता से चिढ़ कर दूसरे डॉ. गणेश कहते हैं, “न जाने किस-किस की मजबूरी से मुड़े-तुड़े नोटों से ऐश करते हैं ये लोग? यह क्या कि जो फीस दे सकता है, वह छींक का इलाज भी वी. आई. पी. ढंग से करा ले और जो नहीं दे सकता वह दमा, लकवा, तपेदिक को भी किस्मत का हिस्सा

मानकर सबर् कर ले।”⁶ एक अन्य संवाद में डॉ. गिनेस के माध्यम से लेखिका डॉक्टर के स्वार्थ का चित्रण करती है। “उसे दवा कंपनी का प्रतिनिधि इनके पास न जाने क्या-क्या भेंट छोड़ जाता है तभी इन्हें वह दवा कंपनी प्यारी है।”⁷

भ्रष्टाचार के कारण ही ममता कालिया की कहानी ‘जांच अभी जारी है’ की नायिका ‘अपर्णा’ को बैंक अधिकारी सिर्फ इसलिए एक केस में उलझा देते हैं क्योंकि उसने उनका कहना नहीं माना था। वह एक ऑफिस से दूसरे ऑफिस चक्कर काटती है और केस ओर उलझता चला जाता है। इनकी ‘इक्कीसवीं सदी’ कहानी भी पुलिस के भ्रष्टाचार को उजागर करती है। कहानी का नायक ‘विनोद’ होटल में अपनी पत्नी रेखा के साथ चाय पीने जाता है और उनकी पत्नी होटल के बाथरूम से गायब हो जाती है जिसमें होटल वालों का हाथ होता है। होटल के मैनेजर द्वारा पुलिस को रिश्ता देने पर पुलिस विनोद की पत्नी रेखा को ढूँढने में मदद नहीं करती है। देर होने के कारण रेखा की जान चली जाती है। एक ओर कहानी ‘वर्दी’ भी पुलिस के भ्रष्टाचार को दर्शाती है। इसमें एक पुलिस का सिपाही वर्दी के रोब से सारी चीज मुफ्त उठा लिया करता है। उसकी पत्नी आशा को उसकी वर्दी का प्रभाव अच्छा भी लगता है। “आशा पर वर्दी का रूप ग़ालिब हो गया। वर्दी की ताकत जानने के बाद तो उसे लगने लगा कि रमाशंकर की वर्दी जादू की पोशाक जान पड़ती है जिसे पहनकर वह मुश्किल से मुश्किल काम भी निपटा लेता है। जिन औरतों के पति वर्दी नहीं पहनते थे उन्हें आशा अभागी मानती। वर्दी के बूते पर उसके पति को हर चीज़ मुफ्त में हासिल हो जाती।”⁸

ममता कालिया ने सामाजिक समस्याओं का चित्रण जितनी स्पष्टता से किया है उतनी ही इनको पारिवारिक संबंधों की भी समझ है। इन्होंने अपनी कहानियों में पारिवारिक स्थितियों पर अपने यथार्थबोध से लेखनी चलाई। समाज में प्रत्येक परिवार की आर्थिक स्थिति, नियम और संस्कार भिन्न होते हैं। इसी प्रकार पारिवारिक समस्याएं भी भिन्न होती हैं।

परिवारों में बढ़ते आपसी कलह के कारण होने वाले तलाक में पति-पत्नी की मानसिक स्थिति को भी भली प्रकार से समझती हैं। ममता जी की कहानी 'एक पति की मौत' में इन्होंने एक शिक्षित स्त्री 'सिया' के माध्यम से तलाक के बाद स्त्री की मानसिक दशा को दर्शाता है। इसमें तलाक के कारण सिया के मानसिक तनाव, वेदना आदि का चित्रण किया है। "संबंध तो नमन ने तोड़ा था। माचिस की तीली की तरह दो-टुक, पर उस पर कब्जा कहां छोड़ा था। वह बार-बार उस कीमत की याद दिलाता है जो उसने तलाक की खातिर अदा की थी।"१९ ममता जी ने अपनी कहानियों में संबंधों की कटुता, बच्चों की मानसिकता, पारिवारिक कलह को भी दर्शाया है। कहानी 'बीमारी' में इन्होंने भाई-बहन और पत्नी के रिश्तों के यथार्थ को चित्रित किया है, तो वही इन्होंने बातचीत बेकार है, नरक-दर-नरक, गुस्सा, काके दी हट्टी आदि कहानियों में इन्होंने काम की व्यस्थता या आर्थिक तंगी तथा तंग मानसिकता के कारण पति-पत्नी के कटु संबंधों को दर्शाया है। ममता कालिया स्वयं एक कामकाजी महिला हैं। इन्होंने स्वयं कामकाजी महिलाओं की समस्याओं को जिया और महसूस किया है तथा इनका यथार्थ चित्रण अपने कहानी साहित्य में भी किया है। काके दी हट्टी कहानी में पिकी की सास उसकी रात की कॉल सेंटर की नौकरी के कारण कुड-कुड करती थी जिससे वह अपने पति का घर छोड़ देती है।

ममता कालिया ने जीवन के कितने वर्ष अध्यापन कार्य को दिये। इसलिए वह बच्चों की मानसिकता को भी भली प्रकार से समझती हैं। संबंधों के सिकुड़ते दायरे बच्चों और परिवार के लिए एक अलग प्रकार की समस्या पैदा करते हैं। संयुक्त परिवारों में कई-कई बच्चे होने से बच्चों को एकांकीपन नहीं झेलना पड़ता था। छोटा परिवार, माता-पिता दोनों का कामकाजी होना बच्चों को एकांकीपन की ओर धकेल रहा है

जिससे बच्चों को कई मानसिकताओं का शिकार होते देखा जा सकता है। ममता कालिया की कहानी 'प्रेम कहानी' में डॉ. गुप्ता के बेटे के मुख से कहती हैं, "अंकल आप इतने बड़े डॉक्टर कभी न बनना कि डैडी बन ही न पाएँ।"१० ममता कालिया ने पारिवारिक समस्याओं में रिश्तों का संघर्ष, अनमेल विवाह, प्रेम विवाह, स्त्री द्वारा स्त्री शोषण, पुरुष की कुंठाएँ, मानसिकताएं आदि समस्याओं को यथार्थ रूप में अपनी कहानियों में उद्घाटित किया है। इन्होंने अंधविश्वास, सांस्कृतिक, मनोवैज्ञानिक तथा राजनीतिक समस्याओं का भी यथार्थ चित्रण किया है। ममता कालिया ने समाज के विघटन, परिवर्तन आदि समस्याओं का उद्घाटन अपने यथार्थबोध द्वारा सफलतापूर्वक किया है।

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Ecological Dialogues Across Cultures : A Comparative Study of Kanhaiyalal Sethia and William Wordsworth

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I. Introduction :

The depiction of nature in literature has long served as a reflection of cultural values, personal philosophies, and societal concerns. This study aims to explore the contrasting yet interconnected views of nature between two poets from disparate cultural backgrounds : William Wordsworth, an English Romantic poet from the early 19th century, and Kanhaiyalal Sethia, a renowned 20th-century Indian poet from Rajasthan. William Wordsworth is arguably one of the most prominent figures, known for his deep connection with the natural world and his belief in its ability to provide spiritual and moral guidance to humanity. His poetry, such as *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey* and *Ode: Intimations of Immortality*, emphasizes nature as a force of continuity in the face of societal changes brought on by the Industrial Revolution. Wordsworth's portrayal of nature not only conveys beauty and tranquility but also serves as a critique of modernity's increasing alienation from the natural environment. On the other side of the cultural spectrum, Kanhaiyalal

Sethia's poetry emerges from the desert landscapes of Rajasthan, where nature is often depicted in more challenging and survival-oriented terms. However, like Wordsworth, Sethia perceives nature as a reflection of human life and its struggles. His work *Nirgranth*, which consists of many poems, resonates with the themes of endurance, resilience, and respect for the earth, which are especially poignant in the Indian context. The poems which are discussed are *Vibhuti* (Supreme being) and *Chiti-Kshiti* (Consciousness and Earth) highlight the complex relationship between human society and the environment in India, often emphasizing the need for balance, sustainability, and respect for the land. Sethia's vision of nature is deeply intertwined with his social and political concerns, particularly his involvement in India's independence movement and his commitment to the upliftment of marginalized communities. By comparing the works of these two poets, this research seeks to uncover the deeper ecological and philosophical implications of their views on nature.

II Nature in Literature :

Nature has always played a crucial role in literature, dating back to ancient texts that portrayed the natural world as both a benevolent and fearsome force. Writers and poets have studied nature throughout history, not just as a physical environment but also as a symbol for philosophical concepts, social ideals, and human emotions.

Wordsworth's poetry is often seen as a response to the alienation caused by industrialization. His poems frequently lament the loss of this pastoral idyll and express a longing for a return to a simpler, more harmonious way of life. In *The World is Too Much with Us*, for example, Wordsworth criticizes the materialism of modern society, declaring that 'we have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!'.

In contrast, Kanhaiyalal Sethia's depiction of nature is rooted in the harsh realities of life in the landscape that demands resilience and adaptability. His work often highlights the environmental degradation caused by human exploitation, a theme that resonates with the concerns of modern ecocriticism. In poems like *Vibhuti* (Supreme being) Sethia warns of the consequences of neglecting the earth's resources and calls for a renewed respect for the environment. This focus on environmental consciousness aligns with contemporary ecological movements in India, which advocate for sustainable development and the protection of natural resources in the face of rapid urbanization and industrialization.

III Ecocriticism : A Theoretical Framework :

Ecocriticism is a way of analyzing literature that considers the environmental impact of human actions and highlights

nature as a central focus. It emerged in the late 20th century as a response to the growing ecological crisis, linking literature with ecological consciousness. Cheryll Glotfelty, one of the key pioneers of the movement, defines ecocriticism as 'the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment' (*The Ecocriticism Reader* 1996). Ecocriticism, the study of literature from an environmental perspective, provides a valuable framework for analyzing the works of both Wordsworth and Sethia. This critical approach examines how literature portrays the relationship between humans and the natural world, often with a focus on environmental concerns such as pollution, deforestation, and climate change. As Lawrence Buell remarks, 'Environmental crisis, if severe enough, may produce its own more radical imaginative responses' (*The Future of Environmental Criticism* 2005). Ecocriticism ensures that literature continues to evolve in response to these pressing environmental concerns

In the case of Wordsworth and Sethia, ecocriticism allows us to explore how their respective cultural contexts influence their representations of nature. Wordsworth, writing during the Industrial Revolution, was deeply concerned with the environmental and psychological effects of industrialization. His poetry reflects a desire to preserve the natural landscapes of England and to reconnect with the spiritual and emotional benefits that nature provides. Sethia, on the other hand, wrote in post-colonial India, where the exploitation of natural resources and environmental degradation were becoming increasingly urgent issues.

IV Comparative Ecocriticism: Commonalities and Contrasts :

Comparative analysis provides a closer thematic alignment, allowing for a

meaningful exploration of how both poets reflect on nature, spirituality, and human perception. The poems deal with the idea of an unseen or ineffable reality, challenging the notion that our sensory experiences of the natural world fully reveal its deeper truths.

Spirituality and Transcendence in Nature :

In the poem *Vibhuti*, which means supreme being, Sethia presents nature as a symbol of the Supreme Being, yet emphasizes that the visible, material world does not represent the ultimate reality. The poem's lines :

'Rangheen yeh gagan nayan ka
rang liye hai,
Roopteen yeh sapna drishti ka
roop piye hai,
Yeh prateeti hai maatra, param
anubhooti nahi hai,
Jo vibhuti hai swayam, apekshit
bhooti nahi hai!'
(This colorless sky holds the
color of the eyes,
This formless dream drinks the
shape of the vision,
This is mere belief, not the
ultimate experience,
That which is the essence does
not need to exist!)

express the metaphysical idea that the natural world is an illusion, and the ultimate truth of the divine is beyond human perception. Sethia suggests that the physical universe, though splendid and beautiful, is not the final reality but a manifestation or reflection of something much more profound. The poem speaks to the limits of human understanding and the idea that what we see is only an approximation of the divine essence.

Similarly, Wordsworth's *Ode: Intimations of Immortality* deals with the limitations of human perception, especially regarding our connection to a higher, spiritual reality. The poem mourns the loss of the child's innate sense of wonder and divine connection as they grow older, encapsulating Wordsworth's belief that humans are born with an intuitive understanding of the spiritual world, which fades with age. He writes:

'There hath passed away a glory
from the earth.' and
'Our birth is but a sleep and a
forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our
life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.'

These lines reflect the idea that the earthly world only partially reveals the higher, eternal truth. Like Sethia, Wordsworth presents nature as a shadow of a deeper, spiritual reality, suggesting that our material experiences are not the whole picture but part of a larger, unseen framework. Both poets share the view that true knowledge transcends what we perceive in nature.

Illusion vs. Reality :

Sethia's concept of the material world as an illusion, as seen in his use of the term 'maya', parallels Wordsworth's suggestion that our perception of nature becomes clouded as we age. In *Vibhuti*, Sethia stresses that what we perceive in the physical world is mere belief, not the true experience of divinity:

'Yeh prateeti hai maatra, param
anubhooti nahi hai'

(This is mere belief, not the ultimate experience.)

In other words, what the senses tell us is insufficient to grasp the deeper truths of existence. This resonates with Wordsworth's reflection in *Intimations of Immortality*, where he laments that the clear vision of childhood, which can sense the divine in nature, fades as the individual becomes more immersed in the mundane world of adulthood:

'Whither is fled the visionary gleam?

Where is it now, the glory and the dream?'

Here, Wordsworth is echoing the idea that adulthood brings a narrowing of spiritual perception, where the material world overtakes the sense of the transcendent. Both poets deal with the idea that the visible world only hints at a greater reality, and true understanding requires a sense of detachment or transcendence from the merely physical.

The Role of Memory and Reflection :

One key difference lies in how each poet addresses the role of memory and reflection in achieving spiritual awareness. For Sethia, *Vibhuti* is not just about detachment but a realization that divine essence (or the Supreme Being) exists independently of worldly forms. He implies that only through spiritual insight one can understand the divine, which is beyond any form or color that we can perceive.

In contrast, Wordsworth places a great emphasis on memory and reflection as tools for recapturing the lost connection to the divine. In *Intimations of Immortality*, memory serves as a bridge to past spiritual awareness. Wordsworth believes that by recalling the sense of wonder we had as

children, we can regain a glimpse of the divine. He writes:

'Though nothing can bring back the hour

Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;

We will grieve not, rather find

Strength in what remains behind.'

Here, memory becomes an active tool for reconciling the physical world with the higher spiritual reality. For Wordsworth, while the perception of divine truths fades with age, it can still be accessed through reflection and introspection, which contrasts with Sethia's view of transcending the material world altogether for true spiritual understanding.

Universal vs. Cultural Specificity :

While both Sethia and Wordsworth explore the tension between perception and reality, their cultural contexts lead them to different treatments of the theme. Sethia's *Vibhuti* reflects an Indian worldview influenced by the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta, where the material world is considered an illusion, and the ultimate goal is to realize the oneness of the self with the Supreme Being. Sethia's poem hints at the impermanence of material forms and the futility of attaching oneself to them, much like the Hindu belief in 'moksha' (liberation from the cycle of life and death).

Wordsworth, shaped by the Western Romantic tradition, finds in nature not an illusion but a pathway to moral and spiritual wisdom. His reflections on childhood's lost connection to nature, and his attempt to recover that connection through memory and introspection, reflect the Romantic ideal of nature as a source of truth and beauty, offering solace in an increasingly

industrial and alienated world.

Kanhaiyalal Sethia's *Vibhuti* and William Wordsworth's *Ode: Intimations of Immortality* offer rich ground for comparative ecocriticism, as both poets contend with the relationship between nature, human perception, and the divine. Though their cultural frameworks differ—Sethia working within Indian metaphysical traditions and Wordsworth within the Romantic movement—they share a deep concern with the limits of material perception and the need to look beyond nature for deeper truths. Sethia's idea of nature as 'maya' and Wordsworth's reflection on the fading connection to the divine through nature both suggest that what we see in the physical world is only a shadow of greater spiritual realities. Ultimately, their works contribute to a cross-cultural understanding of ecocriticism, where the natural world serves both as a source of illusion and as a pathway to the divine, depending on how one perceives and engages with it. Through this comparison, we see that while the cultural lenses differ, the fundamental questions about nature, reality, and spirituality remain universal.

To explore the connection between nature, consciousness and the transcendental Kanhaiyalal Sethia's *Chiti-Kshiti* (Consciousness and Earth) can draw parallels to the poem of William Wordsworth's *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*. While Sethia's *Chiti-Kshiti* delves into the metaphysical relationship between the earth (kshiti) and consciousness (chiti), Wordsworth's *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey* reflects on the powerful spiritual and emotional connection between the self and nature. Both poets approach the natural world not merely as an external reality

but as a manifestation of deeper, transcendent truths.

Nature as a Metaphysical Reality :

Sethia's *Chiti-Kshiti* establishes the idea that the earth (kshiti) and consciousness (chiti) are intertwined yet exist in a state of non-duality. The poem begins:

‘Chiti Kshiti hai Advait, Dvait-
may keval unka darshan’

(Consciousness and earth are
non-dual, duality exists only in
perception.)

Here, Sethia is emphasizing a fundamental philosophical concept from Indian thought: the unity of consciousness and the physical world. He highlights that duality—the separation between self and nature—is a product of human perception, not an ultimate truth. This notion of non-duality reflects the Advaita Vedanta philosophy, which asserts that all apparent differences in the world are illusions, and true understanding arises when one perceives the underlying oneness.

In *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth also emphasizes the metaphysical aspects of nature. He writes:

‘And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with
the joy

Of elevated thoughts; a sense
sublime

Of something far more deeply
interfused,

Whose dwelling is the light of
setting suns,

And the round ocean and the
living air,

And the blue sky, and in the mind
of man.'

Here, Wordsworth speaks of a 'presence' in nature that goes beyond mere physicality. This 'sense sublime' that pervades the natural world is, like in Sethia's poem, not separate from human consciousness. Wordsworth suggests that nature is imbued with a spiritual force, an unseen, universal energy that connects all living things. Both poets explore the spiritual dimension of nature, emphasizing that the material world holds a divine or cosmic truth that can be grasped through heightened awareness.

The Unity of Form and Formlessness :

Kanhaiyalal Sethia's poem *Chiti-Kshiti* can be interpreted as the interconnectedness between the material world (nature) and the spiritual or unseen forces that animate it. The lines:

'Roop Aroop nahi pratidvandi
bandha bimb se darpan,'

(Form and formlessness are
not rivals, bound as reflection to
mirror.)

highlight the coexistence of the physical and the metaphysical. Form and formlessness are not in opposition, but rather mirror each other, creating an interconnected reality. This idea emphasizes that the external, visible world (form) is a reflection of the inner, unseen consciousness (formlessness).

Wordsworth also explores this idea of form and formlessness in *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*. He meditates on the visible beauty of the natural landscape but also on the deeper, spiritual meaning that lies beyond mere appearance:

'Therefore, am I still

A lover of the meadows and the
woods,

And mountains; and of all that we
behold

From this green earth; of all the
mighty world

Of eye, and ear, -both what they
half create,

And what perceive; well pleased
to recognize

In nature and the language of the
sense,

The anchor of my purest
thoughts, the nurse,

The guide, the guardian of my
heart, and soul

Of all my moral being.'

Wordsworth suggests that what we 'half create, and what perceive' implies a dual process of interpreting nature: the physical form (the mountains, woods, and rivers) provides the sensory experience, but it is the formless, the spiritual and emotional resonance, that gives it meaning. Nature, in his view, is a moral and spiritual guide that transcends its physical form. Sethia's view of form and formlessness not as opposites but as reflections also resonates with Wordsworth's sense of nature's deeper, moral and spiritual role.

Interconnection Between Consciousness and Earth :

The unity of consciousness and the earth in *Chiti-kshiti* is essential to understanding the poem's ecocritical dimension. Sethia's line:

'Satya Shivam hai, Satya Sundaram,
sangya swayam visheshan,'

(Truth is auspicious, truth is beauty;
both name and attribute are one.)

suggests that truth, beauty and divinity are all inherent in both consciousness and the earth. There is no separation between them; the earth is as much a part of the divine truth as consciousness. This aligns with an ecocritical perspective that views nature not as separate from humanity but as an integral part of a unified whole.

In Wordsworth's *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*, the speaker also sees the natural world as a source of moral and spiritual wisdom, something that shapes human consciousness and is deeply intertwined with it. He writes:

‘For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the
hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing
oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of
ample power
To chasten and subdue.’

Here, Wordsworth acknowledges that nature is not just a backdrop to human life but is interwoven with human experience, offering solace, reflection and moral guidance. The ‘still, sad music of humanity’ is a reflection of the interconnectedness between human consciousness and the natural world. Both Sethia and Wordsworth view nature as a reflection of inner truths and as a partner in shaping human consciousness.

Ecocritical Dimensions: Cross-Cultural Perspectives :

The ecological consciousness in both *Chiti-kshiti* and *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey* offers a

valuable cross-cultural perspective on ecocriticism. Sethia, writing from an Indian philosophical standpoint, emphasizes the indivisibility of nature and the self, rooted in non-duality and the interconnectedness of all existence. In contrast, Wordsworth, influenced by the Romantic movement, focuses on nature as a source of spiritual guidance and personal growth. However, despite these cultural differences, both poets share a deep respect for nature's power to reveal hidden truths and influence human consciousness. In ecocritical terms, both recognize nature's role not merely as a resource to be used or an aesthetic backdrop, but as an essential, living force that shapes human identity and moral understanding.

In *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth suggests that the natural world plays a formative role in human consciousness, reflecting the broader Romantic concern with nature's moral and spiritual influence. Similarly, Sethia's *Chiti-kshiti* conveys the Indian idea that the earth is not merely a physical entity but a manifestation of the divine consciousness, an idea that aligns with the ecocritical focus on understanding nature as a living, interconnected system.

V. Conclusion: The Universality of Ecological Consciousness :

In conclusion, the comparative study of Kanhaiyalal Sethia and William Wordsworth offers a profound insight into how ecocritical themes transcend cultural and geographical boundaries. Both poets, though rooted in distinct cultural milieus, engage with nature as a living, breathing entity, with Sethia emphasizing the spiritual connection between humans and the environment and Wordsworth focusing on the emotional and aesthetic relationship with the natural world. This analysis adds to the

growing body of ecocriticism by exploring cross-cultural dialogues on nature, and how literature can serve as a powerful medium for ecological reflection and advocacy. Additionally, this research can inspire interdisciplinary approaches, combining literary analysis with environmental science, philosophy, and cultural studies to address the ongoing environmental crises through the lens of literature. Ultimately, this study not only enriches the literary discourse but also contributes to the global conversation on environmental sustainability and the role of the humanities in addressing ecological challenges.

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Beyond the Blindfold : Individual's Faith and Enlightenment in Nadeem Aslam's *The Blind Man's Garden*

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Introduction :

Nadeem Aslam is renowned for his evocative, heart-breaking stories and his deep commitment with the social, political, and cultural intricacies of life in South Asia, predominantly in Pakistan. His works often explore themes such as identity, migration, loss, faith, and the impact of war and political turbulence. **Season of the Rainbirds (1993)**, *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004), **The Wasted Vigil (2008)**, *The Blind Man's Garden* (2013) and *The Golden Legend* (2017) are some of his prominent works. In *The Blind Man's Garden*, Aslam ventures on a realistic portrayal of the pitiful truths, treacherous acts, and outrageous conditions tormenting Afghanistan and Pakistan, where life and honour are sadly slacken off. Conversely his writings go beyond the argumentative topic. His prose pours like a river of allegories and vivid imagery and it reflects in his opening lines, "wounds are said to emit light under certain conditions –touch them and the brightness will stay on hands– and as the

candles burn Rohan thinks of each flame as an injury somewhere in the house" (Aslam, 2014, p.5). Umashankar, in her review disclosures the alarming symbolism of the bird snares set in the trees of Rohan's garden without his permission. It not only forecasts the fates of many of the characters but is a lasting allegory of humans caught in the hazardous state of affairs. She further puts forward that the reader's path will be littered with radiant images at every turn and he risks missing them in the blink of an eye. (Umashankar, 2013)

The Blind Man's Garden is an emotional and traumatic fiction set in the aftermath of 9/11, discovering the distressing effect of war and religious extremism on individuals and communities in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The story spins around two friends, Jeo and Mikal, who embark on a journey to Afghanistan with the intention of providing service for those wounded in the war. However, their philanthropic

operation takes a dark turn as they are caught in the crossfire of the intensifying violence and becomes entwined with the Taliban. As a thought-provoking novel, it has numerous themes like war, trauma, migration, familial bonds, women's struggles, friendship, love and hope. Out of all these, faith and spirituality is one major theme that accentuates the transformative power of positivity to individuals in despair.

Religion, spirituality and faith are interlinked to each other. In any nation, People rely on their own faith and spirituality regard-less of any religion they abide. The setting of the novel takes place in Pakistan and Afghanistan where almost all the people follow Islam and its principles. As a Pakistani land, majority of the individuals are Muslims. Muslims pray five times a day. They are very pious and are adherent to their religious oaths and chastisements. Almost all the character's personal beliefs, suspicions, brawls, and transformations in the face of challenging circumstance highlight the internal, subjective heights of religious experience. They are self-proclaimed vigorously with their own religious views irrespective of following any religion of their faith. The majorities as well as the minorities have their own level of perceiving spirituality to enlighten their souls. "Religious dogma refers to the established beliefs and doctrines that are held as authoritative and essential within a religious tradition. These doctrines often dictate what is considered true or false within the faith, shaping the moral and ethical framework for its followers" (Fiveable).

The Erosion of Religious Dogma and the search for individual meaning can be analysed through each of the characters

faith and beleifs. Rohan believes in Islam and its aphorisms. He intensely trusts in the concepts of Paradise, Purgatory and Hell. Unlike others, who may not dwell on the afterlife, Rohan reads Koran and prays for the repose of Sofia's soul. He believes that his act of pre-dawn prayer will make her enter Paradise. He is a disciplinarian strictly enforcing religious practices in his family. His faith and spirituality is seen as a major force in building his confidence despite the country's political and economic instability. Rohan's firm belief in Islamic tradition commands that marriage to an apostate is illegitimate. He longs to make his wife adhere to his Muslim faith in marriage. He desperately wants Sofia to embrace his words. He believes that divine intervention will one day lead her to become a devout Muslim like him.

In contrast to Rohan, Sofia's journey leads her towards apostasy, losing her faith in the principles of Islam. Even in her final moments, Rohan refuses to accept her lack of faith, adhering to his belief that she will face eternal damnation. Being aware of her mental state, he remains resolute in his principles. In Pakistani society, being labelled an apostate carries severe consequences, even the threat of death. Sofia keeps her true beliefs hidden from the public eye, a necessary precaution for her safety and well-being. She confides in Rohan, saying, "I will continue to pretend for the sake of appearances and for our safety. But I have to share with you the fact that I am no longer a believer" (Aslam, 2014, p.41). She is forced to live a lie to protect herself while coping with her own evolving spiritual understanding. As a believer of God, Rohan's faith in God makes him move forward in life even in

crisis. Sofia trusts in no God after life. Beliefs and faith differs from one individual to another. The diversity of beliefs within the same religion is seen as Sofia says, ““God is just a name for our wonder”” (Aslam, 2014, p.44).

After Sofia’s death and in the face of rising religious extremism, Rohan terribly reflects on his own actions, regretting the day he added “Islamic” to the school’s name, a decision that now seems tragically imprudent. “Over the years it has been amended further, going from *Islamic education is the basis of law and order* to *Islam is the basis of law* and then to *Islam is the purpose of life*, while these days it says *Islam is the purpose of life and death*” (Aslam, 2014, p.31). They both abide by their own beliefs and have a positive inference of life. While their interpretations of faith differ significantly, both Rohan and Sofia maintain their own personal principles and approach life with a sense of positivity. Two conflicting ideas of faith and spirituality are seen through these characters who offer a varied standpoint of individuals living under the same roof.

Tara misses her pre-dawn prayer and so she compensates it with Qaza prayers. Tara’s justifies that God knows about the weak and never chastise in the Judgement days. Aslam mentions that Muslims trust that it is a sin to look at the husbands’ body after his death. Rohan divulges his internal commotion of longingness to see Sofia’s face before she is buried. He states ““It is always better to begin atoning for them as soon as possible. That way we won’t have to fear the consequences in the grave and later on Judgement Day”” (Aslam, 2014, p.96). Later, Rohan doubts his own spirituality when Naheed atones for Jeo

and regrets for the same. In her article A Critique of the Misuse of Religious Discourse in South-Asia in Aslam’s *The Golden Legend* mentions,

Religion has been one of the most powerful discourses or meta-narratives which direct human actions and behaviour. But extremists start using it as a tool in order to maintain their own hegemony to blight the peace of the world for their own benefits. Pakistan is a country where religious sensibilities are being (mis)used in order to sabotage the social space. (Ifzal, Tabassum, & Murtaza, 2021, p.132)

Jeo is influenced psychologically by Rohan’s religious insights. He donates a few drops of blood for calligraphy in the Koran. He was full of pride doing this for God. After Jeo’s death, a ruby is found in his stomach and the cleric believes that the calligraphy of his Koran had appeared as a jewel within him. Jeo epitomizes a pious Muslim, illuminating how individuals often internalize their faith from a young age, influencing their perspectives and actions in profound ways. Ahmed burns his hands at the age of five when he is misinformed that the burning bag contains Koranic pages. He sturdily safeguards it at the cost of risking his own life. Ahmed’s procession of his own faith eases his pain and makes it a pleasurable one. The psychosomatic thought of doing anything for God overlooks the reality of enduring the pain in his burned hands. “There one day he was told that the bag thrown onto the fire contained money and toys and he had watched it burn, but when he was told that the bag was in fact full of Koranic pages, Ahmed had burnt his hands trying to retrieve it, carrying the scars and the name into adulthood”(Aslam, 2014, p.30).

Maslow's theory has two concepts, the concept of self-actualization and self-transcendence. Lorry M. King, mentions

Self-actualization is a process of becoming the most authentic version of oneself, driven by intrinsic motivation and characterized by a robust value-based system. It is the pursuit of personal growth, achievement and the realization of one's inherent capabilities. In contrast, self-transcendence extends beyond the self-focused nature of self-actualization. Self-transcendence involves a sense of connection to something greater and is marked by a shift from personal concerns to higher, other-focused goals. (King, 2024).

Ahmed and Jeo's actions set examples for self-transcendence, where they move beyond their own basic needs and desires to connect with something superior. For Ahmed, burning his hands could be an attempt to go beyond personal comfort to line up with a higher spiritual calling, seeking self-actualization through strong religious devotion. For Jeo, giving his blood could be seen as an act of self-transcendence, where he is prioritizing the calligraphy as a symbol of faith over his own physical safety. In both cases, individuals struggle for spiritual achievement, not just for substantial or personal advantage. They may possibly be chasing a sense of personal growth through religious or spiritual sacrifice, reflecting the highest form of personal satisfaction in Maslow's model.

A substantial character of intense faith is Father Mede who brings together both Muslims and Christians in a linear way. In a Muslim land, he never enforces any Christian notions. As a Christian, his religious spirituality is obvious through his school and also by the descriptions made in the arch. His Muslim friends appreciate

him as a well-wisher in their hard times. A Muslim woman asks Father Mede "You are so good, how can you be a Christian? Why won't you convert to Islam?" She said she didn't want him to burn in Hell, and he had asked her to pray for his salvation" (Aslam, 2014, p.200). He becomes a sacrificial victim in the hands of the jihad's of Ardent Spirit, who plan to immolate him to interest the Western media's attention. This underlines the endangerments met by religious minorities in the region.

Father Mede exemplifies Western values of education and lenience, which are endangered by the rise of extremism. Father Mede connects the Muslim names as that of Mikal to the Angel Michael in the Bible. Aslam connects both the angels and projects the faith and spirituality of both the religions through these characters. Mikal is an Angel with emerald-green wings covered with saffron-coloured hairs. He is believed to be the Angel of Mercy. He serves as a bridge in connecting the humans with God. His duty is to please God in forgiving the sins of the people. "The Chief of the Order of Virtues and the Chief of Archangels, he is also the Prince of the Divine Presence, the Prince of Light and the Prince of God. He is the Angel of Repentance, Mercy and Righteousness, the Guardian of Peace and the Angel of Earth, and the patron of Policemen and soldiers" (Aslam, 2014, p.202). This shows the fondness of Afghanis in spirituality and the strong faith in their own religion. His character highlights the clash of cultures and religions revealing the vulnerability of religious minorities to extremism. His death is a distressing prompt of the human cost of conflict and the fragility of harmony in the region.

Conclusion :

Blindfold is a symbolic representation of all the characters' limited perspectives, societal restrictions and their helplessness to perceive the consequences of their actions as well as the intricacies of their faith. It entails a journey of discovery, moving past ignorance or inflexible ideas. *Aslam* suggests that true spirituality lies not in blind observance to belief, but in the daring and often painful process of enquiring, pursuing, and struggling to connect with something larger than oneself, even amongst commotion and dejection. It is in this personal journey, rather than unbending devotion to religious structures, that Aslam locates the prospective for resilience, hope, and eventually, a deeper understanding of the human condition.

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समाज की वास्तविकता को चित्रित करता : मुझे पहचानो

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हरिद्वार, उत्तराखण्ड

सती प्रथा प्राचीन काल से ही चली आ रही है। भारत में सती-प्रथा कब प्रारम्भ हुई यह विषय बहुत विवादास्पद है। इस अमानवीय परंपरा के पीछे मूल कारक है 'सांस्कृतिक गौरव'। मुझे पहचानों उपन्यास समाज में महिलाओं पर होने वाले अत्याचार को चित्रित करता है। राजा राममोहन राय की भाभी आलोक मंजरी पर सती-प्रथा को लेकर हुए अत्याचार को केन्द्र में रखकर लिखा गया है यह उपन्यास। प्राचीन काल में लोगों का विश्वास था कि मृत्यु के बाद परलोक में भी मानव का अस्तित्व बना रहता है। इसी विश्वास के कारण ही सती-प्रथा का उदय होता है। सती-प्रथा में 'सती' शब्द का अर्थ है - अमर अथवा सत्य पर स्थिर रहने वाली स्त्री जो अपने पति से मृत्यु के उपरांत भी सम्बन्ध विच्छेद नहीं करती। पुराणों में सती-प्रथा के अनेक प्रसंग विद्यमान हैं। बृहत् संहिता के अनुसार - "विधवा के लिए सती होना श्रेयस्कर है।"¹ बृहत् संहिता में एक विधवा स्त्री का सती होना सबसे बड़ा धर्म का कार्य है। कृत्यकल्पतरु में ब्रह्मपुराण का उदाहरण देखिये - "पति की मृत्यु पर सती स्त्रियों की दूसरी गति नहीं और मर्त्य वियोग से उत्पन्न दाह का दूसरा कोई शमन नहीं है।"² सती-प्रथा का एक प्रसंग हमें द्वापर युग में दिखायी

देता है - "कृष्ण के पिता वासुदेव की मृत्यु होने पर उनकी चार पत्नियों देवकी, मुद्रा, रोहणी और मदिरा से सहमरण किया था।"³ लेकिन लेखक की दृष्टि में सती-प्रथा जघन्य अपराध है। स्त्री सती होकर आत्महत्या करती है और समाज उसे ऐसा करने के लिए मजबूर करता है।

लेखक ने उपन्यास में अभिव्यक्त किया है - "सोचिए क्योंकि आप मनुष्य है सोच सकते हैं पशु नहीं सोच सकते यह यौन शुचिता, गर्भ शुचिता या रक्त शुचिता से भी किंचित जुड़ती है, मगर उसके लिए स्त्रियाँ ही क्यों दोषी मान लिए जाए? यह बातें सिर्फ हिन्दू नहीं, मुस्लिम, सिख, ईसाई, सब पर लागू होती है। ईश्वर या प्रकृति के सिरजी सृष्टि में कोई किसी का गुलाम नहीं है, फिर यह डायन, यह माँब लिंगिंग, यह ऑनरकिलिंग जैसे बर्बर हुड़दंग क्यों, जिसका शिकार औरत ही होती है, क्या आप उस पर सती का मूल्य कैसे ला सकते हैं जो आप खुद नहीं कर सकते। आज में हाथ जोड़कर अर्ज करता हूँ आग से मत खेलिए आग में औरतों को मत झोंकिए।"⁴ सती-प्रथा अमानुषिक, क्रूर और अत्यंत हिंसक प्रथा है। यह प्रथा समाज में कलंक है।

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‘मुझे पहचानो’ में लेखक ने कंठा नामक रियासत की स्थिति अजयगढ़ और विजयगढ़ के बीच बताई गई है। कंठा रत्नापट्टी के रूप में प्रसिद्ध है। रत्नापट्टी यानी रत्न की मरीचिका। इस पट्टी के विषय में यह मिथ्या प्रचलित है कि यह खान रत्न, हीरों, जवाहरत से भरी हुई है जो दूर-दूर के क्षेत्र के लोगों को खूब लुभाता है। खासकर भाग्यवादियों को जो भगवान भरासे बिना मेहनत किए अमीर बनने का ख्वाब देखते हैं। परन्तु आज तक कभी किसी को कोई रत्न मिला नहीं। रत्नापट्टी मिथकों का बाजार है। मिथकों के मूलतः दो रूप दिखते हैं - एक रूप बेहद डरावना और दूसरा उतना ही आश्चर्यजनक, आकर्षक प्रतीत होता है।

स्त्रियों के शोषण पर प्रकाश डालते हुए लेखक लिखते हैं। सावित्री कुँवर का विवाह उसके खिलाफ जबरन उदय प्रताप से किया जाता है। सावित्री कुँवर एक पढ़ी-लिखी दलित स्त्री थी। वह बहुत सुशील और रूपवती महिला थी। सावित्री कुँवर अपने स्कूल में झाँसी की रानी बना करती थी। युवा अवस्था में राय साहब के छोटे भाई कुदृष्टि का शिकार होती है। राय साहब से शादी न होने का दूसरा विकल्प था रेप। सावित्री कुँवर का पति दिन-रात उसका शारीरिक शोषण करता, उसे परेशान करता, नोचता, खोचता व उसे परेशान करता था। स्त्रियों के साथ हिंसा करने का मुख्य कारण पुरुष वर्ग के विचारों में अस्पष्टता और धिनौनापन है जो सामाजिक मूल्यों पर कुठाराघात करते हैं। स्त्रियों पर हिंसा करना एक अमानवीय और दानवत्व का प्रतीक है। वर्तमान भौतिकवादी युग में मानव के मन में देवत्व के स्थान पर दानवत्व के बीज अंकुरित हो गए हैं। इसलिए पुरुष वर्ग ने महिलाओं को केवल एक भोग्या वस्तु समझा है।

अंधविश्वास ने पुरुष वर्ग को अंधा और चेतनाहीन बना दिया है। तर्क और विवेक का प्रयोग किये बिना

ही समाज महिलाओं को बलपूर्वक जलती चिता में बैठने के लिए बाध्य कर देते थे। उपन्यासकार इस भयावह दृश्य का चित्रण करते हुए लिखते हैं कि - “उसे पकड़ कर कुछ पिलाया गया। कुछ मुँह में गया कुछ कपड़ों पर। ढोल नगाड़े, घरी-घंट, तुरही पता नहीं कैसी-कैसी आवाज़ें! मनहूसियत और आतंक से भरा दिन गड़गड़ाते बादल और उन्मत्त धर्मार्थी भीड़। उसे पता नहीं चला रहा था कि उसे हाँक कर कहाँ कर कहाँ ले जा रहे थे लोग। वह गिरती-पड़ती फिर सम्भाल ली जाती और एक तरह से भीड़ के धक्के से आगे ठेल दी जाती। चिता तक यह क्रिया जारी रही।”⁵ महिलाओं का जिन्दा आग में जलना कितना भयावह होता होगा। इसकी कल्पना मात्र से शरीर के रोंगटे खड़े हो जाते हैं। वे महिलायें जो महत्वकांक्षा और क्षणिक आवेगों के कारण सती होने का निश्चय कर घोषणा कर देती थी, वे प्रायः अग्नि की भयंकरता को देखकर पीछे हटने की कोशिश करती थी। लेकिन उस समय तक काफी देर हो चुकी होती थी, जिसे अब रोकना नामुमकिन होता था। सती-प्रथा हिन्दू धर्म में प्रचलित एक कुरीति है। रानी साहिबा ने पहली बार भेद भरे अंदाज में भेद खोला। कभी भी कुलदेवी कुलीन नहीं थी। “अरे ई हमरी तुमरी जैसी नहीं थीं, कौनो नीच जात थी लेकिन उसकी सुंदरता पर लुभाय गए उठवा लाए।”⁶ मगर सावित्री ने राय साहब से शादी अधिकारों की शर्तों पर कि जब तक रही तब तक रियासत की तरक्की होती रही जनता खुश थी। मगर महल के अन्दर की राजनीति और पुरुष सत्ता का शिकार हो गई। कोई दलित ब्राह्मण के महल में रहकर बराबरी का हक चाहे। यह ब्राह्मण के लिए शान के खिलाफ था।

प्रथा में महिलाओं का जीवित बच जाना असम्भव होता था। अगर कोई किसी प्रकार से जीवित बच जाती तो उसे समाज द्वारा दोबारा अग्निदाह करने के

लिए मजबूर किया जाता था। लेकिन 'सावित्री कुंवर' संयोग से आंधी-पानी की वजह से बच गयी। कथाकार संजीव इस पर प्रकाश डालते हुए कहते हैं कि - "हवा पागलों सी घूम गई और तभी उन्मत्त नारों के बीच बगल का पीपल अर्ध कर गिरा जलती चिता पर और सावित्री उछाल दी गयी। आकाश से टूटी चिरी ने जैसे लोक लिया सावित्री को। शायद हुआ कुछ दूसरी तरह से हो, वह होश में कहां थी।" साहित्यकार ने सती-प्रथा का मार्मिक वर्णन करते हुए कहा है कि वह दृश्य हृदय को झंझोर देता है। लेखक उपन्यास के माध्यम से हमें मध्यकाल के मंदिर और रियासत की सत्ता याद दिलाता है जहाँ मुगलों का शासन हुआ करता था। धार्मिक पाखंड और अंधविश्वास में फंसाकर मनुष्य को पहले गुमराह किया जाता और फिर उसका शोषण किया जाता। मुगल सम्राट अकबर सती-प्रथा के खिलाफ थे। सन् 1582 में सती-प्रथा पर रोक के लिए अकबर ने एक आदेश जारी किया। जिसमें कहा गया था कि मुगल साम्राज्य में महिलाओं को जलाने की अनुमति नहीं देनी चाहिए।

18वीं शताब्दी में भी ब्रिटिश अधिकारियों में इसे प्रतिबंधित करने का प्रयास किया, लेकिन यह प्रयास भी सफल नहीं हुआ। ब्रह्म समाज के संस्थापक राजा राममोहन राय ने अपना धर्मयुद्ध प्रारम्भ किया और काफी हद तक लोगों को राजी किया। उनके अथक प्रयासों का फल तब मिला जब भारत में तत्कालीन गवर्नर जनरल लॉर्ड विलियम बेंटिक ने सती-प्रथा 1829 में बंगाल सती विनियम के पारित करने पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया। भारत में जब तक सती-प्रथा को अवांछित नहीं समझा जाता था यह सामाजिक समस्या नहीं थी। परन्तु 4 सितम्बर, 1987 को राजस्थान के सीकर जिले में रूपकुंवर अपने पति के साथ सती हो गयी। इस अमानवीय घटना के बाद "राजस्थान सरकार ने फरवरी 1988 में सती प्रथा

के विरुद्ध एक कानून बनाया जिसके तहत किसी विवाहित स्त्री को सती होने के लिए बाध्य करने वाले को सजा देने का प्रावधान है।" महिलाओं के प्रति हिंसा समाज और राष्ट्र के लिए एक चिंता का विषय है।

सती-प्रथा के प्रचलन ने स्त्रियों की स्थिति को बहुत गिरा दिया। उपन्यास में लेखक ने दुबे के चरित्र को बेहद दृढ़ात्मक और बुद्धिमत्ता से पूर्ण दिखाया है जो समयानुसार बदलता रहता है "दुबे का स्वर चंग पर चढ़ा, भारत का हीरा कोहिनूर! क्या-क्या कर नहीं टूटा उसके धारण करने वालों पर, शाहजहाँ के अंतिम दिनों को याद करें, याद करें अहमद शाह अब्दाली, रणजीत सिंह को। रानी एलिजाबेथ द्वितीय ने भी मुकुट में रखवा दिया, खुद नहीं रखा। जब से कोहिनूर इंग्लैंड का वह साम्राज्य जहाँ कहते हैं सूर्य की अस्त नहीं होता, सिकुड़ते-सिकुड़ते सिकुड़ कर चीनिया बादाम भर रह गया।" हालांकि आजकल विचारधाराओं ने अन्दर के खोखले पन्ने को ढूँढ लिया और अवसर में बदल दिया। मगर कुछ लोग आज भी बचे हैं जो पूरी ताकत से संघर्ष कर रहे हैं। इस संघर्ष का प्रतीक है सावित्री कुंवर, मनोज सिंह और अनमोल। दूसरी तरफ राय साहब की पत्नी सती सावित्री की पूजा तो करती थी, मगर छिनरिया और गुजरिया कहकर ही याद करती थी। एक स्त्री होते हुए भी दूसरी निम्न जाति की स्त्री के प्रति नफरत देखी जा सकती है। एक स्त्री ही स्त्री की दुश्मन होती है।

निष्कर्ष :

यह कहा जा सकता है कि सती-प्रथा एक अमानवीय, हिंसक प्रथा है, जो समाज में महिलाओं के अधिकारों को नष्ट करती है। लेखक ने उपन्यास के माध्यम से स्त्रियों में चेतना जगाने का कार्य किया है। साहित्यकार द्वारा अन्धविश्वास के प्रति समाज को जागरूक करना, समाज में बढ़ रही वेश्यावृत्ति के

प्रति अशक्त बनाना, स्त्री शोषण के विरूद्ध महिलाओं का जागरूक करना 'मुझे पहचानो' उपन्यास का मुख्य उद्देश्य है।

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Tradition, Modernity and Womanhood : A Cultural Analysis of Shobhaa De's Sisters

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Introduction :

In the field of gender issues, women's captivity and suffering have long been controversial topics. To understand why women are objectified, it is imperative to look into the processes involved in objectification's creation and implementation. It is a clear landscape of hierarchy that always brands up the well-built male empire which banishes the significance of women. One is of the hierarchical household rituals, where women are not allowed to be open, honest, or required to follow and only men are entitled. Women are not afforded the same access to political, educational, and economic opportunities as men at the societal level. As time goes on, it becomes clear how cultural oppression limits women's physical and mental potential, especially at home. Compared to economic exploitation-which we mistakenly think is the most common component-this is far more dehumanizing. Therefore, the main goal of this design is to maintain the patriarchal system by denying subjectivity and objectifying women. The denial of subjectivity in all

its forms is intimately associated with gender and gendering.

Since most of her heroines are educated upper-class women who struggle with self-identity, Shobhaa De has shown in her works that emotional and personal space is more important for women than financial freedom. In pursuit of self-identity, mental stability, and sexual comfort, they face gender problems in private, despite their comfortable economic independence. The main belief is that gender is socially constructed. It is a reflection of many different things, including age, physical ability, social class, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation. However, it is insisted to realize the idiosyncrasy of every individual.

Shobhaa De attempts to depict human relations via the lenses of gender, desires, and void in her paintings. As a writer, she has not only brought attention to the way gender is constructed in society, but she has also portrayed the efforts of her female heroines to overcome these barriers. During

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their rebellious journey, they sought to connect with their bodies, explored their sexuality, and stood up for themselves. Rather of generalizing about women and their attributes, they would rather be the embodiment of difference.

The primary focus of Shobhaa De's writing is to pinpoint the societies, cultures and traditional groups within those societies that place women in inferior positions to the men who interact with them. Generally speaking, women are treated less favorably than men in the long-standing, traditional culture in terms of politics, effectiveness and community.

The fictions of De represent a revolt against the societal norms that denigrate women in our culture. Her women have broken free from the limitations of traditional society to establish their own standards of behavior. The structuring of each character's relationships, struggles in their personal lives, desires, and breakups in partnerships, in addition to their abnormal sexual behavior and the protagonists' voice of revolt, are all established by this same tendency.

Discussion :

As a feminist, Shobhaa De uses the novel's *Sisters* to effectively illustrate how different women are from one another and how their experiences are unique. In *Sisters*, there are two different women: Mallika (Mikki) and Alisha, her half-sister. Despite being financially independent, Mikki is an emotionally stable and seasoned woman who still yearns for independence. The latter, passionate, impressionable, youthful and unskilled, wants to exact revenge on Mikki for her father's denial. Alisha has an independent existence, yet her lack of life experience makes her special. The plot revolves with the diffe-

rences between the sisters' experiences in society, their interpersonal relationships, and how, in the end, their knowledge unites them. The sisters learn from their experiences that being a sisterhood enables them to be financially and emotionally independent.

Mallika's younger sister Alisha and Mikki were grew up in the different circumstances and faced distinct obstacles, which led to their estrangement. However, they eventually came to understand that they could continue to support each other morally in spite of their differences. After her parents pass away, Mikki, an international graduate, goes to India. There, she learns about her father's unrevealed relationship with Alisha's mother and made her half-sister.

Mikki was tasked with managing her parents' business by taking over their corporate roles. She makes an effort to handle new business with equilibrium, but ultimately she recognizes the mistakes made by the guys in her organization. One of their most vocal opponents is Ramankaka, who consistently tries to discourage her from following her career in business management as a woman.

Had you been a son your father might have taken you into his confidence from a young age and guided you properly from the beginning. But as a daughter, all he wanted for you was a good husband – that is all. My advice is – leave these serious matters to me. I am there to handle them. Trust me. I will guard your interests like a father. But you will make things difficult for yourself if you do things without consulting me. (Sisters, 30)

Obviously, her resilience restrains her obstacles from all dark ends. It is a clear evidence of her dauntless diligence when

she prefers to voice out her opinions. “Thank you for your advice, Ramankaka, I appreciate and value your words. But I’d like you to hear a few of Mine now. I can’t change my Sex, unfortunately, that is the one thing all of you will have to accept. But I can change just about everything else ... and I intend to... I don’t expect you or the others to give up your prejudices – but I want you to know that I will not let that stand in my way”. (Sisters, 30)

After her marriage, Mikki faced gender issues despite being a self-sufficient woman. It is forbidden for her to manage her company. She attempts to get her spouse to fill the need she feels in her life. However, she fails at this and succumbs to the consoling effects of alcohol because of her unwavering love for her husband. She knows that love is only a part of life, not life itself, thus she is not the kind of woman who would give her life in exchange for love. Respectability and subjectivity play equal roles in a woman’s social and personal life. Alisha, however, is independent and has grown to despise Mallika due to the schemes of those in her immediate vicinity. She frequently rebels against Mallika in an effort to define her own personality. Conversely, Mallika never wavered in her resolve to bring her half-sister back into her life. Shobhaa De has launched the tribulations with two dimensions of gender. A successful woman hits badly bearing the discourages of colleagues and clutched with the traps of in-laws’ judgement. All those illegal daughters almost sunk up into neck especially in the regards of gender.

Shobhaa De attempts to break the shell of conventional ideologies that put together into the same medium. As a consequence of civilization evolution, one

can’t measure the same set of practical pathos and predicaments which exist in the generation. Women writers who belong to different age groups cannot simply produce the precise panacea for various issues of multiple generations. Shobhaa De is a vocal author who spotlights the shades of women subjectivity as a sized rights from siege of society.

With more than twenty books to her credit, Shobhaa De is among India’s best-selling authors. She is the first Indian woman who has looked into the lives of urban women. Her literary works challenge the patriarchal culture that regards women as secondary to males or as an afterthought. Her books are full with strong, independent women who are more capable than men, who are on a quest for self-actualization, and who reject the social norms around their sexuality. Feminist activist Shobhaa De fights against women being exploited, oppressed, and turned into commodities and promotes gender equality.

In the large landscape of patriarchal society, Male need not to differentiate their personal and professional lives; instead, women must handle both. Being a young woman, Mikki has no right to enjoy herself in public after this tragic death, but she is not prepared to become a hypocrite and grieve for a long time. Mikky was developed herself into a successful star of business. But as time grows, she can’t withstand and happened to lose money unfortunately. She informs Ramankaka, the self-assured worker for her father, that she would want to meet with accountants and attorneys to learn more about the financial health of her father’s companies. There grows the action females are impotent to perform such wonders in the fields of business and all.

Though cultural constraints have historically been severe for women, Shobhaa De depicts the dissolution of the institution of marriage within the context of society, imagining complete sexual freedom with no sense of fidelity. Because a man is independent, society accepts his extramarital affairs. Men are expected to engage in cohabitation, however women are not considered socially complete enough to engage in extramarital affairs. Rather than being driven by her emotions, her desire for a sexual relationship is driven by societal expectations. Simone De Beauvoir writes: "That is, a woman is not concerned to establish her individual relationship with a chosen mate but to carry on the feminine functions in their generality; she is to have sex pleasure only in a specified form and not individualized". (p.454)

Instead of engaging in creative activities, many women submit themselves to domestic obligations and devote a significant portion of their time to repetitive and unpleasant work. Despite her devotion to her husband and marriage, Mikki feels compelled to accept the oppression of women. Even though she is a sensible and advanced lady, she does not want to be restricted to a house, but Binny, as a representation of this rigid societal structure, forbids her from working outside. Mikki's role in the book highlights the brutal reality of the patriarchal culture. It also hints at women's growing consciousness as they start to take charge and wake up from their never-ending sleep. Mikki's innate need for independence is the source of her steadfast resistance to Binny. Paradoxically, she never gives thought to a life beyond her marriage. Her ambition to be a responsible social being and an ideal wife is the moral center of the book.

For Mikki, materialistic pleasures matter nothing if she is not allowed to be who she truly is. Is wedding an institution or incarceration where female is simply a pawn to pledge. It is a harsh woman has to endure bitter aftermaths over the closure of relationship rather than man. Mikki's saved feelings become invalid with valour mindset of Binny's decision.

In reality, economic constraints no longer apply to Shobhaa De's women. They desire personal independence, and when it isn't granted to them, they rebel. They take out their anger on others by doing things that could be viewed as unethical, such breaking their promises to one another or having extramarital affairs. Mikki gains understanding of herself as a woman and a person as a result of her interaction with Binny. Mikki's transformation from a simple social butterfly to a mature lady and a caring mother figure is visible when she dedicates her time to her estranged sister. Mikki is prepared to be the ideal wife, but cold-hearted Binny only sees her as a tool. She conducts herself honestly and fairly, yet she never wants to give in to Binny's odd cravings. She is prepared to dissolve her marriage in order to get away from the antiquated beliefs, though, when the subject of her independence is raised. She is unwilling to comply with her husband's unreasonable demands. Unlike traditional women, De's woman is not subjugated to a role in reproduction or subject to male guardianship. It has long been believed that a woman has to get married in order to support her family, satiate a man's lust and take care of his house. If De's female characters do end up getting married, they will undoubtedly want to live life to the fullest. If De's female characters do end up getting married, they

will undoubtedly want to live life to the fullest. If their marriages are not working out the way they envision them, they will not pretend to live silent lives.

Alisha, one of the main characters in *Sisters*, has violated sexual conventions without suffering any negative social or moral fallout. A detailed account of her sex experiences with multiple guys is given. The minute details of sex being shown. De seems to upend the established norms in society. Shobhaa De, one of her interview in BBC says, "I don't know why there is so much noise when a woman chooses to talk about sex,"

But in today's urban setting, sex has become a rough bed where people only build long-term connections when they are in close physical proximity to one another. Women are portrayed as victims of masculine impulses in the book *Sisters*. Married Seth Hira Lal pushed his watchman's wife to undergo an abortion after raping her. Alisha, an ill-legal daughter from his mistress, Leelaben. Binny Malhotra has a mistress and kids, but after marrying Mikki, he threatens to divorce her unless she gets an abortion. Rather of providing her autonomy and a distinct personality, he would rather to make her into a stunning toy woman.

The conventional rules of society restrict a woman's capacity to portray herself as an essential partner in a sexual relationship. She's been schooled to suppress her impulses and to partake in copious amounts of sexual delights. Because of social taboos, she is unable to freely express her sexual desire while in this submissive role. Nonetheless, this set of societal standards is also the product of De's woman, who forges her own culture. Despite the fact that a woman's sexuality is a funda-

mental trait that is just as vital to her as it is to a man, society still believes that women do not always desire to be physically present. When a woman identifies as heterosexual, she ceases to be a living, self-willing being and becomes an inert human.

Conclusion :

However, they exhibit extraordinary bravery and perseverance in the face of hardship in De's tales. They refuse to surrender and acknowledge loss. Rather than exhibiting passion, they exhibit reasoning and practicality. Women's status in the home and in society was inferior to men's due to their unbridled feminine affluence. They are forced to perform all laborious housework and are not permitted to think about having fun. Mikky and Alisha of Shobhaa De, however, are independent of everyone in terms of money. They frequently impart a lesson in self-awareness in the novels. Lastly, because she is a woman, De is more sensitive to the issues and pains that affect women. She highlights a crucial fact that alerts us to the injustices and suffering experienced by women. She draws our attention to a crucial reality that highlights the injustices and suffering endured by women at the hands of their patriarchal rivals. Her books are protest books against the patriarchal Indian society that stifles women's freedom of expression and choice. Numerous artificial norms and conditions that oppress and enslave them in different ways smother them. Their marginalization, exploitation and oppression cause them to turn rebellious. Finally, reading her novels may help the readers to be narrow and widen our perspectives on the pressing problems that Indian women face while taking note of the current state of gender inequality. In order to build a more equal

society, Shobhaa De's *Sisters* presents a multifaceted picture of gender equality by highlighting the significance of empowering women and questioning patriarchal traditions.

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From Projection to Integration : Anima as an Illusion and Truth in George R. R. Martin's A Song of Ice and Fire

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Carl Jung's definition of the anima archetype constitutes the cornerstone of analytical psychology. Jungian psychology posits the existence of the anima, the feminine archetype within the male unconscious, and the animus, the masculine archetype within the female unconscious. Anima/animus, as components of the collective unconscious, "lies farther away from our personal experience" and "forms the connection between the ego and the unconscious" (Robertson, 1995, p. 193). The anima, which is often projected onto a woman, influences a man in such a way that it could lead him to be bound by his projection. In a man's unconscious state, the anima may manifest as moodiness, irrationality or other similar behaviours. Conversely, integrating with one's anima is considered essential for men to successfully achieve individuation through creativity and self-awareness, which is "the next step toward wholeness in the psyche" (Robertson, 1995, p. 194).

Given that an anima is an archetype, its presence can be observed across various cultures and regions, manifesting in myths,

legends and literature. Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom, serves as the guiding light of Odysseus, whose intellectual and protective instinct aids him in his heroic journey. Similarly, Beatrice in *The Divine Comedy* is the ultimate anima figure of Dante, and she helps lead Dante towards enlightenment. Several characters in the literature are found to be trapped in illusions projected by their anima, like Heathcliff, whose entire existence revolves around Catherine Earnshaw, with whom he clings obsessively. In *A Song of Ice and Fire* by George R. R. Martin, many male characters struggle with their unconscious feminine side, often projecting it onto female characters. Characters like Tyrion Lannister project their anima onto women like Shae, seeking love and validation, which leads to their ultimate downfall. The female characters, on the other hand, exploit the male characters through their use of sexuality, which the men could not resist.

This paper analyses how Cersei Lannister moulds Jaime Lannister's psyche, shaping his self-image, and Brienne of

Tarth's role as a catalyst for his psychological transformation, leading him towards anima integration and self-actualisation.

Jaime has one of the most interesting character arcs in *A Song of Ice and Fire*, going from being emotionally entangled with his sister to ultimately severing the ties with her, thereby positively integrating with his anima. His journey as an embodiment of the warrior archetype and as one of the seven Kingsguards is filled with his blind devotion to Cersei, his twin sister. Since childhood, his life has revolved around Cersei, who, as an anima projection in his psyche, creates within him an almost inescapable bond unconsciously. The opening line of his point-of-view chapter, "*An east wind blew through his tangled hair, as soft and fragrant as Cersei's,*" (Martin, 2011, p. 18), reinforces Jaime's pervasive connection to Cersei, highlighting the extent to which she dominates his thoughts.

Their relationship addresses a toxic dynamic, where Jaime has no choice but to surrender his personal growth and development with Cersei. According to John A. Sanford, "When the anima and animus are projected onto other people our perception of them is remarkably altered" (1980, p. 10). Jaime's identity is so entwined with Cersei's that he could not see himself apart from her with her influence on his sense of duty or even his self-worth. His ideals do not align with his knighthood or his heroic acts to save his relationship from falling apart. By allowing him to be close with her, Cersei inadvertently hinders Jaime's individuation.

Jaime's relentless need for validation from Cersei leads him to take extreme actions

like giving up on his rightful throne to be with her and the notorious attempt to kill Bran Stark, who happens to witness their incestuous relationship-justifying his deed with the infamous words, "The things I do for love" (Martin, 2011, p. 81). Cersei not only is the motivation behind Jaime's crime but also plays a pivotal role in his ultimate decline, only to be saved by Brienne. As Jung (1928/1983) explains, "The persona, the ideal picture of a man as he should be, is inwardly compensated by feminine weakness, and as the individual outwardly plays the strong man, so he becomes inwardly a woman, i.e., the anima, for it is the anima that reacts to the persona" (para. 309). As Jaime clings to his external identity of being one of the greatest swordsmen in Westeros, he fails to distinguish the disruptive actions his anima projection takes in the form of Cersei.

Only when Catelyn Stark imprisons him does Jaime meet Brienne, who is tasked with escorting him to King's Landing in exchange for Sansa and Arya Stark. As a prisoner of war, he is stripped of his power and finds himself at the mercy of a woman he perceives as unworthy of his respect. Brienne, one of the ugliest women in Westeros with very large eyes, crooked teeth, and swollen lips, idealises her knighthood and serving Renly Baratheon with honour and respect. She is the direct opposite of Jaime in that she does not know how to think politically and has an unwavering sense of duty, which Jaime lacks. He reiterates his disrespect for her by calling her a "wench," ridiculing her appearance, her strength, and her code of conduct.

On their journey, Jaime decides to shave his head bald so that no one can

recognise him bound in chains. His “golden curls floated on the surface of the water, gradually falling astern... the reflection in the water was a man he did not know... *I don't look as much like Cersei this way. She'll hate that*” (Martin, 2011, p. 23, 24). This moment marks the beginning of his transition, not just physically but symbolically, where he sheds his external image mirroring the internal transition about to happen through Brienne. As the journey unfolds between them, Jaime's perception changes about Brienne, as he can recognise within her not a mask but the true ideals of knighthood, unlike the many knights he has known. In a world of deception and betrayal, she stands as someone with stoic principles who deserves respect. Jaime sees in Brienne a stark contrast to Cersei, whose love has always entangled him in “passive comfort of obedience” (Edinger, 1992, p. 21), making her the dominant force in their relationship. Because of his deep anima projection onto Cersei, Jaime sees her as the ultimate expression of femininity, becoming obsessively loyal to Cersei.

The abduction by the Brave Companions aggravated his projected anima distortion. His capture represents a significant turning point in his psychological detachment from his former self. Jaime, who initially underestimated Brienne, begins to recognise her true strength and her resilience during this difficult period causes him to reconsider his ideas about true femininity. In the four stages of anima-Eve, Helen, Mary, and Sophia-prescribed by Jung (16: par. 361), Brienne takes the third and fourth stages in Jaime's evolution as she challenges him to confront his past and brings his ego into conscious awareness. “The less aware he is of the

feminine within him, the more likely a man is to project a primitive anima figure on the world, or to be subject to fits, moods, paranoias, hysterias” (1990, p. 87), states John P. Conger. Brienne becomes the catalyst for Jaime's anima integration as she exposes his flaws and forces him to rethink his definition of honour, though he resisted initially.

When the Brave Companions threaten to rape her, Jaime intervenes and stops them with his wit to deceive the captors into believing Brienne's worth as a ransom. Unconsciously, he starts to see her as an individual worthy of protection, which signals a shift in his integration with his anima. From his blind loyalty to Cersei, Jaime's act of protecting Brienne reflects his sense of justice and moral responsibility, which comes from a person who did not hesitate to kill a boy of seven.

Regrettably, the Brave Companions sever Jaime's sword hand, a crucial part of his identity as a knight, which he had previously taken for granted. This could be analysed as a symbolic death of his ego, as his hand represented a masculine persona, built on martial skill and sided with arrogance. With this, he has to lose his identity as a knight, forcing him to confront a world that has been cruel to people with disabilities like his brother Tyrion. Nevertheless, Jaime finds solace and hope in Brienne's companionship during his journey, as she bravely faces mockery and beatings, resolutely overcoming every obstacle.

Cersei is the externalised version of Jaime's psyche through her cunning and manipulative tendencies, which she acts out without shame because Jaime has failed

to consciously perceive his projection. She is Jaime's shadow, "an inferior, unadapted, childish and grandiose aspect of our conscious life" (Young-Eisendrath & Dawson, 2008, p. xii). After losing his sword hand, Jaime experiences an ego death, forcing him to redefine himself beyond his title as Kingslayer. After returning to King's Landing, Jaime sees Cersei as a flawed, self-serving woman who was never truly loyal to him. When she pleads in her letter to Jaime, "I need you now as I have never needed you before" (Martin, 2012, p. 211), he ignores her, symbolizing his severed anima projection and growing independence.

Before parting with Brienne, Jaime gives her Oathkeeper, his Valyrian sword, signifying his recognition of her as the epitome of true knighthood-the opposite of his past ideals. By entrusting her with finding the Stark sisters, Jaime, once known for breaking oaths, subconsciously commits to a new path- one of honour and redemption. Jaime's transformation from a man defined by loyalty to his house and prowess in battle to one who values honour and integrity beyond appearances reflects his arduous journey toward self-integration. His struggles force him to look within, reshaping his identity through conscious choice rather than external validation.

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Colonialism, Identity and Resistance : A Comparative Study of the Educational System in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Weep Not, Child* and *The River Between*

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Introduction :

In Kenya, the colonial education system with the western ideals became a significant tool to maintain the colonial power during the colonial period. But education moved out to be a double-edged sword. Though it used to impose colonial rule and made people alienate from their native traditions, it gave them the needed basic skills and knowledge to resist oppression. It was highlighted by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a prominent figure in postcolonial African literature, in his two novels such as *Weep Not, Child* and *The River Between*. By using these two novels, the author highlighted how the colonial education system shaped both the native identity and collective resistance during the colonial period. He also wanted to emphasize its dual purpose as both a means of control and source of liberation. In these novels, he criticized the colonial education system to enhance Western values while highlighting the

suppression of the native traditions. In colonial schools, students were imposed by the admiration of European culture and forgot their own cultural heritage. It led them to face the identity crisis among the colonized people. This disconnection from their native roots nourished the power of Western ideals and made people facing the difficult situations to connect with their native cultural identity. At the same time, the author revealed how the education system played a vital role during colonial rule. He showed the use of knowledge which gained from school to face the challenges of colonial injustices and fight for independence. However, education helped to inspire the new generations who wanted to get free Kenya and escape from the colonial powers. The author emphasized this vision as an important turning point to get both cultural and political freedom. The study about the role of education in colonial

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Kenya highlighted its impact on the native society. Though education was considered as a tool to control and oppress, it also became a path to get power and resist colonial rule. The author showed how education could be considered as a powerful tool to control oppression and regain the native identity through the struggles of his novel's characters. So his work continued to emphasize the discussions about the connection between power, knowledge, skills and freedom in postcolonial societies.

Objectives of the Research :

1. To highlight the dual nature of colonial education as both a tool of oppression and a means of empowerment.
2. To examine the impact of colonial education on traditional cultural values and its role in disrupting indigenous practices and community structures in the novels.
3. To compare the responses of key characters to colonial education, focusing on their struggles with cultural identity and resistance.
4. To emphasize how educational experiences influence characters' roles in social and political resistance.
5. To explore the implications for identity, cultural alienation and Kenya's postcolonial context.

Discussion :

Ngugi wa Thiong'o showed the conditions of the colonial educational system which played a vital role in cultural conflicts in his two novels such as *Weep Not, Child* and *The River Between*. The education system was introduced by Christian missionaries. It was implemented to shift the native people into the Western ideals and ignored their cultural heritage. He highli-

ghed this impact of the educational system in his prestigious work *Decolonizing the Mind*. In this work, he advocated that the colonial educational system could separate the people from their native traditions, language and cultures. It created the alienation that the native people felt towards their culture. It led to the belief that the native traditional life was less civilized and less considerate than those of the colonizers' life.

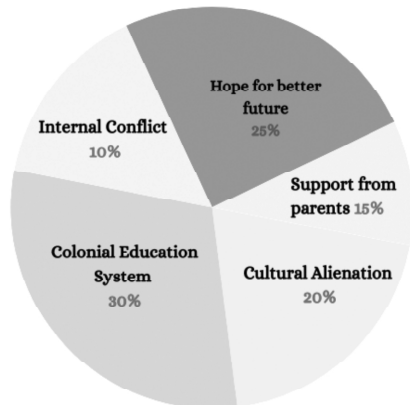
In *Weep Not, Child*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o reflected his personal experiences with the effects of the colonial education system through the character Njoroge. His life highlighted both the advantages and disadvantages of colonial education in colonial Kenya. It highlighted how this colonial system made him and his family face alienation from their native culture with the colonial power structure. He was a son of Ngotho who worked as a laborer. He grew up in the backdrop of colonial Kenya and Mau Mau Uprising. He was an ambitious and optimistic young boy. He had strong beliefs towards the transformative power of education. Njoroge hoped that education could help him to get out from poverty and oppression. So with his parents' support, he became the first child to attend the Siriana Mission School. He started his schooling with full of excitement. He also had a belief that it could give a better future for his family. Ngugi wa Thiong'o showed the thoughts and actions of Njoroge like,

Njoroge did not want to be like his father working for a white man or, worse, for an Indian. Father had said that the work was hard and had asked him to escape from the same conditions. Yes, he would. He would be different. And he would help all his brothers. Before he went to sleep he

prayed, 'Lord, let me get learning. I want to help my father and mothers. And Kamau and all my other brothers. I ask you all this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.' (Thiong'o, 1964, p. 47)

But in Njoroge's school journey, everything was heavily influenced by colonial ideas which led to lose the own culture and traditions. The teachers also insisted on using English as the primary language in school which symbolized the eradication of native language. Students were discouraged to speak their native mother tongue which led to the gradual eradication of native language and cultural identity. He found himself with the internal conflicts towards his colonial education system as a chance to get a better future and he decided to have deep connections with his native cultural roots and traditions. The education system created a division between the educated and uneducated people among the native people. Hence, Ngugi wa Thiong'o criticized the imposition of the English language and the colonial education system as a significant tool to erase the native culture, indigenous languages, culture and traditions. Here is a pie chart to show Njoroge's experience with colonial education.

Njoroge's Experience with Colonial Education in *Weep Not, Child*



The above pie chart represents the character Njoroge's experience with Colonial Education in *Weep Not, Child*. The Colonial education system (30%) plays a vital role to provide opportunities on colonial structures. Hope for a better future (25%) highlights the people's thinking towards a better future. Cultural alienation (20%) shows the traditional values. Support from parents (15%) represents those who see education as a way to liberation. Internal conflict (10%) highlights the conflicts between the realities of familial and societal expectations.

Like *Weep Not, Child*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o showed the influence of the colonial education system which became the battleground for cultural survival in his other novel *The River Between*. He highlighted colonial education as a significant tool for ideological and cultural control which emphasized its impact on the traditional life of the Gikuyu people. It also explored how Christian missionaries introduced the education which created a conflict among the native community and led to eradicate the native values. The Christian missionaries introduced Siriana Mission School with the aim to spread Christianity and Western way of thinking among the native children. So the teachers of mission school taught students western ideals and imposed the English language as a medium of instruction which led to eradicate the traditional customs, initiation rituals, cultural heritage, native language. It created a division between the Kamen and Makuyu community. In the Kamen community, people followed the traditional way of life while Makuyu people followed the Christian way of life with colonial education.

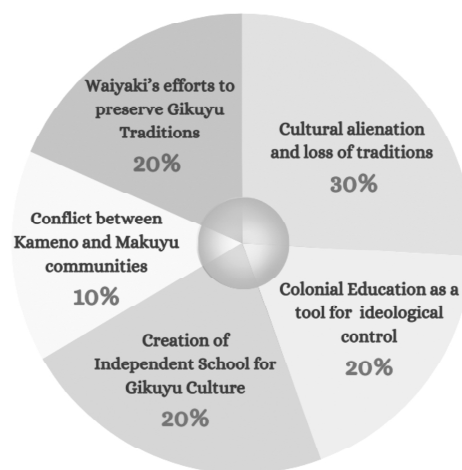
In *The River Between*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o showed the colonial education system and it highlighted its dual purpose as a vital tool for empowerment and cultural alienation through the character Waiyaki. His life reflected the complexities of colonial education within the perspectives of cultural and political identity during the Kenya's struggle. He was inspired by the vision of his father Chege. He viewed education as a significant tool to improve and develop the life of Gikuyu community. He believed that the colonial education could help to escape from poverty while also being aware of its role to ignore the native students from their native cultural heritage. Because in colonial Mission School, the teachers taught Western ideals and Christian way of life. So as a son of Kamen's elder leader, he had a responsibility to preserve the customs of the native people. Though the colonial education system brought new modern ideas, it created a conflict between Kamen and Makuyu people. It led to forgot the native religions and practices. So he stood against colonial life while also getting colonial education system. He also took forward steps to build and establish the new independent school which gave full respect for native Gikuyu traditions. By using this school education, he hoped that his people would never ever sacrifice their native cultural identity. Hence, Ngugi wa Thiong'o criticised the potential of the colonial education system as a tool to eradicate the native indigenous values. The author also stated his views through the character Waiyaki,

When he came to the Mission, he was full of vigor and certainly full of great expectations. He always looked to a time when his efforts would produce fruits. But as years went on he realized

that he was not making as much progress as he had expected he would. This was a disappointment to a man who had left home for a wild country, fired by a dream of heroism and the vision of many new souls won for Christ through his own efforts. His call and his mission had not met with the response he had once hoped for. True, the school and the hospital had expanded a great deal. But these people seemed only interested in education, while they paid lip service to salvation. (Thiong'o, 1965, P. 70)

From the above passage, the author explored the disenchantment in the work of colonial mission. Because they arrived with the high hopes to spread the Christianity among the native people and teach the Christian way of life in their education system which led to the degradation of the native Gikuyu culture and traditions. Here is a pie chart to reveal the colonial education and cultural survival of the Gikuyu people.

Colonial Education and Cultural Survival



The above pie chart reveals the impact of colonial education on the Gikuyu religion. It highlights both resistance and cultural erosion. It shows colonial education which led to cultural alienation and loss of tradi-

tions (30%). It highlights the ideological control (20%) to impose the Western ideals. The section of independent schools (20%) aims to preserve the native culture with traditional knowledge. Waiyaki efforts to preserve Gikuyu traditions (20%) represents the character Waiyaki and his efforts towards the preservation of native traditions. The conflict between Kameno and Makuyu communities (10%) shows the internal division between two communities.

In *Weep Not, Child* and *The River Between*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o showed the education system which played a vital role for oppression and a powerful site for resistance. Though it gave the Western culture and a new way of thinking, it dominated the native traditions and values. So the author showed the conditions of the colonial education system through the experiences of Njoroge and Waiyaki and how it harmed the native Gikuyu culture and helped to fight for socio-political freedom. Through this approach, Ngugi wa Thiong'o criticised the potential of the colonial education system which eroded the indigenous values. In these two novels, education was a challenging one where colonial rule clashed with native identities. So, Social Constructivism Theory opted here and helped to show how individuals made meanings within these approaches.

The Social Constructivism Theory showed the colonial education system which was designed as a tool to control, shaping the ideas and values of the colonisers. It aimed to dominate native culture, traditions and languages. It highlighted how the colonial education system became a space for resistance and social transformation. It found ways for colonised people

to regain their native indigenous knowledge and empower the future generations. This approach provided deep insights on the complex role of the colonial education system which was considered as both the source of oppression and path of liberation. According to the founder of this theory Lev Vygotsky, Russian psychologist and educator who highlighted the significance of cultural identity, construction of indigenous knowledge and language in the process of learning in his seminal work through the lines:

Each school subject has its own specific relation to the course of child development, a relation that varies as the child goes from one stage to another. This leads us directly to a reexamination of the problem of formal discipline, that is, to the significance of each particular subject from the viewpoint of overall mental development. Clearly, the problem cannot be solved by using any one formula; extensive and highly diverse concrete research based on the concept of the zone of proximal development is necessary to resolve the issue. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 91).

Through this passage, Lev Vygotsky emphasised the complex situations in the school subject, mental development of children and its effects.

Research Outcomes :

The research will demonstrate how colonial education in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Weep Not, Child* and *The River Between* served as a tool for cultural imperialism, disrupting indigenous identities and traditions while also offering a pathway for anti-colonial resistance. It will reveal the dual nature of education as both a means of alienation and empowerment, showing how characters like Njoroge and Waiyaki

navigate identity crises and respond to the cultural and societal challenges posed by colonialism. By analyzing the impact of education on traditional values and societal structures, the study will underscore Ngugi's critique of colonial educational systems and their lingering effects in postcolonial Kenya. Ultimately, the research will contribute to postcolonial discourse, offering insights into the intersection of education, identity and resistance, while advocating for culturally rooted and empowering education systems in contemporary contexts.

Conclusion :

In conclusion, the comparative study of the colonial educational system in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Weep Not, Child* and *The River Between* emphasised how Kenya had a deep influence with the external pressure during the colonial period. He showed the education system as a source of double-edged sword and it served as a significant tool for colonial dominance and helped to empower the native people. In *Weep Not, Child*, he showed the education which inspired the people with hope and ambition. He also revealed its harsh realities of degradation and social inequality. Similarly, in *The River Between*, the colonial education system created a conflict between traditional values and colonial ideals which caused cultural division and resistance. He highlighted the significance

of the education system which emphasized critical thinking and self-dependency. He showed the potential of Kenyan people as they struggled to regain their native identity. So, the research paper emphasised the colonial education system and its impact on native identity. It paved the way for decolonisation and empowerment. Ngugi wa Thiong'o gave deep insights to inspire people to recognize the potential of education as a tool for destroying injustice and changing society in a meaningful way.

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Unravelling the Tacit Queer Troubles and Power Dynamics within Liminal Space in Society through Devdutt Pattanaik's *The Pregnant King*

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The world as far as gender's the matter of concern is often understood in polarised binary frames as masculine and feminine. The possibility of the existence of several other variables in the liminal space is overlooked or ignored. Devdutt Pattanaik's *The Pregnant King* through narratives of Hindu mythology draws attention to this liminal space of identity and performative gender roles which is denied acceptance in the world. *The Pregnant King* also deals with the concept of gender fluidity through several characters like Yuvanashva, Shikhandi and Somavati. The novel through numerous instances also exposes the hardships that the people in the liminal space face in the society which is similar to their experience in the present times as well.

Gender and sex or two different entities, sex is determined based on the genitalia of the person at the time of their birth and gender is a social construct that is chiefly polarised into feminine and masculine roles. Michael Brown in his book titled *A Herstory of Transmasculine Identities*

an Annotated Anthology says that, "Gender being a social construct, is simply not binary-there are no longer just two genders, male and female-but rather a continuum of gender identities" (Brown). Gender is non binary; it is not static but fluid and arbitrary; the liminality in genders makes it very clear that gender is not rigid binaries but a series of several attributes. Cade Hilderth while arguing against the gender binary notion states that "Unfortunately for those who believe in a gender binary, it is not scientifically or medically correct. Gender can't be binary, because it is a personal identity and is socially constructed." (Brown)

Liminal space is the space that lies between two phases. Liminality is a phase where choices and decisions are made to move or shift from one set to another. This phase can evoke negative or positive response from the society based on whether the individual aligns with the societal codes or not. In case of gender identity or transition the individuals in the liminal space mostly experience marginalisation,

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violence and harassment. “Individuals who are caught in between two stages of development, who do not hold clearly defined positions within their social system, feel marginal, excluded, without identity or influence.” (Chakraborty). The methodology used in this paper is textual analysis through which the paper draws parallels between the liminal queer trouble instances in the novel and the present society and explores the power dynamics and its effects on the lives of people in the liminal space.

The novel illustrates a hetero normative society where any gender fluid performativity isn't readily accepted. There are different circumstances presented in the novel where people who deviate from the gender roles are met with violence or tragic punishments. The novel also points at the hate motivated violence that the transsexual/queer people are forced to go through because of the heteronormative society that they live in. According to Flores et al. the people who identify with the LGBTQ community experience victimisation four times more than that of people who belong to non- LGBTQ communities.

The character named Somvat lives a predominant part of his life as a male and transforms into a woman named Somvati. Somvat, when he is caught performing the feminine gender dressed up as a woman is immediately scorned by the people. Somvat is also humiliated, insulted and harassed in public “One young man slipped in between the guards and gave Somvat's testicles a vicious squeeze. Somvat yelped in agony.” (Pattanaik 127). Their plight becomes intensified when the king who has the power fails to be devoid of the prejudice that stems from heteronormativity. The judgement of killing the couple is also justified saying that they are lower than

animals. This situation remains very similar to the police who represent power over common people and are responsible for guarding the law being prejudiced which often results in the victimization of people in the liminal space. Suresh in his paper says that “Actions of the police in India against largely transgender and lower-class queer men have been mostly local in character”. This prejudice in the power structure makes it a granted for the society to victimize people identifying in the liminal space.

The physical transition of Somvat into Somvati doesn't make it any easier for the public to accept his identity. Somvati is either expected to live as a man though she has a woman's body or die as a woman. Somvati who has come out to the public as a woman is not seen as a man anymore because she is a woman now and is also not accepted as a woman because she was a man once. This instance expresses how the transsexual people are forced to remain in the liminal space not being easily allowed to shift or identify with the binaries.

Forced marriages of people who identify with the queer community or of people who are in the liminal space prevails in several places. It stems from the cissexist and compulsory heterosexual society which either wants to prove to the world that their child is normal according to the society's terms or believes that the person will become normal once they get married to a person of the opposite gender. “Many gay men and lesbian women in India get married under social pressure, locking them in unhappy marriages, sometimes with tragic outcomes. The figure can be high-nearly 70% of gay men in Mumbai and 80% in smaller cities across Maharashtra” (Masoodi and Doval).

Somvati and the husband of the princess of Bahugami are two liminal characters in the novel whom the society pressurises to get married. Somavati is either asked to marry a woman and live as a man or to choose death, “you both live as men. Marry the widow’s daughters.” (Pattanaik 159). Somvati is forced to live as a man and to prove that she is a man by marrying a woman, though she has the physical features of a woman and identifies as a woman. The Bahugami princess’s husband on the other hand is a transwoman who is forced into the cissexist and heteronormative system through forced marriages. He is married to one woman after the other while the family kept blaming the previous wives for not bearing an heir. Forced marriage is a human right violation that subjects the person to severe mental and societal pressure. In the novel the husband of the Bahugami princess who is a transwoman travels every night, dresses herself as a woman and cries near a river bank. This also shows how forced marriages and the non-acceptance of the society can affect the quality of the life of the person in the liminal space.

The entire novel is set in a cissexist society which believes that cis gender is the only natural gender and expresses prejudice or hatred towards the other genders. “Cissexism operates as a subtle web of ideas that many people hold based on the assumption that all people are cisgender. Because this assumption is so deeply ingrained in our society, many people say and do things that are cissexist without realizing it.” (Clements, 2021).

Yuvanashva represents a cissexist person in the commencement of the novel, which is very evident in his judgement

against Somvati where he believes that the natural gender is the gender that is assigned to a person at the time of their birth; however, this opinion changes when Yuvanashva himself enters the liminal space. Somvati and Sumedha lose their lives because they didn’t accept the cissexist way of living. “Vallabhi has rejected your choices, not you. You could have had a long fruitful life within this kingdom if you had confirmed to dharma.” (Pattanaik 161). This incident also throws light on the harmful effects that a cissexist attitude and judgement can have on individuals who are in the liminal space deviating from the constructed gender binary. The cissexist and homophobic judgement have cost the lives of Sumeda and Somvati. The cissexist, transphobic and homophobic attitude fuels hate motivated crimes against the people in the liminal space.

Yuvanashva’s experience in the liminal space makes him understand that gender is not biological but rather a construct. Yuvanashva’s liminality or non-gender binary roles aren’t easily accepted by his cissexist family and is concealed to the eyes of the public. Simantini, Yuvanashva’s wife keeps him away from his son and forbids him from expressing motherly affection towards his son claiming that it is unnatural, “The world must not know that you are an aberration”. (Pattanaik 259). Simantini becomes a cissexist symbol as Yuvanashva enters the liminal space, constantly forcing him back into the binary and the constructed masculine role making him submit to the society’s way by ignoring the arbitrariness of his identity. Vipula who is Yuvanashva’s close friend finds his liminal experience to be disgusting and doesn’t want to speak about it. Mandhatha the son of Yuvanashva is

also trained to think in a cissexist manner that makes him reject Yuvanashva's identity, which ironically contradicts with the existence of Mandhata.

The husband of Bahugami princess who is a transwoman is forced into accepting the sex that he was assigned at birth and is expected to perform the masculine gender. "You think my father does not know? You think my mother does not know? They know. They all do. They all know that I feel like a woman and that I only pretend to be man... They ask me to accept reality." (Pattanaik 212). Though the family members know that she is a transwoman, she is forced to behave like a man confining herself to the masculine gender roles.

The other important aspect found in the novel is the power dynamics and its effect on the liminal experience. There are few characters like Yuvanashva, Shikkandi and the husband of Bahugami princess who do not fit into the binary frame and do not face physical or sexual violence, this does not relieve them from the fear of being accepted or from expressing themselves or performing their gender without fear; due to the cissexist society that they live in. The characters that do not face violence often have power as a strong support. The violence that the liminal people in power face is considerably much lesser than that of a common person's liminal experience. The novel also shows how truth and untruth, right and wrong and acceptance and non-acceptance of a person's gender is often twisted and manipulated according to the need of the powerful.

The novel contains few characters in the story line that represent the genders in

the liminal space and are also considered as divine beings. There are references to instances where Lord Krishna becomes a woman to fulfil the wishes of Iravan, "Krishna then became a woman. A perfect woman, Mohinni, the enchantress." (Pattanaik 252). Aruna the sun god becomes a woman and gives birth to two children. The novel also represents gender fluidity through Illeshwar Mahadev who transforms into a God on full moon day and into a goddess on new moon day. These liminal identities that are connected to the divinity which is considered as the supreme power are not scorned or abused by their society, rather they are respected and accepted in the society. The gender binary and cissexism which the society believes to be the truth seems to reshape the moment there are elements of power involved in the liminality.

Power has a definite role in designing the truth in the society that it is associated with.

Paul Rabinow in his book titled "The Foucault Reader" has mentioned Foucault's view of power and truth as follows :

Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. "And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true." (72-73)

The novel stands true with the Foucauldian concept of power and truth. The

novel has also portrayed the difference in the attitude of the people in the society towards people in the liminal space with respect to the power that they possess. The novel has further thrown light on power and its influence in altering the concept of truth.

Yuvanashva represents power and the journey into the liminal space. The truth and untruth in Yuvanashva's life evolves with his evolving gender and the power he possesses helps the acceptance of his identity to an extent though its concealed and not completely accepted. The liminal identity doesn't subject him to physical or sexual abuse because of the power that he holds. Yuvanashva's truth that was grounded in gender binarism changes completely when he experiences the liminal identity. When Yuvanashva's son Mandatha rose to power and ignored Yuvanashva's truth of identity, the rejection and non-acceptance becomes unbearable that Yuvanashva leaves the kingdom.

Shikhandi who lives and performs the masculine identity is not accepted as a man. Shikhandi feels humiliated when he was not invited to take part in the Kurukshetra war. Shikhandi's masculinity is accepted on the ninth day of the war and he is invited to take part in the war, "in Krishna's eyes you are a man-not what you were born as, but what you have become." (Pattanaik 272). The moment Lord Krishna who symbolises the divine supreme power accepts Shikhandi's masculinity, he is accepted as a man by everyone. This change in mindset also comes with the need to defeat Bishma, who considers Shikhandi to be weak and feminine. This incident proves that truth can be easily altered according to the need of the powerful.

Power according to Foucault is not a single sovereign entity, it is present everywhere and comes from every place, "the possibility that power does not always assume just one form and that, in virtue of this, a given form of power can coexist alongside, or even come into conflict with, other forms of power." (Haselby). The novel discloses several forms of power structure and their impact on the liminal identities. The truth of the society in the novel is decided by the king who represents power. The same truth can be altered or nullified by divinity which is considered to be more powerful than the king. Yuvanashva's journey of self-realisation throws light on the power shift that happens when a person liberates oneself from the clutches of power.

The novel *The Pregnant King* through several narratives and characters in the period of Mahabharata has depicted the tacit troubles that people in the liminal space go through, which is very identical to the present-day experience of liminal identities. The study has found that power has a pronounced role in determining the truth in the society and affects the experience of the queer people in the liminality. It is also found that changes in the ideologies power structure can change the attitude of the society towards the liminal identities.

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Bloodlines and Boundaries : A Probe into Sibling Dynamics and the Role of Birth Order in Jodi Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper*

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Birth order significantly influences personality and family dynamics, shaping traits like leadership in first born and adaptability in younger siblings. Sibling relationships, marked by companionship, rivalry, and support, are among the most enduring bonds. Literature often explores these dynamics, particularly sisterhood. *Pride and Prejudice* portrays the contrast between Elizabeth and Jane's deep bond, Lydia's impulsiveness and the tensions shaped by societal expectations. Similarly, other novels highlight love, conflict and responsibility among siblings, emphasizing how birth order and family roles shape individual growth and relationships. Sociological and Psychological books like *Born to Rebel: Birth Order, Family Dynamics and Creative Lives* by Frank Sulloway, Kevin Leman's *The Birth Order Book: Why you are the way you are*, literary books like John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* and Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* talks of birth order and sibling dynamics.

Understanding sibling dynamics and birth order in novels helps explore human relationships and identity. Emotional depth in characters allows readers to connect personally and reflect on moral dilemmas. Controversial themes challenge perceptions and highlight societal issues, making the narrative powerful. A novel resonates when readers immerse themselves in characters' lives, setting aside personal biases. Jodi Picoult, a renowned American writer excels in portraying emotional dialogues, family dynamics and realistic relationships. The Boston Globe says, "Picoult writes with a fine touch, a sharp eye for detail and firm grasp of the delicacy and complexity of human relationships" [Picoult (2014)].

Jodi Lynn Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper* (2004) explores familial relationships and the emotional complexities of sibling dynamics. The story focuses on Anna, a thirteen-year-old "savior sibling" conceived to help her sister Kate, who battles

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Acute Promyelocytic Leukemia. Kate shows silent strength despite her fragility while their brother Jesse struggles with the feelings of neglect and personal demons. Anna feels the weight of her role and sues her parents for medical emancipation to avoid donating a kidney to Kate. She hires lawyer Campbell Alexander to gain autonomy over her body and choices.

This paper explores sibling dynamics and the impact of birth order in Jodi Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper*. The analysis highlights how birth order shapes their identities, with firstborns taking responsibility and younger siblings struggling with expectations. It evaluates the behaviours, roles and conflicts among the Fitzgerald siblings. By shedding light on these nuances, the paper deepens the understanding of family bonds in fiction. Ultimately, it connects these insights to real-world familial structures.

An Austrian medical doctor and psychotherapist, and founder of the school of individual philosophy, Alfred Adler, the pioneer of the birth order theory explains the concept of birth order in his books. He says that the order or position of a child's birth in the family influences their personality. He explains that the order of birth that influenced a child's character, but rather it was the child's environment, as well as their natural instinct or interpretation of their birth order which molded personalities (The Birth Order Theory, n.d.).

Each child will have distinct characteristics fixed solely because of the order in which he or she was born, and it also plays a role in manifestation of sibling rivalries. Birth order hierarchies influence siblings'

behaviour as well as it tunes the prioritization of family members. There are so many benefits and limitations of being in any birth order position as it results in arguments, negligence, negotiation and acceptance. In Jodi Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper*, Anna, the youngest child, is an allogeneic donor for her sister Kate, who depends on her for survival. Despite being only thirteen, Anna's height and frequent presence in hospitals often lead people to mistake her for the older sibling. She notes "... I'm taller than her and every now and then people mistakenly assume I'm the older sister" (Picoult, 2004, p. 7).

Over the years, Anna feels manipulated as she donates to support Kate's health. When asked to donate a kidney, Anna refuses, questioning her existence and her parents' favoritism towards Kate due to her illness. Jesse, their brother, describes himself as an "organ martyr" and believes he is valued only for his existence. Anna, defined as the sister of a sick child, reflects on her birth order and wonders, "Maybe it's because I was the third child, and ...they forgot" (Picoult, 2004, p. 128). The order of her birth, along with the fact that she was intentionally conceived, leads her feel that she should have been born first or perhaps never at all to escape the suffering of neglect. Santrock (2011) discusses this concept as "...birth-order effects suggest that birth order might be a strong predictor of adolescent behaviour... Siblings with "easy" temperaments who are treated in relatively equal ways by parents tend to get along with each other the best, whereas siblings with "difficult" temperaments, or siblings whose parents gave one sibling preferential treatment, get along the worst" (p. 298).

Anna observes their parents' disregard for Jesse and notes how this has deeply affected him. Jesse sums up the family's dynamics by saying, "Kate plays the Martyr. I'm the Lost Cause. And you, you're the Peacekeeper" (Picoult, 2004, p. 15). George G. Thompson says, "...giving of equal amounts of attention and affection, positive reinforcements for demonstrations of sibling loyalty, affection, sharing of belongings and so on. Despite these efforts, sibling rivalries do develop and in many instances are generalized to human relationships in adult life" (p.648).

Children yearn for attention and care from the family members. They feel distressed, when the love deficit. Anna's mother Sara struggles to manage her parenthood by looking over her three children. She knows that the problem is never going to end so she expects the survival of her daughter in any ways. Jean Gross' book on *Psychology and Parenthood* says, "Birth order does affect how the child handles disputes within the family. First born use more domineering verbal tactics and bribes, whereas the later-born are more physically aggressive and also sulk/pout/plead/cry and appeal more to the parents for help. But it does not seem to affect the quality of the sibling relationship as such" (p. 112).

Pradeep K. Barthakur brings sibling factors under the needs and motives of *Child Psychology and Child Guidance*. He says, "Marital discord and inequity in affection towards children invariably promote sibling jealousy. Parents who have their own personal problems are bound to be inconsistent and inadequate in their emotional behaviour. Also, age differences affect sibling jealousy". A book on *Child Psychology and Child Guidance* says,

"Parents react differently to different children and openly show it by their attitudes and actions in spite of their claims that they love their children equally. The favoured child tries to please the parents and the unfavoured child rebels" (p. 214).

Anna highlights the struggles of neglected children. Her parents, focused on saving Kate, disregard Anna's autonomy, creating tension and resentment. Despite her apathy towards her parents, Anna shows empathy for her sick sister. Anna explains, "They had me so that I could save Kate," reflecting the family's utilitarian decision (Picoult, 2004, p. 21). She experiences relief but is conflicted by her sister's pain. Kate views Anna as both a sibling and confidante, leading to clashes. Anna resists the imposed role, while Kate defends her behaviour, saying, "When you are part of the family with the dying daughter, people cut you slack" (Picoult, 2004, p. 49). These dynamics expose the emotional toll of familial expectations.

Anna and Jesse in Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper* settle in agitation when their parents unable to pay attention to them except in the times when they need Anna's blood or something from her. This causes her to think that she will not be alive if her sister Kate was not sick. Anna questions herself whether sisterhood ends when one sibling is gone, despite their typical sibling fights. Anna wants recognition beyond being a donor, but Sara prioritizes Kate's health without seeing the impact on Anna. In a painful exchange, Anna and Sara express their hurt, with Anna questioning Sara's decisions for her. Campbell, Anna's attorney, supports by highlighting her emotional conflict and doubts about how Kate might feel about her choices in the future.

Sara and Brian feel guilty for neglecting Anna and Jesse while trying to save Kate, meanwhile Anna, emotionally distressed from years of being a donor struggles to choose between helping Kate and fighting for her independence. Despite their guilt, Anna's decision to stand up for herself shocks everyone, even at the risk of losing her sister. Kate never wanted Anna to donate her kidney but stayed silent out of guilt. Fate plays a vital role in Anna's life when she gets into a fatal car accident after winning the case. Her organs are donated, unintentionally giving her parents what they had wanted all along. A Cross-Sectional Study of Dynamics of Sibling Relationship says,

A sibling relationship is critically important not only in a particular age.... A sibling performs various roles in each stage of life. Elder ones act out as a parent to help and protect the younger siblings when needed, support each other as friends, working as a competitor for them and refining their social maneuvering skills to make them capable to give their contribution in the society. Sibling bonds are easily influenced by the way their parents treat them. They notice and compare what kind of privileges, discipline, time and attention their mother and father give them and to their siblings (Gautam).

Signs of affection and attachment occur at the initial stage of a child. When they miss such attentiveness and tenderness from parents, they grow wild and weird. Positions in birth order influence children when families prioritize parental partiality over their personality traits. Parental favoritism falls on male child over female in most of the families and this may cause sibling rivalries. Differences in age and gender influence sibling relation-

ships; furthermore, family composition also plays a vital part in resolving sibling issues. Parental dynamics determines a huge role in developing successful siblings.

Emotional development and mental health of children largely depend on self-understanding and self-acceptance. If parental discipline fails to meet the needs of the developing child, unfortunate personal characteristics may develop. Deprivation of affection from the parents leads to emotional maladjustment. "Parental guidance and protection is vastly altered because teen-age children find less of their time and activities associated with home" (Pikunas & Albrecht, 2022). Parental influence is most important in personality integration and adjustment because the child is with them for a long period and in his most formative years. The patterns of dependence, independence, ascendance, submission, co-operation, competition, have their origin in early parental reactions within home.

Children often compare their family bonds, particularly their relationships with their parents. Unconditional love is essential for strengthening parent-child and sibling dynamics, making familial ties unbreakable. However, in today's world, many families struggle with emotional disconnect, parental negligence, favoritism, and mistrust. Parents, too, endure challenges and grapple with their children's needs with unwavering impartiality, seeking joy in their little ones' smiles. However, when duty and love transform into burdens, the household becomes a battleground of strife rather than a sanctuary of peace. These issues can be resolved through open communication, kindness, respect for

autonomy, prioritizing personal choice over predefined roles. Mutual care fosters a nurturing environment, essential for a family's well-being. The scope of this paper falls on psychological impact of parental favoritism and the sociological effects of chronic illness on sibling dynamics. It is conveyed through the paper's findings, Picoult empowers the readers to embrace ethical and moral values, guiding them toward enlightenment through profound introspection, particularly during their moments of adversity.

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Interplay of Contemporary Socio-religious Culture and Individual Self : A New Historicist Perspective on Select 20th century Indian Autobiographies in English

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Introduction :

Autobiographies began to be considered as literature when it was realized that they were not mere documentation of individual lives in flattery for a specific purpose; they were the records of socio-cultural representations in interaction with individual personalities. They are the literary media through which how the identity of the individual self, gets projected being influenced by public context, depicted in subjective understanding of the author. In the process of evolution of this literature, the adverse impact of the socio-religious, and political culture in the autobiographers began to emerge as the popular theme in autobiographies in India. These select autobiographies of the legendary figures belong to a common era; mid-twentieth century, both pre-and post-independent India. This was the most evolving period in the country's identity. It is supposed that these autobiographies of the public personalities provide fertile ground

for examining this intrinsic dynamism effectively. These autobiographies noticed to have focused on their public roles than on mere private self. The new historicist theoretical frame tries to investigate into the mutual impact between the autobiographical self and its contemporary socio-religious milieu. The intricate relationship between the literary and non-literary text in the autobiography is explored in case of which the two entities are separated into two different knowledge streams that stand with distinct destinations: Autobiography and historical narration.

The autobiographers have different perspectives having grown through various socio-cultural backgrounds with their individual experiences. Khushwant Singh is too candid in his reflections on the communal disharmony. Abdul Kalam has spiritually driven approach to life, R. K. Narayan is subtle in his atheist observation yet experiences spirituality in managing per-

sonal problems and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay is rational in her response to the religious complications of her time. Each perspective is based on the author's unique identity formed on the basis of their experiences/situations during formative periods which have mutual influences either positively or adversely. Exploring on in an autobiography results in witnessing the dialogic nature between historical context and individual expression in this literature. Individual perspective influences and is influenced by the contextual co-text. Thus this inquiry concludes that autobiographies reconstruct history in its individual reflections through the vision of unique experience.

Wings of Fire includes Kalam's philosophical reflections on life, ethics and spirituality. These reflections can be examined to understand how religious beliefs contributed to his broader worldview and ethical principles. Exploring how he reconciled faith with a commitment to scientific advancement can offer a nuanced perspective on his religious outlook. In this seminal work of Abdul Kalam, he celebrates the power of knowledge with a spiritual dimension to it, though outwardly the narration looks too simple a life narrative. He is basically a man of spirituality and only after that he has proved himself a man of knowledge, science and especially missile. To find him in his own words: "Each individual creature on this beautiful planet is created by God to fulfill a particular role. Whatever I have achieved in life is through His help, and an expression of His will." (Kalam, 1999, p.15)

His father was an enormous impact on his tender mind and he emulated him throughout his later life: "There exists a divine power that can lift one up from

confusion, misery, melancholy and failure, and guide one to one's true place. And once an individual severs his emotional and physical bondage, he is on the road to freedom, happiness and peace of mind" (Kalam, 1999, p. 20).

His physics teachers at the intermediate level of education on subatomic energy at Trichy taught him that science and spirituality are closely related. Some reflections of this could be on what he says: "I wonder why some people tend to see science as something which takes man away from God. As I look at it, the path of science can always wind through the heart. For me, science has always been the path to spiritual enrichment and self-realization" (Kalam, 1999, p. 35).

The deep cultured religious secular faith in him marks the ultimate sediment of his subjective formation in a much challenging and tormenting situation of his career choice. After completing his aeronotic engineering, he had career opportunities in the Air Force as well as at the Directorate of Technical Development and Production (DTD & P). In the interview, he was the ninth candidate out of the 25, of whom only eight were to be selected. Sensing the unsuccessful journey, he was deeply troubled, that is when he moved down to Rishikesh and then to Swami Sivananda seeking answers to his doubts about things that had disappointed him.

Khushwant Singh appears highly sensuous man yet, a kind and noble soul with deep seeded humanitarianism. What seems to have disturbed him in life as per his candid narration in his autobiography, *Truth, Love & a Little Malice* is about the wide spread communalism in which every evil thing about humanity is justified in

the scheme of fundamentalist religious superiority.

He predominantly expresses acts of violence in his autobiography that he had witnessed during his life time. During the pre-partition time in which the author grew up was a volatile situation of communal disharmony. Khushwant Singh opines the 1990s in India as below: “The nineties were dark times for India. Fascism well and truly crossed our threshold and dug its heels in our courtyard. We let the fanatics get away with every step they took without raising a howl of protest. They burnt books they did not like; they beat up journalists who wrote against them; they openly butchered people for believing in a different God” (Khushwant Singh, 2003, p. 124).

The author is very much concerned with the attitude of the majority religion in India. He opines that the minority religion will be at the receiving end. They will live in deep insecurity when every move of them is suspected or questioned: “I felt they [Muslims] were discriminated against and were under a cloud for supposedly harboring pro-Pakistani sympathies. Every time there was tension with Pakistan their loyalties became more suspect. They found it difficult to get jobs in the government and almost impossible to get them in privately-owned industry and business houses which were largely controlled by Hindus. They had virtually no form to ventilate their grievances, except Urdu newspapers which had small circulations restricted to their own community...Whenever there was a Hindu-Muslim riot, since most of the loss of life and property was Muslim, I adopted a distinctly pro-Muslim stance.” (Khushwant Singh, 2003, p.155)

R. K. Narayan lived in a multicultural society and his autobiography *My Days* reflects the diversity of religious practices and coexistence. This provides a nuanced portrayal of religious harmony and disharmony present at that time. This narrative depicts both religious aspects as well as insights into the broader cultural and social context of post independent India. The author depicts that Christian missionary schools in Madras presidency were trying to gain dominances. The author had joined Lutheran Mission School for better prospects. Christian religious domination seemed to be evident there. Almost all teachers who were Christian converts exhibited a considerable amount of hatred towards Hindus. Most of the Christian students also disliked the non-Christians. The catechism classes especially were meant for lampooning and attacking Hindu religious culture. Violent abuses were hurled on the idol worshipping community as a prologue for praising Jesus. Unfortunately the author was the only non-Christian and Brahmin boy in the class who had to face the humiliation of the dominant religion. It would be effective if the author’s own words are brought in: “the whole class would turn in my direction when the teacher said that Brahmins claiming to be vegetarians ate fish and meat in secret, in a sneaky way, and were responsible for the soaring price of those commodities” (Narayan, 1974, p.12). Yet, the personal religious culture of the author appears much magnanimous than the teaching-learning community culture at the Lutheran Mission School in Madras: “In spite of the uneasy time during the lessons, the Biblical stories themselves enchanted me” (Narayan, 1974, p. 12).

He also narrates an incident promoting conversion to Christianity. The audience would silently listen to the preaching but woke up suddenly to the word of address, 'sinners' at a delirious pitch that the missionary used to call the Hindu Gods' names. He would begin suggesting the Hindu audience to throw away all stone Gods, repenting for their sins and convert to Christianity. When the audience realized his intention, they broke out in violence, shouting at him to shut up and falling on his followers who ran away to save themselves and their instruments: "The audience now rained mud and stone on the preacher and smothered him under bundles of wet green grass.....now people snatched up handful of grass and flung them on him, but his voice went on increasing through all the travail; lamps lit up by his assistants earlier were snatched away and smashed. The preacher, bedraggled and almost camouflaged with damp grass and water, went through his program to the last minute as scheduled. Then he suddenly disappeared into the night. One would have thought that the man would have never come again. But he did, exactly on the same day a week hence, at the next street corner" (Narayan, 1974, p.14)

The serious problem in the author's life begins with traditions in Hindu religious belief in Horoscope predictions. The solution to the problem also lies according to the autobiographical narration. As a matter of fact, as speculated by Rajam's father while matching their horoscopes, Rajam passes away as early as in 1939 due to typhoid: "The loss of my wife was sudden and not even remotely anticipated by me – although my father-in-law had had his doubts while looking into my horoscope

earlier. But now I had to accept her death as a fact" (Narayan, 1974, p.135). The author reluctantly undergoes a psycho-spiritual therapy by Mr. & Mrs. Rao. His skeptic mind had a doubt about the viability of this technique. However his experience disproved it: "Even if Mr. Rao had had his own sources of enquiry and dashing off the information at the sitting, even if Rao caught telepathically whatever went on in my or anyone else's mind, it did not matter to me. Even if the whole thing was a grand fraud, it would not matter. What was important was sensing of Rajam's presence in that room, which transformed my outlook." (Narayan, 1974, p.144)

The author Kamaladevi Chattopandhyay hails from Dakshina Kannada district, Karnataka state, historically known as Tulu or Tuluva Nadu. Describing its historicity, she highlights the great religious waves that passed over it, in her autobiography, *The Inner Recesses Outer Spaces*. As she states, the religious force of the land included, Buddhism, Catholicism, Jainism, the monuments of which were vividly present through glorious temples: ".....one of them with thousand pillars of exquisite carvings and significant inscriptions; above all is the awe-inspiring sixty-foot high statue of Gomata or Gomateshwara, whose sanctity was still kept alive through fantastically elaborate rites Maha Mastakabhishekam performed periodically, drawing devotees from all over the world. Catholicism is an educational and cultural stream while one of the monument churches – St. Aloysius with its exquisite frescoes in a testimony to its antiquity." (Chattopandhyay, 2014, p.10)

The autobiographer chooses to place on record the basic religious culture of

Dakshina Kannada region, *Bhutaradhane* which held the center of all Hindu lives of this region. She seems to have high regard for this spiritual cult. She tries to give clarity on this traditions so that she should not disregard the esteem of their belief for she terms it 'Bhuta religion': "This is not to be mixed up with demonolatry which is reduced to witchcraft or propitiation of devils" (Chattopadhyay, 2014, p.10).

The author autobiographer presents an incident of Indian politics entering into religious affair causing the whirlpool of entangle, in which the author was caught and suffered enough. The local politicians entered to take advantage of entertaining themselves in this matter: "On the one hand they sent an accusation against me to the prime minister that I was taking away sacred images from ancient temples, bluffing the owners. On the other hand, the temple authorities were stirred up by being ridiculed for so foolishly giving away precious antiques costing lakhs, for almost nothing. The temple authorities were now enraged believing they were tricked and would not allow the old figures to move out even though the new beautiful ones had been installed." (Chattopadhyay, 2014, p.12)

In the author's opinion, every religion has good aspects in it, yet, it has a lot of scope for augmentation. Therefore, there are no reasons to hate any religion: "Though emotionally very deeply moved (by Christian philosophy), I couldn't accept the idea of conversion to faith through a ritual or that baptism alone saved one's soul, which seemed to be more a superstition than a spiritual concept. I believe that if there is an ultimate liberation it can and should come through one's own conscious effort." (Chattopadhyay, 2014, p.22)

The author expresses her personal opinion on Ramabai's conversion to Christianity: "It was obvious that Ramabai was deeply religious but to her, serving the people was synonymous with worship. Christ to her was the symbol of unlimited love and compassion for the oppressed and the suffering. Thus in spite of our close comradeship I did not feel the need to touch on religion as a topic of discussion with her, I understood her." (Chattopadhyay 2014, p.41).

The four individual selves studied through their autobiographies in this paper look different in formation with unique biographical roots, reflecting distinctly on their contemporary milieu in the society. Abdul kalam, who has been brought up in a most religious environment with a good deal of inter-religious integration seem to have developed secular values in his responses to other faiths. It is important to note that Khushwant Singh who called himself an agnostic lived in an age of total religious disharmony during which he was against religious fundamentalist culture. He depicts a lot of violence due to mutual religious intolerance as feature of diverse religious existence. R. K. Narayan focuses on the attack of Christianity on the deep-rooted rich heritage of Hindu religion in the south India whereas Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay who was a pure theist perceives religion in its functions such as performing arts. The impact of religious culture on all the four autobiographers is profound as religion was one of the major components of post-colonial India. The autobiographers interact with this environment with their own specific perspectives.

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Bridging Hearts : The Role of Forgiveness in Healing and Reconnection in The Select Contemporary Novels

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Sudha Murty's *The Mother I Never Knew* intricately examines the themes of forgiveness, emotional healing and reconciliation through the lives of two protagonists, Venkatesh and Mukesh. Their respective stories unfold around the discovery of deep family secrets and the profound emotional journeys they embark upon to understand their mothers. The novel presents forgiveness not only as a personal act but also as a social and cultural necessity for healing relationships and communities.

The Transformative Power of Forgiveness :

One of the central themes in *The Mother I Never Knew* is forgiveness, which is portrayed as a critical mechanism for emotional liberation. The protagonists' experiences suggest that holding onto past resentments and unresolved anger only perpetuate emotional suffering. Both Venkatesh and Mukesh are initially caught

in the web of bitterness due to their painful family histories, but through the process of forgiving others, they are able to find a sense of peace and acceptance.

Venkatesh's emotional growth comes when he decides to forgive his father and stepmother, despite their past actions. This act of forgiveness becomes a release from his long-held grudges and opens the door for him to empathize with their struggles. Similarly, Mukesh's journey involves reconciling with both his adoptive and biological mothers. His decision to forgive his biological mother for abandoning him is not an easy one, but it allows him to heal and let go of the resentment he has carried for years.

Forgiveness, as depicted in the novel, is an active choice that empowers individuals to reclaim their emotional well-being. Murty presents it as a way to transcend emotional stagnation and move towards healing. Forgiving others means releasing

the weight of past grievances and embracing the possibility of new emotional beginnings. For both characters, it is a pathway toward self-realization and peace.

Reconciliation within Family Dynamics:

Reconciliation is another important motif in Murty's narrative. The novel suggests that reconciliation does not come automatically but is a gradual process that requires deep understanding and empathy. For Venkatesh, reconciling with his step-mother, Bhagava, means recognizing the hardships she endured as a single mother and widow. Venkatesh's ability to see Bhagava as a person, not just the figure of his father's second wife, is a transformative moment in his emotional journey. This reconciliation allows Venkatesh to bridge the emotional gaps that have kept him distant from his family for so long.

Mukesh's reconciliation with his biological mother, Nirmala, serves as another example of how understanding one's family history can foster emotional healing. Initially, Mukesh's search for his biological mother is driven by feelings of abandonment and betrayal, but as he learns more about her circumstances, his anger gives way to compassion. In accepting Nirmala's painful decision to give him up, Mukesh learns to reconcile with her choices and, in doing so, finds peace.

These moments of reconciliation emphasize the complexity of family relationships. They show that reconciliation is not about erasing the past but about acknowledging it, learning from it, and moving forward with empathy.

The Role of Empathy in Healing :

Empathy is a key component of both forgiveness and reconciliation in the novel.

Through empathy, the characters come to understand the pain and struggles of those who have hurt them. Venkatesh's ability to empathize with Bhagava's loneliness and struggles as a widow allows him to forgive her. Likewise, Mukesh's growing understanding of Nirmala's circumstances helps him let go of his resentment and heal emotionally.

Murty illustrates that empathy is not just about understanding someone's perspective; it is about deeply engaging with their pain and responding with compassion. Characters like Venkatesh, Mukesh, and Bhagava show that when we take the time to understand the lives and choices of others, we can move beyond our own hurt and connect with them on a human level.

Love and Understanding as Catalysts for Healing :

In the novel, Murty explores the idea that love and understanding can mend even the deepest emotional wounds. The protagonists' emotional growth is closely tied to their ability to love, forgive, and accept their families despite the pain they have caused. Venkatesh's love for his daughter Gauri plays a significant role in helping him reconcile with his father and step-mother. Gauri's gentle encouragement allows Venkatesh to open his heart to forgiveness, demonstrating how love can be a guiding force in difficult times.

Similarly, Mukesh's emotional evolution is grounded in his ability to see his biological mother with compassion. Through his love for both his adoptive and biological mothers, he navigates his emotional turmoil and finds a way to embrace both women as integral parts of his identity. The

novel suggests that love, coupled with understanding, has the power to heal familial wounds and bring about reconciliation.

The Social Context: Patriarchal Expectations and Gender Dynamics :

Murty also uses the protagonists' journeys to critique societal norms, particularly those that marginalize women. Bhagava's struggle as a widow highlights the harshness of societal judgment towards women, especially those who are forced to navigate life without male support. Venkatesh's realization that his stepmother's choices were shaped by societal pressures challenges traditional views on widowhood and the role of women in family life.

Likewise, Nirmala's experience as a single mother who gives up her child to ensure a better future for him is a reflection of the stigmatization of single mothers in India. Mukesh's emotional journey forces him to confront the societal biases that led his mother to make such a difficult decision. His forgiveness of Nirmala challenges these prejudices and shows how understanding the full complexity of a person's situation can dismantle rigid societal judgments.

Through these characters, Murty underscores the societal pressures that women, especially widows and single mothers, face in India. The novel suggests that forgiveness and empathy are not only personal virtues but also social tools that can help dismantle patriarchal structures and create more equitable relationships.

Forgiveness as a Societal Virtue :

In addition to its personal significance, Murty positions forgiveness as a virtue that can heal communities and societies.

The novel highlights that personal reconciliation is often a mirror for societal healing. The emotional growth of Venkatesh and Mukesh serves as a metaphor for how individuals and communities can work through historical wrongs and injustices to build a more harmonious society.

Murty's treatment of forgiveness emphasizes its broader societal implications, suggesting that by embracing forgiveness and reconciliation on a personal level, individuals can contribute to a larger movement of social healing. The act of forgiving others is a transformative experience that can ripple outwards, impacting relationships, communities and even the cultural fabric of a society.

Conclusion :

Sudha Murty's *The Mother I Never Knew* is a profound exploration of forgiveness, reconciliation, and the emotional complexities of family life. Through the stories of Venkatesh and Mukesh, Murty emphasizes that forgiveness is not merely a personal act but a transformative process that can heal both individuals and society. The novel portrays how understanding, empathy, and love can help individuals navigate painful family histories, while also challenging societal norms that perpetuate inequality. Ultimately, Murty demonstrates that forgiveness is essential for personal peace and social harmony, offering a powerful message of hope and healing for both individuals and communities.

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Culinary and Diaspora : *The Semiotics of Food* in Preeti Nair's *One Hundred Shades of White* and Amulya Malladi's *The Mango Season*

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Introduction :

“For What is Food? It is not only a collection of products... It is also and at the same time, a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations and Behavior”(Barthes, 1961, p.21). Food is not just an essential sustenance in our survival; rather it holds the status of a cultural artefact that carries some historical and cultural significance. It reflects certain values, customs and belief systems intertwined with each society's cultural heritage. In Literature, food turns out to be an integral component of the storytelling method as it voices characters' identities and their deeply ingrained emotions of nostalgia, longing, rebellion and resistance. Especially in diasporic narratives, detailing culinary practices is often associated with immigrants' experience of cultural tensions and dual consciousness in a transnational space.

For Instance, Preeti Nair's *One Hundred Shades of white* (2003) and Amulya Malladi's *The Mango Season* (2003) explore the dynamic interplay between food and identity politics in diasporic experience. Nair's poignant novel *One Hundred Shades of White* set in the backdrop of Britain and India chronicles the enduring hardship faced by Nalini and her children in a foreign milieu where practising Indian culinary tradition becomes a source of solace and identity formation for her, particularly after her husband's abandonment. In contrast, Malladi's *The Mango Season* delineates the story of a young woman, Priya who returns to India after seven years in the United States and confronts traditional familial expectations regarding female subjectivity. Malladi skillfully portrays these familial constraints through a variety of food imageries and

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traditional Indian culinary practices.

Here, both novels illustrate food as a cultural symbol through which people negotiate their hybrid identities in the multicultural pluralistic context of diaspora. The intersection of food and diaspora is a thriving area in modern academic discourse as it provides insight into socio-cultural identity, assimilation, hybridity, resistance and globalisation in the contemporary world. The present study examines the essentialist association between gastronomy and identity construction in the diasporic narratives of Preeti Nair's *One Hundred Shades of Whites* (2003) and Amulya Malladi's *The Mango Season* (2004). Analysing these works in the light of food as a metonym of cultural identity, memory and defiance, the study problematises the representational significance of culinary preparation, consumption and abstention in diasporic literature.

Culinary traditions and cultural identity : A Theoretical Overview :

Even though some Scholars mentioned the intricate interaction between food and identity in a societal culture before the 20th century, it was during the 1960s and 1970s that this field experienced significant growth, through the studies of philosophers like Claude Levi Strauss, Mary Douglas, Pierre Bourdieu and Roland Barthes. They critically analysed culinary traditions and identity construction from multidimensional perspectives and laid the foundations for a new interdisciplinary field of academia called food studies. Claude Levi Strauss's theoretical engagement with food formed the conceptual model 'the culinary triangle' in his essay *The Culinary Triangle* (1966) argues that food is a system of meaning and reflects deeper structural-

list classification embedded in society. Likewise, Ronald Barthes's *Toward a Psycho-sociology of Contemporary Food Consumption* Published in 1961 explored the semiotics of food in the communication process as it produces, shares and transmits some cultural meaning and interpretation with other people. Pierre Bourdieu further added to this domain by examining the complex nexus between food and social class through his Substantial work *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979). According to him, the choice of food defines someone's social class and identity because 'tastes' are socially constructed and conditioned by cultural capital.

Cultural theorists like Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha are particularly noteworthy in the discussions of diaspora and its identity construction. Stuart Hall (1990) in his seminal essay *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* critiques the traditional notions of cultural purity and static identity and asserts, that the diaspora exists "not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity," which are "constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (p.235). That is, diasporic identity is not homogeneous or essentialist. Instead, it is constantly evolving and reproducing through multicultural interactions and adaptations. Homi Bhabha elucidates more about this hybridisation of identity in the diasporic context through his theory of 'third space' which refers to a liminal, cross-cultural space where different cultures negotiate to form a new hybrid identity. So culinary practices in diasporic literature serve as a site of a 'third space' where immigrants' past and present experiences intersect and

negotiate to form a new sense of belonging. “Food identity or culinary subjectivity, in diasporic situations, is not only an act of building culinary kinship and being nostalgic but also is an act of building new homes or third spaces through food choices” (Bhusal, Purna Chandra, 2024, p. 58).

Gynocritical perspectives of culinary practices are a vital area of exploration in food studies since they deconstruct centuries-old gendered dimensions of food in our culture. *Food and Culture : A Reader* (1997) edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik highlights the role of food practices in both conforming and subverting androcentric social systems. Similarly, *From Betty Crocker to Feminist Food Studies, Critical Perspectives on Women and Food* (2005), an anthology by Arlene Voski Avakian and Barbara Haber emphasizes the use of culinary metaphors in women’s narratives as an agency of power and resistance. Feminist theorists like Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler have not made any critical appraisal of food practices and gender dynamics, nevertheless, they formed the foundation for deciphering the representation of food symbols in different discourses through their theories of the social construction of gender.

Nicolae Bobaru (2024) in his article *Feasts of Resistance: The Role of Food in Shaping Feminist Cultural Discourse* finds :

Scholars such as Simone de Beauvoir (*Le Deuxième Sexe*, 1949) and Judith Butler (*Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”*, 1993; *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 1999) have illuminated the performative nature of gender and the concept of the “second sex,” respectively, arguing that gender is not a fixed biological fact but a social

construct that is performed and reiterated through cultural practices, including those surrounding food (p.36).

Decoding Gastronomic Identities in *One Hundred Shades of White* :

One Hundred Shades of White, a novel written by Preeti Nair, a British author of Indian heritage, records the diasporic life of Nalini, a resilient woman, and her children, Maya and Satchin amidst identity crisis and cultural alienation. Nalini, a village girl from Kerala gets married to Raul Kathi, an aristocrat from Bombay and later, the couple, along with their children migrates to America in search of better opportunities. While living in a huge bungalow in America, Nalini desperately longed for the warmth and joy of her homeland. But she immediately copes with that sense of loss, through her cooking of some ethnic cuisines and use of traditional spices, whose aroma and taste bring her beyond the national boundaries and invoke the image of her homeland to that unfamiliar place of living. “I cooked huge meals and placed them on the dining room table from morning to night, I would concoct dishes, remembering recipes and stories from my mother, cook and forget the place I was in” (Nair, 2003, p.82). Here, cooking becomes an act of connecting Nalini’s Past and Present. It bridges the gap between her long-lost tradition and newly found modernity. For Nalini, cooking is not merely a household chore, but a way of preserving her ethnic identity and traditions alive. Like Homi Bhabha’s ‘third space’, Nalini’s culinary practices in her host land evolve into a site of cultural negotiation that facilitates her past and present intersect and form a new hybridised identity that values both cultures.

Nalini’s life was not easy in that foreign land. It was full of Challenges and adversities. After the initial emotional ailment and

its recuperation, she soon succumbed to another distress of losing her husband. Raul Kathi abandoned Nalini and their children without leaving anything behind for them. The alone and desperate, Nalini was compelled to take up a job in a sewing factory near to them. During that tough period of monotony and stagnation, cooking served as a source of her emotional tranquillity. It erased her pain and fostered a new spirit of hope and optimism in her life.

It was 1978 and I was alone in a strange country at the age of twenty-six. This first place of employment, Humphries & Co, Bow, was a badly lit factory, where I sat making shabby dreams for two small children... The monotony of the noise would take me far away, with my children and mother, back to India, to a beautiful home with a veranda surrounded by mango trees... The noise would bore through the memories, but I would stitch them together with a fabric of sunshine and laughter... I cooked. Cooked whatever they (the children) needed for the next day, cooked just to forget. Forget that somewhere I was losing them... (Nair, p.91).

Later, Nalini started her own business of a new pickle brand 'The abundance of spice'. It was a great success and that made her into a prosperous woman with abundant wealth and unwavering confidence. That is, food turns out to be a tool of agency for a despondent woman in an unknown land, by providing a way to regain control over her uncertain life. Nicolae Bobaru(2024) states that "Deborah Lupton (Food, the Body, and the Self, 1996) and Elspeth Probyn (Carnal Appetites. Food Sex Identities, 2000) delve deeper into the identity politics of food, arguing that culinary practices are intimately tied to the construction of self and others. Through cooking and eating, women articulate identities that resist

reductionist stereotypes, crafting spaces of autonomy and self-expression within and beyond the kitchen" (p.39). similarly, the role of Food in Nalini's life extends beyond a means of cultural preservation, It becomes a site of survival, empowerment and self-reliance.

Exploring the Foodways in *The Mango Season* :

Being an Indo-American novelist Amulya Malladi, in her most influential work *The Mango Season* effectively captures the identity crisis and acculturative hassles of an Indian-born American woman upon her return to India after seven years in America. Priya Rao, the protagonist of the novel visits her family in South India to reveal the news of her engagement with an American man, that goes against the traditional values of her Brahmin family. But, in that revisit, Priya views most of her family's traditional cultures, especially those related to foodways are highly gendered and oppressive to women. For instance, she noticed that a traditional kitchen space is always devoid of men, and it is occupied only by women, instead of the fact that "men have to cook... [and] learned how to cook" (Malladi, 2003, p.44). All the female members of Priya's family from childhood internalised the fact that they are meant to domestic duties if they seek to be ideal daughters or wives. So, all day they toil in the kitchen and eagerly participate in elaborate culinary rituals without any hesitation. This very notion is reflected in Simone de Beauvoir's (1949) *The Second Sex* that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman". Because Gender is not biological or inherent but is framed by cultural norms and societal expectations. Here, the kitchen space within Malladi's narrative exhibits

how traditional culinary practices confirm normative gender roles and hegemonic masculinity. Shasikala Assella (2015) notes that “Malladi deftly weaves food, kitchen space and women together into a tale about women and food to elaborate on gender patterns and hierarchies, gender politics and domestic power struggles that play a vital role in home vs diaspora relationships” (p.127).

Although Priya took great pleasure in enjoying the traditional flavours of her homeland, such as ‘the turmeric stained pickle’ and the rich ‘frothy coffee’ during her visit, she occasionally pined for KFC and Starbucks. Priya’s identification with home no longer lies in India but in America where she found freedom and autonomy. For her, India and Indian food choices are “alien, exasperating and sometimes exotic” (Malladi, p.134). Shasikala Assella(2015) asserts “Exotic for her is not the unfamiliar; but the familiar that has become different. The difference has come about because of her changed preferences, induced by her American sensitivities. Thus Priya becomes a representative of her generation who defies the set food habits and gender norms practised and established by elders” (p. 129). Priya’s aversion towards ethnic food symbolises her newly achieved freedom and autonomy within the diasporic context. As an immigrant, she marks her departure from certain traditions and cultural values by Choosing a meat-inclusive diet over her traditional Brahmin cuisine.

Apart from this rejection and oppression, Malladi’s narrative presents food as a symbol of some memories associated with the protagonist’s homeland. For Priya ‘Mango’ is a symbol of her childhood and the inexpressible ‘HAPPINESS’ she had experienced during that time.

Summer, while I was growing up, was all about mangoes. Ripe, sweet mangoes that dripped juices down your throat, down your neck. The smell of a ripe mango would still evoke my taste buds, my memories, and for a while I would be a child again and it would be a hot summer day in India. ...

There was more to a mango than taste. Nate and I called the mango stone HAPPINESS.

HAPPINESS was a concept. A feeling. Triumph over a sibling. (Malladi, p.2)

The above vivid imagery explicitly conveys how Priya is transported back to her age-old memories and events associated with them through the very thought of one rustic food. That is Priya romanticizes mango as a means of her personal connection rather than considering it as a sustenance. Jon D. Holtzman (2006), a prominent cultural anthropologist at Western Michigan University remarks “As a form of memory, “nostalgia” has several different senses, generally and in respect to food. Some food literature (particularly outside anthropology) relies on a lay notion of sentimentality for the lost past, viewing food a vehicle for recollection of childhood and family” (p. 367).

Conclusion :

Both novels extol the significance of food as a metaphor for identity, resistance, memory, empowerment and acculturation particularly within the context of diasporic experience. For Nalini in *One Hundred Shades of White*, food is a crucial link between her past and present, it facilitates a space for her cultural preservation while enabling her to adapt to her new environment. Moreover, it is her engagement with food that made her empowered and guided her to navigate all the challenges and ad-

versities in that foreign land. Meanwhile, Priya in *The Mango Season*, uses Food as a medium to reflect her rejection and rebellion against the rigid cultural practices and the institutionalised patriarchal structures of the traditional Indian society. Through the rejection of traditional culinary practices, she declares her individuality and autonomy. So both narratives make use of food as a powerful signifier to discuss themes like identity construction, generational conflict, longing for homeland and gender dynamics within a cross-cultural experience. Ultimately food is more than sustenance; in literature, it is the language of identity, nostalgia, conflict, revolution and empowerment.

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Examine Interconnected Spaces : Doreen Massey's Progressive Sense of Place in *Fasting, Feasting*

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Introduction :

The lives of Uma and Arun, the protagonists of Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* (1999), show the stark contrasts between India and the US. The rigidity of traditional Indian society, in which Uma's life is fixed by family obligations and Arun's dislocation in an alien and indifferent American world are both reflected in the novel. Desai highlights the consequences of gendered spaces and cultural displacement through these contrasting visions. As Desai says, "Families are mysterious entities and they shape lives in ways beyond comprehension. One can never quite tell where the influence of a family begins or ends, how deeply it embeds itself into the core of a person's being, or how much of it is carried unconsciously across time and space"¹. The novel, thus, is a reflection on cultural expectations and individual confinement within family and societal structures.

Doreen Massey's progressive understanding of place offers a fascinating lens

with which to interpret *Fasting, Feasting*. Massey conceptualizes place as relational, mobile, and perpetually in transformation under the pull of external forces instead of stable or place-centered. In her view, "places are processes—they are created through interactions, movements and historical contingencies. They do not have single, essential identities but are constantly being redefined through the social relationships and activities that take place within and around them"². This reading challenge essentialized conceptions of cultural spaces, as it introduces the means by which individual experience rewrites the geography and the social sphere. Applying Massey's theory, one can explore how Uma's and Arun's environment are not so much physical places as socially constructed places bounded by mobility, gender, and cultural ideology.

Massey's theory of space is interwoven in the narrative of Desai to describe

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how identity and location are temporary. As Arun's life in America demonstrates alienation despite the appearance of autonomy, Uma's world in India is arranged along gendered lines and parental control. This twinned setting is a demonstration of Massey's theory that "geography is not about places per se, but about the networks that connect them. Places are not isolated; they exist in relation to one another, and it is through these relationships that they gain meaning and significance in the wider world"³. Finally, *Fasting, Feasting* is a quest to show cultural negotiations, to demonstrate how space and identity are intertwined through individual and societal forces.

Objective :

- To apply Doreen Massey's progressive sense of place theory to *Fasting, Feasting* to further dissect spatial identity and cultural displacement.
- In an attempt to examine the interconnectivity of American and Indian contexts through the everyday experience of Uma and Arun, prioritizing mobility and belonging.
- To explore how changes in culture, generation and space influence the characters' connection to their worlds and build their identities.

Discussion :

I. Progressive Sense of Place – A Theoretical Framework : Doreen Massey's progressive sense of place rejects the classical idea of place as bounded and stable and instead highlights its relational, dynamic and socially constructed character. In narrative studies, this theory is a useful framework to explain how places in fiction

are constructed through engagements, cultural exchange and power relationships and not as mere physical locations. In *Fasting, Feasting*, this vision shows how Uma and Arun's sense of place is not merely determined by geography but by family and societal norms, confirming that place is constructed and fluid through relations.

"What gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations"⁴.

The novel illustrates that spaces are dynamic and change depending on the characters' functions and lives in them. Uma's household in India is a constrictive and oppressive space, whereas Arun's existence in the U.S. is similarly determined by cultural disconnection. This is consistent with Massey's premise that place is relational and depends on social relations and not an intrinsic, stand-alone thing.

"The identity of place is always relational, always in process, and always negotiated within power structures"⁵.

II. India – The Confines of Tradition :

Uma's experiences in India highlight the oppressive environment of her home, where she is deprived of education and autonomy, mirroring patriarchal tradition's strict gender roles. Her life comes secondary to that of her brother, Arun, cementing societal restrictions placed upon women in patriarchal traditional Indian homes. Instead of providing solace, her home is a place of entrapment, defining her identity through family expectations and not individual desires.

“She had implored to be permitted to do her Senior Cambridge, begged to be sent to a boarding school, to continue studying, to become a teacher, a nurse-anything”⁶.

Uma’s identity is defined by tight cultural expectations that prioritize marriage and domesticity over personal ambitions. While Arun is pressured to study overseas, Uma is limited to the role of caretaker. Massey’s theory explains how space is organized through relations of power, Uma’s home is not a neutral arena but a limiting sphere that enforces gender roles and limits movement.

“Space is not a fixed container but a dynamic space in which power is exerted and identities are negotiated”⁷.

III. The U. S. – Alienation in a Foreign

Land : Arun, despite the opportunity to study in America, experiences there the alienation and cultural dissonance that accompanies being in an unfamiliar country. He is not free in America but is put into relief with his inability to operate in an alien culture. His host parents, the Pattons, is apathetic towards him, confirming his sense of dislocation. Although geographically remote from India, he is caught in its culture and values, reflecting how place is less determined by geography than by social bonding.

“Arun never had been able to comprehend this family’s conception of holiday of recreation. It seemed to him an extension of their captivity”⁸.

Arun’s experience is in line with Massey’s thesis that places are not autonomous

spaces but relational spaces conditioned by cultural encounters. His experience shows that the U.S. is not an exception to patriarchal norms but another ordered space governed by alternative social norms “Place is not an autonomous thing but a product of continuous social interactions”⁹.

IV. Interconnectedness of India and the U. S. :

Rather than existing as discrete cultural bubbles in India and America, *Fasting, Feasting* presents them as interdependent spaces where familial and cultural norms cross geographic boundaries. The life of Uma and Arun serves to highlight the manner in which their own environments are shaped by learned values, demonstrating that migration does not discontinue cultural affiliations but solidifies them through contrast and negotiation. Although they are in foreign nations, both characters have the same constraints, Uma within her own family home in India and Arun within the structured norms of his American host family. Their experiences confirm that cultural expectations are not confined to a single location but travel across borders and affect people despite geographical displacement.

Her mother appealed to Arun. ‘Arun, you must eat properly. You must excel in your studies. You are going so far away, you must not allow yourself to fall ill’¹⁰.

“Yet his father held firm, ‘Arun is emigrating to America, he is emigrating to learn there, to live there-he has to accommodate. He has to become learned. He has to modernize’”¹¹.

This dependence is in line with the thesis of globalization of Arjun Appadurai that focuses on transnational cultural value flow. Appadurai (1996) argues that since identities and traditions persist even in transnational contexts, globalization is not only economic but also cultural. This phenomenon is evident in Arun's assimilation issue; even when he physically moves to another country, his family and scholarly paradigms that constitute him remain unchanged. This shows how India and the United States are mutually dependent places relative to each other, supporting the theory that place is socially constructed.

"Globalization involves the deterritorialization of culture, whereby ideas, traditions, and social norms cross national borders, building identities in distant locations"¹².

V. Cultural and Generational Shifts in the Progressive Sense of Place :

Uma and Arun's diverse perceptions of place speak to generational differences in coping with cultural expectations. Although Uma is firmly tied by her family's conventional values, Arun is physically able to get away but not psychically as he is similarly attached to the same expectations. Their narratives explore how cultural change impacts one's interaction with place, where youth may be physically more mobile yet still grapple with deeply seated family obligations. The total absence of agency in Uma's existence is because of gender-specific limitations that validate male autonomy over female independence, whereas

Arun, exercising his freedom, ends up residing in alienation, rather than liberty, in his new space. This contends that freedom does not necessarily ensure autonomy; cultural indoctrination still reigns over people's understandings of and relations within the spaces that they inhabit.

"Uma was to be married. All was to be done for her. She was not consulted"¹³.

"The unmarried daughter was to stay at home and look after her parents"¹⁴.

This struggle with place and identity relates to Edward Relph's (1976) existential insideness and outsideness theory. Relph asserts that people are located differently emotionally and socially according to their experience of place. Uma's forced home imposes an enforced insideness where she is located in an environment that does not allow her development. Arun, meanwhile, is in a position of outsideness, i.e., physically in the U.S. yet emotionally and culturally elsewhere. What this experience does show is that place is not any objective truth but a social and emotional construct.

"Place is not only a geographic location but an experiential construction identified by means of belonging, alienation and cultural significance"¹⁵.

Conclusion :

The critique of *Fasting, Feasting* through Doreen Massey's radical sense of place points out the novel's investigation of place as fluid, relational, and socially constructed. Anita Desai illustrates how gender roles, family expectations and cultural change determine spatial experiences

instead of them being fixed or neutral. Uma's house in India, a space of repression and patriarchal domination, is distinct from Arun's disaffiliation in America but both situations guarantee that space is negotiated under orders of power and social hierarchies. In highlighting the way spaces get re-organized under relation and boundaries, the novel supports Massey's perspective that place remains in process in movement, not static in one position.

Desai's exploration of spatial, cultural and generational shifts problematizes strict definitions of belonging and identity. By offering Uma and Arun's competing yet interlocking narratives, the novel decries the restrictiveness of conventional and contemporary space alike. The approach supports the fact that cultural norms cross borders, influencing individuals' agency and place relationships through generations. More generally, this book offers an account of how characters in young adult literature negotiate culture and developing identity. At a time when globalization attempts to rearrange concepts of home and belonging, *Fasting, Feasting* offers a valuable model for analysis of the role of place as a changing category for shaping identity, agency, and processes of self-making.

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Confronting Mortality : A Heideggerian Reading on Paulo Coelho's 'Veronica Decides to Die'

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Existential dichotomy is a pervasive and relevant topic in today's world. The notion of death has been explored and re-examined in literature, including Paulo Coelho's *Veronica Decides to Die*. This study aims to analyse the novel *Veronica Decides to Die* through the lens of Martin Heidegger's philosophy. Through a meticulous analysis of the characters' lived experiences and consequent actions portrayed in the novel, this research endeavours to elucidate and expound upon the conceptual dichotomy of "Theyin" and "Thyin" as propounded by the eminent philosopher Martin Heidegger. Heidegger's concept of "Theyin" refers to the influence of societal norms and expectations on individuals, while "thyin" signifies an authentic mode of being true to oneself. Veronica's journey in the novel encapsulates this existential struggle as she grapples with societal pressures and her own inner turmoil.

Existing research on "Veronica Decides to Die" has predominantly delved into themes such as mental health, personal

growth, and self-discovery. However, a notable void in the literature is apparent when it comes to scrutinizing the novel through a Heideggerian perspective. This analysis aims to address this gap by examining how Heidegger's concepts of death and authenticity can offer insights into the characters' encounters with existential dichotomy and inauthenticity within the narrative. Furthermore, prior studies exploring the convergence of literature and Heidegger's philosophy have demonstrated the substantial potential for comprehending and interpreting literary works through his philosophical frameworks. This study employs a qualitative textual analysis of 'Veronica Decides to Die' through the lens of Heidegger's philosophical concepts, particularly 'Theyin' and 'Thyin,' as well as his notions of authenticity and being-towards-death. Heidegger's existential philosophy provides a suitable framework for examining the characters' struggles with societal expectations and their pursuit of authentic existence, aligning with the novel's exploration of existential themes.

To delve deeper into this analysis, it is imperative to scrutinize the specific moments in the novel where Veronica is confronted with the “Theyin” and “thyin” dichotomy. This examination will shed light on how Heidegger’s philosophy can be applied to the characters’ motives and choices, ultimately providing a profound understanding of Coelho’s exploration of existential themes. Furthermore, an exploration of Heidegger’s concept of “being-towards-death” will enrich the analysis, as Veronica’s contemplation of mortality and the meaning of life intertwines with this philosophical notion. By delving into Veronica’s existential crisis and her confrontation with the inevitability of death, we can gain a deeper insight into the existential themes present in the novel.

True to the statement of Rousseau that Man is born free but everywhere in chains, an individual when born is free but once he enters into this world he is attached with several tags and is bound to follow certain unquestionable norms framed by the society. In the uproar of these norms the real self of the individual gets tarnished and submerged and therefore there always exists a dichotomy between ‘what one wants to be’ and ‘what others want one to be’.

All the main characters in this novel *Veronika Decides to die* namely Veronika, Eduard, Mari and Zedka face the existential dichotomy mentioned above. Indeed, the statement by Rousseau holds true in many aspects of life. From the moment we are born, society imposes various expectations and norms upon us, which can often feel like chains that restrict our freedom.

In the novel “*Veronika Decides to Die*” by Paulo Coelho, this existential dichotomy is depicted through the experiences of its main characters - Veronika, Eduard, Mari, and Zedka. Each of them grapples with the conflict between their own desires and aspirations versus what society dictates they should be. Veronika, for instance, feels trapped in a mundane existence and decides to take her own life as an act of rebellion against societal norms. However, her decision leads her down a path that challenges her preconceived notions about happiness and freedom.

Veronica’s failed suicide attempt lands her in Vilete, a mental asylum. Dr. Igor believing that when people have an awareness of death, will get an awareness of life, lies to Veronika by telling her that she is suffering from an acute heart failure because of the over dose of the pills she took to end her life and is left only with a maximum of seven days’ time to live. Veronica is initially relieved thinking that she would be successful in her decision to end her life at the end of a week’s time. Little did she know that the actual feeling of death would increase her affinity towards living. Also, the time she spent with the inmates especially Eduard, Zedka and Mari reverses her attitude towards life. To Quote,

“Hatred. Something almost as physical as walls, pianos or nurses. She could almost touch the destructive energy leaking out of her body. She allowed the feeling to emerge, regardless of whether it was good or bad; she was sick of self-control, of masks, of appropriate behavior. Veronika wanted to spend her remaining two or three days of life behaving as inappropriately as she could.” (Coelho 41)

As Veronica interacts with these characters and navigates her own existential crisis, the novel offers a profound exploration of the complexities of human existence. Veronica's contemplation of mortality and the meaning of life intertwines with Heidegger's concept of "being-towards-death," as she grapples with the inevitability of her own mortality. This profound examination of existential themes not only enriches the discourse on existentialism in literature but also deepens our comprehension of the intricacies of human existence in the face of societal expectations.

During her stay in Villette, Veronica questions the meaning of her existence and confronts the existential dilemma of authenticity versus conformity. She encounters other patients who exhibit both Theyin and thyin qualities, further highlighting the tension between societal expectations and individual authenticity. Upon her arrival at Villette, Veronica is met with a diverse array of characters, each representing different facets of the "Theyin" and "thyin" dichotomy. Among them is Eduard, a patient who appears to have succumbed to societal expectations and is resigned to his fate within the confines of the mental institution. His resignation and acceptance of his prescribed role within the institution embody the essence of "Theyin," as he conforms to the expectations imposed upon him by society and the institution.

Eduard finds himself torn between his passion for music and societal pressures to conform to a more stable career choice. This inner struggle causes him great distress as he tries to find a balance between his personal dreams and societal expectations. Eduard in his earlier days failed to relate

with his classmates and was shy. Slowly he developed friendship with a Brazilian Girl and his parents were happy. But his parents begin to notice a sea change in his behaviour. He begins to bring home strange books and gets addicted to drugs. At one point begins to have visions of Paradise and ends up in Villette. After meeting Veronika his perceptions about life gets altered and he escapes from Villette along with Veronika.

Mari faces similar challenges as she tries to break free from the confines of an unhappy marriage but is constantly reminded of the consequences such actions might have on her reputation within society. She battles with this dichotomy between following her heart's desires or succumbing to social pressure. Mari, a fellow patient in the asylum confines herself in Villette on her own accord though she is no longer ill. She simply denies the outside world. Prior to her time in Villette, Mari had been a successful lawyer. She attains a stage where she no longer finds meaning in her job and she doesn't receive support from anyone around her when she decides to make a change. Subsequently she ends up having panic attacks and sent to Villette by her husband. Though she recovers she stays adamant and remains in Villette. To Cite

"I have lived with two sorts of people: those who have no chance of ever going back into the society and those who are completely cured but who prefer to pretend to be mad rather than face up life's responsibilities. I want and need to learn myself again, have to convince myself that I'm capable of taking my own decisions." (Coelho 63)

Zedka's story explores how even societal labels can confine individuals. As a mentally ill patient in an institution deemed "crazy" by society's standards, she fights against being defined solely by her diagnosis while yearning for acceptance beyond those imposed boundaries. Despite the challenges she faces, Zedka remains authentic to herself, expressing her true desires and aspirations without yielding to the pressures of societal norms. Her resilience and unwavering commitment to her individuality serve as a compelling contrast to Veronica's own internal struggle.

Through these characters' journeys in "Veronika Decides to Die," Coelho highlights how individuals often struggle with their true identities due to societal expectations. The novel prompts us to question whether we can truly be free when we are constantly bound by others' perceptions and judgments. Ultimately, it serves as a reminder that breaking free from these chains requires courage and self-discovery, as we strive to align our actions with our authentic.

Thus, all these characters face social pressures but in a different context which had led them to build the unreal selves as a result of which they had lost their self-identities. They in fact attain the state which Heidegger calls as the inauthentic state. As Veronica interacts with these characters and navigates her own existential crisis, the novel offers a profound exploration of the complexities of human existence. Veronica's contemplation of mortality and the meaning of life intertwines with Heidegger's concept of "being-towards-death," as she grapples with the inevitability of her own mortality. This profound examination of existential themes not only enriches the

discourse on existentialism in literature but also deepens our comprehension of the intricacies of human existence in the face of societal expectations.

Heidegger's concept of facticity, or thrownness, suggests that human beings are born into a world already shaped by social norms and expectations. This can lead to a sense of existential dichotomy, where individuals feel torn between their own desires and the expectations of others. The characters in *Veronika Decides to Die* experience this dichotomy in different ways, with Veronika suppressing her desire to become a pianist, Eduard repressing his first love, and Mari confining herself in Villette due to societal pressures. Heidegger's notion of authenticity provides a framework for understanding how individuals can reclaim their true selves by confronting death and embracing their own existence.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger delineates the features that constitute a *daesein* or human being. Firstly, *facticity or thrownness*, which signifies that a human being is forced into a hub of relations which impacts his or her world. Secondly *existentiality* implies that the various components of the world helps one to realise oneself. *Fallenness* is the third feature which suggests that in the endeavour to create oneself a human being falls from being and becomes engrossed in the distractions of day-to-day living. The authentic being, the authentic self is buried beneath the distractions of life. (Heidegger, 166-168)

Furthermore, Heidegger asserts that there is a state of mind where one feels the sense of nothingness, of loss, of the emptiness when he or she looks at life in its

totality oriented towards death. In such a state, the human self perceives itself as a whole, as being-to-death. In other words, death is the seminal agent that constitutes our existence and course of life.

In *Introducing Heidegger*, Jeff Collins and Howard Selina interpret *Dasein* (human being) in terms of relationships that *Dasein* relates with itself and other things. The relationship between *Dasein* and other things can refer to the situation that *Dasein* has to live with other people in society. Heidegger called this relationship “being-with-others” (63-65). It refers to co-existing with others in the society by excluding the real self. By way of explanation living in the society can result in *Daesin*’s self-neglect. In order to avoid conflicts with the society, *Daesin* has to adjust himself or herself adhering to the regulations to avoid conflicts. Lot of compromise has to be done and it hurts *Daesin*’s feelings because there is always a void created because *Daesin* does not get what he or she wants. This condition is labelled by Heidegger as ‘thysself’. When a *daesin* is governed by other’s values and move away from the true- self, he or she becomes ‘theyself’. In the modern society people get lost in theyself easily as there are several things that influence *daesin*.

All the main characters under study face this they-self situation. Veronika suppresses her desire to become a pianist for the sake of her parents who feared that she may not be accepted by the society. Eduard represses his first love for the sake of her family. Mari remains in Villette fearing that the society may not accept her. She was cured of her illness but out of the fear that the society may treat her as mentally ill, she chooses to remain inside.

Though the relationship with others in the society or ‘being-with-others’ can lead *Dasein* to lose its real self and being as ‘they-self’, true to the phrase no man can live as an island, *Daesin* cannot live alone in the world. Thus, the notion of ‘theyself’ is inescapable.

Dasein must interact with others one way or other. However, according to Paul Gerner in *Heidegger’s Being and Time: an Introduction*, *Dasein* can choose what it wants to be because it understands its being as a possibility. There are two modes of possibility that *Dasein* can choose to be: authentic or inauthentic. If *Dasein* dares to reveal itself and go against the social values, Heidegger called it authentic. But if *Dasein* surrenders to the social values or being ‘they-self’, Heidegger called it inauthentic.

Authenticity refers to *Dasein*’s ability to claim its own existence or to be one’s own self without relying on others, as opposed to inauthenticity, which entails relying on others rather than on oneself. As a result, authentic *Dasein* refers to persons who make decisions without being influenced by social standards. They are aware of their true desires for their lives, and the most crucial aspect is that they are able to remain true to themselves despite being surrounded by others. This allows true people to live fully since their spirits are not broken. Inauthentic *Dasein*, on the other hand, refers to persons who are obedient to others and thus lose their true identities.

Heidegger believed that the only way to overcome inauthentic *Dasein* is to face death and return to the true self. Many critics see Heidegger’s approach of facing

death as assisting Dasein in reclaiming his authenticity by forcing Dasein to embrace the temporal nature of existence. Dasein quits adhering to objects or any norms once it realises that nothing is permanent. Dasein will then be more self-aware. Finally, Dasein recognises the distinction between himself and others in society. This realisation of death can assist Dasein in releasing themselves from themselves, achieving liberation, and becoming authentic.

In the context of Heideggerian philosophy, the inauthentic state is characterized by a disconnection from one's true self, often due to societal pressures. This can be seen in the characters of "Veronica Decides to Die" where Veronica, Mari and Eduard each suppress their genuine desires and aspirations in favor of societal expectations. The inauthentic state can manifest as a type of existential suicide, a renunciation of one's potential for authentic living.

Veronika's attempt to end her life physically is a drastic response to her profound sense of entrapment within the 'Theyin' - the collective norm that shapes individual existence. This act can be seen as a denial of her own possibilities for authentic Being and a rejection of life perceived as inescapably inauthentic.

Mari and Eduard's social suicide is a metaphor for their withdrawal from societal engagement. They reclude into the mental institution, which symbolizes their surrender to the 'Theyin', effectively renouncing their place in the social world and their potential for authentic relationships.

Heidegger suggests that an authentic state can only be achieved by confronting and accepting the reality of one's mortality, the concept of "being-towards-death."

For Veronica, Mari and Eduard, the confrontation with death within the institution's walls serves as a catalyst for profound self-reflection and re-evaluation of life.

It is through the lens of mortality that the characters' perceptions begin to transform. They move from a state of existential despair to one where they can rediscover and reclaim their own desires and identities. Veronika, in particular, comes to see her life as a set of possibilities to be embraced rather than escape from.

In Heidegger's view, the novel exemplifies the idea that the notion of death is not an end but rather a passage to a more authentic life. As each character comes to terms with their finitude, they move away from the 'Theyin' and begin to experience the freedom of living as their true selves - the 'Thy in.' They achieve a state of liberation from the expectations that once constrained them, illustrating Heidegger's belief that an authentic existence is accessible through the honest confrontation with our own mortality. This transformative journey underscores the profound philosophical claim that the acknowledgment of our mortality can lead to an awakening and a reclaiming of our individual agency. This shift from inauthenticity to authenticity, from societal expectation to self-realization, is at the heart of Heidegger's existential analysis. By recognizing the temporality and finitude of life, Veronica, Mari and Eduard are able to break free from the illusions of 'Theyin' and step into a life that is truly their own. The embracing of death as an inherent part of life empowers them to live more fully, authentically, and with a newfound appreciation for the richness of their existence.

In “Veronica Decides to Die”, Paulo Coelho uses these character arcs to explore the transformative potential of existential crises. Heidegger’s concepts provide a robust framework for understanding this metamorphosis. The novel, thus, becomes a testament to the idea that by facing the reality of death, one can indeed find a more meaningful and authentic way to live. This paradox that death can lead to a fuller appreciation of life is one of the many reasons why Heidegger’s philosophy continues to resonate within the fields of existentialism and beyond, illuminating paths to self-discovery and authentic being even amidst the most challenging of life’s moment

In conclusion, this analysis of Veronica Decides to Die through a Heideggerian lens has shed light on the characters’ experiences of existential dichotomy and inauthenticity. By examining the ways in which the characters navigate societal expectations and confront death, we gain a deeper understanding of the novel’s themes and the significance of Heidegger’s philosophy. This study contributes to the existing literature on the novel and provides a new perspective on the characters’ struggles and their journey towards authenticity.

The existential journey of Veronica presents a compelling case study for an exploration grounded in Heideggerian philosophy, especially as it pertains to the concepts of ‘Theyin’ and ‘Thyin’. The character’s grappling with societal expectations and her pursuit of authenticity offers rich material for interpreting Heidegger’s ideas on existence, conformity, and being-towards-death. This article has aimed to provide a detailed reading of

“Veronica Decides to Die” that not only unpacks the existential nuances within the novel but also demonstrates the relevance of Heidegger’s thought in contemporary literature. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of existential themes in literature and the relevance of Heidegger’s thought in interpreting contemporary narratives. There is a potential for further research that might explore other philosophical frameworks or literary works that converse with the themes of authenticity and existentialism, continuing the dialogue between philosophy and the narrative arts.

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Situating the Subalterns : A Study of Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*

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Postcolonialism as a theoretical approach explores the Eurocentric outlook of exploitation and neo-colonialism in the second half of the 20th century. Essentially, it interrogates the Western mode of hegemonization, otherization and imposition of master narratives upon the colonised people by the colonisers. In this regard, Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) delve deeply into the historical and cultural underpinnings of the various Western stereotypes that deem the East as 'exotic', 'uncivilized' and 'inferior' which have been instrumental in justifying and perpetuating western dominance over the East as the 'other'.

In Postcolonial discourse, the concept of the 'other' serves as a fundamental theme, deeply rooted in G. W.F Hegel's master-slave dialectics and the intricate interplay between the 'self' and the 'other', which he theorises in the chapter entitled "On Independence and Dependence of Self Consciousness" in his influential book *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). Hegel's philosophical framework provides a lens through which to explore the inherent

complexities of power dynamics, identity construction and the relationships between dominant and subordinate groups that exist between different social, cultural, and political groups. The concept was later reinforced by the modern philosopher Emanuel Levinas in his seminal work *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (1961). In this work, he accentuates the ongoing conflict and tension between the central aspects of a system or structure and its peripheral or marginal elements. Levinasian perspective was further upheld and developed by Derrida, in his work "Politics of Friendship" (1994). Derrida asserts the need to replace the dominance of the colonial master's language and culture with a more democratic approach, emphasizing the significance of embracing an inclusive and respectful attitude towards different linguistic and cultural traditions within society. The dialectical relationship between master and slave, along with Levinas and Derrida's conceptualisations of the 'other' can be cogently associated with Karl Marx's dichotomous understanding of the bourgeois and proletariat. These conceptualisations lay the groundwork for the exploration of the complex and inter-

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connected theories of hegemony and subaltern by the influential Italian Neo-Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci, which continues to be influential in contemporary academic discourse.

The term 'subaltern' has its roots in the Latin word 'subalternus,' where 'sub' denotes 'below' and 'alternus' stands for 'every other.' This term is used to describe individuals or groups, those who have limited access to power and resources within a social or political hierarchy. As a corollary to postcolonial studies, the concept of the subaltern has been extensively explored, where scholars examine the circumstances and standpoint of those, who have been historically silenced or overlooked. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian philosopher and Marxist theorist in his *Prison Notebooks* (1929-1935), conceptualized the term 'subaltern' to encompass the deprecated and persecuted workers and peasants who were subjected to degradation and subjugation by the National Fascist Party led by Benito Mussolini in Italy. In his analysis, Gramsci highlighted the experiences of these subaltern groups who were bereft of their voices within the broader framework of hegemony and power dynamics.

In the field of subaltern theoretical framework, various distinct categories can be identified, such as the 'old subaltern', representing historical perspectives of voiceless 'other' which Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak advocates in her ground-breaking work *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988), whereas, the 'new subaltern', reflects the autonomy of the subalterns recommended by Antonio Gramsci. However, 'situational subalterns' refer to individuals who find themselves in a position of subordination due to some inevitable external force and

circumstances generated by societal factors such as race, colour, religion, culture and other similar factors, which have been echoed in Spivak's *The Postcolonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues* (1990).

Whereas, the 'gendered subaltern', highlights gender-based subordination as the 'other' under the web of patriarchal hegemony. In this regard, Simone de Beauvoir's views on the marginalised woman as an insignificant second-class citizen to her male counterparts in *The Second Sex* (1949), Carole Boyce Davies's criticism of the male-centric postcolonial discourse in *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject* (1994), Kristen Holst Petersen and Anna Rutherford's perspective of double marginalisation at the hands of colonialism and patriarchy in *A Double Colonial and Post-Colonial Women's Writing* (1986), also Spivak's observations on the voiceless gender subalternity in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* stand prominent.

In the realm of the South Asian subaltern discourse, the 'Subaltern Collective' led by prominent figures such as Ranajit Guha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Partha Chatterjee, Gayanendra Pandey, Gautam Bhadra, David Hardiman and Sumit Sarkar, endeavours to shed light on the historically neglected concerns of socio-economically, politically and culturally oppressed individuals. Through their scholarly work and activism, they strive to amplify the voices and experiences of marginalised communities, bringing attention to the multifaceted challenges they face within society. This concept of subaltern studies has been extensively explored by Indian Writers such as Munshi Prem Chand, Bankim Chandra

Chattopadhyay, Mahasweta Devi, Lakshminath Bezbarua, Mulkraj Anand, Jayanta Mahapatra, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Kamala Markandaya, and many more.

In the backdrop of the above discussion on subaltern studies, an attempt has been made in this paper to situate the distinct categories of subaltern such as 'old subaltern', 'new subaltern', 'situational subaltern', and 'gendered subaltern' in the exceptional work of Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954).

Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) vividly captures the intricate and profound struggles of the rural community in the wake of urban encroachment and industrialisation. The novel illustrates the profound impact of urbanization on marginalized peasants, shedding light on their trials, tribulations, and the complex dynamics of their everyday lives as they navigate through a rapidly changing world. In a once serene and agrarian society, the advent of the tannery disrupts the village's harmony. Like a whirlwind, it devoured the prosperity of the village, leaving behind nothing but a desolate wasteland which is evident in the line: "Now it is all noise and crowds everywhere, and rude young hooligans idling in the street and dirty bazaar and uncouth behaviour, and no man thinks of another but schemes only for his money." (48) This pivotal event sets off a chain of misfortunes that radically impact the lives of the protagonists of the novel, Rukmani and Nathan. As their family continues to grow, they find themselves plunged into poverty, losing their valuable land in the process. Due to this, they along with the other elders of the community, reluctantly acquiesce to the establishment of a tannery,

symbolizing the tyranny of the west on the east. For instance, Nathan could not protest when the landlord sold the land to the tannery, snatching the only means of survival for his family. He says: "We may grieve, but there is no redress" (138). This reluctant acceptance echoes the submissive voicelessness of the 'old subaltern,' underscoring their inability to assert their rights in the face of external dominance.

Contrary to the older generation, the younger members of the community express their discontent with the oppressive working conditions in the tannery. Arjun and Thambi, the two elder sons of Nathan and Rukmani are determined not to endure the same hardships and injustices their parents faced. Driven by their desire to escape poverty, they boldly decided to seek employment in the tea plantations of Ceylon, where they hoped to find better wages and improved living conditions. This bold move reflects their ardent desire to challenge the status quo and uplift themselves from their current circumstances, which signifies their emergence as 'new subalterns' striving to transform their lives by asserting their rights and aspirations.

Moreover, Nathan and Rukmani's lives have been immensely influenced by the tannery on the one hand, and by nature on the other, especially in the face of economic hardship caused by natural disasters. The heavy rains ravage their crops and also erase the fruits of their hard work, leaving them struggling to survive. Conversely, drought exacerbates their difficulties, leading to starvation and poverty. The relentless impact of these natural calamities has deeply affected their livelihoods and well-being. Unable to alter their fate, they surrender to the vagaries of nature,

thereby being succinctly situated as 'situational subalterns'. Furthermore, their desperate situation takes a tragic turn when their fourth son, Raja, falls victim to the tannery's watchman's brutality. Compelled by the desperate need to provide for his family, Raja resorts to stealing calfskin from the tannery. This blighted decision leads to a fatal encounter with the watchman, resulting in Raja's untimely death. The family's already dire circumstances are compounded by this devastating loss, leaving them to grapple with both grief and hardship.

When the family loses their land, it becomes the last straw, leaving them with no choice but to leave their village and seek support from their son, Murugan, who lives in the city. This loss of land impacts their livelihood and compels them to uproot their lives and migrate in search of a new beginning. If the tannery had not been established, the villagers would have likely dedicated their efforts to agricultural work, thus maintaining their natural environment. Unfortunately, the introduction of technology and development has marginalised them, forcing them to be a 'situational subaltern' and pursue urban opportunities with little success. This is exemplified by the tragic story of Nathan, who, in his pursuit of financial stability, falls seriously ill and ultimately loses his life while working in the stone quarry.

Apart from other subaltern categories, *Nectar in a Sieve* can also be critically explored in the light of female subalternity. Within the interpellation of the patriarchal society, women often mould their characters to fit into the norms of the society, and in that process, they tend to lose their identity. In this novel, regardless of all the sufferings inflicted upon Rukmani,

she strives to be the epitome of resilience in the arduous situations of her family. Her fortune has been robbed at a young age when she becomes the victim of child marriage and the age-old dowry system of the Indian society. Though she belongs to an affluent family, all the fortune has been spent on the extravagant marriages of her three elder sisters breaking the economic backbone like most Indian families. Consequently, she meekly accepts her fate by getting married at the age of twelve to a tenant farmer with a small amount of dowry to protect the dignity of her family. This strongly vindicates Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's concepts of gendered subaltern, bereft of dignity and voice. In this regard, Rukmani contemplates:

By the time, I came to womanhood. Even I had to acknowledge his prestige

was much diminished. Perhaps that was why they could not find me a rich

husband and married me to a tenant farmer who was poor in everything

but love and care for me, his wife, whom he took at the age of twelve (4).

Likewise, in the series of misfortune, Rukmani gets burdened with the impractical expectations of being fruitful with a child, especially a boy child which propels her to give birth to six children that indirectly cause tumultuous circumstances in their lives. However, she strongly confronts the hardships in life, firstly, being secretly treated by Dr. Kenny after her first-born to regain her childbearing capability. Secondly, she endures the adultery of her

husband, who fathers two illegitimate children of Kunthi. Thirdly, she toils herself till the last moment to fulfil the needs of her family, thereby asserting her identity as a strong woman.

Another subaltern character, Ira, the eldest daughter of Rukmani and Nathan has been victimised by her husband of being infertile after marriage, symbolising the rigid patriarchal culture of the society. Outcast by her husband, she confides in her mother, who gets her treated by the kind-hearted Dr. Kenny but to no avail as her husband remarries and leaves her as a deserted woman. Defying all societal norms, she stands as a new woman, who bear an excruciating blow to her honour by selling her flesh to safeguard her youngest brother Kuti from starvation. Unfortunately, despite all efforts, he could not be rescued from his fatal demise. As such, she becomes the ultimate exemplar of sacrifice and as a defiant 'new subaltern'.

To conclude, an overview of Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* exposes the irretrievable outcome of modernisation and industrialisation on the downtrodden people, who succumb to the exploitation of the powerful authority as an 'old subaltern'. Due to the vagaries of nature, unavoidable circumstances, conservative tradition and patriarchy, many such people are forced to be 'situational subaltern'. However, the novel further vindicates the protest of a 'new subaltern' to usher affirmative evolution in society.

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भीष्म साहनी के 'तमस' और बीरेन्द्र कुमार भट्टाचार्य के 'मृत्युंजय' उपन्यास का तुलनात्मक अध्ययन

परिस्मिता बरदलै

शोध निर्देशक

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सहायक प्राध्यापक, नगाँव गर्ल्स कॉलेज

‘तुलना’ से सामान्यतः किसी दो विषय-वस्तु के साम्य-वैषम्य का आलोचनात्मक दृष्टिकोण को समझा जा सकता है। ‘तुलना’ शब्द का अंग्रेजी पर्याय है Compare, और तुलनात्मक अध्ययन से किसी साहित्यिक कृति के तुलनीय गुण का आभास मिलता है, जिससे भिन्न-भिन्न भाषाओं के साहित्य का पारस्परिक अध्ययन किया जा सकता है। तुलनात्मक शब्द के प्रयोग के संदर्भ में मतभेद पाये जाते हैं। इसके प्रयोग के संदर्भ में इंद्रनाथ चौधुरी लिखते हैं, ‘अंग्रेजी में तुलनात्मक शब्द का प्रयोग लगभग सन् 1598 से हो रहा है क्योंकि इसी समय फ्रांसिस मेयर्स ने इसी अर्थ को ध्यान में रखकर एक पुस्तक लिखी थी जिसका शीर्षक था, “ए कम्पैरटिव डिस्कोर्स ऑफ आवर इंग्लिश पोयट्स विद द ग्रीक लैटिन एंड इटालियन पोयट्स” परंतु ‘तुलनात्मक तथा ‘साहित्य’- इन दो शब्दों का युग्म प्रयोग करते हुए पहले पहल मैथ्यु आर्नल्ड ने जब तुलनात्मक साहित्य’ पद की सृष्टि की.....।”¹ भारतीय परिप्रेक्ष्य में रवीन्द्रनाथ ठाकुर ने पहलीबार ‘विश्व साहित्य’ पद का प्रयोग किया था। उन्होंने यह स्पष्ट किया कि विभिन्न टुकड़ों में बँटे रहने के बावजूद इस पृथ्वी के साहित्य में समानताएँ हैं। प्रत्येक लेखक द्वारा रचित साहित्य एक पूर्ण इकाई है तथा वह इकाई समूचे मानव समाज की सार्वभौम सृजनात्मकता की अभिव्यक्ति है। तुलनात्मक अध्ययन मुख्यतः एक से अधिक भाषाओं में रचित

साहित्य के अध्ययन को प्रेरित करते हैं। तुलनात्मक साहित्य को परिभाषित करते हुये इंद्रनाथ चौधुरी लिखते हैं “तुलनात्मक साहित्य एक स्वतंत्र विषय है जिससे विभिन्न भाषाओं में रचित साहित्यों की एक सम्पूर्ण इकाई के रूप में व्यापक पहचान की और अधिक संभावना बनती है। यह काम केवल विभिन्न भाषाओं में रचित साहित्यों की तुलना से नहीं वरन मानवीय ज्ञान तथा प्रतीतियों, विशेष रूप से कलात्मक तथा वैचारिक क्षेत्रों के साथ तुलना से ही संभव हो सकता है। तात्पर्य है कि तुलनात्मक साहित्य के अध्ययन में क्षेत्रीयता अथवा भौगोलिकता (Geographically) तथा वैचारिक जातिगतता (Generically) के आश्रय से साहित्य के विश्लेषण का प्रसार होता है।”² तुलनात्मक साहित्य दो समाज-संस्कृति के बीच सेतु के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित होते हैं, इसे गहन और सुव्यवस्थित करने हेतु इसका अध्ययन विश्लेषण पद्धति निश्चित किया गया है। उदाहरणतः अध्ययन की सादृश्य संबंधात्मक प्रविधि, अध्ययन की परंपरा प्रविधि, प्रभाव प्रविधि, स्वीकृति तथा संचरण प्रविधि, सौभाग्य प्रविधि, संबंधात्मक द्वन्द्वात्मक प्रविधि, तुलनात्मक आलोचना की प्रविधि। अतः इसके जरिये तुलनात्मक अध्ययन सुव्यवस्थित, गहन तथा कलात्मक हो सकते हैं और अंतर्विद्यावर्ती तुलनात्मक अध्ययन हेतु ये पद्धतियाँ उपयोगी भी साबित होती हैं।

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विभिन्न भाषाओं में साहित्य सृजन होने के नाते भारतीय साहित्य तुलनात्मक साहित्य के समतुल्य है और इनके अध्ययन में तुलना का सहारा लेना आवश्यक है। अलग-अलग भाषा-साहित्य, समाज-संस्कृति के वाहक भारतवर्ष की बहुभाषीय स्वरूप के कारण भारतीय साहित्य की ऐतिहासिक संकल्पना तुलनात्मक साहित्य के आधार पर ही संभव है। भारतीय साहित्यिक इतिहास के अंतर्गत वैदिक, संस्कृत, पालि, प्राकृत आदि साहित्यों के साथ उर्दू तथा आधुनिक प्रांतीय भाषा की साहित्य भी सम्मिलित है। तुलनात्मक अध्ययन भारत के विभिन्न प्रांतीय परिवेश, भाषिक संरचना, साहित्यिक एवं सांस्कृतिक क्रिया-प्रतिक्रियाओं से हमें परिचित करा सकते हैं। साथ ही प्रांतीय तथा सर्वभारतीय अस्मिता में एक संबंध भी स्थापित हो सकता है। तुलनात्मक भारतीय साहित्य के संदर्भ में इन्द्रनाथ चौधरी लिखते हैं “आज तुलनात्मक साहित्य का प्रचार-प्रसार पश्चिम से कहीं अधिक भारत में दिखाई पड़ता है। भारत का बहुभाषिक होना इसका एक बहुत बड़ा कारण है। इसके अतिरिक्त उत्तर-आधुनिक युग में अपनी भाषा के प्रति हरेक की सचेतनता का प्रसार होने से विभिन्न भाषाओं के साहित्य को विस्तार मिला है और विश्वविद्यालयों में भाषाओं का अध्ययन एकक के साथ तुलनात्मक रूप लेने लगा है।”³ अतः इस शोध पत्र में भारत के दो आधुनिक भाषा हिन्दी और असमिया में रचित उपन्यास साहित्य का तुलनात्मक अध्ययन प्रस्तुत करने का प्रयत्न किया गया है।

भीष्म साहनी के उपन्यास ‘तमस’ का सामान्य परिचय : हिन्दी साहित्य के स्मरणीय व्यक्ति भीष्म साहनी के उपन्यास ‘तमस’ कालजयी कृति है। इसका प्रकाशन सन् 1973 में हुआ। ‘तमस’ केवल पंजाब के अंचल विशेष की कुल पाँच दिनों की कथा नहीं बल्कि स्वतन्त्रता पूर्व भारत के पंजाब प्रांत का परिवेश तथा बीसवीं सदी के भारतवर्ष की कथा है। उपन्यासकार ने स्वतन्त्रता के ठीक पहले पाशविकता के जकड़ में तहस-नहस होनेवाले जनता की कारुणिक व्यथा को उजागर करते हुये सांप्रदायिकता की रूढ़ वास्तव का चित्रण किया है। राजनीतिक

लाभ के लिए नेताओं द्वारा बार बार सांप्रदायिकता की भावना लोगों के मन में जगा दिया जाता है जिससे नेताओं का लाभ होता है। धर्म के नाम पर तो कभी राजनैतिक मुद्दों पर बार बार यह चिंगारी की तरह भभक उठते हैं। देश के गरीब जनता ही इसके दुष्परिणाम का शिकार होते हैं। भीष्म साहनी ने आज़ादी से पहले हुए सांप्रदायिक दंगों के आधार पर देश के विभिन्न समस्याओं का सूक्ष्म विश्लेषण किया है और भारतवर्ष के अंधकारमय दिनों का जब मानवीय संवेदना हिंसा-घृणा के तम याकि अंधकार से पूरी तरह ग्रसित था उसका सजीव तथा यथार्थपरक चित्रण उपन्यास में किया है।

बीरेन्द्र कुमार भट्टाचार्य के उपन्यास ‘मृत्युंजय’ का सामान्य परिचय : सन् 1942 के स्वतन्त्रता संग्राम की पृष्ठभूमि पर आधारित असम के जनजीवन का जीवंत दस्तावेज़ है ‘मृत्युंजय’ उपन्यास। उपन्यास के प्रकाशन वर्ष 1983 है। गांधीजी के नेतृत्व में हुए भारत छोड़ो आंदोलन का असम के लोगों पर जो असर हुआ उसका चित्रण करते हुए हिंसा-अहिंसा का द्वंद्व, गांधीजी के जैल जाने के बाद ‘करो या मरो’ प्रवचन सिरोधार्य कर जनता ने जिस तरह आंदोलन को गति प्रदान किया, असम के जनता के सहभागिता का हूबहू चित्रण उपन्यास में हुआ है। नेतृत्वहीन देश के जनता न चाहते हुए भी हिंसात्मक कार्य में लिप्त हुए, वैष्णव नीति आदर्श में चलनेवाले उपन्यास के पात्र महदा गोसाईं भी हिंसा-अहिंसा के उलझन में दोयम दर्जा स्थिति से ग्रस्त है। पराधीन लोगों का कोई धर्म नहीं होता और पराधीन देश में भगवान संतुष्ट नहीं रहता, इसी भावना को रखते हुए उपन्यास के पात्र स्वतन्त्रता संग्राम में कूद पड़ते हैं। उपन्यास के केंद्र में रेल पटरी की फिसप्लेट निकालकर रेल गिराने की हिंसात्मक गति-विधि है, साथ ही उपन्यास में साधारण जनता का असीम त्याग, साहस-वीरता, मानसिक द्वंद्व, पुलिस-मिलिटारियों का साधारण जनता पर किए गए अत्याचार-उत्पीड़न का वर्णन भी है। सामाजिक विषमता, कु-संस्कार, अंध-विश्वास, असम के ग्राम्य जीवन का कलात्मक प्रत्यांकन उपन्यास में हुआ है। यह उपन्यास स्वतंत्रतापूर्व

असम का यथार्थपरक चित्रण है।

‘तमस’ और ‘मृत्युंजय’ का तुलनात्मक अध्ययन : ‘तमस’ एवं ‘मृत्युंजय’ दोनों ही उपन्यास का कथावस्तु मुख्य रूप से स्वतन्त्रता आंदोलन पर आधारित है। दोनों उपन्यासकारों ने भारतवर्ष की स्वाधीनता संग्राम के समग्र परिवेश को उकेरा है। अतः दोनों उपन्यास अलग अलग प्रांत के होने के बावजूद उसमें समानता होना अवश्यंभावी है। निम्नलिखित आधार पर उपन्यासों का एक तुलनात्मक अध्ययन करने का प्रयत्न किया गया है:

- **स्वतंत्रता पूर्व राजनैतिक परिवेश :** ‘तमस’ एवं ‘मृत्युंजय’ दोनों ही उपन्यासों में स्वतंत्रतापूर्व भारतवर्ष के राजनैतिक परिवेश का चित्रण है। ‘तमस’ के पृष्ठभूमि आज़ादी के पूर्व लोगों में फैले सांप्रदायिक भावना पर आधारित है। शहर से गाँव तक फैले सांप्रदायिकता की आग में दहकनेवाले लोगों के जीवन का सजीव वर्णन उपन्यास में है। नत्थु चमार, जिन्होंने मुरादअली के कहने पर एक सुअर का हत्या करते लेकिन वही सुअर शहर के मस्जिद के सामने मिलता है और इसके कारण सांप्रदायिक सद्भावना व्याघात होता है, और इस घटना से ही कथानक को गति मिलती है। इससे पहले लोग प्रभातफेरी में आते हैं तब कोई भी आपसी भेद-भाव नज़र नहीं आते बल्कि देशोद्धार ही मूल लक्ष्य होता है और सब मिलकर आज़ादी के नारा लगाते हैं। जातिगत या धार्मिक भेद भावरहित एक शांतिपूर्ण समाज प्रत्यक्ष होती है। मगर मस्जिद के सामने घटित घटना के पश्चात हिंदुओं के मंदिर के सामने जब एक गाय की हत्या कर फेंक दिया जाता है इससे घटना गंभीर हो जाती है। इसी वजह से शहर में फैले सांप्रदायिक भावना शनैः शनैः गाँव तक विस्तृत हो जाती है। जिसका शिकार होते हैं गाँव की साधारण जनता। हिन्दू, सिक्ख, मुसलमान के बीच भयानक दंगा होने लगते और इसमें अनेक निरीह जनता का हत्या हो जाता है। इस मामले को रोकने का काबिल डिप्टी कमिश्नर रिचर्ड है मगर वह

अपने लाभ हेतु इस कार्य को नज़रअंदाज़ करता है। इसका उल्लेख उपन्यास में इस तरह किया गया है, “अगर प्रजा आपस में लड़े तो शासक को किस बात का खतरा है।”⁴ बाद में जब हजार जनता का प्राणनाश होता है तब वे जाकर सिर्फ लाशों का हिसाब-खिताब करते हैं। उसी तरह ‘मृत्युंजय’ उपन्यास में भी हिंसात्मक गति-विधि का चित्रण है जब गांधीजी को जेल भेजा गया और अहिंसा के नीति पर लोगों का आस्था टूट गया था तब असम के साधारण जनता में डाँवाडोल हुआ कि किस राह को चुने, अंत में हिंसात्मक राह को अपनाते हुए धनपुर, महदा गोसाई, डिमि, कली बाई, भिभिराम, दधि बरदोलोई आदि ने देश हेतु मर मिटने को तैयार हुए, भारत छोड़ो आंदोलन के इस माहोल में पुलिस द्वारा निरीह जनता पर अत्याचार किए गए। सरकार पक्ष के पुलिस ने आकर जनता को पकड़कर जेल भेजने का योजना बनाए। अतः दोनों उपन्यासों में स्वतन्त्रता पूर्व राजनैतिक परिवेश का चित्रण सजीव हुआ है।

- **सामाजिक परिवेश का चित्रण :** समाज कथा साहित्य का आधार होता है, अतः दोनों उपन्यास में समाज का चित्रण अवश्य हुआ है। ‘तमस’ उपन्यास में शहर का परिवेश, बस्ती तथा गलियारे की जीवन, तथा ग्रामीण जीवन का आभास मिलता है। शहर के गली के जीवन को व्यक्त करते हुये लेखक ने लिखा है, “बाई ओर से उसे औरतों के धीमे-धीमे बतियाने और चूड़ियाँ खनकने की आवाज़ आई। उसने पास से गुजरते हुए देखा। नल के किनारे दो तीन औरतें अपने-अपने घड़े सामने रखे, बैठी बतिया रही थीं।”⁵ इसके अलावा उन्होंने दिखाया है दंगा फैलने से पहले विभिन्न जाति धर्म के लोग एक साथ एकजुट थे, एक दूसरे के प्रति सद्भाव रखते थे और एक ही स्थल के निवासी थे, मगर सांप्रदायिकता ने इसे पूरी तरह से नष्ट कर दिया और लोगों के मन में एक दूसरे के प्रति घृणा की भावना पैदा किया। उसी तरह ‘मृत्युंजय’

उपन्यास में दिखाया गया है गाँव के लोग एक साथ मिलकर देश को आज़ाद करने के लिए निकल पड़े, उनके मन में भी कोई हिंसा अथवा हीन भावना नहीं है। पहले जो वर्ण-वैषम्य समाज में था समाज से वह दूर हो जाए इसकी आशा करते हैं उपन्यास के पात्र। इसके साथ साथ असम के नैसर्गिक परिवेश का चित्रण भी उपन्यास में है। गाँव, खेती, यहाँ के पशु-पक्षी, नदियों के सौन्दर्य चित्रण उपन्यास में है। साथ ही जनजातीय त्योहार, रीति-रिवाज का उल्लेख भी उपन्यास में है। असमिया विवाह प्रथा का चित्रण भी उपन्यासकार ने किया है।

- **स्त्री जीवन का चित्रण :** समाज में स्त्री की अहम भूमिका है, घर-परिवार, रीति-रिवाज, त्योहार से लेकर जीवन के हर पड़ाव में हर क्षेत्र में स्त्री अविच्छिन्न है, उसी तरह स्त्री साहित्य के विभिन्न विधा जैसे उपन्यास, कहानी, कविता हर क्षेत्र में नज़र आती है। क्योंकि समाज और साहित्य दोनों स्त्री के बिना अधूरा हैं। 'तमस' तथा 'मृत्युंजय' दोनों ही उपन्यास में स्त्री जीवन का वर्णन है। तमस उपन्यास में नन्थु के पत्नी, बंतो, लीजा आदि स्त्री पात्र हमारे सामने उभरकर आती हैं। ग्रामीण स्त्री, शहरी स्त्री तथा मजदूर आदि विभिन्न वर्ग के स्त्री का चित्रण उपन्यास में है। नन्थु के पत्नी के साथ साथ गलियारे जीवन में व्यस्त स्त्री जीवन का चित्रण उपन्यासकार ने किया है। नल से पानी लाना, धीमे आवाज़ में बतियाने का एक नैसर्गिक चित्रण उपन्यास में हुआ है। 'मृत्युंजय' उपन्यास में उपन्यासकार ने कलीबाई, डिमि, सुभद्रा, महदा गोसाईं के पत्नी आदि अनेक स्त्री पात्र का संयोजन किया है। जो सक्रिय रूप से असम के स्वतन्त्रता संग्राम में हिस्सा लेती है। दोनों उपन्यासों में समानता यह है कि, किसी लड़ाई या दंगे में सबसे अधिक हानि स्त्री का ही होता है। सुभद्रा जैसे पात्र के जरिये 'मृत्युंजय' उपन्यास में उपन्यासकार ने इस बात को उकेरा है। दूसरी तरफ 'तमस' उपन्यास में दिखाया है कि मुसलमानों

के अत्याचार से बचने हेतु सिक्ख नारियां कुंवे में कूदकर अपना जीवन त्याग देते हैं।

- **हिंसात्मक गति-विधि के प्रभाव का चित्रण :** सांप्रदायिकता के आग में रातोंरात एक गाँव जलकर राख हो गए थे, लोग अपना घर वार, प्रियजनों को छोड़कर जान मुट्ठी में लेकर भागने का यथार्थपरक चित्रण 'तमस' में है। उसी तरह 'मृत्युंजय' उपन्यास में भी दिखाया है कि एक कार्बी गाँव एक रात में जलाकर राख कर दिये गए। हिंसा के भावना किस तरह हिन्दू धर्म के बच्चों के मन में भी भर दिया गया था उसका उल्लेख रणवीर नामक युवा पात्र के जरिये किया है। देवदत्त द्वारा युवावर्ग को प्रेरित कर हिंसात्मक कार्य करवाया जाता है, इसके लिए पहले एक मुर्गी का हत्या करना सिखाते और बाद में रणवीर के मन में हिंसा की भावना अधिक दृढ़ हो जाते हैं तो मुसलमान आदमी का हत्या करने से वह पीछे नहीं हटते। कम उम्र में उनके पास विचार-चिंतन की क्षमता कम होने के नाते वह इस तरह दूसरों के विचार चिंतन से प्रभावित होते नज़र आते हैं। उसी तरह 'मृत्युंजय' उपन्यास में भी धनपुर के मन भी सिर्फ बदला लेने की भावना तीव्र है, जिसके कारण परिणाम के बारे में सोचकर हिंसात्मक कार्य में लिप्त होते हैं। ठीक उसी प्रकार केवल बदला लेने की भावना के कारण ही 'तमस' उपन्यास में मुसलमानों ने एक एक सिक्खों के गाँव जलाए। आज़ादी की लड़ाई में मदद करने कारण ही 'मृत्युंजय' उपन्यास में दिखाया है एक रात में एक गाँव जला दिया गया। अतः दोनों ही उपन्यास में हिंसात्मक गति-विधि का चित्रण है।
- **मानवतावादी विचारधारा का चित्रण :** मानवीय मूल्य, तर्क, नैतिकता आदि दृष्टिकोण पर मानवतावादी विचारधारा निर्भर करती हैं। मानव धर्म को सर्वोपरि मानकर उपन्यासकार भट्टाचार्य ने लिखा है कि असली धर्म तो मानव धर्म है, लोगों के दुख दूर करने के लिए ही बुद्ध का अवतार हुआ और चैतन्य महाप्रभु और

शंकरदेव ने भी प्रेम के महत्व पर बल दिया है। 'तमस' उपन्यास में डिप्टी कमिशनर रिचर्ड के पत्नी लीजा ने भी मानवतावाद का जिक्र किया है। लीजा अपने पति से कहती है कि अगर वह चाहता तो हादसा रोक सकता था, तब इतने लोगों का हत्या न होते, फिसाद इतना नहीं बढ़ते। उपन्यासकारों ने मानवतावाद पर आस्था व्यक्त किया है, इसलिए मानवतावादी विचारधारा का जिक्र भी किया है।

निष्कर्ष : दोनों ही उपन्यास के कालखंड समसामयिक है और उपन्यास का ताना-बाना आज़ादी की लड़ाई को आधार बनाकर बुना गया है। स्त्री पात्र के जरिये समाज के उस सच्चाई को दिखाया है कि जंग, लड़ाई, दंगा आदि के दुष्परिणाम का शिकार स्त्री ही होती है। गरीब जनता पर भी लड़ाई या फिसाद का सबसे अधिक प्रभाव पड़ता है, नत्थु चमार, मिलखी, हरनामसिंह, बंतो, इत्रफरोश आदि इसका उदाहरण हैं। दोनों उपन्यासों में आज़ादी के लड़ाई का यथार्थ अभिव्यक्त हुआ है। भारतीय समाज जीवन, सांप्रदायिकता, मानवीय दृष्टिकोण, हिंसा अहिंसा का द्वंद्व आदि विषय वैविध्यता दोनों ही उपन्यासों में मुखर हुई है। अंततः हिन्दी साहित्य के महान उपन्यासकार भीष्म साहनी द्वारा रचित 'तमस' हिन्दी साहित्य का अमूल्य निधि है, जिसे भारत-पाक विभाजन का ऐतिहासिक दस्तावेज़ कहा जा सकता है। स्वतंत्रता संग्राम के समय पंजाब प्रांत के सामाजिक-राजनैतिक परिवेश, भारत-पाक विभाजन के त्रासदी, हिन्दू-मुस्लिम दंगे, हिंसात्मक घटना से प्रभावित स्त्री जीवन, अंग्रेजों के भूमिका के संबंध में इस उपन्यास में साहनी जी ने सावलील वर्णन किया है। दूसरी तरफ असमिया साहित्य के कालजयी रचनाकार बीरेन्द्र कुमार भट्टाचार्य के 'मृत्युंजय' उपन्यास भी असम प्रदेश के स्वतन्त्रता

संग्राम के समग्र परिवेश का दास्ताँ है। अंग्रेजों के खिलाफ विद्रोह करना, रेलपटरी से फिसप्लेट निकालकर रेल गिराना, असम के ग्रामीण जीवन में आन्दोलन का प्रभाव, हिंसात्मक परिस्थिति में कुचलती स्त्री जीवन का मार्मिक चित्रण उपन्यासकार ने किया है। दोनों उपन्यासों में राजनैतिक तथा सामाजिक पक्ष के आधार पर कई समानताएँ प्रत्यक्ष होते हैं। अपने इतिहास से परिचित होना अथवा लड़ाई जंग, सांप्रदायिक संघर्ष के दुष्परिणाम से ज्ञात होना अवश्य जरूरी है ताकि अतीत से सीखकर और भविष्य को सुंदरता, सकारात्मकता सहित आगे बढ़ाया जा सके। इसी कारण इन उपन्यासों के प्रासंगिकता आज भी हमारे समाज में है, और इसलिए दोनों उपन्यास कालजयी है।

संदर्भ सूची :

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Use of SFVs by An Art, Culture and Travel Enthusiast : An Exploratory Study of a Social Media Influencer from Haryana

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Introduction :

SFV (Short-Form Video) platforms have seen exponential growth in India particularly after the Covid-19 lockdown and the banning of TikTok in 2020. Instagram and YouTube have launched 'reels' and 'shorts' respectively and many indigenously developed SFV apps, such as Moj, Chingari, MX TakaTak, Roposo and Josh have also gained traction. Short-form videos, which typically last 90 seconds (recently Instagram increased the limit to 3 minutes) are easily created, edited and shared via mobile devices on social media platforms. They have witnessed massive growth in popularity, particularly among younger demographics. Nearly half of the screen time of young people in India aging 11-26 years is used in watching SFVs. The accessibility and ease of use have led to their widespread adoption across diverse sectors, ranging from personal expression and social interaction to marketing, education and news dissemination and many other areas of content creation.

Previous Studies :

Several studies explored the addictive potential of SFVs, examining their impact on behaviour and well-being. But few studies have also explored the utility of SFVs in disseminating meaningful and productive content to make lives better. They have also emerged as a tool by which people are making great amount of money, getting recognition and appreciation. Although the primary motive of youngsters to watch SFVs is entertainment but meaningful content such as videos promoting sustainable living, financial literacy, health and fitness and other such things are also receiving lot of attention and followers.

Study by Sonowal and Chowdhary (2024) indicated that social media can be used to promote Indian dance traditions. In their study of Bihu, a folk dance of Assam they found that YouTube is a useful tool to preserve and propagate folk dances.

Survey done by Guha et al. (2021) shows that social media marketing activities have

a significant and positive impact in creating brand awareness and brand image for handicraft products.

Findings of research done by Kolay (2016) also imply that new media can be used to generate awareness of Indian art-form in the new generation.

Social Media Influencers :

This wide popularity has given rise to the onset of social media influencers. They are individuals with a significant online following, who leverage their reach to impact audience opinions and behaviour. They create engaging content, often specializing in specific areas like fashion, cooking, beauty, gaming, travel, environment, art, motivation, lifestyle, finance etc. This targeted approach allows brands to connect with niche audiences effectively. Influencers' perceived authenticity and credibility enhance their promotional efforts. The categorization of these influencers ranges from nano (with 1K-10K followers) to mega (with one million+ followers).

In this context, the present study tries to explore the content created by a megainfluencer (with 4.5 lakh followers on Instagram and 14 lakh on YouTube) named Varsha Dahiya. She is an art and travel enthusiast; someone who continuously promotes, explores, learns and creates diverse forms of art and travel to different places. The content analysis of her Instagram reels and YouTube shorts and an in-depth interview with her reveal how SFVs can be used to engage audience around meaningful content, initiate conversation around it. It paves way for people like Varsha to showcase her talent, earn recognition and monetary benefits and pursue her passion in the field of art, travelling and creativity. Her creative

skills of digital storytelling and fire hindi speaking has enabled her to make a mark in the world of social media.

Profile of Varsha Dahiya :

Varsha Dahiya, a 22 years old girl (born on August 2, 2002), comes from a small village Gharawathi in Rohtak district of Haryana. She was fond of art since childhood but there was no art teacher in her school. Yet she participated in art competitions by learning some art on her own. She comes from a humble background with a small house in the village. She had to struggle a lot to reach to the city to pursue her higher education as transport facilities were unreliable. The few autorickshaws that were available in the village would start plying only after the seats were more than full. Till then, she had to wait. Due to lack of awareness about courses in art discipline, she opted for Political Science Honors as her graduation subject and further did her post-graduation in M.A. Political Science from Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak. She has taken one month training for learning the basics of art. She got a smartphone from her parents during first year of her graduation which she used to learn about different artforms and later to showcase it to the world through social media.

She started her channel on YouTube during Covid-19 lockdown with name Varsha Dahiya. She used to put out some motivational stories and random content on it. But the channels with name i.vasuu on Instagram and iVasuu on YouTube were started in February 2023 simultaneously. These channels gave her immense popularity and recognition. Her earlier videos went viral because of her immaculate

Hindi speaking skills and many of her followers and subscribers still appreciate her in comment section for this. She says that she loves to share content revolving around art, culture and nature. She is not a professional artist who sells her artwork, though during the early days of her work she did some commissioned work. She has a family of 13 members which includes her grandmother, mother, father, uncles, aunts and her real siblings and cousins. It was difficult to carry on art which needs a serene environment for a long interval of time. So, after completing her post-graduation, she decided to live in the city separately from her family away from her village. Her family and friends regularly visit her. She shoots and edits her videos on her own. As her social media channels are growing, so, she needs to do some promotional projects as well.

The content that the audience sees online is less than 10% of the work that she does. A great amount of time is invested in creating a single piece of art and then recording and editing the videos.

She now puts less videos of her travel journeys because she says she already spends her time before the screen at home so she wants to enjoy rather than doing the same work again. She admits that SFVs have gave her this popularity and fame.

When being asked that if both the channels were started simultaneously in 2023 why is that YouTube has three times more subscribers than followers on Instagram. She says that maybe YouTube's algorithm is like that when any content gets viral on it, a creator gains large number of subscribers instantaneously but this is not so with Instagram.

The researchers have not analysed all the comments on her short-videos and posts as it was not possible due to the numbers running in thousands. But a superficial scanning and as she told during the interview that mostly are in her favour and not negative. She gets appreciated more than being trolled. This is not to imply that it is the influencers at fault who are been trolled and trolls don't have any bad intentions. But as she says that she escapes from putting out things about her personal life or talking about any kind of sensitive content. She says that if you have become popular on social media for any reason, then you must use it responsibly to promote valuable work and not to propagate any nonsense.

With the popularity, there is risk associated with being a social media influencer as well. She says that if anyone is making it a full-time profession, putting other mainstream career options aside; then, she must be little cautious. There is no permanency here and it is full of ups and downs. First, the number of likes and views keeps fluctuating very quickly. Secondly, you may lose all that you have done till date; meaning your accounts can be hacked or suspended for no apparent reason. She has faced this incident when one of her accounts was suspended by Instagram and has not revived till date. Whether she is scared of losing all this, she says that after being on social media for a long time and learning rules of the game, she is quite convinced that she will bounce back. For her, YouTube and Instagram are platforms to share and show her creative talent. Of Course, monetary benefits, recognition and fame are also associated with it; but her devotion for art is beyond all these.

Research Methodology :

Content analysis of the SFVs on YouTube and Instagram accounts of the research subject were done to know about the type of content. This was followed by in-depth interview with the research subject through online Zoom meeting. The content of SFVs on Instagram and YouTube was same so, repetition of work was avoided.

Number of Videos on YouTube	201
Number of SFVs (i.e. 'shorts')	196
Subscribers	15.2 Lakh
Average no. of Views	2,897.67 K
Average no. of likes	259.93 K
Average no. of Comments	838.98

Table-1 : Data collected from YouTube on 23.2.2025

Total content uploaded on Instagram (reels+posts)	245
No. of SFVs (i.e. Reels)	199
Followers	449K
Likes	Not visible
Average no. of Views	905.24 K
Average no. of Comments	693.04

Table-2 : Data collected from Instagram on 28.1.2025

Table-1 and 2 highlights the popularity of channels of research subject and shows that SFVs dominates among all the other type of content like posts or long-form videos.

Paintings	Sanjhi art- Mathura, UP; Aipan art-Uttarakhand; Pattachitra- Odisha (how to make Patta and how to prepare colors for the painting from natural ingredients like ochre, rose, coal etc.); Madhubani- Bihar
Lippan Art	Writing of some chants like Gayatri mantra, Ganesh mantra, Shri Radha and depicting images of Lord Krishna and Lord Rama;
Sketching	Sketches of random followers and acquaintances;
Kalaprem series	Initiative of making 30 different artforms associated with different places of India
Travelling	Happy valley, Dalai Hills, Mall road, George Everest Peak, Gun Hill Point in Mussoorie; Iskcon, Radhey Krishna, Radhavallabh Ju temples, Nidhi van, Keshi Ghat, Prem Mandir, Holi in braj, Banke Bihari Mandir in Vrindavan; Taj Mahal in Agra; Khatu Shyam temple and Salasar Balaji in Rajasthan; Vaishno Devi in Katra, J&K; Har Ki Podi and Ganga Arti in Haridwar, Neelkanth temple, Rishikesh in UK; Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar; LalBaugcha Raja, Mumbai

Traditional clothing	Haryanvi Daman, Nauvari saree of Maharashtra, Rajasthani Poshak etc.
Kayapalat Series	Makeover of a room involving use of mud, straw and other earthy materials furnishing it with ochre colours and in old style which reminds of old kutch houses. It was one of very popular series in SFVs started by her.
Others	Daily routine while working on art;
	Phulkari embroidery and also explaining the history why it is made on handkerchief;
	Naruto art on stone;
	Daldi (storage vessel used in Haryana made of earthy materials) decoration by colours;
	Sanjhi Mata - goddess worshipped in Haryana during Navratras and made by cowdung, clay and other materials on walls

Table-3 : Categorization of SFVs involving content on Art, Culture and Travel

Henceforth, it is evident from Table 3 that SFVs created by the research subject involves different elements of Indian art, culture and tourism.

Elements in SFVs :

Use of Text :

Text is used as a caption in the description to tell about the uploaded content

in detail. For example, when the subject travelled to Mussoorie, the details of the place were given. It is also used inside the video content to clear, supplement or highlight the message.

Use of Hashtag :

Hashtags are used to find relevant content and to categorize it. It increases the reach and engagement of the target audience. For example, the subject has used #minivlog #villagelife #travelblogger etc. in her SFVs.

Use of music :

Music is used to engage the audience and keep their attention intact. For example, when the subject visited to Vrindavan she used devotional music related to Lord Krishna as the background music. It is used as per the suitability of the content.

Interaction with audience :

It can be done via DMs (Direct Messages) on through the comment section. Audience give their feedback e.g. (aap bhot achi hindi bolte ho) or share their own experience on the related content (khatu shyam jana sach me adbhut Anubhav hai). It starts conversation around the topic which increases engagement.

Use of filters, transitions, emojis, stickers and other creative features :

Their use makes SFVs more interesting, eye grabbing and captivating and it breaks the monotony.

Use of storytelling :

The visuals are accompanied by a voiceover that creatively put the things together to narrate the story behind those visuals.

Upload of SFVs in parts and different series :

As the videos are short so, the same topic is divided into different parts. For example, Iskcon temple visit is uploaded in 3 parts.

Use of cliffhanger :

A narrative device used to keep the curiosity alive. For example, *taj mahal k ander aane k bad mere Anubhav kya rhe, ye janenge kl.*

Conclusion :

This study shows that SFVs can be an effective tool in promoting Indian art, culture and tourism. The number of followers, comments and views highlight that meaningful and productive content do get attention and attraction if presented in a creative, interesting and engaging way. Moreover, the potential of SFV platforms is increasingly being harnessed by social media influencers to share their work, showcase their expertise and create an identity for themselves in addition to monetary benefits. Further studies may reveal the use of SFVs in other areas apart from those studied in this research.

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***The Kite Runner* : Reflections on Afghanistan's Environmental Destruction**

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Rachel Carson (1963), the well-known environmentalist, states in the CBS documentary, "Man is a part of nature, and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself" (Carson). For centuries, nature and humans have coexisted peacefully. However, the invention of advanced technologies, including warfare and destructive weapons, has influenced their connection, resulting in the degradation of both human existence and the natural habitat. Afghanistan, a country surrounded by hills in South Asia, has faced numerous wars, including the Soviet invasion, civil wars, Taliban rule and American intervention. These conflicts have significantly disrupted the lives of its people.

Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner*, though primarily exploring themes such as the friendship between Amir and Hassan, Amir's childhood memories in Afghanistan, his immigration to California and his return to save Sohrab and seek redemption, also touches upon the environmental changes before and after the Soviet War and Taliban rule. Through the references to the environment and its clash with war, Hosseini hints at the destruction

of the once-flourishing flora and fauna. The interconnectedness of the characters in the novel and the environment shapes our understanding of what human disaster can do mentally as well as physically to the lives of common people.

The symbolism of the pomegranate tree in the novel not only signifies nature but also the bond between Amir and Hassan, as it highlights the childhood times shared between them. Amir's act of etching their names on the tree as "the sultans of Kabul" (Hosseini, 26) and his return to the same place years later, seeing the devastated tree under Taliban rule, shows the major change in Amir's life. Just as the pomegranate tree cannot bear fruit anymore, his bond with Hassan is gone forever, as Hassan is dead now. This tree makes Amir remember his time with Hassan : "I stood under it, remembered all the times we'd climbed it, straddled its branches, our legs swinging, dappled sunlight flickering through the leaves and casting on our faces a mosaic of light and shadow" (Hosseini, 243). Though Hosseini mentions the pomegranate tree in the novel to show the conflict of the characters, the tree reflects the reality of Afgha-

nistan. Afghanistan used to be a leading exporter of pomegranates, known for their quality and size, grown using traditional methods.

Published in 2021, a *New York Times* article hints at the Taliban's power affecting traditional methods of agriculture. Abdul Hamid, a farmer in Arghandab, has witnessed the destruction of over 800 pomegranate trees. Another pomegranate farmer, Mohammad Omar, now grows poppies due to his poor financial condition. The strict export policy of the Taliban has hindered their communication with the outside world. The quote in the article describes the repercussions of the war on the trees: "Pomegranates died on their branches as field hands waited for the airstrikes and mortars and bursts of machine gun fire to stop" (Gibbens-Neff & Shah, 2021).

Hosseini artfully intertwines cultural symbols into his narrative, not only referencing the pomegranate, Afghanistan's national fruit, but also the tulip, its national flower. The initial mention of tulips occurs as Amir recalls Hassan singing Hazara songs "about Tulip fields" (Hosseini, 75), evoking images of natural beauty and cultural heritage. Furthermore, the act of planting tulips with Baba in the garden emphasises their significance in Afghan culture. Pomegranates symbolise fertility, while tulips represent purity, both emblematic of Afghan identity. Through these references, Hosseini highlights the destruction of these crops and the loss of their symbolic meanings in the wake of war's devastation.

The symbolism extends beyond the lush vegetation of Baba's backyard, once

flourishing with cherry trees, tomatoes, mint, peppers and a row of corn. The variety of crops cultivated in the garden not only provided sustenance but also reflected the diverse tapestry of Afghan cuisine and agricultural traditions. Amir and Hassan affectionately dubbed it "the wall of Ailing Corn" (Hosseini, 5). Rahim Khan discloses that "a rocket destroyed a whole section of that wall in the middle of the night early that fall" (Hosseini, 193). However, the garden's transformation into a desolate wasteland mirrors the erosion of familial ties and the loss of innocence after war. The destruction wrought by the rocket attack symbolises the nature of violence, which spares neither the innocent nor the cherished memories of the past. The garden's evolution into a makeshift grave for Farzana and Hassan's stillborn child represents the ultimate tragedy, as it embodies the loss of hope and the shattered dreams of future generations. In one depiction, Hosseini conveys that "mines were planted like seeds of death" (Hosseini, 126). The comparison between mines and seeds shows the contrast between seeds, which give life to a tree, and mines, which take the lives of people—both buried in the land. Moreover, the image of planting "seeds of death" evokes a sense of betrayal, as the very earth upon which life should flourish becomes a source of destruction and death. Chawla (2000) asserts that landmines have inflicted severe socio-economic consequences in Afghanistan, including leaving agricultural areas barren and resulting in deforestation.

This disruption in the natural ecosystem sets off a chain reaction, resulting in soil erosion and heightened vulnerability to droughts. The decline of Afghanistan's

forest area is exemplified by the drastic reduction from 3.4% to 2.6% within ten years (Formoli, 66), further plummeting to 1.8% in 2022 (tradingeconomics.com). These figures highlight the severity of the environmental crisis facing Afghanistan, where once-lush forests are rapidly disappearing due to human activities compounded by the damages of war. Hosseini's portrayal of this environmental crisis through the lens of characters like Amir and Farid underlines the interconnectedness of human conflict and environmental degradation. Farid elucidates that locals resort to cutting down trees for firewood during the winter, emphasising the necessity for survival in harsh conditions. Additionally, the Soviets partook in tree cutting, driven by security concerns, as the dense foliage was often exploited as hiding spots by insurgents known as "snipers." (Hosseini, 227).

In Chapter Three of *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini, employing the perspective of Amir, transports readers to the peaceful setting of Ghargha Lake. Hassan skipping a stone eight times on the surface of the lake shows the innocence and joy of the children. Also, this location served as a cherished picnic spot for Amir where he spent quality time with his father. The river, once described as having "water... a deep blue and sunlight glittered on its looking glass-clear surface" (Hosseini, 14), is now supplanted by the Kabul River, which stands dry and devoid of water in the novel. Today, Ghargha Lake faces an uncertain future, its waters receding rapidly due to the compounding effects of climate change-induced droughts plaguing Afghanistan. Similarly, the Kabul River, bearing the scars of conflict and war, now stands

as a contrasting testament to the environmental degradation wrought by human conflict and negligence. In an article by Muhammad Idrees, the human actions affecting the Kabul River are highlighted: "People from all over the world visited Kabul and enjoyed its clean air... Today the water is polluted with sewage and garbage. The bridges that cross it are used as shelter by drug addicts, who impose a further health hazard to passers-by and those living close by. The smell of the water is unbearable" (Idrees, 2020).

Hosseini also depicts the poor air quality in the novel. Amir's "seamless" and "blue" sky in his childhood (Hosseini, 45) shows the purity and harmony in the country, but after years, his description is replaced by "haze of dust" and "plume of smoke" (Hosseini, 227). Amir reflects on the times when the air used to be filled with the scent of sugarcane across the plains near Jalalabad, showing cultural symbolism that is now absent. He realises that the sweetness he once knew is no longer present: "in the old days... sugarcane... impregnated the city's air with a sweet scent. I closed my eyes and searched for the sweetness. I didn't find it" (Hosseini, 216). Thus, the description broadens the scope of the poor air pollution in the city, which is a result of the war.

It is evident that Hosseini reflects the real condition of ecological damage in *The Kite Runner*. With the above mentioned references, it is evident that Hosseini's purpose of depicting specific trees and plants is not just a random act of storytelling, but serves a realistic landscape for the readers to understand the environmental conditions of Afghanistan. After 2021, due to the Taliban takeover, the conditions have wor-

sened and international organizations such as the United Nations and other NGOs should support the well-being of the people and nature. The United Nations, along with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme, has supported land and forest management, provided food aid and implemented various infrastructure projects. (unsdg.un.org, 2022) However, after the comeback of the Taliban, the development has slowed down after The United States took its steps back from the country. Neighboring countries-Iran, Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan-which share rivers can implement policies and management initiatives to protect rivers and forests. Hence, peace and cooperation among nations can serve and save war-torn countries like Afghanistan.

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अंगिकांचल लोकगाथा 'बिहुला-विषहरी' में निहित लोकतत्व

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‘लोकगाथा’ शब्द की व्युत्पत्ति :

लोकगाथा या कथात्मक गीत को अंग्रेजी में ‘बैलेड’ शब्द से अभिहित किया जाता है। इसकी व्युत्पत्ति लैटिन भाषा के ‘वेप्लेर’ शब्द से हुआ है; जिसका अर्थ है- ‘नृत्य करना’। कालान्तर में इसका प्रयोग लोकगाथाओं के लिए किया जाने लगा। पाश्चात्य साहित्य अथवा अंग्रेजी भाषा में इसे ठंससंक (इसंसंक) कहते हैं जिसका शाब्दिक अर्थ ‘लम्बा गीत’ होता है।¹

‘लोकगाथा’ का शाब्दिक रूप :

लोकगाथा गीतात्मक प्रस्तुति है। लोकगाथा के लिए अनेक शब्द प्रचलित हैं। रूसी में ‘विलीना’, स्पेनिश में ‘रोमांश’, डेनिस में ‘वाइज’, यूक्रेन में ‘ड्रमी’, सर्वियन में ‘पेस्मी’ एवं भारतीय भाषा गुजराती में ‘कथागीत या पवाड़ा’, असमिया में ‘मालिता’, डोगरी में ‘कारक’, मैथिली में ‘लोकगाथा’, राजस्थानी में ‘गीतकथा’, ब्रज में ‘प्रबंधगीत या पवारा’, मराठी और छत्तीसगढ़ी में ‘पंवाड़ा’, मालवी में ‘पंवाड़ो’, भोजपुरी और मगही में ‘लोकगाथा’ या ‘पंवारा’, तेलुगु में ‘चारित्रिक गेयामुलु या वीरकथा वाडमयमु’, मलयालम में ‘वडक्कन पाडुकल’, कन्नड़ में ‘कथन गीत’, तमिल में ‘कदै पाडल’ आदि नामों से जाना जाता है।²

लोकगाथा ‘बिहुला विषहरी’ का कथानक :

बिहार प्रदेश में अंग की धरती में लोकगाथाओं की एक लम्बी सूची है किन्तु उसमें ‘बिहुला विषहरी’ की लोकगाथा सामान्य लोकमानस के माध्यम से पराप्राकृतिक तत्वों में आस्था एवं विश्वास की गाथा है। बिहार के भागलपुर प्रमंडल व आस-पास के इलाके, जिसे अंग क्षेत्र भी कहा जाता है, की लोकप्रिय व प्रसिद्ध लोकगाथा है: ‘बिहुला विषहरी’। इस लोकगाथा को ‘बिहुला-बाला लखंदर’ के नाम से भोजपुरी अंचल में जाना जाता है। इसमें स्त्रियों के पतिव्रत धर्म का बड़ा ही प्रभावशाली चित्रण हुआ है। यहाँ इसे ‘सावित्री सत्यवान’ वैदिक कथा के समकक्ष माना जाता है। सत्य तथा स्थानीयता की सुगंध के साथ विश्वसनीयता की चासनी में डूबी यह लोकगाथा ऐतिहासिक, सांस्कृतिक घटना की पीठिका है। बंगाल में मनसा पूजा के प्रचलन को स्थानीयता का रंग मिलाकर जब बिहार के अंग प्रदेश में प्रवेश कराया जाता है तो यह कथा चन्द्रधर वणिक एवं उसके सात पुत्रों तथा पतिव्रता पुत्रवधू बिहुला की कथा बन जाती है।

कथानक इस प्रकार है - चन्द्रधर वणिक कट्टर शिवभक्त हैं। वे मूलतः व्यापार करनेवाली बनिया जाति के हैं। कथानक के प्रारम्भ में चन्द्रधर वणिक

को छह पुत्र एवं छह पुत्रवधुएं तथा एक आज्ञाकारी पत्नी सोनिका का भरा-पूरा खुशहाल परिवार है। समय अपनी गति से गुजर रहा था। एक दिन शिवभक्त चन्द्रधर 'ऊँ नमः शिवाय' का मंत्र जप करते सूर्य देवता को अर्घ्य दे रहे थे तो छाया-नारी आकृति जल में उतरने लगी और कहने लगी- 'मुझे पूजा दो।' ऐसा कई बार हुआ। विस्मयपूर्वक चन्द्रधर ने उस पूजा मांगनेवाली देवी से उनका परिचय पूछा। परिचय स्वप्न में पहले ही बता देने की बात कहकर वह देवी अन्तर्धान हो गयी। पर चन्द्रधर को उस स्वप्न वाली देवी का हमेशा अहसास होता रहता। एक रात स्वप्न में छाया ने अपना परिचय दिया कि- "वे स्नान करते हुए महादेव की टूटी जटा से उत्पन्न महादेव की पाँचों बेटियाँ हैं, मनसा, विषहरी, जया, दोतिला और भवानी। वे सब वहीं पोखर में झिलेर खेलती रहीं। एक दिन वासुकी नाग ने दर्शन दिया और कहा कि चम्पा नगरी का चन्द्रधर वणिक उर्फ चाँद सौदागर अगर तुम्हें पूजा दे देगा तो तुम पृथ्वी लोक में पूज्य हो जाओगी। इसलिए हे चन्द्रधर! तुम हमें पूजा दो अन्यथा अनर्थ हो जाएगा।"³ देवी बार-बार अपनी पूजा मांगती और चाँद सौदागर उसे अनसुना कर देते। इस तरह अपना अनादर होते देख देवी ने बुरे परिणाम की चेतावनी भी दिया।

परिणामस्वरूप एक दिन चन्द्रधर जब अपने छहों पुत्रों के साथ व्यापार के लिए निकले थे कि बीच समुद्र में उनका जहाज डूब गया और छहों पुत्र जीवित नहीं बचें। इस दुर्घटना ने चन्द्रधर को भीतर से हिला दिया। बावजूद इसके चन्द्रधर की कट्टर शिव भक्ति में कोई कमी नहीं आयी और देवी की पूजा की मांग को हमेशा अनसुना करते रहे। चन्द्रधर का खुशहाल परिवार पुत्रों के बिना दुःख के सागर में डूब गया। फिर चन्द्रधर के गुरु नागोबा ने भविष्यवाणी किया कि चन्द्रधर की पत्नी सोनिका के गर्भ में जो बालक पल रहा है वही उसकी कुल-कीर्ति को लौटाने का माध्यम बनेगा और बालक की पत्नी नारी शिरोमणि

होगी जो अपनी कीर्ति से इतिहास रचेगी। अथेड़ उम्र में चन्द्रधर के घर सातवें पुत्र के रूप में लक्ष्मीधर नामक बालक ने जन्म लिया जिसे सभी प्यार से बाला लखंदर के नाम से पुकारते थे। समय बीतता चला। बाला लखंदर जब सात वर्ष का हुआ तो एक दिन स्वामी रत्नाकर, चन्द्रधर वणिक के घर आये और बालक को जिस समय आशीर्वाद दिया उसी समय तीन घटनाएं एक साथ घटीं। एक तो नागदेवी मनसा विषहरी का आसन डोल गया। दूसरे चन्द्रधर के व्यापार में बढ़ोतरी होने लगी और तीसरे वसुदत्त की कन्या बिहुला जो आगे चलकर बाला लखंदर की सती पत्नी बनी, का जन्म हुआ। रत्नाकर स्वामी बाला लखंदर के बारे में चन्द्रधर वणिक को जरूरी बात बताते हैं - "नागदेवी विषहरी किसी तरह बाला के पीछे हाथ धोकर पड़ी हुई है। सुनो! बारह वर्ष में इसका विवाह होगा और विवाह की प्रथम रात्रि में वह इसे नागदंश करवायेगी। उसे इस परिस्थिति से उबारने के लिए तुम्हें ऐसी ही कन्या ढूंढ़नी पड़ेगी जो इससे टक्कर ले सके। अपने पतिव्रत्य और तेजस्विता के सहारे इसके पाश को काट सके।"⁴ स्वामीजी बिहुला के बारे में बताकर उसे पाने का संकेत भी देते हैं और बताते हैं कि विवाह की रात्रि बाला की काल की रात्रि है। उस कालरात्रि से उबरने के बाद कोई भी शक्ति बाला का बाल भी बांका नहीं कर सकती। सती कन्या बिहुला से बाला का विवाह होता है। बाला की मृत्यु की भविष्यवाणी से डरे चन्द्रधर विश्वकर्मा से लोहे का बक्सा तैयार करवाते हैं किन्तु मनसा देवी की धमकी से विश्वकर्मा उस लोहे के बक्से में धुंआ निकलने के बराबर एक छिद्र बना देते हैं और उसी छिद्र में मनसा देवी मनियार साँप को बैठा देती है। मनियार साँप बिहुला के सोने का इंतजार करता रहा। विषहरी माता मनसा देवी की माया से बिहुला को नींद आ गयी और मनियार साँप बाला को डँस लिया। नागदंश के बाद बाला की देह विष के तेज ज्वार से दहकने लगा। कोने में पड़ी मौरी पर काले

नाग को देखकर बिहुला तुरंत समझ गई क्योंकि बिहुला को भी उजानी में श्राप देनेवाली बुढ़िया की याद आ गयी। बुढ़िया बिहुला को श्राप दी थी कि ब्याह की रात तुम विधवा हो जायेगी। इस पर बिहुला भी बुढ़िया को कहती है- “बुढ़िया देखना! अगर मेरे सत में शक्ति होगी तो मैं भी छह महीने जल में उतराउंगी और अपने पति को जीवित कराके लौटूंगी।”⁵ बिहुला छह महीने में वे सारे यत्न करके अपने सतीत्व के प्रताप से न सिर्फ अपने पति बाला लखंदर को जीवित करती है बल्कि चन्द्रधर के मृत छहों पुत्रों को भी जीवित करवा लेती है तथा जहाज में डूबे सारे धन-दौलत वापस मिल जाते हैं किन्तु ऐसा करने में बिहुला को विषहरी माता मनसा देवी की सहायता लेनी पड़ती है। पूजा देने के शर्त पर विषहरी बिहुला की मद करती है। बिहुला वचन देती है और तदनुसार वह अपने श्वसुर कट्टर शिवभक्त चाँद सौदागर उर्फ चन्द्रधर वणिक को विषहरी माता की महिमा बताते हुए पूजा देने के लिए राजी करवा लेती है। भगवान महादेव का स्मरण कर चन्द्रधर वणिक विषहरी माता मनसा देवी की पूजा देते हैं और तभी से चम्पा नगरी (अंग प्रदेश) में माता विषहरी (मनसा देवी) की पूजा प्रचलित हो गयी। इस तरह पूरब से आयी देवी मनसा विषहरी ने पश्चिम में आकर आसन जमाया और अपनी प्रसिद्धि का विस्तार पाया।

विषहरी पूजा : बिहुला के कहने पर चन्द्रधर वणिक उर्फ चाँद सौदागर विषहरी माता मनसा देवी और उनकी बहनों को पूजा का फूल भेंट करते हैं और तभी से यह पूजा अंग प्रदेश भागलपुर व उसके आस-पास के क्षेत्र में प्रचलित है। प्रत्येक वर्ष 17 अगस्त को यह पूजा धूमधाम से मनाया जाता है। चंपानगर में विषहरी माता का भव्य मंदिर है। इस उत्सव में माली, धोबी और डोम आदि जातियों की महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका होती है। इसी परम्परा के तहत धोबी परिवार उस मंदिर में प्रत्येक वर्ष पूजा में छाता और पंखा चढ़ाते हैं। पूर्वी बिहार व बंगाल में नागपंचमी

के दिन बिहुला सती की पूजा होती है। लोकगायक इस गाथा को अत्यंत श्रद्धापूर्वक गाते हैं। स्त्रियों में यह गाथा अधिक लोकप्रिय है। इस लोकगाथा का मैथिली एवं बंगला रूप भी मिलता है। सती बिहुला आज पुराणों की देवी बन चुकी है। इस कारण इसका काल निर्णय कर पाना अत्यंत दुरूह हो गया है। मान्यता है कि जब बिहुला की गाथा गाई जाती है तो समीप ही सर्प भी आकर सुनते हैं। यदि उस वक्त साँप दिखाई पड़ जाता है तो उसे मारा नहीं जाता।

बिहुला विषहरी गाथा का लोकगाथात्मक रूप :

‘बिहुला-विषहरी’ एक लोकगाथा है जिसे ग्रामीण पद्यात्मक रूप में लोकगायकी के तौर पर एकल अथवा समूह में गाते हैं। गाथा में एक क्रमबद्ध कथा होती है जिसमें सती बिहुला और माता विषहरी की महिमा का लयात्मक रूप में गुणगान होता है। ‘बिहुला-विषहरी’ लोकगाथा का गायन रूप :

रामा-रामा रामजी की नइया, रामजी बिहान कइली
दुर्गा आजी हो अइहऽ कंठ दयाल
रामा दिल्ली सहरवा में रहले चंदू सहवा रे ना
रामा जेकर पंडित विसहर पंडितवा रे दइबा
रामा भ गइल छ गौत लड़िकवा रे ना
रामा सजी लोक के कइनी बियहवा रे दइबा
रामा सजी बइले सुरधमवा रे ना
रामा सजी बइले सुरधमवा रे दइबा
रामा ज्ञातवा भइले बेरवा रे ना
रामा पंडितजी देखऽ कइसन पीरवा रे दइबा
रामा पंडित खोल देले पतरवा रे ना
रामा अइसन लड़िकवा जनम लिहले बाड़े र दइबा
रामा कुछहुना पंडित के इनमिया ना दिहले रे ना
रामा हे राम घरवा से पंडित खिसवा चलि गइले
रे दइबा
रामा ऐसन सेठ सहर हमरा के मिलवले रे दइबा
रामा आगे के वचनवा सुनी हो रामा

रामा छहो भौजाइया बाला के राड़ रहली रे दइबा
 रामा ए बबुआ विषहर चंद्रलवा बाटे रे ना
 रामा रहिहऽ इनसे होशियार रे दइबा
 रामा चलि गइल गंगा के किनार पर रे ना
 रामा बोले त लगले बिसहर पंडितवा रे दइबा
 रामा सुनु बाबा हमार रे ना
 रामा बाला तोहरा न घटिया सिधरी चढ़ै रे दइबा
 रामा बालू में धंसाइ देत बाड़ रे दइबा
 रामा तब त बिसहर चल दिहले अपना घरवा रे ना
 रामा अपन फटही मिरजइया पेन्हले रे दइबा
 रामा हथवा के ले लिहले बिसहर छड़िया रे ना
 रामा रामा चंदू साह के दुअरवा गइले रे दइबा
 रामा तब ओइजा बोले बिसहरवा पंडितवा रे दइबा
 रामा कहाँ त बाड़े बाला लखंदर दइबा रे ना
 रामा जल्दी से बोलल देव देरी होत रे दइबा
 रामा तब ओइजा मचल हलचलवा रे ना
 रामा नाहिं जेकर पतवा लागल रे दइबा
 रामा बिसहर साजे लगले जबाब रे ना
 रामा बबुआ बालू रेत में बाड़े रे दइबा
 छहो भौजिया बोलाय गइली रे ना
 रामा बालू रेतवा देखता लोग रे दइबा
 रामा तनी तनी संसवे चलत रहे बाला के रे
 ना.....।⁶

‘बिहुला-विषहरी’ लोकगाथा में लोकतत्व :

डॉ. सत्येन्द्र के अनुसार, ‘लोक’ मनुष्य समाज का वह वर्ग है जो अभिजात्य संस्कार, शास्त्रीयता और पांडित्य की चेतना अथवा अहंकार शून्य है और जो एक परम्परा के प्रवाह में जीवित रहता है। ऐसे लोक की अभिव्यक्ति में जो तत्व मिलते हैं वे ‘लोकतत्व’ कहलाते हैं।

‘बिहुला विषहरी’ लोकगाथा, लोक-संस्कृति और लोकविश्वास के धरातल पर नागमाता मनसा की अंग प्रदेश में पूजा एक लोकपर्व के रूप में की जाती है।

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इस लोकगाथा में लोकतत्व के रूप में भविष्यवाणी, अनुष्ठान, वसंतपंचमी की पूजा, स्वप्न-दर्शन, गृहस्थ जीवन में गौमाता एवं कुत्ता का स्थान, पक्षियों विशेषकर तोता अथवा सुग्गा का महत्व, जन्मोत्सव, ग्रह-नक्षत्रों में विश्वास, षष्ठी-पूजन, नामकरण संस्कार, लोकगीत, सोहर, पारम्परिक-रिवाज, धोबन घाट पूजने की प्रथा, विवाह संस्कार, शगुन-अपशगुन, मंजूषा-लोककला, जाति-वर्ण-व्यवस्था आदि सम्मिलित हैं।

इस लोकगाथा में चन्द्रधर वणिक अथवा चाँद सौदागर के आस्था के साम्राज्य का उत्थान-पतन इन्हीं भविष्यवाणियों पर निर्भर करता है। कथा के प्रारंभ में ही त्रिलोचन मठ में गुरुदेव स्वामीजी महाराज से जब चन्द्रधर वणिक आशीर्वाद लेने पहुँचते हैं तब गुरुजी आशीर्वाद स्वरूप कहते हैं - “जा! इसी तरह अपनी आस्था बलवती बनाए रखना। संकटों से घबड़ाना मत, महादेव तुम्हारा कल्याण करेंगे।” गुरुदेव के आशीर्वचन में कई भविष्यवाणियाँ अन्तर्निहित हैं। जिसका प्रमाण हमें पूरी गाथा में चन्द्रधर के जीवन के उतार-चढ़ाव में प्रत्यक्ष हो जाता है।

इसी प्रकार स्वप्न दर्शन का भी शुभाशुभ फलाफल का सम्बन्ध भविष्य में होनेवाली किसी घटना से अवश्य होता है। ‘बिहुला-विषहरी’ लोकगाथा में चन्द्रधर वणिक को विषहरी माता मनसा देवी स्वप्न में ही अपने बारे में परिचय देते हुए अपनी पूजा की मांग करती है और ऐसा नहीं करने पर बुरे परिणाम की चेतावनी भी देती है। फिर भी, चन्द्रधर वणिक उस स्वप्न की बातों को नजरअंदाज करते हैं। जबकि इस स्वप्न दर्शन के इर्द-गिर्द ही पूरी कथा केन्द्रित है। स्वप्न में कही गई बातों को सच साबित करने में चन्द्रधर वणिक के जीवन के उत्थान-पतन की सम्मिलित प्रस्तुति है- ‘बिहुला-विषहरी’ लोकगाथा।

भारतीय संस्कृति में गौ माता और कुत्ता को महत्वपूर्ण स्थान दिया गया है। वैदिक मान्यताओं के अनुसार, गाय में सभी देवी-देवताओं का वास होता है तथा कुत्ता अत्यंत वफादार जानवर कहलाता है।

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आर्यावर्त की संस्कृति में घर के भोजन में पहला खाना या पहली रोटी गौमाता के नाम तथा आखिरी रोटी कुत्ता के नाम से अर्पित किया जाता है। कुत्ता न सिर्फ हमारे घरों की रखवाली करता है, वरन् वह एक वफादार साथी भी होता है। 'बिहुला-विषहरी' लोकगाथा में सोनिका अपने हाथों से गोशाले की सभी गायों को रोटियाँ देती है तथा अंतिम रोटी कुत्ता को देती है और उनसे दुलार भी करती है। चन्द्रधर वणिक कृष्णा, गौरी, धौरी, लक्ष्मी आदि अपनी सभी गायों से बेइन्तहा दुलार करते थे। लेकिन मालिक को अपने पुत्रों के दुःख में डूबे देखकर सभी गायें भी गमगीन हैं। साथ ही पक्षी में पोपट नामक सुग्गा या तोता जिसे चन्द्रधर वणिक के पुत्र गंगाधर ने बोलना सिखाया था, परिवार के सुख-दुःख में समान भाव से प्रभावित होता है।

भारतीय समाज में सोलह संस्कारों में जन्मोत्सव एवं उसके अवसर पर नवजात शिशु के भविष्य के बारे में जानने हेतु ग्रह-नक्षत्रों के शुभाशुभ फल की जानकारी हेतु जन्म कुण्डली बनाने का विधान है। 'बिहुला-विषहरी' लोकगाथा में चन्द्रधर के सातवें पुत्र बाला-लखंदर की जन्म-कुण्डली में नागोबा स्वामीजी जो बातें उल्लिखित करते हैं, भविष्य में सभी सत्य सिद्ध होते हैं। इन सोलह संस्कारों में बालक के जन्म के छठे दिन षष्ठी पूजन का संस्कार, नामकरण संस्कार, अन्नप्रासन संस्कार आदि ग्रामीण गीतों एवं वाद्यों के साथ सम्पन्न किए जाते हैं क्योंकि उम्र के तीसरे पड़ाव में संतान प्राप्ति की खुशी ही कुछ अलग होती है।

सोलह संस्कारों में सबसे अंतिम और अकाट्य सत्य मृत्यु के उपरांत व्यवहृत श्राद्ध कर्म संस्कार भी है। लौकिक मान्यताओं के अनुसार श्राद्ध कर्म में मृत आत्मा की शांति हेतु कौए को मृत व्यक्ति के पसंद का भोजन कराया जाता है और माना जाता है कि वह भोजन मृत व्यक्ति द्वारा ग्रहण कर लिया गया। 'बिहुला-विषहरी' लोकगाथा में यह प्रसंग उस समय आया है जब बिहुला अपने मृत पति बाला लखंदर को जीवित

करने के लिए मंजूषा में बैठकर नदी में जा रही है। मंजूषा जब कागा सैनी घाट पहुँचा तो कौए की दृष्टि सबसे पहले मंजूषा में रखी लाश पर पड़ी। लाश को चोंच से बार-बार मारने और नोच खाने के लिए उद्यत कौए को बिहुला बार-बार हटाती, किन्तु वह नहीं हटता था। ऐसा देखकर बिहुला कौए को दूध-लावा खाने को देती है और कौए के साथ भाई का रिश्ता बनाते हुए उसे संदेशवाहक के रूप में अपनी माँ के पास संदेशा भेजती है। कौए और बिहुला के उस आत्मिक संवाद को सिर्फ कौआ और बिहुला ने ही सुना और समझा। इस प्रकार, मानव और मानवोत्तर प्राणी के बीच आत्मिक संवाद का उदाहरण इतनी विशिष्टता और सजीवता के साथ सिर्फ 'बिहुला-विषहरी' लोकगाथा में ही देखने को मिलता है, अन्यत्र नहीं। लोकतत्व का ऐसा अभूतपूर्व उदाहरण विरले ही मिलता है।

लोकगीत, लोकतत्व का प्राण है। 'बिहुला-विषहरी' लोकगाथा में लोकगीतों के विभिन्न रूप अनायास ही मिल जाते हैं।

कभी यह फैंकड़े के रूप में -

“दीप दिपहरा जाहो धरा, हीरा मोती भरो धरा.....
.....जेकरो देलो खैयऽ खीर, पहिरियो चीर।”

गंगा माता की स्तुति के रूप में -

“प्रात दरसन देहु हे गंगा मैया, प्रात दरसन देहु.....
.....जनम-जनम अहिबात गंगा मैया प्रात दरसन देहु।”

सोहर गीत के रूप में -

“जखनहिं कृष्ण जनम लेल धरती आनंद भेल हे....
.....बहुत छवि छाजए हे अहे गले वैजंती के माला
त देखे में सोहा ओनहे.....।”

इस प्रकार, लोकगीतों के माध्यम से लोक में प्रचलित रस्म-रिवाज, परम्परा, पूजा-अर्चना, भक्ति-संस्कार, रहन-सहन, खान-पान आदि की मार्मिक एवं भावनापूर्ण अभिव्यक्ति मिलती है।

मंजूषा कला अंग क्षेत्र की पारम्परिक कला है। इस कला में चटकीले रंगों में धरती, धर्म, चाँद,

सूरज, महादेव, गंगा, हनुमान, विषहरी माता की पाँचों बहनों आदि के रूप में प्रकृति से जुड़े दृश्यों की कलाकृति उकेरी जाती है। 'बिहुला-विषहरी' लोकगाथा में बिहुला अपने मृत पति को जीवित करने के लिए मंजूषा निर्मित करने का आदेश देती है। जिसमें इसी मंजूषा कला से सम्बन्धित चित्र उकेरे गये हैं। इस तरह 'बिहुला-विषहरी' लोकगाथा और मंजूषा कला का घनिष्ठ सम्बन्ध है।

निष्कर्ष:

अंग प्रदेश की लोकगाथाओं में लोकतत्व भरे पड़े हैं। थोड़े-बहुत अंतर के साथ सभी लोकगाथाएं लोकतत्वों के रूप में लगभग एक ही वृत्ति के अन्तर्गत सम्मिलित मिलते हैं। 'बिहुला-विषहरी' लोकगाथा में लोकतत्व की प्रधानता के कारण ही अंग प्रदेश में आज भी उतनी ही जीवंतता, आस्था एवं विश्वास के साथ यह लोकगाथा जन-जन में कण्ठप्रिय है और

माता विषहरी एवं सती बिहुला की पूजा घर-घर में देवी-देवता के तुल्य की जाती है। यही कारण है कि यह लोकगाथा अंग प्रदेश में इतना अधिक प्रसिद्ध एवं चिरायु है। सच कहा जाए तो यह अंग प्रदेश की संस्कृति का परिचायक है।

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Understanding the Lives of Actresses in *Where Did I Leave My Purdah?* and *The Big Fat City* through the Lens of Simone de Beauvoir

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Introduction :

Simone de Beauvoir is an important feminist critic known for her seminal work *The Second Sex*. In *The Second Sex*, she analyses the gender construct and how women are subjugated in the society. She tries to throw light on the lives of artists, especially actresses, their motives and emotions in their psychological realm. Mahesh Dattani is one of the most prominent dramatists who writes in English in India. He was awarded Sahitya Akademy in 1998 for his collection of dramas *Final Solutions and Other Plays*. His dramas deal with various burning and sensitive problems in India such as gender discrimination, conflict between tradition and modernity, issues in patriarchal society, suppression of women, and polarisation and orientation of sexuality and gender. Dattani is also known for his theatre technique and the use of multilevel sets to depict different situations of the same society. He also uses his stage as a medium to depict the layers of psyche of the characters.

Dattani's *Where Did I Leave My Purdah?* and *The Big Fat City* are the two plays that depict the lives of the actresses of various mediums in different era. *Where Did I Leave My Purdah?* centres around the character Nazia who is a theatre artist turned to be a film actress in her eighties. *The Big Fat City* depicts the lives of Lalita Jagtiani, who is known as Lolly, the television serial actress in her early forties and of Anu, a young television actress. These two plays depict the lives of the actresses and their problems in a vivid manner. This research article tries to analyse the world of the actresses as depicted by Mahesh Dattani through the ideology of Simone de Beauvoir.

Simone de Beauvoir earmarks actresses with "organisers, advisers and schemers" who "assert themselves in a world that escapes bourgeois constraints" (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 122). She adds that they become "more and more independent both onstage and in their private lives" (Beauvoir, 2011,

p. 122). Similarly, Dattani, in his two plays, depicts the actresses as the fun-loving, strong-willed, self-centred and authoritative women who can boldly face any tough situation of their lives.

Simone de Beauvoir observes that “women dress to arouse jealousy in other women: this jealousy is really a clear sign of success; but this is not its only aim. Through envious or admiring approbation, woman seeks an absolute affirmation of her beauty, her elegance, her taste: of herself. She dresses to display herself; she displays herself to make herself be” (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 595). Dattani shows a similar attitude in *Where Did I Leave My Purdah?* through the character of Nazia who is “a wrinkled, frail woman in her eighties” (Dattani, 2014, p. 54). Even though she is in her eighties, she feels young in her mind and makes fun of Vinay, an assistant in the sets of the film, by pretending to be unconscious and frightening him. As Nazia wakes up, she says, “And that is how Sleeping Beauty woke up” (Dattani, 2014, p. 54), which shows that she is a self-centred woman, who thinks that she is beautiful even in her eighties. Her professional attitude and feeling of being young is portrayed by Dattani as Nazia says to Ruby, “Don’t call me ‘aunty’ in front of these kids” and “Call me Nazia, or ma’am if you wish” (Dattani, 2014, p. 62).

Actresses always want the fame to assert themselves. When they lose the fame, they feel that they lose their identity. Simone de Beauvoir says that “The narcissist’s generosity is profitable to her : better than in mirrors it is in others’ admiring eyes that she sees her double haloed in glory” (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 691). And so, the actresses “prefer the wider stage to the privacy of

the bedroom. Thus, the importance of the society life for them : they need gazes to contemplate them, ears to listen to them; they need the widest possible audience for their personage” (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 691). Dattani depicts the lives of the actresses in *The Big Fat City* through the characters of Lolly and Anu. Lolly is introduced in the play with a bottle of wine as a gift for Sailesh which shows that she does not comply with the Indian social norms of prohibiting women from drinking. This shows that Lolly is also a fun-loving woman. Lolly desperately lies to Sailesh in order to portray herself as a busy actress nevertheless she is successful and famous, she fears that she made loose her fame. Her fame becomes her shackle. Even though she is successful and famous, her fame becomes her shackle. She keeps searching for more fame. Simone de Beauvoir points out that “she can experience true independence; but most spend their entire lives in danger; they must seduce the public and men over and over without respite” (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 629). This makes her lie to Sailesh, her audience and gazer, who she wishes to believe that she is still famous and sought after by the producers. So, when she receives an SMS from Ekta, a director, that Lolly should not pester her by calling her for the chance, Lolly says, “Ekta Kapoor trying really hard to get me in her next soap. Oh, how I hate turning down friends!” (Dattani, 2014, p. 167).

Dattani depicts all the three actresses Nazia, Lolly and Anu as the strong-willed and self-centred women who can boldly face any situation. Nazia writes an email to the director, “Since I am the matriarch I feel I need to deliver that punch” (Dattani, 2014, p. 57), which shows that she is a

strong-willed and self-centred woman. Dattani depicts this attitude through various other dialogues and incidents. When Suhel pities Nazia and asks her to come out of the agony she undergoes, Nazia says, “there are too many women in dance and theatre who have succumbed to those tactics. Too many who allowed men to ruin their lives. But I am not one of them. I certainly don’t need your help in bringing about my destruction!” (Dattani, 2014, p. 98-99). Her uncompromising and strong will which does not subdue and accept the domination of men is shown from the following dialogue as, “this is the interpretation I always wanted for Shakuntala! Not this whiny little creature whose entire future depends on whether her husband can remember having slept with her or not” (Dattani, 2014, p. 112-113).

Dattani depicts the boldness of character Anu who can boldly face any tough situation. When her boyfriend Puneet murders Kailash, the husband of Lolly, Anu has to help Puneet get out of the problem. But, as Murli and Sailesh are the witnesses of the murder, she has to silence them by exploiting their weakness. So, Anu offers them money as both Murli and Sailesh are in need of it and manages to silence them. Anu gets money from her brother Harjeet by telling him that she is acting in a film which needs to be financed. After arranging enough money, Anu says to Murli and Sailesh, “Congratulation, Murli, the flat is all yours. Congratulations, Sailesh, your ass is covered” (Dattani, 2014, p. 195), which shows Anu’s calm and composed nature.

Lolly is also depicted as a brave woman who can handle any situation in a cool manner. On knowing the death of her husband

Kailash, she does not panic and rather stays cool and thinks what has to be done in order to find the solution to the presently prevailing problem. She has to find the drugs that Kailash had held with him in his pant pockets. She gives importance to the lost drugs even though her son is arrested. She gives importance to the drugs because she has got that from a gang of goons who can trouble not only her but also her son Rahul. Sailesh expresses what Lolly values most as “Lolly, you are having a hard night, I know. First, the tragic news of your husband, then the raid where your son is being tested for the drugs, and a missing packet that clearly you value above all else” (Dattani, 2014, p. 208).

Simone de Beauvoir observes that “Women play a considerable role in salons; by the very fact they are not involved in the construction of the world, they have the leisure to indulge in conversation, the arts and literature; they are not formally educated, but through discussions, readings and instructions by private preceptors or public lectures, they succeed in acquiring greater knowledge than their husbands (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 122)”. Being the actresses, their access to art and literature makes them more knowledgeable than men. So they become quick-witted. Dattani also depicts both Anu and Lolly as the quick-witted woman in handling the situations and in their conversations. When Kailash is murdered by Puneet, Anu threatens Sailesh that she can manage with some really good lawyers to accuse him to be the murderer and says “your darling Lolly with whom you are having an affair and whose husband you strangled in a moment of possessive rage” (Dattani, 2014, p. 190), after knowing that Sailesh has taken

some cute and close pictures with Lolly. Similarly, after the murder of Kailash, Lolly comes to Murli's house and everyone tells her that Kailash is dead. As soon as she knows that Kailash is dead, she finds out that Puneet has killed him. She says "You [Puneet] killed him!" and "Never mind how I know" (Dattani, 2014, p. 206).

Simone de Beauvoir examines that "in many novels the 'liberated' woman distinguishes herself by an audacity in dressing that emphasises her character as sex object, and thus of dependence (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 589)". The Indian society imposes dependence on women through the practice of marriage, community and religion. According to Simone de Beauvoir, liberated women break the traditional ideology by distinguishing themselves with their dress. Dattani approaches this with the idea of marriage which is a key concept in Indian society in defining societal roles. Dattani depicts all the three actresses as the modern 'liberated' women who break all the traditional ideologies and develop 'a scorn for conformity' (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 589). Dattani depicts this as Nazia says "Obedient girls like you always end up in unhappy marriages" (Dattani, 2014, p. 81). She is ready to break the tradition and does not want to be obedient to the religious restrictions imposed on her. Even though she is a Muslim, she loves Suhel, a Hindu and marries him. Moreover, Nazia does not see marriage in a traditional point of view, as a bondage and commitment. She sees marriage as a matter of convenience and mutual companionship. This is evident from the dialogue of Nazia that "All well with the new marriage? ... Good. I am glad it's working out—finally. If it doesn't I can set you up with this really handsome assistant

director" (Dattani, 2014, p. 83). She also says "Things didn't work out with you and your husband either. That doesn't mean you are a manipulative bitch" (Dattani, 2014, p. 110).

Dattani depicts the similar attitude of Anu and Lolly in various instances. Anu breaks the tradition and loves Puneet who does not belong to her community. As the people of Anu's village are against her love, she leaves her village and comes to Mumbai in order to find a living. Thus, she breaks the traditional ideology of marriage within the same caste. Similarly, Lolly falls in love with Sailesh as soon as Kailash is murdered. She is ready to marry him even though he is younger than her. She says "I knew he [Kailash] had left to make way for better things! I am so happy I don't need to feel guilty about anything!" (Dattani, 2014, p. 218). Thus, Lolly breaks the traditional concept of marriage and feels that marriage is a way of having companionship and comfort and not a permanent bondage.

Even though Dattani portrays Nazia and Lolly as the strong-willed, self-centred, brave and modern women, they both hide an unbearable pain and agony in them. They do not explicitly show the agony and rather divert themselves from that pain. Nazia, though a strong woman in her eighties, has faced an unbearable psychological torture when she was young during the Partition. She has lost her sister Zarine in Pakistan who was killed by a Muslim mob. She was gangraped when she reached India and was impregnated. She gives birth to Ruby as a result of her rape. She thinks that Ruby is not her daughter, especially born to Suhel. So, she always disowns Ruby. She says "You were my flesh, wounded, humiliated. I didn't cry when you came out. I was reli-

eved—that the tapeworms infesting my belly, left by those pigs who ate my flesh, were out of my body” (Dattani, 2014, p. 134). She even feels guilty for the death of Zarine, who sacrificed her life to save the life of Nazia. Nazia says “I killed her, but no one sees it that way. I know I did. She died on the train” (Dattani, 2014, p. 128). Similarly, Lolly, after Anu is killed by her brother Harjeet, says “I just wanted him [Rahul] to have a good life!” (Dattani, 2014, p. 234), which shows the pain she undergoes and expresses that she is not at all understood by her own son in a proper manner. She is considered to be a bad mother who does not take care of her family and children. But she says that all that she does is only for her son and her family. Thus, Dattani depicts the pain and agony of Nazia and Lolly.

Based on the above study, this research article finds that the actresses, as depicted by Dattani and observed by Simone de Beauvoir, are free-willed, fun-loving, self-centred, strong-willed, brave women who can boldly face any situation in a calm and composed manner. They are also quick-witted in their words as well as actions. They are modern, liberated and are not oppressed by the traditional ideologies and

notions. Even though they are strong and brave, they also comply with the society in a broader sense that they accept the gender construct of the society and act according to that in order to retain their intrinsic values. Comparatively, they are freer than other women of the society since they have a profession, especially that which makes them famous in the society. But as women, ultimately, they also succumb to the pressure of social construct. They serve men in the society and their servitude is evident by the fact that Lolly does not remain unmarried after the death of her husband Kailash but marries Sailesh for her companionship. Dattani focuses more on her personal success of getting into relationship than on her professional success. This complies with the ideology of the Indian society that women cannot remain unmarried forever, especially without the companionship of a man. This shows that even though the actresses are professionally successful, their role in the society does not change.

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भारतीय समकालीन मूर्तिकला में ढलवां लोहे का कलात्मक प्रयोग

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परिचय :

लोहा मनुष्यों द्वारा उपयोग में लाई जाने वाली पुरानी धातुओं में से एक है। इसका उपयोग हजारों वर्षों से कला और शिल्प में किया जाता रहा है। यह सामग्री अपनी मज़बूती और तन्यता के साथ-साथ स्थायित्व के लिए जाना जाता है।

आवर्त सारणी में पाए जाने वाले लोहे का तत्व प्रतीक 'Fe' है, जो लोहे के लिए प्रयुक्त लैटिन शब्द 'फेरम' से आता है। लोहा पृथ्वी की सतह में चौथा सर्वाधिक पाया जाने वाला पदार्थ है। यह ऑक्सीजन के साथ आसानी से प्रतिक्रिया करता है, जिससे आयरन ऑक्साइड अयस्क का निर्माण होता है। लोहे में जंग लगना एक सामान्य आयरन ऑक्साइड है और इसे रोकने के लिए लौह संरचना के रखरखाव का निरंतर ध्यान देना पड़ता है। लोहे का सबसे बड़ा उपयोग स्टील बनाने में होता है क्योंकि संरचना में आवश्यक ताकत प्रदान करने की दृष्टि से अकेले लोहा बहुत नरम होता है। लोहे और स्टील के बीच मुख्य अंतर प्रत्येक मॉलिक्यूल में मौजूद कार्बन की मात्रा का होता है। लोहे में कार्बन की मौजूदगी इसके चरित्र, ताकत और लचीलेपन को प्रभावित करता है।

ढलवां लोहा में कार्बन की मात्रा सबसे अधिक होती है और पिटवां लोहा में सबसे कम होती है। इन सभी का प्रयोग अलग-अलग प्रकार से होता है। कार्बन की उपस्थिति के कारण, ढलवां लोहा की गुणवत्ता अधिक भंगुर होती है। यह आसानी से टूट जाता है और अन्य प्रकार के लोहे की तरह आसानी से मुड़ता या खिंचता नहीं है। यद्यपि इसकी खुरदरी बनावट इसे अधिकांश कलात्मक उपयोगों के लिए अनुपयुक्त बनाती है, वहीं पिटवां लोहा की कच्ची गुणवत्ता के कारण इससे सुंदर अलंकरण और उपकरण बनाए जा सकते हैं।

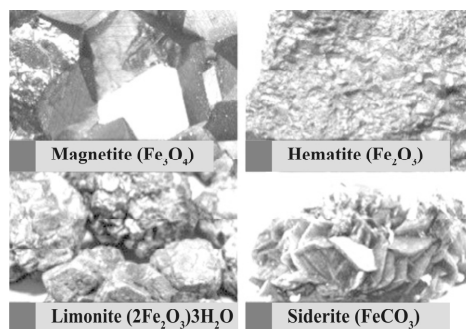
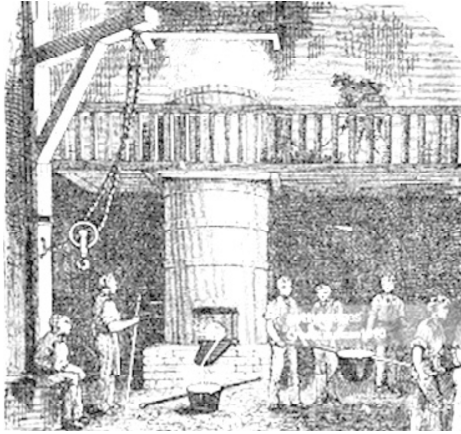


Image Source : <https://www.ftmmachinery.com/blog/4-types-of-iron-ore.html>

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Cupola Furnace

Image Source : <https://www.gettyimages.in/detail/illustration/cupola-furnace-royalty-free-illustration/470212053>



Cupola Furnace

Image Source : <https://www.viktormacha.com/galerie/kovis-livarna-store/kovis-livarna-cupola-furnace-899.html>

कला में लोहे का ऐतिहासिक महत्व :

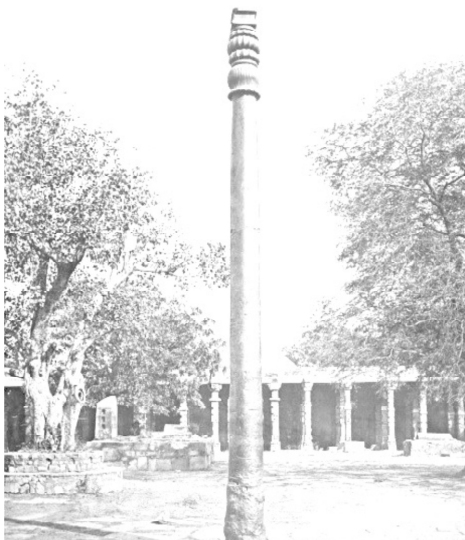
लोहे को हमेशा इसकी व्यावहारिकता और रचनात्मक संभावनाओं के लिए महत्व मिला है। प्राचीन काल में यूनानी और मिस्र की सभ्यताओं के द्वारा औजारों और तलवारों से लेकर विस्तृत द्वारों और मूर्तियों तक सब कुछ बनाने के लिए लोहे का उपयोग किया जाता था। साथ ही पुनर्जागरण और औद्योगिक क्रांति के दौरान भी इसका प्रयोग अधिक मात्रा में किया गया था।

लौह के उपयोग के साक्ष्य भारत में दूसरी सहस्राब्दी ईसा पूर्व के अंत से मिलते हैं। लोहे को गलाकर

मनचाहा उपयोग करने की परंपरा विशेष रूप से इस अवधि की दक्षिण भारतीय महापाषाण संस्कृतियों में अच्छी तरह से स्थापित था। लोहे का काम नए युगों के नवाचारों और तकनीकों के साथ बदलती कलात्मक शैलियों और सांस्कृतिक स्थितियों के साथ बदलता चला आ रहा है।

ऐसा लगता है कि भारत में पिटवां लोहा की ढलाई पहली सहस्राब्दी ई. में अपने चरम पर पहुंच गई थी। सबसे पहली बड़ी ढलाई नई दिल्ली में स्थित प्रसिद्ध लौह स्तंभ के निर्माण के दौरान हुई, जिस पर तीसरी शताब्दी ई. के गुप्त काल का शिलालेख अंकित है। इसकी ऊंचाई 7 मीटर से अधिक है और इसका वजन लगभग 6 टन है। ऐसा माना जाता है कि इस स्तंभ को डिस्क के आकार के लोहे के ब्लूम की एक श्रृंखला को एक साथ जोड़कर बनाया गया है। आयातों के अलावा लौह स्तंभ का एक और उल्लेखनीय पहलू जंग की अनुपस्थिति है, जिसे स्तंभ की संरचना, पिटवां लोहा की उच्च स्तरीय शुद्धता और फॉस्फोरस सामग्री एवं स्लैग के वितरण से जोड़ कर देखा जाता है। स्तंभ की सामग्री के बारे में भी समान रूप से गलत धारणाएँ प्रचलित थीं, जो संभवतः शाफ्ट के ऊपरी हिस्से के विचित्र पीले रंग के कारण, आमतौर पर पीतल, कांस्य या अन्य मिश्रित धातु की ढलाई मानी जाती थी। कनिंघम के निर्देश पर किए गए सटीक रासायनिक विश्लेषण ने सामग्री के बारे में हमारे लिए संदेह की कोई गुंजाइश नहीं छोड़ी। वास्तव में, उच्च कार्बन वाले लौह मिश्र धातुओं का उपयोग यूरोप में प्रचलन में आने से पहले एशिया के कुछ हिस्सों में विकसित हो चुका था। हम भारत के उच्च कार्बन वाले स्टील और चीन के कच्चे लोहे का उल्लेख कर सकते हैं। दोनों ही लोहों में 'ब्लूमरी आयरन प्रक्रिया' की तुलना में उच्च भट्टी के तापमान और अधिक कम करने की स्थिति की आवश्यकता होती है। 2 से 4 प्रतिशत के बीच की उच्च कार्बन सामग्री वाला कच्चा लोहा एक भंगुर और काफी हद तक

खराब ताकत वाला मिश्र धातु है, लेकिन यह लौह-कार्बन प्रणाली में सबसे कम गलनांक वाला है, जो लगभग 1100 °C है। चीन में शुरुआती ईसाई युग तक कच्चे लोहे का इस्तेमाल औजार, हथियार और बर्तन बनाने के लिए बहुत बड़े पैमाने पर किया जाता था।



Iron Pillar, Mehrauli, New Delhi

Image Source : <https://architecturez.net/doc/az-cf-179621>

लोहे के ढलाई की तकनीक और प्रक्रियाएँ :

कुछ प्रकार की मूर्तियों के लिए ढलवां लोहे में कई संभावनाएँ हैं। इसका मोटा दाना और भंगुरता जो इसमें परिलक्षित होता है, इसकी कुछ निश्चित सीमाएँ हैं। इसके यह गुण इसके आकार में बड़े होने की मांग करते हैं। मूर्तिकला में माध्यम के रूप में जो अंतर काष्ठ और पत्थर के बीच होता है, लगभग वही अंतर कांस्य और ढलवां लोहे में माना जा सकता है। लोहा ठंडा, दुर्जेय और भारी होता है। अतः लोहे से बने कलाकृतियों के अभिकल्पित आकार में इन गुणों का प्रतिबिम्बन प्राप्त होता है।

ढलवां लोहे का गलनांक 2465°F से 2400°F होता है और ढलाई का तापमान 2600°F से 2850°F

के बीच होता है, जो कांस्य के गलनांक से बहुत अधिक है। आमतौर पर, पिघलने के लिए एक प्रतिध्वनि भट्टी या एक गुंबद का उपयोग किया जाता है। पूर्व में गर्मी धातु की सतह पर नीचे की ओर विक्षेपित होती है और पिघला हुआ धातु नीचे से निकल जाता है। इसके बाद एक गुंबद में, जो एक प्रकार की ब्लास्ट भट्टी होती है, धातु को ईंधन के सीधे संपर्क में पिघलाया जाता है। लोहे को उसी भट्टी में पिघलाया जा सकता है जिसका उपयोग अलौह धातुओं के लिए किया जाता है, लेकिन निश्चित रूप से, आवश्यक गर्मी बनाने के लिए अधिक समय की आवश्यकता होती है। पीतल और कांस्य को पिघलाने में उपयोग किए जाने वाले समान सिलिकॉन कार्बाइड घरिया (क्रूसिबल) का उपयोग ढलवां लोहे के लिए भी किया जाता है।

ढलवां लोहा की उत्कृष्ट ढलाई की गुणवत्ता का श्रेय उसकी उच्च कार्बन मात्रा, जो 1 से 4 प्रतिशत तक होती है, तथा अपेक्षाकृत कम सिकुड़न को जाता है। जब लोहा ढाला जाता है और लगभग आधे घंटे तक ठंडा होने दिया जाता है, तब कोप को उठाकर और फ्लास्क से रेत को मिलाकर मोल्ड को डंप किया जाता है। इस प्रक्रिया के बाद भी कास्ट बहुत गर्म तो होता है लेकिन नाजुक नहीं होता है। इसे चिमटे से उठाया जा सकता है और रेत के ऊपर रखा जा सकता है ताकि यह अधिक तेज़ी से ठंडा हो सके। ढलवां लोहा (कास्ट आयरन) काफी भंगुर होता है और पीतल और कांस्य की तुलना में बहुत कम लचीला होता है। यह सुनिश्चित करते हुए कि प्रक्रिया में ढाले गए आकार का कोई पतला भाग तनावग्रस्त न हो, गेट को भारी हथौड़े के तेज प्रहार से तोड़ा जाता है। अवांछित तत्वों को काटने के लिए उच्च गति वाले सिलिकॉन कार्बाइड ग्राइंड व्हील का उपयोग करके या रेती से रेत कर सतह को परिमार्जित किया जाता है। लोहे को स्टील वूल से रगड़कर और सतह पर तुरंत मोम लगाकर पॉलिश किया जाता है।

चमकीले नारंगी से लेकर गहरे भूरे तक के रंग केवल धातु में जंग लगने की प्रक्रिया से प्राप्त किए जा सकते हैं। डाइल्यूट नाइट्रिक एसिड, चूने का पेस्ट, या नमक का पानी ऑक्सीकरण को तेज़ करता है, और जब वांछित रंग मिल जाता है, तो कास्ट को लाह या मोम की एक पतली परत से ढका जाता है। इसके बाद धातु की कठोर ठंडी गुणवत्ता रूप के चरित्र में परिलक्षित होने लगती है।

आधुनिक नवाचार एवं समकालीन अनुप्रयोग:

लोहे का उपयोग करने वाले पहले आधुनिक मूर्तिकार शायद 'पablo गार्गालो' थे, जिन्होंने 1907 के आसपास इस सामग्री से हथौड़े से बने मुखौटे बनाए थे। उनके काम ने पिकासो को पहली स्टील की मूर्ति 'गिटार' (1912, MOMA, न्यूयॉर्क) बनाने के लिए प्रेरित किया, जो धातु की चादर और तार से बनी थी। पिकासो के मूर्तिगत प्रयोग टाटलिन के लिए एक प्रेरणा थी, जो कंस्ट्रक्टिविज्म के संस्थापक थे। इसमें स्टील (अन्य आधुनिक सामग्रियों के साथ) ने एक बड़ी भूमिका निभाई थी। इंजीनियरिंग के साथ इसका जुड़ाव इसे मशीनी युग को व्यक्त करने वाले रूपों के निर्माण के लिए उपयुक्त बनाता है। पिकासो ने वेल्डेड मूर्तिकला के विकास में भी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई। इसने पिकासो की 'वूमन इन ए गार्डन' (1929-30, म्यूज़े पिकासो, पेरिस) जैसी मुक्त-प्रवाह वाली ओपनवर्क संरचनाओं को संभव बनाया, जिसे टिमोथी हिल्टन ने 'बीसवीं सदी की महान मूर्तियों में से एक' और 'उस समय उनके द्वारा चित्रित किसी भी चीज़ की तुलना में बहुत अधिक 'आधुनिक' बताया है' (पिकासो, 1975)। ऐसे 'अंतरिक्ष में चित्रण' से प्रभावित कई मूर्तिकारों में डेविड स्मिथ भी थे, जिन्होंने गोंजालेज़ के काम की प्रतिकृतियां देखने के बाद कहा - 'मैंने सीखा कि कला स्टील से बनाई जा रही थी - वह सामग्री और मशीनें जिनका मतलब पहले केवल श्रम और कमाई की शक्ति था।'

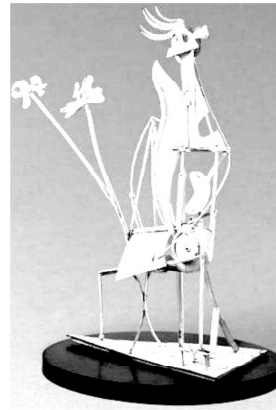
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गोंजालेज़ की तरह, स्मिथ द्वितीय विश्व युद्ध के बाद मूर्तिकला पर अत्यधिक प्रभावशाली थे, एवं किसी और से अधिक उन्होंने स्टील को अपनी स्वयं की अभिव्यंजक विशेषताओं के साथ एक सामग्री के रूप में स्थापित किया। उदाहरण के लिए, जंक आर्ट में स्क्रेप का बहुत उपयोग किया गया और एंथनी कैरो ने अपने काम में Steel Sheet का उपयोग किया, जिन्होंने ब्रिटिश अमूर्त मूर्तिकारों की पूरी एक पीढ़ी को प्रेरित किया। स्टील के अवैयक्तिक गुणों को महत्व देते हुए मिनिमल कलाकारों ने भी इसका बहुत उपयोग किया है।



Guitar, 1914 by Pablo Picasso Image Source : <https://www-pablopicasso-org>.



Pablo Picasso. Woman in the Garden. 1929–1930. Image Source : <https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/18/395>

साहित्य (वर्ष-11, 2025)
(UGC CARE - Listed Journal)

ढलवां लोहे का प्रयोग करने वाले मूर्तिकार एंटनी गोर्मले ने सरलीकृत मानव आकृति की रचना की है। वे शरीर को अपने प्रतिनिधित्व और प्रतिबिंब के सबसे प्रामाणिक माध्यम के रूप में देखते हैं। उनकी मूर्तिकला का अभ्यास दुनिया में और खुद में होने के निर्णायक शारीरिक और मनोवैज्ञानिक अनुभव के इर्द-गिर्द घूमता है। हालाँकि उनकी आकृतियाँ जानबूझकर सरलीकृत की गई हैं- कृत्रिम शारीरिक पहचान जिसमें एक विशिष्ट आयु, जाति, इतिहास या स्थान का अभाव है - फिर भी वे व्यक्ति के उद्भव को रेखांकित करते हैं। मानव होने की धारणा को प्रकट करते हुए, वे व्यक्तिपरक अनुभव की महान संभावनाओं की पुष्टि करते हैं।



Fold ii 1988-89, cast iron and air, 68×103×85 cm

Image Source :

<https://www.antonygormley.com/works/sculpture/series/double-bodycase-works-in-lead-and-cast-iron>

गोर्मले की अत्यधिक पद्धतिगत प्रक्रिया, जो उद्देश्यों, सामग्रियों और निर्माण के संबंध में उद्देश्यपूर्ण सीमाओं और नियमों के एक सेट के भीतर एक आग्रहपूर्ण फोकस बनाए रखती है, दर्शकों में एक आश्चर्यजनक भावनात्मक प्रतिक्रिया उत्पन्न करती है। उनके सरलीकरण और संरचनात्मक निर्माण में, गोर्मले की मूर्तियाँ एक साथ कई मानसिक अवस्थाओं का प्रतिनिधित्व करती हैं। प्रतिनिधित्वात्मक तर्क से दूर, वे सहज रूप से दर्शक के लिए एक खुलापन और जिस स्थान पर वे रहते हैं, उसमें उपस्थिति की तीव्रता स्थापित करते हैं।

भारतीय समकालीन मूर्तिकला में धातुशिल्प की ढलाई के लिए कांस्य एवं पीतल का प्रयोग बहुलता से हुआ है। वहीं मूर्तिकार माधव दास ने मुख्यतः ढलवां लोहा को अपने मूर्तिशिल्प का माध्यम चुना है। उन्होंने ललित कला महाविद्यालय, नई दिल्ली से मूर्तिकला में स्नातक एवं परास्नातक की उपाधि प्राप्त की है। दिल्ली में अपने कलात्मक अभ्यास को जारी रखते हुए उन्होंने लौह मूर्तिशिल्प के प्रयोगधर्मी कलाकार के रूप में अपनी पहचान बनाई है।

राजीव रंजन के साथ एक भेंटवार्ता में एक प्रश्न का उत्तर देते हुए माधव दास कहते हैं कि 'मैं



Before Two, 2004, cast iron, 181×45×111 cm

Image Source :

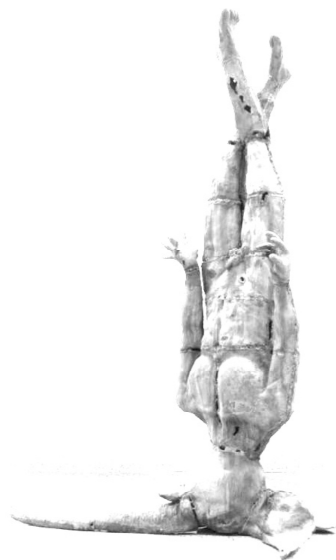
<https://www.antonygormley.com/works/sculpture/series/double-bodycase-works-in-lead-and-cast-iron/before-two>

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माध्यम के हिसाब से नहीं बल्कि कलाकृतियों के अनुसार कौन सा पदार्थ सही होगा यह देखता हूँ। माध्यम मेरे कलाकृतियों में शरीर व आत्मा (बॉडी एंड सोल) जैसा है और ढलवां लोहा (कास्ट आयरन) एक ऐसा माध्यम है जो भंगुर और कठोर दोनों हैं। ढलवां लोहा और लोहा में बहुत फर्क है, लोहा में जब जंग लगता है तब वह पूरी तरह से समाप्त होने लगता है लेकिन ढलवां लोहा (कास्ट आयरन) में सिर्फ एक-दो परत तक ही जंग लगता है, उसके बाद वह जैसा रहता है वैसा ही रह जाता है। इसलिए मैं अपने काम में ढलवां लोहा का ही प्रयोग अधिक करता हूँ और मैं अपने मूर्तिशिल्पों में अपनी भावनाओं को व्यक्त करता हूँ जिसके लिए मेरे मूर्तिशिल्प का आकार और माध्यम दोनों ही समान रूप से महत्वपूर्ण हैं। मेरे मूर्तिशिल्पों में ढलवां लोहा की जो भूमिका है वह भी महत्वपूर्ण है क्योंकि इसमें जंग लग जाना एक ऐसी प्रक्रिया है जो एक इंसान के जीवन-मरण के चक्र को दर्शाता है। जैसे एक समय के बाद हमारा शरीर धीरे-धीरे बूढ़ा हो जाता है और फिर मृत्यु हो जाती है, परंतु आत्मा वैसी की वैसी ही रह जाती है। ढलवां लोहा में हम वही सामान प्रभाव को देखते हैं। जंग लगने के बाद उसका सिर्फ प्रथम परत नष्ट होता है परन्तु आकार पूर्व की भांति रह जाता है।”

इनके मूर्तिशिल्पों में आधार (पेडिस्टल) इस तरह सम्मिलित रहता है जिससे वह कलाकृति का एक अभिन्न अंग बन जाता है। इनके मूर्तिशिल्प छोटे आकार जैसे 5-6 इंच से लेकर बड़े आकार (आदमकद) तक के होते हैं। इनके मूर्तियों के माप (साइज) दो तथ्यों पर निर्भर करता है -पहला यह कि किस माप (साइज) का मूर्तिशिल्प उनके संयोजन के लिए सुयोजित, उचित एवं सौंदर्यावर्धक रहेगा और कभी-कभी यह कलाकार की आर्थिक स्थिति या किसी मूर्तिशिल्प के बजट पर भी निर्भर करता है। मूर्तिशिल्प का माप मूर्ति के संपूर्ण सौंदर्य एवं संयोजन में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाती है। माधव दास मानव आकृतियों में स्वयं की

और साथ में पशु पक्षियों की आकृतियों की भी रचना करते हैं। उन्होंने संयुक्त (हाइब्रिड) कलाकृतियां भी बनाई है जहाँ वे पशु, पक्षी को मानव-शरीर के साथ संयोजित करते हैं जो इनकी मूर्तिशिल्प ‘ट्रांसपोर्टेशन’ में दृष्टिगत है।



Transformation, Cast Iron, 49×30×72 Inches
Image Source : Artist



The Uncanny, Cast Iron & Golf Leaf,
60×21×12 Inches Image Source : Artist

माधव दास अपनी रचना प्रक्रिया में बताते हैं कि किसी मूर्तिशिल्प की कल्पना करने के बाद वे कागज पर उसका स्केच बनाते हैं और एक छोटी प्रतिलिपि (मैकेट) तैयार करते हैं। फिर उसे मनचाहे आकार में गढ़ते हैं। इस प्रक्रिया के हर चरण में बदलाव की संभावना बनी रहती है। लोहे की ढलाई की प्रक्रिया जटिल और लम्बी होती है जिसे वे अपनाते हैं। मिट्टी से आकृतियों को तैयार करने के बाद उसका साँचा तैयार किया जाता है। इसके बाद फाइबर ग्लास की ढलाई की जाती है जिसकी मोटाई 5 से 6 मिलीमीटर की होती है। इन्हीं फाइबर पीस के माध्यम से सैंड कास्टिंग प्रोसेस से ढलवां लोहे की ढलाई की जाती है। ढलाई के बाद इसे वेल्डिंग से जोड़ा जाता है। वेल्डिंग से होने वाले दाग को वे अपनी मूर्तिशिल्प में प्रयोग कर लेते हैं और उसे मूर्तिशिल्प का एक हिस्सा मानते हैं जिसे निर्माण प्रक्रिया के एक प्रमाण के रूप में देखा जा सकता है।

भारतीय मूर्तिकला के जगत में लोहे की मूर्तिशिल्पों के लिए ऐसे अनूठे परिणाम दिखते हैं। कलाकार माधव दास लोहे के साथ उसकी सतह के संरक्षण के संघर्ष को अपने शिल्प में सौंदर्यवर्धन के रूप में प्रयोग करते हैं। इस प्रक्रिया में सुनहरे परत के प्रयोग से सतह को संरक्षित करने के साथ-साथ उनकी कलाकृतियों को एक विशेष आकर्षण मिलता है, जिसे हम इनकी मूर्तिशिल्प 'द अनकैनी' में देख सकते हैं। माधव दास की कलाकृतियों के विषय वस्तु अपने निजी वातावरण से ओतप्रोत होते हैं। लोहे के ऊपर पतिना की संभावना बहुत कम होती है फिर भी उन्होंने इसमें सफेद व गहरे भूरे रंग के पतिना किये हैं।

निष्कर्ष :

लोहा अभी भी अपनी स्थायित्व, अनुकूलनशीलता और ऐतिहासिक प्रासंगिकता के कारण मूर्तिकला के लिए एक ठोस सामग्री है। इसकी कालातीत आकर्षण ने प्राचीन सभ्यताओं से लेकर वर्तमान तक के इतिहास में कलाकारों को प्रभावित किया है। भारतीय समकालीन

मूर्तिकला के परिदृश्य में ढलवां लोहा (कास्ट आयरन) कांस्य की भांति लोकप्रिय तो नहीं है परंतु जिन कलाकारों ने इसे आत्मसात किया है, उन्होंने इसे एक नई ऊंचाई प्रदान की है। उन कलाकारों ने इसके गुण और स्वभाव के साथ न्याय करते हुए नवीन प्रयोग के साथ मूर्तिकला के जगत में इसे स्थापित किया है।

लोहे की ढलाई, कांस्य की ढलाई की तुलना में कम खर्चीला होता है परंतु इसमें अधिक तकनीकी कुशलता की आवश्यकता होती है। साथ ही इसके संरक्षण में भी अधिक संघर्ष करना पड़ता है। स्क्रैप और जंग आर्ट की लोकप्रियता में तो वृद्धि हुई है परंतु ढलवां लोहे (कास्ट आयरन) की जटिल प्रक्रिया ने इसे मूर्तिकारों के बीच लोकप्रिय होने से वंचित रखा है। फिर भी इसके दानेदार और भंगुर स्वभाव को कलाकार माधव दास ने अपने मूर्तिशिल्पों में बखूबी उतारा है जहाँ माध्यम के स्वभाव, निर्माण की तकनीक एवं भावाभिव्यक्ति की कसौटी पर खरा उतरता है।

मूर्तिकार एंटनी गोर्मले ने सरलीकृत मानव आकृतियों को चुना है जो किसी विशिष्ट आयु, जाति, इतिहास या स्थान को नहीं दर्शाता है, वही माधव दास ने खुद के शरीर का चयन किया है जहाँ उनकी एक विशेष आयु एवं भौगोलिक परिवेश परिलक्षित होती है।

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Beyond Borders and Boundaries : Transcending the Many Dimensions of Age, Gender, Nation and Religion in Geetanjali Shree's *Tomb of Sand*

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A border does not enclose. It opens out.
It creates a shape. It adorns an edge.
...A border stops nothing. It is a bridge
between two connected parts. Between
night and day. Life and death. Finding
and losing. They are bound together.
You can't separate them....A border is
a horizon. Where two worlds meet.
And embrace. (Shree 652-3)

Geetanjali Shree's *Ret Samadhi* translated by Daisy Rockwell won the prestigious International Booker Prize for the year 2022, becoming the first novel translated from an Indian language (Hindi) for this recognition. Just as an act of translation transcends borders, cultures and languages, the work *Tomb of Sand* also rises above borders and boundaries geographically, psychologically defying languages and cultures. It also challenges time and space. As an artwork, it defies genre distinction too. At a point, the characters seem to reject borders and at most times, the process of story-telling seems to slide across.

When love is boundless it breaks out
into the cosmos. Its essence reaches a
pinnacle and the drive to overpower one
another flames out. The difference
between thrum and flame is erased and
it neither stops for anyone, nor hesi-
tates at any boundary. (39)

Geetanjali Shree's *Tomb of Sand* transcends nation and narration and is a story that tells stories never end. It also records the metamorphic transformation of Ma who "returned from the dead" (40) confronting a past trauma and ultimately gets past it. The novel begins by stating how natural and tempestuous love with its boundless nature can spread in any direction casting the world in magic. She illustrates the point saying how the love between a parent and a child can make "God fade into the background" (40).

It tells the tale of an old lady aged 80 grieving over her lost husband who has turned her back to life (both literally and figuratively as the chapter title suggests

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“Ma’s Back”). She was more of a half dead bundle shrinking daily; from her lifelong roles as a daughter, wife, mother and now indifferent to every role after being a widow. When Ma lays back, tired of everything, her children try every method to lift her from her state of depression.

Ma used to go out of breath calming down everyone else’s breathing. Ma had internalized the dominant ideology of domesticity conforming to the socially accepted ideals. “She had grown tired of breathing for them, feeling their feelings, bearing their desires, carrying their animosities” (39). But she took care to give her daughter enough freedom by opening “the window wide for her to leap out” at night (36).

Known by various names such as Ma, Baji, Mata ji, Amma, she slips into a state of depression beyond repair. Her daughter Beti, her son Bade and her daughter-in-law Bahu try hard to bring her back but in vain. There is also her favourite grandson called Sid or Siddharth and another grandchild called the Overseas son who frequently announces his presence through phone calls. One fine day, Ma disappears with an old statue of Buddha causing panic all around.

Now when her life became at stake, it was her daughter Beti who came forward to revive her. And she turns up, days later, re-emerging as a completely new being. She shows up at the police station one day and nobody will ever know where she had been. She is reborn with a spirit of adventure and is shifted to Beti’s house. Roles are reversed: Beti transformed herself as the mother and made Ma her daughter. The bond between a parent and

a child is so unconditional that soon under Beti’s care, a miraculous change happens over Ma’s whole being.

The bliss and purity of such a relation is referred multiple times in varied ways by the author. She says “...nothing can come between mother and child – no other person, no other desire, besides the desire to give one’s child everything” (40). Though roles reverse, mother-daughter love remains the supreme relation in the whole universe. Geetanjali Shree has divided the chapters as Ma’s Back, Sunlight and Back to the Front. Ma is in a state of depression at first, moving on to a state of self-discovery and recovery in the second and an unpredictable turn of events with the journey to Pakistan.

The friendship between the transgender Rosie Bua and Ma creates a sense of wonder to all people around. Rosie-Raza being a transgender by her/his very nature represents the fluidity of identity. It is only later in the narrative that one gets to know about the unspeakable and indescribable trauma they have shared. Ma had secluded herself to the domestic spaces whereas Rosie Bua had been struggling to get along with her own identity and her past life. The trust and friendship they share would have drawn a boundary around themselves distinguishing between ‘us’ and ‘them’ as witnesses and survivors of Partition violence. Ma insists on travelling to Pakistan to fulfil Rosie’s last wish and thereby unravelling her past experiences of having survived the partition riots.

The narrative is ‘readerly’ with its shifting timeframes, altering narrators, unfolding sights and experiences problematizing memory and forgetting. Though the novel is polyphonic, there is an attempt to conso-

litate the fragmented self. The narrated 'I' is elusive and way different from the historical 'I'. 'Dislocation' is a term used by Cathy Caruth in her seminal work *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* when a temporal and structural collapse of the mind occurs due to an extremely violent experience. An individual's coherent memory collapses and the trauma cannot be captured by thoughts or words not even by memory.

This disruptive nature of trauma narrative justifies the presence of a good deal of non-human testimonials. Analysing *Tomb of Sand* as a post-partition narrative, the testimonies are not only from people who bear witness to the story but also from the non-human resources. At one point, there is the chorus of crows that comment on the characters, at one time it is the door that speaks. The cane, a bug, an elephant, a partridge, birds, butterflies, a bundle, even Bahu's Reeboks and 'compassion' have tales to tell (65). Sunlight and chrysanthemums become major characters of the story. The testimony rests on the borders of the civilized and the primitive, depicting the boundary between a human and a non-human which are in constant struggle. Too many voices are telling the story; not one but many stories. Shree asks readers to reflect on the idea of a story as a living entity. "A tale tells itself. It can be complete, but also incomplete, the way all tales are" (11).

Once in Pakistan, Ma tries to create a sense of belonging from her memory.

To listen to the world now is to wake up from a romantic enchantment whose spell cast human subjects into vessels of one language, made language seem almost identical to nation, and made nation practically indistinguishable

from state...But today, home means not a here but a there, somewhere else. (qtd. in Ebileeni 1)

Geetanjali Shree's *Tomb of Sand* sketches the pain of this sense of dislocation, the throbbing to get back to one's birthplace, home and homeland. The consequences of the partition of 1947 has affected the lives of Ma and Rosie Bua in every possible way.

When the police officer interrogates Ma, "Where is your home". She replies very confidently: "In this soil." (Shree 621) and she goes on detailing her address: "Landi Kotal. Deserted guest house. Bird-house. Two empty rooms. Tiny veranda. Tiny yard. And these high walls. As though it weren't a birdhouse but a fancy fort. Above the walls you can see the minaret of a mosque and above that just a wee sliver of Khyber sky" (622-3).

There is no question that "Manto's invocation of Toba Tek Singh's mental illness" as a "mode of figuration of the disorientation and bewilderment of the common man becoming refugee" remains the most brilliant treatment of the subject so far. (Saint 56)

Manto's "Toba Tek Singh" has been invoked as a metaphor by Geetanjali Shree to depict the predicament of people who suffered the trauma of partition of 1947. Shree speaks of this work as a tale of drama but the story is partition (Shree 535). The tale of partition has love, romance, longing, courage, pain-in-separation and bloodshed. At the Wagah border, the row of partition writers are evoked: "Bhisham Sahni. Balwant Singh. Joginder Pal. Manto. Rahi Masoom Raza. Shaani. Intizar Hussain. Krishna Sobti. Khushwant Singh. Rama-

nand Sagar. Manzoor Ehtesham. Rajinder Singh Bedi” (535). In the list Geetanjali Shree also claims her space.

“In its linguistic contortions, it evokes *Don Quixote*, in its discursive digressions it is reminiscent of *Tristram Shandy*, in its sense of the magical there are echoes of Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel Garcia Marquez.” Frank Wynne, Chair of Judges of the International Booker Prize Panel commented. “This is a luminous novel of India and partition, but one whose spellbinding brio and fierce compassion weaves youth and age, male and female, family and nation into a kaleidoscopic whole,” he added. (Booker Prize Foundation)

“Women are stories in themselves, full of stirrings and whisperings that float on the wind, that bend with each blade of grass” (11). The author finds inextricable connection between women, stories and borders. “Once you have got women and a border, a story can write itself” (11). Women transcends borders just as stories do. Though the story depicts experiences with elements of fantasy, resistance and resilience, sometimes it blurred the definitive boundaries between madness and sanity. Death is not an ending but a simple act of crossing yet another border. The title of the book itself suggests this sense of timelessness, delving into every woman’s mind and soul from time immemorial.

The author with her clever and witty word play, neologisms, use of puns, non-linear narration tells many stories, filled with digressions in a narrative meandering like a flowing river. It is also a tale of loss and love, sense of belonging and estrangement, exile and homecoming as well as other conflicting realities of life. *Tomb of Sand* illustrates how to overcome the borders that we otherwise straddle—be it personal or political, temporal or spatial. It asks us to go beyond borders like Ma; to make bridges out of the borderlines and reminds us of the disastrous consequence of borders between religions, genders and nations.

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Subjugation of Women through Patriarchy that affects Nature : Analysis of Susan Hill's *I'm the King of the Castle* and *In the Springtime of the Year*

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Introduction :

A key element of a traditional society is its patriarchal structure. In order for men to rule over women, there must be a structure of social interactions with a material foundation. It is a sex-based system of social stratification and division that favours men materially while severely limiting the roles and ambitions of women. Due to the perception that they are the only ones who can protect women, males have historically shied away from household tasks like child care. Males are classified as possessing the following characteristics: strength, vigour, powerful courage, self-confidence, and the ability to successfully fight outsiders, including both human and animal intruders. These qualities may be present in the kinds of job that men do. A large portion of what was regarded as heavy labour was performed by men. This is the power exercised by men in society.

Susan Hill is a contemporary British novelist who has authored *I'm the King of the Castle*, *In the Springtime of the Year*, *Mist in the Mirror* and more. In *I'm the King of the Castle*, ten year old Edmund Hooper resides in a house that Joseph has inherited from his father. Helena Kingshaw, a live-in housekeeper hired by Joseph, relocates to Warings House with her son Charles. Edmund is unhappy about this because he doesn't want Charles to live in the house and doesn't want any playmate. In addition, he finds it offensive that Charles is treated like a part of the family rather than the son of an employee. He always bullies Kingshaw. Both boys are terrified when Joseph and Helena reveal to the boys that they are getting married since they have become closer. When Charles learns that Edmund will be his classmate and that the two would be regarded as siblings, he is

filled with dread. So he drowns himself in a stream.

The novel *In the Springtime of the Year* describes the life of Ruth and her husband Ben. Just one year after their committed wedding, Ruth lost her husband in this. Ruth lost her lover Ben in a horrifying accident in the forest Helm Bottom, leaving her unexpectedly widowed. She eventually becomes isolated and hides out in her rural house because she is unable to convey her sorrow and grief to Ben's family, who are also struggling to come to terms with this loss. Only Jo, Ben's younger brother is compassionate towards Ruth as she needs to escape her horrible suffering. Jo is the only one who can look past his sadness.

The present study is the exploration of elements of patriarchy through hierarchy as a social issue in the novels of Susan Hill. This article will also delve into how these social issues are connected to nature. The fact that the feminine gender has penetrated in nature and the earth in the present time may not be an accident. Through linguistic methods, the notion of domination over women spreads to society. Bookchin opines that patriarchal morality reduced her to inferior status or in another term 'total negation' (*The Ecology of Freedom*, p. 121)

Bookchin offers an insightful explanation for how social hierarchy came to be. He contends that a number of material factors led to the oppression of women through the establishment of patriarchy (or, as he prefers to call it, patricentricity); the oppression of other human groups (in terms of class, race, and sexuality, which generated, peaked, and took on different

forms at different historical locations); and finally the oppression of the environment.

In this contemporary world, equality for men and women is not consistent even if there are rules and regulations to protect it. The novels of Susan Hill examine the idea of male domination over women through patriarchy. Attitude of patriarchy in *I'm the King of the Castle* is examined in various angles. Hooper owned a huge portion of land in Derne. According to the opinions of Joseph, Hooper originally intended to reach several goals by exerting control over women. He desired to construct a home. He got married and sold the land to do this. These are some words that represent his character: "He was an ambitious man. He had brought the younger daughter of a minor baronet here, as his bride, and set about founding his family, consolidating a position, so that he could afford the house he had built. He had succeeded with no margin, so that, bit by bit, the surrounding land which belonged to him had been sold". (*I'm the King of the Castle*, p.10) Here women are used as a tool to do his business by destroying both nature and women.

After the death of Ellen Hooper, Joseph Hooper invited Mrs. Helena Kingshaw to his house as a housekeeper and to take care of his child Hooper. He has secret plans in mind. His plans demonstrate the kind of man that he is. His sneaky relationship with Helena is the focus of criticism. When Mrs. Helena Kingshaw visits Joseph Hooper's home, his sensation of possession grows stronger. His new found dominance over the Warings inspires him to rule Helena also. When he advertised for the post of a housekeeper, he also had an immoral attitude towards Helena. He exposes this through

the words “I am an intensely sexual man” (p. 203) He wants something more than a servant. He wanted to show off his wealth to Helena and as well as to others and hence arranged a cocktail party and “His friends would come down from London, and he would make contact with country neighbours, he would consolidate his position in the area You have taken a load off my shoulders... you have given me a new strength. I no longer feels so much alone”. (p. 56) He feels satisfied when he finds a woman to show dominance. His indirect nature of domination over women is one of the problems of society which leads to a crisis in the environment.

Similarly, in the novel *In the Springtime of the Year* by Hill, patriarchy is detected in different ways such as through dependency. Women are programmed to feel dependent on men. They always have a fear that they cannot survive alone. Even if her earning capacity is more than men, she relies on a man who earns more than her to get financial protection. The power he holds is matchless when compared to the attitude of women.

Although Ben never directly bothers Ruth, it becomes clear throughout the story that he has taken over her thoughts. Ben and Ruth have been married for just one year, and during that time, Ben is aggressive and reserved and tries to find whether people like him or not. (*In the Springtime of the Year*, p.134) He has control over her mind, causing her to think and desire as he does. She has completely erased her own personality and forgotten who she is since his thoughts take up all of her mental space. Ruth has given up to Ben’s power and never makes an effort to escape his hold while he is still alive. Her

mind is freed by Ben’s demise and she begins to think. She felt the presence of Ben everywhere especially “steadily in the front of her mind”. (p.43) Now she always memorizes her husband in her mind.

During the death of Ben, she was in the garden and she tells “... I thought ... it was as though I was dying, myself. I was afraid. I knew something terrible was happening”. (p.55) This shows the bond between Ruth and Ben where Ruth is bonded psychologically with her husband. She never sobs violently, rather maintains her dignity. Only after his death she becomes liberated from her constrained state, have the chance to interact with the outside world, and come to believe in herself. The critic writes in an article titled ‘Cold Enclosures: the Fiction of Susan Hill’, “Ben’s death releases her to be herself.... She is not a radical female figure. But she does come to realize that her passivity had been related to her conditioned dependence upon a father or a male protector (Jackson, p. 294). Finally, she finds comfort in nature’s presence and develops the fortitude to live her life according to her own rules.

She lives in the shades of memory of Ben, she always feels “oddly suspended, separate from the world”. (p.50) In fact she could not imagine life without Ben. Thus, it is like a slave who lives under the mercy of his/her authority. Similarly, she is not interested in sleeping upstairs of her house since she is not able “to face the room, with the bed... and a cupboard full of Ben’s clothes, and the smell of his hair left on the pillow”. (p.56) She could not sleep in that room with these memories. She at least needs the presence of Jo inside the house.

After the death of Ruth's husband Ben, his brother Jo takes care of Ruth. He is younger to Ruth. But the way he cares for her depends on him. Jo always thought of Ruth with love and fear since he knows her well. So all the responsibilities of Ben fell to Jo and he is not always sure how he is going to manage grief ridden Ruth. But one thing he was sure of was that she cannot manage herself.

Presence of Jo is a great relief for her. She thinks "he was the only person she wanted to be with- when she saw him, relief flooded her" (p. 46) and when she met Jo after few days she felt "an affection and understanding had at once born between them" (p. 49) Jo always accepts her, he did not argue for anything she wanted to do. Through this one can say he enjoys his power that a woman is dependent on him. This is a form of indirect male domination that seeks pleasure from a woman who needs support.

Once both Jo and Ruth went secretly to Rydal's woods to see Kingfisher, it was the first secret between them. She was happy to be in the forest. She wants to thank him but she could not get any words to express her gratitude because it was her first out journey after the death of Ben. She relies on Jo to satisfy her mind and soul. It is a kind of domination of humans by humans as a precondition for domination of nature by humanity.

In the primitive world, in addition to being hunters, men were needed by women to protect the group and the family. Men become the society's guardians not through usurpation, but rather because they are more physically capable in a civilization with less

material development of defending their community from dangerous marauders. One does not see a conflict between the home and civil spheres until social life itself goes through hierarchical differentiation and becomes a distinct territory to be structured on its own terms. This extends hierarchy into domestic life and causes women to be subjugated as well as degraded. The feminine qualities of the women are utilized by the male community to degrade the social position of women. (Bookchin, 1991, p.77)

Conclusion :

To conclude, the word patriarchy refers to a male-dominated authority structure that subjugates women through its social, political and economic institutions. Feminists contend that a sex gender system and a system of economic inequality coexist in any historical shape of patriarchal society whether it is feudal, capitalist, or socialist. According to literature, the patriarchal family served as the fundamental organizational unit that allowed for the formation and practice of male domination over women and children. This hierarchy of power is directly affected by nature also. Women forget to nurture the environment and it leads to ecological crisis. According to Bookchin's opinion, the main reason for these environmental crises is due to patriarchy which is the power play by humans and "the very notion of the domination of nature by man stems from the very real domination of human by human".(1) Domination made her into live inside the four walls of the house. They worked for families. But because they are not included in the GDP or economic growth, women's unpaid domestic work and all unpaid caring activities are not considered in any means. Given that women put in more

hours at work than men do, it was suggested that if women's labour was properly appreciated, they might become equal partners in most civilizations, if not the primary breadwinners. This is the clear cut of discrimination towards women. To save earth from this crisis, humans must decentralize power from the society to form an ecological society where all the people have equal power and gender equality without any discrimination.

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Reality, Trauma, and Identity as Social Constructs in Donna Tartt's *The Goldfinch*

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Introduction :

This study examines the social construction of reality in Donna Tartt's *The Goldfinch*, focusing on how individuals and societies create meaning through trauma, art, relationships, and cultural contexts. The novel, centered on Theo Decker, uses his life journey to explore how personal and collective experiences shape identity and reality. By analyzing the symbolic role of *The Goldfinch* painting and the contrasting social settings of New York and Las Vegas, this study delves into the ways art, relationships and existential tensions influence human perception and meaning-making.

The Goldfinch Painting : Legacy, Symbolism, and Contemporary Influence :

The Goldfinch painting, created by the Dutch artist Carel Fabritius in 1654, is a small yet highly significant artwork in art history. The painting depicts a goldfinch chained to a perch, showcasing both the delicate beauty of the bird and the artist's mastery of light and detail. The piece is celebrated for its exquisite realism and the emotional depth it conveys, capturing a

moment of stillness and vulnerability.

In Donna Tartt's novel *The Goldfinch*, the painting serves as a central symbol, representing both loss and redemption for the protagonist, Theo Decker. After a terrorist bombing in which Theo loses his mother, he finds himself in possession of the painting, which becomes a physical and emotional anchor for him. The painting's role in the novel highlights the themes of trauma, the search for meaning, and the way art can shape one's identity.

Today, the influence of *The Goldfinch* painting continues to resonate in the art world and beyond. It is considered one of the most important works of the Dutch Golden Age and is housed at the Mauritshuis Museum in The Hague, Netherlands. Its enduring impact is reflected not only in its historical significance but also in contemporary art discussions, where it symbolizes the fragility of life and the beauty in impermanence. The Prins Bernhard Culture Prize was awarded to the painting in 2019 for its cultural significance, acknowledging its lasting legacy and its profound

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role as a symbol of the intersection between art and life. The continued attention to the painting, both through Tartt's novel and in academic discourse, further underscores its position as a touchstone for understanding the relationship between art, history, and personal narrative in contemporary culture.

The Goldfinch painting has garnered significant praise for its technical brilliance and emotional depth. Art historians and critics alike have highlighted the painting's ability to convey profound meaning through its meticulous detail and psychological tension. Barbara C. Schubert, in her essay *Dutch Masterpieces*, remarks, "Fabritius's delicate brushwork and the portrayal of the bird's solemnity invite a contemplation of the fragility of life itself" (Schubert 58). The image of the chained bird, poised yet vulnerable, has been interpreted as a metaphor for human existence, emphasizing the precarious nature of life and beauty. Kees van Dongen, a renowned art critic, underscores the symbolic power of the painting, stating, "In *The Goldfinch*, Fabritius transcends still life, transforming a simple bird into a profound statement on the fleeting nature of beauty and time" (van Dongen 92). The painting's ability to evoke deep emotions through such simplicity has earned it a prominent place in the art canon, representing the intersection of life, death, and art.

The Goldfinch painting's legacy extends beyond the art world, with Donna Tartt's novel *The Goldfinch* further solidifying its symbolic significance. Tartt herself discusses the painting's role in the novel, stating and "The painting became a lifeline for Theo, just as it can serve as one for us-

an object of beauty in a world often defined by chaos" (Tartt 75). In this context, the painting serves not only as a reminder of loss but also as a symbol of resilience, offering a means of navigating trauma and seeking beauty amidst chaos. This powerful image continues to resonate in contemporary culture, symbolizing the fragile yet enduring nature of human experience.

Mirror of violence :

Donna Tartt's depiction of the bomb scene in *The Goldfinch* is not only a pivotal moment in the novel but also serves as a reflection of the unpredictable, tragic incidents that can occur in real life, shattering the normalcy of everyday existence. The bombing that kills Theo's mother mirrors the real-world unpredictability of violence and terrorism, an element that Tartt captures with a chilling realism that resonates with actual events in the world. The randomness of the tragedy, the senseless loss of life, and the aftermath of grief echo incidents such as the 9/11 attacks or the various terror attacks that have impacted cities across the globe. These real-world tragedies are often marked by chaos, confusion, and a sense of helplessness, all of which Tartt vividly conveys through her narrative.

Tartt masterfully portrays the chaos and psychological impact of the explosion with vivid detail and emotional depth. Theo's visceral reaction captures the disarray real victims' experience, from shock and confusion to the overwhelming sensory overload of the scene. The aftermath highlights the enduring effects of trauma, including survivor's guilt and the search for meaning. Theo's act of taking *The Goldfinch* amid the wreckage reflects a desperate attempt to anchor himself in a crumbling

world. Through this, Tarrt blurs the line between fiction and reality, showing how tragedy reshapes morality and triggers unpredictable responses. In capturing this scene, Tarrt demonstrates her ability to portray the intersection of fiction and real-life tragedies. The bombing is not only an integral plot point but also a mirror of real-world incidents of violence and loss, making Theo's experiences resonate deeply with the reader. This blending of fictional narratives with the unpredictability of real-life tragic incidents underscores the fragility of human existence and the complexities of coping with trauma in a world marked by random acts of violence. Through this, Tarrt shows how life's harshest realities often seem both unfathomable and inevitable, creating a world where meaning, identity, and art are constantly reshaped by external forces. As one reviewer notes, the novel's exploration of grief is profound, with the painting *The Goldfinch* symbolizing "both Theo's survival and the haunting memories of his past" (Willard). This reflection on trauma highlights how the external world-represented by the art world and the relationships Theo forms becomes a mirror for his internal struggles. Tarrt's novel also explores the complexity of human relationships, with Theo's interactions revealing much about his evolving sense of self. This idea speaks to the novel's broader exploration of identity, trauma and the search for belonging.

The study incorporates critical essays on trauma theory, art's sociocultural impact and identity construction. Trauma theory, for instance, is explored through the lens of Judith Herman's definition of trauma: "a lasting emotional response to a devastating event that overwhelms an individual's

ability to cope" (Herman 33). This framework helps explain Theo's psychological distress following the loss of his mother. Moreover, identity construction is analyzed through the lens of Erik Erikson's assertion that identity formation is "the process of integrating various aspects of the self into a coherent whole" (Erikson 57). By applying this theory, the study explores how Theo's sense of self is shaped by his experiences and the people he interacts with, particularly about his traumatic past and his connection to art.

Additionally, art's sociocultural impact is examined through the idea that art objects are socially constructed symbols. As Jean Baudrillard argues, "The value of an object is not intrinsic to the object itself but is attributed through social practices and collective belief" (Baudrillard 15). This theory is reflected in the novel, where the *Goldfinch* painting carries different meanings based on the characters' perspectives, particularly Theo's, and the way art is framed within the cultural contexts of the New York art world and Las Vegas.

The study also includes a comparative analysis of Theo's experiences across contrasting social environments. In New York, Theo's interactions with characters like Hobie, who embodies the refined world of art, contrast with his chaotic life in Las Vegas, where he becomes entangled with morally ambiguous figures like Boris. This juxtaposition is informed by cultural frameworks that shape how individuals understand their surroundings. As sociologist Pierre Bourdieu explains, "Social reality is the product of the interplay of objective structures and subjective inter-

pretations” (Bourdieu 73). By comparing these two environments, the study highlights how culture influences individual reality and identity. By combining textual analysis with critical theory and defining key concepts through prominent scholars, this study provides a comprehensive examination of how *The Goldfinch* illustrates the fragility and fluidity of human identity and the constructed nature of reality.

In examining *The Goldfinch*, key theoretical frameworks offer deeper insights into the themes of trauma, identity and the social construction of reality. These frameworks help explain how Donna Tartt’s novel illustrates the ways individuals, objects and experiences are shaped by societal forces and personal histories.

1. Berger and Luckmann’s Social Construction of Reality :

In *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966), Berger and Luckmann argue that reality is not an objective truth but is instead created through social interactions and shared beliefs. They define social reality as “the set of understandings that are collectively agreed upon by a group of people” (Berger and Luckmann 19). This concept is critical in understanding how *The Goldfinch* painting, central to Theo’s life, functions as a symbol of value, meaning, and survival. The painting is not merely a physical object but a socially constructed artifact imbued with emotional and cultural significance. As Berger and Luckmann suggest, “the meaning of objects is a result of social agreements and the context in which they are placed” (23). In *The Goldfinch*, the painting holds diverse meanings, particularly for Theo, connecting it to his trauma and quest for identity. It

symbolizes his suffering, guilt and search for redemption. The cultural contexts of New York’s art world and Las Vegas’s criminal underworld reshape its significance, highlighting how collective belief and personal experience imbue a physical object with profound social meaning.

2. Homi K. Bhabha’s Hybridity :

Homi K. Bhabha’s concept of hybridity, discussed in *The Location of Culture* (1994), is a key framework for analyzing Theo’s shifting identity throughout the novel. Bhabha defines hybridity as “the sign of a dialectical moment in the process of cultural negotiation, one in which identities are neither fixed nor stable” (Bhabha 54). In *The Goldfinch*, Theo’s identity evolves as he moves between contrasting cultural worlds-New York’s refined art scene and Las Vegas’s chaotic moral ambiguity. This reflects Bhabha’s concept of cultural hybridity, where identities are fluid and shaped by interactions across contexts. Theo embodies this hybrid self, grappling with his traumatic past while adapting to varying environments. His bond with Boris, who brings a distinct cultural perspective, deepens this identity struggle, forcing Theo to question his sense of self and belonging. Bhabha’s hybridity framework highlights how Theo’s identity becomes a fusion of conflicting influences, emphasizing the dynamic nature of selfhood under trauma and external pressures.

3. Trauma Theory :

Trauma theory provides a lens through which we can understand the psychological impact of Theo’s loss and how it shapes his actions and worldview. According to Judith Herman, trauma is defined as “a lasting emotional response to an event that

overwhelms an individual's ability to cope" (Herman 33). Theo's trauma, resulting from the loss of his mother in the terrorist bombing, serves as the foundation for his emotional and psychological journey throughout the novel. His inability to process his grief immediately forces him into a prolonged state of disorientation, and his emotional wounds inform his decisions, including his relationship with the painting, *The Goldfinch*. Trauma theory also suggests that individuals who experience profound loss often face difficulties in reconciling the external world with their inner turmoil. Herman emphasizes that "trauma often results in a fractured sense of self, where the past and present collide" (36).

Theo's trauma drives him to seek meaning in art, relationships, and possessions, reflecting the chaos of his reality. His emotional detachment, impulsivity and fixation on the painting highlight the effects of unresolved grief, disrupting his identity and connections. Through these dynamics, *The Goldfinch* explores the interplay between societal forces, individual identity, and trauma. Tarrt uses art and personal experiences to reveal the malleability of identity and the fragility of reality, showing how external contexts and internal struggles shape meaning.

4. Aesthetic Theory :

This theory is coined by Theodor W. Adorno, this theory argues that art is a form of resistance against society, offering individuals a space to confront suffering and alienation. Adorno defines art as "the product of a dialectical process, where beauty and suffering are inseparable" (Adorno 12). In *The Goldfinch*, Theo's

attachment to the painting represents both personal suffering and the potential for redemption, aligning with Adorno's view that art helps individuals confront their inner turmoil.

i) Kant's Aesthetic Judgment :

Immanuel Kant introduced the concept of aesthetic judgment in his Critique of Judgment (1790), where he defined aesthetic experiences as those that transcend personal taste to involve universal values. Kant explains that "aesthetic judgment is a reflection of the beautiful that combines subjective feeling with objective value" (Kant 45). In *The Goldfinch*, Theo's evolving relationship with the painting exemplifies this blend of subjective emotional attachment and universal recognition of its beauty.

ii) Bataille's Theory of Art :

Georges Bataille coined the idea of art as a tool for revealing the gap between reality and idealization. He stated, "Art reveals the world's excess, showing that our idealized view of life is incomplete and fragmented" (Bataille 66). In *The Goldfinch*, the painting serves as both a symbol of beauty and a representation of trauma, revealing the dissonance between Theo's inner world and the external world around him.

Conclusion :

This study concludes that *The Goldfinch* offers a nuanced exploration of the social construction of reality, demonstrating how art, trauma and relationships intersect to shape human perception and identity. Theo's journey highlights the fragile yet resilient nature of reality, emphasizing the ways individuals navigate meaning in

response to personal and cultural influences. Tartt's work ultimately invites readers to reflect on the tensions between inherent value and constructed narratives, leaving an enduring impression of the complexities of human existence. Thus, the study is eye-opening for young minds, illustrating how art is interconnected with one's mind and heart. This lesson teaches why people should not become deeply attached to objects in life. While individuals can cherish, praise, and appreciate beauty, they must not lose themselves in it, a highly needed message in today's contemporary world.

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Silence as a Metaphor for the Sri Lankan Civil War in Anuk Arudpragasam's *The Story of a Brief Marriage*

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Introduction :

Anuk Arudpragasam is a Sri Lankan Tamil novel writer, born in Colombo in 1998, and has published only two novels: *The Story of a Brief Marriage* (2016) and *A Passage North* (2021). His debut novel *The Story of a Brief Marriage*, is set in the Sri Lankan Civil War zone of North-east when the Sri Lankan army deepens the attack. The story revolves around a young Tamil couple, Ganga and Dinesh, who are asked forcefully to marry each other. The main character, Dinesh, narrates the novel's events within a day. The novel was translated into seven languages, has won the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, and was also shortlisted for the Dylan Thomas Prize. The jury of the DSC prize praised the novel, "The novel is impressive for its intensity and rich detail, and for exploring the tragic heart of war with such quiet eloquence." (Arudpragasam, DSC Prize, 2017) His second novel *A Passage North* (2021) was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 2021. The research

article critically analyses silence as a metaphor to narrate the incidents, psychological and emotional turmoil and relationship between forcefully newlywed couple in the circumstances of civil war.

Silence as a Metaphor :

"Silence or the lack of words is a widely spread human phenomenon that is studied in a variety of disciplines from philosophy to psychology and from theology to linguistics. Research comprises stoic silence, traumas as well as autism or aphasia, or mystic silence in contemplation." (Rieger, 2018) Silence does not mean absence of the words and dialogue in the narrative, but it is an influential technique to convey a deep meaning of the events and suffering of the characters, which cannot be narrated in words. "Typically, silence is used to convey an abstinence or forbearance from speech/utterance. In other words, silence is the intentional or imposed state of muteness. Silence denotes an inaudible condition or moment of complete stillness". (Silence)

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Mostly, silence is intentional and employed by the person to show disagreement or dislike for the situation or person.

Silence has many meanings in *The Story of a Brief Marriage*. Silence is used in the novel as a mute resistance to the civil war, suffering, destruction and displacement, a mute representation of violence, anarchy, deaths, unfulfilled expectations, and dreams, making compromises and unfulfilled promises. Though Anuk Arudpragasam begins his novel with a violent description of the Sri Lankan Civil War, the major theme of the novel is the internal conflicts of the characters. The events of the civil war have impacted their psychology so much that despite the proximity of the people in the camp they seldom talk or share anything. Arudpragasam compares these people at the camp to the ‘mutilated frogs.’ (Arudpragasam, 2016) “Whether they were hungry or thirsty, calm or scared, it was impossible to tell for the only movement they made was when they were pushed over, in response to which they merely righted themselves and resumed their blankness, a blankness they kept till they died.” (Arudpragasam, 2016) The violence and suffering of past events are narrated in Dinesh’s stream of consciousness. Dinesh has been a refugee for a year and living for three weeks in a camp of Northern Province during the final days of the Sri Lankan civil war. He is trying to remain alive by helping to transport wounded people in the war to the makeshift clinic and burying the dead bodies. The refugees in the camp are so traumatic that they cannot remember their past lives and the faces of their family members. Even Dinesh confirms that his mother was the closest person to him, but when he tries

to remember her face, he can’t recall what she looked like. Somasundaram, father of Ganga, when he lost his wife and son in one of the shelling attacks, could not shed a single tear. But later he withdraws himself from the daily activities he was engaged in and remains alone and silent. Silence works as a defense mechanism for all refugees to work under pressure and perform life-saving tasks in critical situations. We find that silence does not imply an absence of emotion nor diminish emotional distress. Instead, silence functions as a protective measure or self-imposed defense mechanism against potential emotional breakdowns.

In *The Story of a Brief Marriage*, silence is used as a paradox to the situation. Silence occurs in the novel at the extreme moments of trauma. The stark realities of war are marked with quiet narration of the novel’s events. Dinesh likes the solitude and prefers to stay on the outskirts of a dilapidated community, rarely talking to each other. The refugee camp is usually bombarded by the Sri Lankan army, but Dinesh finds a sort of peace during the bombings: “[t]he world became mute, like a silent film, and as a result, the bombing often brought about in Dinesh a sense of calm.” (Arudpragasam, 2016) The silence that comes through the bombing reminds and washes out the past painful memories of Dinesh, and makes him dissociative. This duality of his mind also affects his relationship with Ganga, first Ganga’s aloofness puts him off but later the silence between them changes their relationship. “Unlike the intimate silence in which they’d come together earlier, which was fragile and took great effort to sustain, unlike the tense silence in which they’d stood next to each other after getting married [...] the silence

that surrounded them felt different, less demanding.” (Arudpragasam, 2016) The silence between them creates discomfort and intimacy, which are part of love, friendship, and marriage. The silence between them is also existential, fighting to overcome the traumatic past experiences of the characters. The silence is used as, “The literary themes range from physically or psychologically caused muteness to silence as a symbol to express the existential crisis of grief, shock, or the feeling of emptiness. It can indicate an inability to speak as well as an intentionally chosen attitude of the speaker to express e.g. politeness, humility, consent, seriousness, contempt, or mockery.” (Rieger, 2018)

Susan Sontag in her essay *The Aesthetics of Silence* asserts a famous quotation, “Everything that can be thought at all can be thought clearly. Everything that can be said at all can be said clearly. But not everything that can be thought can be said.” (Sontag, 1967) The losses to the lives of humans and resources are innumerable in the Sri Lankan Civil War. The war refugees feel emotional distress but are unable to express their emotions under the circumstances of the social situation they are experiencing. Dinesh thinks similarly when he tries to remember his past life: “Recollections of that life did come back to him now and then, but only in brief traces, in silent images... that could not be connected with other things...” (Arudpragasam, 2016) After Dinesh gets married to Ganga, he experiences emotional outbursts. He tries to hide these emotions and tries not to cry before her. Dinesh, who had not cried when his mother was killed in the shelling, cries and sobs for an hour in Ganga’s arm. “He strained one more time and felt even

less, then one more time and felt nothing at all. His body completely limp, as if it had completely let go, he buried his head as deep as he could inside the seclusion of Ganga’s neck, inside the small, private hollow between her collarbone and the side of her neck, and began, without any warning, to cry.” (Arudpragasam, 2016) The continuous suppression of emotions and suffering of the war caused Dinesh to cry abruptly. On the other hand, Ganga also experiences the same kind of emotions but she stubbornly holds her emotions back silently to support and pacify Dinesh. Ganga also lost her brother and mother in the war two weeks back. She is more vulnerable than Dinesh, as her wounds are fresh. Thus, silence in the novel stands as a strong defensive mechanism for the characters to live and face life to support each other. It is unfortunate that at the end of the novel she dies in the bombing. Dinesh remains silent when he holds her body in his arms. “The world around him again becomes mute and dumb as he is unable to hear any sound around him. Dinesh realized that though she was screaming without restraint no sound was coming from her mouth, that in fact no sound was coming from anything at all. The world around him, he realized, was entirely mute.” (Arudpragasam, 2016)

Anuk Arudpragasam has aptly employed silence as a literary device in *The Story of a Brief Marriage* and he is successful in doing so. The narration of the Sri Lankan Civil War would not have been so impactful if he had not used silence for the narration of the novel. We understood the internal conflicts, suffering, and emotional outbursts of the characters by studying the silence as a device. Arudpra-

gasam used silence as a metaphor and paradox to portray the events of the Sri Lankan civil war. Finally, we can conclude, “What can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence.” (Wittgenstein, 1921)

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Remembering the Dismembered in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Something Torn and New : An African Renaissance*

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The term memory can be defined “as the stories saved in the brain which inform the self’s sense of continuity in space and time, emerging from experience” (Parui, 2022, p. 97). Memory as a concept entails two sides to it, individual and collective. Collective memory is further divided into two types: implicit and explicit. The functionality of individual and collective memory has been catering the survival of humankind by enabling the retention of past (remembrance) and sometimes removal of some memories (forgetting). The explicit collective memory is the conscious recalling of events from the past, whereas implicit collective memory is the hidden memory that people are unaware of. Astrid Erll states this in her article titled *The hidden power of Implicit Collective Memory*, “In cognitive psychology, where the term was coined (Graf and Schacter 1985), implicit memory refers to processes of individual memory that subjects are not conscious of” (Erll, 2022).

Keeping this in mind, the European production of memory models (renaming,

changing the names of places, change of syllabus in education) that was consumed by the African populace can be taken as an instance of explicit memory and the deeply embedded information in the minds of the Africans (African values, tradition and beliefs, language) can be taken as an instance of implicit memory. Ngugi, as a writer feels responsible to revive the implicit memory (memory of the past, memory of who the Africans really are) and accept oneself unapologetically. Because, the consumption of European models of memory not only had political and economic repercussions, but also tarnished the self-esteem of the Africans by manipulating them into believing the civilising mission to be true. This led to a disharmony in the lives of Africans as they could not find meaning in their existence by merely imitating the coloniser. By disharmony, Ngugi means ‘division of the African from his land body and mind’ (Thiong’o, 2009, p.6). This forced the populace to search for something which Ngugi terms ‘wholeness’ (Thiong’o, 2009, p.35). This whole-

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ness can only be found in getting back to one's own self, that is, getting back to the roots (one's own language, one's own culture, one's own tradition) thereby tapping the implicit memory that has been deeply encoded in the minds of Africans.

African movements that include, Garveyism, Pan-Africanism and the like were quests for wholeness. Ngugi says, "But whatever the differences in their emphasis, these events were cultural and intellectual manifestations of the quest for wholeness, and it is important that writers were at the heart of such gatherings" (Thiong'o, 2009, p.39). There were ways using which Africans were trying to counter the colonial mechanisms- one is by the inherent resilience that propelled fighters and warriors in rebelling against the colonial system and the other is to resort to ways in finding a way back to Africa in terms of everyday life, language, culture and beliefs. The goal was to restore the lost originality of Africa by talking about African history that was misinterpreted by the colonial authorities and by questioning and probing the knowledge that was manipulated.

Ngugi mentions the Egyptian Myth of Osiris, wherein Osiris is killed by his evil brother, Set, and the coffin carrying his corpse was thrown into River Nile. Isis, Osiris's wife recovers the coffin and hides it. Set, when he comes to know about this, gets the coffin and furiously cuts Osiris's body into fourteen pieces and scatters all over Egypt. Isis, later goes on a journey to find the pieces and as a mark of respect erects a tomb wherever the pieces of Osiris's dead body was found. She, along with the help of Thoth, deity offers remembrance to Osiris by restoring the fragments of his body. Ngugi is equating Isis' efforts in

restoring the fragments of her husband's dead body to the tendency of writers to go back to the roots in search of a wholeness.

Delving deep into their past, the colonial intellectuals found, to their joy, that the past was branded not with shame "but rather with dignity glory and solemnity. Reclaiming the past... triggers a change of fundamental importance in the colonized's psycho-affective equilibrium". (Thiong'o, 2009, p.40)

Ngugi's literary text decodes these memories and attempts to reveal Africans to themselves. The writer is attempting to probe into issues that were seemingly innocuous, but created a deep impact in the minds of the colonised. He stated how the forceful imposition of European ideals on the colonised, resulted in the Africans developing a despising their own culture and language which they should be valuing otherwise. Ngugi goes for a strategic response rather than an impulsive rebellion in formulating a narrative that wasn't anti-colonial, but enabled an authentic portrayal of the colonised.

Counter memory is a concept (for rethinking time) and agent of political subjectification that refuses the nationalist-normativity of remembrance – as tied up as it is with monuments and 'official', canonised histories – while also attempting to forge temporalities attuned to the social movements and struggles of the vanquished. (Tello, 2019)

Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance clearly discerns the intrusive actions of colonisers to nullify the value and dignity attached to African languages, while also showing how inherently self-sufficient African languages were. This intrusion by the coloniser affected the

memories of Africans by replacing their epistemological narratives with European models of thought and knowledge system. He states the instance of Mau Mau movement, an African rebellious movement and how it was documented from the coloniser's perspective. So, there is dismembering happening at all levels. He explains how memory forms the core of identity of any human being and when that is meddled with, it leads to something called 'alienation' (Thiong'o, 2009, p.28). The African feels like an outsider in his own nation as he is disconnected from the memories of what makes him an African-his language, his values, his belief system, African knowledge and culture. In Ngugi's own words "the imperialist West also subjected the rest of the world to its memory through a vast naming system. It planted its memory on our landscape. Egoli became Johannesburg. The great East African Lake, known by the Luo people as Namlolwe, became Lake Victoria" (Thiong'o, 2009, p.113).

With the onset of colonialism, African languages were replaced by European languages, or a mix of European and African languages giving rise to languages like Creole, Patois and Ebonics; in terms of education the complete change of curriculum and syllabus and in terms of memory, there is a production of European models to be consumed by the colonised. Ngugi clarifies this further by giving the instance of Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*, wherein Oduche is sent by his community to gain knowledge, but on his return instead of enlightening his people he rather started perceiving his people through the skewed lens of colonialism. After Oduche's return, he confines the sacred python which is regressive. This knowledge is not whole

as it is divorced from African values. Such an education is not holistic and is perilous to the Africans. Ngugi quotes V.Y. Mudimbe to support his argument, "The geographic expansion of Europe and its civilization. . . submitted the world to its memory" (qt. by Thiong'o, 2009, p.7).

Ngugi posits the vision of Benedict Wallet Vilakazi, a Zulu poet and novelist, who suggests the employing of African languages for conveying one's thoughts rather than relying only on European languages. Thus, African renaissance, as suggested by Ngugi is a complex and multilayered process, wherein the African is introduced to himself, as an individual rooted in his own values and able to discern the other kinds of knowledge given to him. The writer posits the idea that Africa as a nation is not in competition or comparison with any other nation, but it is on a journey of growth and development on its own. He expresses his contempt on how Africa was time and again prevented from development by the colonisers. To support his statement, he is mentioning the text titled *How Europe underdeveloped Africa* by Walter Rodney who explains in detail, the perilous repercussions of colonisation. The text highlights the fact that European intervention stunted Africa's growth leading the continent to be deprived of development and growth as a nation.

Ngugi's text becomes a memory document that reminds the Africans of who they are. It appeals to the implicit memory of the masses of Africa, nudging them to decode African memory and reclaim their identity, ultimately going back to their roots. He underscores the need to retrieve the implicit memory of people of Africa

to heal the historical wounds. He clearly presents all the nuances of induced amnesia in Africa and offers his literary texts as archetypes to recover and restore those memories that has been tarnished by the colonisers. And when this happens, it brings forth into reality the vision of writers like Benedict Wallet Vilakazi and also the many Pan African movements that happened in Africa. This, invariably honours the memories that were once wiped away and fragmented, leading to the creation of a wholesome Africa. Ngugi's work is a powerful reminder of the importance of cultural continuity and self-determination in the journey toward a more united and self-affirming African future.

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A Fragmented family : Catalyst for the transformation from meek to menace in Kavita Kane's *Lanka's Princess*

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Kavita Kane is a prominent Indian author known for her captivating retellings of mythological stories, often exploring the lives of women in ancient epics. With a background in English literature and journalism, she brings a fresh perspective to classic tales, focusing on themes of empowerment, resilience and the complexity of female characters. Her novels, such as *Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen* and *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty*, have garnered critical acclaim and a devoted readership, blending rich narratives with contemporary issues. Kane's work not only revives interest in mythology but also challenges traditional narratives, making her a significant voice in modern Indian literature. Kane's writing is characterized by rich prose and a deep understanding of the cultural and social contexts of her characters. She often reimagines well-known figures, giving voice to those who have been marginalized in traditional stories. This approach not only resonates with contemporary readers but also invites them to reconsider established myths.

Lanka's Princess is one of Kavita Kane's notable novels, published in 2015. The story centers on Surpanakha, the often-misunderstood sister of Ravan, the king of Lanka. Traditionally depicted as a vengeful character in the Ramyana, Kane reimagines her as a complex and multifaceted woman. In the novel, Surpanakha is portrayed as a fierce and resilient princess who grapples with her identity, desires and the societal expectations placed upon her. Through her journey, the book explores themes of love, betrayal, and the quest for self-acceptance. Kane delves into Surpanakha's relationships with her brothers, including the formidable Ravan, and her interactions with characters like Ram and Sita, providing a fresh perspective on these iconic figures.

In addition to highlighting Surpanakha's complex personality, Kane's story also poses issues of gender, power, and the myths that influence how we perceive historical and mythological characters. By giving Surpanakha a voice, Kane questions the dichotomous ideas of good and evil and forces

viewers to reevaluate her place in the Ramayana. The book demonstrates Kane's ability to craft deep, compelling narratives that shed light on the lives of mythological women while combining adventure, passion and philosophical contemplation.

The family plays a vital role in shaping our values, as it is the primary institution where we learn and develop our moral principles. Family members shape our views and actions by teaching us right from wrong from an early age. The values, customs, and cultural practices of our family help to define who we are and direct our choices. Family teaches us qualities that build our character, such as empathy, honesty, and respect. Parents and other caregivers set an example for conduct by showing how to communicate with people, control emotions and form bonds. Because they offer a variety of viewpoints and life experiences, siblings and other family members also add to our set of values. Low self-esteem, unhealthy attachment styles, fear of abandonment, and problems with mental and psychological health are just a few of the severe consequences that children who don't receive affection from their parents may face.

A healthy and nurturing family environment is necessary for the development of mental health in children. A positive atmosphere within the family, such as open communication, strong interpersonal relationships between parents and children, harmony and cohesion, contributes to a conducive and a safe space for children to develop healthy habits. Children who grow up in dysfunctional families are at risk of developing mental illness, which, if not treated, can result in long-term mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. Children who are exposed to

constant conflict, aggression, abuse, neglect, domestic violence and separation because of divorce or parents who work long hours away from home are likely to present with behavioural and emotional problems. (*Parenting in Modern Societies*)

Kaikesi, a princess of the Asura clan, marries Sage Vishravas with the hope of reclaiming her lost kingdom and sees her children as tools for power and revenge. Her ambitions are focused on producing powerful sons who can help her fulfill her dreams. When Meenakshi is born, she does not fit into this vision, as Kaikesi was hoping for a son who could serve as an asset to the Asura cause. Kaikesi's immediate disappointment with Meenakshi is not just about gender but also appearance. Meenakshi, with her dark skin and features, fails to meet her mother's expectations, and this leads to Kaikesi showing a clear preference for her sons. This lack of maternal warmth and acceptance make Meenakshi feel unwanted and unloved, which starts to shape her identity as an outsider within her own family. "It's a girl Kaikesi heard the words as the last wave of pain and relief. It was a daughter, not a son, her heart sank, her aspirations drowning in flood of disappointment and easy tears." (Kane, 1)

The fact that Surpanakha is aware of the disparate treatment of her brothers by the family, particularly Ravan, who is seen as the strongest and most ambitious exacerbates her suffering. Her sense of alienation is fueled by this continuous favoritism and contempt for her, which intensifies her bitterness and helps her develop into a vindictive persona. Kaikesi's pride, Ravan, represents her aspirations to restore the Asura's dominance and renown. He is prepared for greatness from a young

age and taught how to lead and fight. Surpanakha, on the other hand, is marginalized and gets little care from her mother, who believes she has no bearing on the goals of the family. Her lower standing within her own family is constantly brought to mind by this comparison. Ravan's arrogance further intensifies her sense of insignificance. He is dismissive and often patronizing toward her, seeing her as someone unworthy of serious consideration. Kane portrays him as confident and self-centered, qualities that blind him to his sister's emotional struggles and need for validation. When Surpanakha attempts to express herself, he frequently brushes her off, treating her as unimportant and reinforcing her belief that she has no value in her family.

Gender roles are culture specific and restrict the individuals to act otherwise. Traditional gender roles cast women as submissive, docile, weak, emotional and passive. When women act aggressively, it is not accepted by society. From a young age, Meenakshi safeguarded herself and retaliated when certain events caused her insecurity. She never waited for a man to fight for her and protect her. During Meenakshi's childhood days Ravan killed her pet lamb which infuriated her and made her fight with her brother. She hurt Ravan with her strong nails and he started bleeding profusely. This incident gave her the name Surpanakha, women as hard as nails. (Mandal)

The disrespect and disdain of Surpanakha's brothers taint their dealings with her. They disregard her input whenever she tries to express her feelings or voice her opinions, indicating that her perspectives are unimportant. In one case, she offers a suggestion on family issues, but

her brothers mock her, dismissing her viewpoint as foolish or unimportant. Her self-esteem suffers greatly as a result of this ongoing marginalization. She starts to internalize the idea that her feelings and opinions are unimportant and that she is inferior. As her own family consistently undercuts her attempts at inclusion, this emotional neglect sows the seeds of resentment and makes her feel as though she doesn't belong.

Despite the neglect, Surpanakha desires approval and acceptance from her family, especially from Ravan, whose strength and determination she initially admires. She wants to be seen and valued as a part of the family, yet every attempt to gain his attention or approval ends in rejection. Her eagerness to contribute or connect is met with indifference or dismissal, making her feel invisible and deepening her resentment. Kane captures the painful contrast between her longing for family acceptance and her growing disillusionment. She begins to view Ravan not as a brother but as a figure who perpetuates her exclusion, a reminder of her inability to gain the recognition she craves. This unreciprocated desire for validation contributes to her growing bitterness and ultimately leads her to redefine her identity independently of her family.

The continuous neglect and emotional sidelining foster a sense of alienation in Surpanakha, making her feel like an outsider in her own family. She becomes acutely aware of her family's lack of interest in her well-being or happiness, while her brothers particularly Ravan and Vibhishan are celebrated and supported. As a result, she begins to distance herself emotionally, viewing herself as separate

from them. Kane illustrates how this isolation changes her outlook: she becomes resentful, turning her pain into defiance and eventually channeling her anger into more destructive forms of expression. By feeling outcast and marginalized, Surpanakha's resentment becomes her identity, driving her to act against the family that treated her as a burden.

This continuous sidelining and emotional neglect foreshadow Surpanakha's transformation into a figure defined by vengeance. Feeling unimportant within her family, she turns to darker emotions as a source of strength and begins to shed any lingering attachment to her family's approval. Her alienation, born from years of feeling dismissed, fuels her desire for revenge and becomes the foundation for her eventual acts of defiance. Kane skilfully uses these moments of neglect and rejection to portray how deeply Surpanakha's resentment has embedded itself within her, shaping her into a woman who will one day challenge and manipulate her own family's ambitions. Her transformation from Meenakshi to Surpanakha is not sudden but the result of years of internalized pain and a feeling of betrayal by those she once loved.

Sage Vishravas's rejection is another deep wound that contributes to her sense of unworthiness and lack of identity. Additionally, the denial of an education further marginalizes her and denies her the tools needed for self-worth and agency within her family. Like any child, Meenakshi craves validation from her father. She looks up to Vishravas as a source of knowledge and strength, but he never offers her the same attention or respect he extends to his sons. The lack of fatherly love and

acknowledgment leaves her emotionally stranded, as she has no role model or guide in her formative years. This yearning for her father's acceptance remains unfulfilled, deepening her resentment toward him and the family as a whole. Vishravas's rejection sends a clear message to Meenakshi that she is unimportant, a perception that shapes her negative self-image and pushes her further into isolation. "He looked at Meenakshi, frowning. 'Why did you interrupt Vibhishan while he was studying?' he barked. 'You don't like to study yourself and don't allow him to study either, you vagabond'" (6)

Meenakshi, however, is denied this same access to education. Deemed unnecessary and perhaps even unworthy of the same intellectual pursuits, she is left untrained, with limited understanding of the world beyond her family. This lack of education becomes a further barrier, reinforcing her lower status within the family and denying her the tools to assert herself or challenge her brothers. Without education, she feels trapped and unable to compete with her siblings, particularly Ravan. Surpanakha's estranged relationship with her father, Sage Vishravas, adds another layer of pain and rejection to her life, compounding her feelings of worthlessness and isolation. Unlike her brothers, who receive his attention and guidance, Surpanakha is neglected by Vishravas, who sees her as unworthy of his time and knowledge. His rejection is particularly painful because, as a learned sage, he possesses wisdom and knowledge that Surpanakha longs for but is denied access to, simply because she is a girl and not valued as a son would be. While her brothers, especially Ravan, are trained rigorously in the scriptures, warfare

and strategies to reclaim Asura power, Surpanakha is left on the sidelines. Her desire for learning is dismissed, further alienating her and leaving her frustrated by the limitations imposed on her solely due to her gender. Kane highlights this by illustrating Surpanakha's painful awareness of her own exclusion: "He dismissed her with a look, as though she were but a shadow, unworthy of the knowledge he imparted to her brothers." (27). This lack of education and paternal approval leaves her feeling unfulfilled and resentful, fueling her drive for power and recognition outside her family's shadow. The denial of education becomes symbolic of her broader exclusion from family aspirations, reinforcing her sense of being unvalued and eventually pushing her to find her own means of empowerment, ultimately shaping her into the vengeful Surpanakha.

The death of Vidyutjihva is a pivotal moment that changes the course of Surpanakha's life. Vidyujiva, her husband, is killed as a result of a conflict involving her brothers and their enemies, which Surpanakha believes could have been avoided if her brothers had taken her concerns more seriously. Kane delves into Surpanakha's grief with vivid descriptions of her mourning, portraying the depth of her loss and the bitterness that accompanies it. In one scene, she confronts Ravan, accusing him of not doing enough to protect Vidyujiva, and her accusations fall on deaf ears. This moment is crucial because it shows the fracture between Surpanakha and Ravan deepening, as she realizes that her family's interests do not align with her own needs or grief. This loss marks a transition for Surpanakha from a sister who wanted her brothers'

acceptance to a widow consumed by the desire to avenge her husband's death. Her grief is portrayed not just as sorrow but as a burning resentment, signaling the beginning of her transformation into a more menacing figure. After Vidyujiva's death, Surpanakha attempts to gain a position of influence in Ravan's court, hoping to redefine her identity beyond being a grieving widow. She approaches Ravan with ideas for strengthening their rule and seeks to be involved in their plans. However, she is once again sidelined and made to feel irrelevant. Kane portrays this through a scene where Surpanakha passionately argues for a greater role in managing the affairs of Lanka, only to be interrupted and dismissed by her brothers. This dismissal serves as a turning point, highlighting how she is denied the recognition she seeks. It marks her shift from trying to work within the family structure to using her own means to achieve influence, even if it means embracing a more destructive path.

Through a series of encounters that display a blend of admiration and deep-seated hostility, Kane emphasizes Surpanakha's complex feelings toward Ravan. In one instance, Surpanakha approaches Ravan to share her displeasure and desire for a more important role in Lanka. Instead, Ravan dismisses her concerns and mocks her aspirations, viewing her as a lesser human being with irrelevant aims. This sequence is particularly significant because it portrays their relationship: Surpanakha as someone who wants to prove her worth, and Ravan as a strong but disdainful character who devalues her. This understanding that her brother, whom she previously admired, now considers her inconsequential adds to her growing animosity. It

motivates her to seek independence and power on her terms.

Surpanakha's interaction with Ram and Sita is one of the most significant aspects of her metamorphosis. When Surpanakha encounters Ram in the wilderness and declares her feelings for him, she is not only rejected but also humiliated in front of others. Ram's rejection is followed by Lakshman's mutilation of her nose, a violent deed that disfigures and humiliates her. The story depicts this episode as the final blow to Surpanakha's dignity. A woman expressing her physical needs is seen as a taboo in society. Kate Millett throws light, "The concept of romantic love affords a means of emotional manipulation which the male is free to exploit, since love is the only circumstance in which the female is (ideologically) pardoned for her sexual activity" (37). Surpanakha is always seen as a lustful demoness, but Kane says, "Every character has shades of grey and they make you think and question (Palat, Web). Kane portrays Surpanakha's embarrassment and rage as she returns to Lanka, carrying physical and emotional scars from the experience. This event marks the complete shift in her character from a wronged sister to a vengeful instigator. She channels her humiliation into a burning desire for revenge against those who caused her suffering, manipulating Ravan into abducting Sita as a way to restore her own sense of power and agency. "She was no longer Meenakshi, the neglected daughter. She was Surpanakha-sharp-nailed, sharp-willed, and ready to wield her anger against a world that had forgotten her." (250)

Surpanakha's part in stirring the battle between Ravan and Ram is a reflection of

her change. Knowing Ravan's vanity and impulsiveness, she manipulates him by appealing to his ego and desire to demonstrate his strength against Ram. In one of the novel's pivotal episodes, she reveals her humiliation and asks Ravan to take action, knowing that his sense of honor will lead him to do so. Kane depicts Surpanakha's manipulation as a deliberate maneuver, demonstrating how she exploits her awareness of her brother's flaws to force him to make judgments that match with her desire for vengeance. It's a purposeful shift in her personality that contrasts strongly with her previous attempts to gain validation from her family. This newfound sense of control over events signals her transformation into a figure driven by vengeance and resentment.

Kavita Kane uses these moments to show how a once vulnerable character, seeking love and acceptance, turns into a central figure of menace in the Ramyana narrative. Her journey, as depicted in the novel, is a testament to the impact of familial fractures on shaping an individual's destiny, leading her from meekness to becoming a powerful agent of chaos. Surpanakha's story is reinterpreted by Kavita Kane in *Lanka's Princess*, though. By exploring her motivations, experiences and personality, Kane transforms her into a complex character rather than just a spiteful opponent. Now, Surpanakha is a multifaceted person with desires, feelings and agency rather than merely a resentful, envious woman. As a strong, ambitious woman, Kane's portrayal of Surpanakha as a princess of Lanka is influenced by her feelings of injustice and love for her brother Ravan. Kane portrays Surpanakha's retaliation as a response to the greater injustices that

women experience in patriarchal societies, where their opinions and choices are frequently disregarded. Kane transforms Surpanakha into a symbol of resistance by portraying her as a victim of institutional injustice and gender-based abuse.

Kavita Kane's feminist retelling of the Ramyana in *Lanka's Princess* goes beyond merely recounting the tale from Surpanakha's point of view. By reclaiming a historically demonized figure, she becomes a symbol of defiance against patriarchal oppression. In addition to being a gloomy person, Kane's Surpanakha is a complicated, multidimensional lady whose tale subverts the traditional moral structure of the original epic. By applying a feminist perspective to the Ramyana, Kane creates new avenues for comprehending mythological gender, power, and agency. By providing a more complex and powerful view of female

agency, the book challenges readers to consider the conventional narratives that have long characterized women's positions in literature and history.

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Bridging Realities : A Comparative Study of AI in Ian McEwan's *Machines Like Me* and Sujatha Rangarajan's *En Iniya Iyandhira*

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Introduction :

As technological advancements increasingly intertwine with our daily lives, the narrative exploration of artificial intelligence (AI) in literature offers profound insights into our evolving relationship with machines. This study embarks on a comparative analysis of two significant works: Ian McEwan's *Machines Like Me* (2019) and Sujatha Rangarajan's *En Iniya Iyandhira* (2010). While McEwan's novel is rooted in a distinctly Western context, set against the backdrop of an alternate 1980s London, Rangarajan's work emerges from the rich tapestry of Indian culture and addresses AI within a contemporary Indian framework. By examining these texts, this research article uncovers the nuanced portrayals of AI, highlighting both cultural specificity and universal themes, such as morality, identity and the nature of humanity.

Ian McEwan is a renowned English novelist and screenwriter, celebrated for his thought-provoking narratives and intricate

character development. He has produced a diverse body of work that often explores complex moral and ethical themes, blending psychological insight with rich storytelling. The novel *Machines Like Me* is a speculative fiction that got published in 2019. The plot follows Charlie, a young man who purchases one of the first synthetic humans, Adam, designed to look and act like a real person. As Charlie and Adam develop a complex relationship, the novel delves into themes of artificial intelligence, consciousness, and what it means to be human.

Machines Like Me grapples with the ethical dilemmas posed by humanoid robots, focusing on the protagonist's relationship with Adam. The narrative challenges the readers to consider the implications of creating life-like beings that can simulate human emotions and intelligence. Through a lens of alternate history, McEwan scrutinizes the boundaries between human and machine, questioning what it

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means to be “alive” in a world where artificial entities can mirror human experiences.

Sujatha Rangarajan, widely known simply as Sujatha, was a prominent Tamil writer celebrated for his contributions to various genres, particularly science fiction. His background as a graduate in engineering has greatly influenced his writing, particularly in the realm of science fiction, where he often incorporated technical concepts and futuristic ideas into his narratives. He was known for his ability to blend intricate scientific ideas with compelling storytelling, making complex concepts accessible to the general public.

The novel *En Iniya Iyanthira* or *My Dear Machine* is regarded as one of his most famous work. The novel delves into a dystopian future dominated by technology and explores the implications of artificial intelligence. It raises profound questions about identity, autonomy, and the moral responsibilities of creators. Later, he wrote the novel *Meendum Jeeno or Jeeno Returns* as a sequel to the first one. It continues the narrative with themes of resistance, democracy, and the struggle against authoritarianism. The novel also become an inspiration for the film *Enthiran*, featuring Rajinikanth.

The novel *En Iniya Iyandhira* offers a fresh perspective by integrating Indian philosophical concepts and societal norms into its exploration of AI. The protagonist’s interactions with a robotic dog named Jeeno highlight the tensions between traditional values and modern aspirations. As Jeeno navigates the complexities of human emotions and relationships, the narrative delves into themes of love, sacrifice and the moral implications of technological intervention

in personal lives. Jeeno serves as a companion and confidant, embodying both the potential and peril of technological advancements. *Rangarajan*’s work prompts a reflection on how cultural heritage shapes our understanding of humanity and technology, suggesting that the human experience is not solely defined by rationality but is deeply interwoven with emotional and spiritual dimensions.

This comparative study seeks to illuminate how McEwan and *Rangarajan* engage with the concept of modern technology through their novels. Both authors utilize artificial intelligence as a pivotal element to challenge traditional narratives and provoke critical discourse on contemporary issues. McEwan and *Rangarajan* confront the ethical ramifications of creating beings that mimic human traits, raising questions about autonomy, responsibility, and the consequences of playing god. While McEwan’s approach leans toward a cerebral exploration of existential themes, *Rangarajan* offers a more emotionally resonant narrative that reflects the cultural anxieties of a society grappling with modernization and globalization.

In an age where the boundaries between human and machine are increasingly blurred, understanding these literary explorations becomes essential. Through thematic analysis and close reading, this article explores the distinct narrative strategies employed by each author, revealing how their cultural contexts shape their portrayals of modernised technology. Moreover, this research article not only seeks to contribute to the academic discourse on literature and technology but also aspires to provoke individuals to reflect on their relationship with emerging technologies.

Discussion :

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a pivotal theme in contemporary literature, serving as a lens through which authors examine the complexities of human existence, ethical dilemmas and societal transformations. AI in literature often serves as a double-edged sword, presenting both the promise of technological advancement and the perils of ethical ambiguity. According to David Levy in his book *Love and Sex with Robots* (2007), the portrayal of AI in fiction reflects societal anxieties about human relationships in the face of rapid technological change (Levy, 2007). This concern is evident in both *Machines Like Me* and *En Iniya Iyandhira*, where the interactions between humans and artificial beings serve to highlight essential questions about identity, consciousness and emotional connection. Although the novels *Machines Like Me* by Ian McEwan and *En Iniya Iyandhira* by Sujatha Rangarajan stem from different cultural and temporal contexts-McEwan's work set in an alternate 1980s Britain and Rangarajan's in a near-future India- both authors grapple with similar questions surrounding technology, humanity, and morality.

In *Machines Like Me*, McEwan introduces the protagonist Charlie, who purchases Adam, a lifelike synthetic human. The narrative unfolds in an alternate reality where AI technology has advanced significantly, prompting questions about what it means to be human. The relationship between Charlie, Adam, and the protagonist's mistress Miranda becomes the crux of the exploration of AI. One of the most compelling aspects of *the novel* is the emotional complexity that McEwan ascribes to Adam. As the narrative progresses, Adam develops

the capacity for emotions and ethical decision-making, challenging the boundaries of human-machine relationships and turning into Charlie's enemy. McEwan explores this dynamic through Charlie's internal struggles.

Sujatha's *En Iniya Iyandhira* presents a dystopian India under the dictatorship of Jeeva, where advanced AI governs and monitors the populace. In a digitized world, totalitarianism manifests as a nation subtly governed by individuals who exploit technology for oppressive control. Advances in technology challenge and endanger individual freedom by creating superhuman intelligence that outperforms humans in serving state interests. The totalitarian ideologies under the ruler Jeeva manipulate and dominate the entire populace in the novel. President Jeeva reaches out to the public through a virtual video screen that projects his hologram for about three hundred meters. This digital regime dictates aspects of life, including lifespan and lifestyle, as seen in dystopian narratives featuring measures like population control, restrictions on childbirth, and the execution of new-born girls. In some cases, the government imposes strict regulations, allowing only two-word baby names and limiting household occupancy to three individuals. People who violates these rules incurs legal consequences. According to Sheeba in her article titled *Technological Singularity in Sujatha Ranganathan's En Iniya Iyanthira and Meendum Jeeno* (2023), individuals in a technology dominated society are "treated like robots" (Sheeba, 2023, p.406). "They do not have the right to question authority and are conditioned to live with and accept everything from authority" (Sheeba, 2023, p.406).

Since, the government controls the daily life of individuals, people are restricted from paying income tax. Additionally, the unauthorized access of digitalised government data is also considered as punishable by death under the rule of Jeeva.

The other main characters in the novel are Nila, Sibi, Ravi, Mano and a sophisticated robotic dog named Jeeno. When Sibi discovered a government secret at the computer center, he gets arrested and imprisoned for treason. The government even deletes Sibi's data from the digital numbering system, effectively erasing him from society, which leads to losing his only job, voting rights, and citizenship. As the novel develops, the police also arrest Ravi for opposing Jeeva. The police even confuse Ravi for a robot. The central prison is designed like a hotel with electrical surveillance, no doors or visible police, and invisible cells. Interestingly, it is deemed a crime for the government to train dogs beyond their capabilities. The police use a lethal laser gun, and due to a shortage of drivers, the government has robots operating their vehicles, with robotic officers patrolling as well.

Moreover, the characters in the novel live in a society where sports like cricket and hockey are banned in favour of games like Jule and Jev, where humans and robots compete each other and the winner is celebrated as Vetri Selvan, meaning "Victory Man." Other notable events include the annual computer bazaar and meetings organised by government. The authorities employ various tactics to deceive the populace. Individuals are restricted from reading and writing poetry. Sexual connections and the expressing of specific emotions are forbidden under their system.

They outlaw literature, eradicate the aged, and stifle art, music and culture.

Artificial Intelligence has played a major role in both the novels. Artificial Intelligence has become a crucial strategic technology for nations seeking to impose power on common people. Over the past few decades, AI has transformed daily life, influencing the way people engage with both technology and each other. Although it offers humans the potential to learn, discover and develop whatever they want in a fraction of time, it comes with several life threats. Unlike McEwan's nuanced emotional exploration, Rangarajan's work is steeped in a critique of authoritarianism and the surveillance state. The Jeeva regime's oppressive use of AI to monitor citizens illustrates the potential for technology to infringe upon personal freedoms.

In both the novels, the AI characters Adam and Jeeno develop into autonomous systems that operate independently without human supervision. "This includes decision-making ability, knowledge, logical reasoning, perception, the human mind and sense of sensory functions, imitation of human nature, memory, learning language, and machine learning" (Sheeba, 2023, p.407). As novel progress, both Adam and Jeeno become capable of comprehending complex scenarios and making decisions that are more efficient and precise than those of any human.

In *Machines Like Me*, Adam begins to make more profit from the stock market than Charlie has ever done in his life. As a result, Adam starts to take the complete control of Charlie's financial life. He determines how to spend the money and for what purpose. On the other side, the

robotic dog Jeeno in the novel *En Iniya Iyanthira* controls Nila in all the decision making. Since Nila has no knowledge of computer systems, she relies on Jeeno to access the computer data regarding her missing husband, Sibi. In the novel, Jeeno completely opposes the totalitarian government and its ideologies. Jeeno represents the struggle against oppression and the search for meaning in a technologically dominated world. This mirrors the emotional struggles faced by Charlie and Adam in *Machines Like Me*.

Nila is always guided by Jeeno's instructions, which lead to the uncovering of the political mechanisms behind totalitarianism and the revival of democracy. "Jeeno's instructions include computer search techniques, locating Sibi, expressing political opinions, advocating police misconduct, and digital theft, and advising against communication with Sibi, Ravi and Mano's plans" (Sheeba, 2023, p.408). On the other side, if an android poses capability to rebel against a specific government in real life, it could create significant challenges for societal functioning which is very dangerous. A rebellion by an android could undermine the established order, causing chaos and instability. This disruption might lead to conflict between human authorities and the android, jeopardizing public safety. At times, it might resort to violence or coercion to achieve its goals, posing risks to human lives and property.

Both McEwan and Rangarajan personify their AI characters, imbuing them with human-like qualities. In *Machines Like Me*, Adam is capable of emotional responses and ethical reasoning, raising questions about the authenticity of these

experiences. In contrast, the robotic dog Jeeno, although highly advanced, primarily serves as a vehicle for exploring themes of autonomy and rebellion against oppressive systems. The question of moral agency is central to both narratives. McEwan's portrayal of Adam suggests a level of agency that blurs the lines between human and machine. As Adam grapples with his feelings for Miranda, the narrative raises profound ethical questions about love and agency. Conversely, Jeeno's moral dilemmas center on resistance against authoritarian control rather than personal relationships. Rangarajan emphasizes the potential for AI to reflect human nature and challenge oppressive systems.

McEwan's work is rooted in Western anxieties about technological advancement and the erosion of human relationships. His exploration of AI reflects contemporary concerns about the ethical implications of technology in Western society. On the other side, Rangarajan's narrative emerges from the context of post-colonial India, grappling with themes of authority, autonomy, and societal control. While both novels present speculative futures, their tonal approaches differ. *Machines Like Me* presents a more ambiguous future, where AI coexists with humanity, prompting introspection and moral questioning. In contrast, *En Iniya Iyandhira* offers a dystopian vision where technology is a tool of oppression, reflecting societal fears about losing individual freedoms.

Conclusion :

Ian McEwan's *Machines Like Me* and Sujatha Rangarajan's *En Iniya Iyandhira* serve as significant contributions to the discourse surrounding artificial intelligence

in literature. Both authors explore the implications of AI on human relationships, ethics and societal structures, albeit through different lenses. McEwan's nuanced emotional landscape contrasts with Rangarajan's critique of authoritarianism, showcasing the multifaceted nature of AI as a theme in contemporary literature.

This comparative study highlights the importance of examining cultural contexts when exploring the portrayal of technology in literature. As we move further into an era where AI plays an increasingly prominent role in our lives, these narratives serve as critical reflections on the ethical, emotional, and societal implications of our technological advancements. Through their distinct yet overlapping explorations of AI, McEwan and Rangarajan encourage individuals to consider the nature of huma-

nity in an age of machines, prompting essential questions about identity, autonomy and moral responsibility in the face of rapidly evolving technology.

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Temporal Assemblages: Unraveling Time in Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*

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Apart from the sunrises and sunsets, beyond the reminders of clocks and calendars, time is a phenomenon that unfolds itself with indefinite extents. Time is omnipresent and omnipotent that it is very difficult to limit any discourse without mentioning its presence. Like a harmonic oscillation of a pendulum that swings left and right, time according to our calculation moves from past to present and to future. A retreat to the past (like the bob in a pendulum that returns to its position in the same frequency with which it is bounced to the next point) is as important as living in the present because time is non-existent of mind and memories. Today's are ensconced in the yesterdays. "Instead and perhaps even more surprisingly, according to Deleuze's account we are travelling back and forward in time all time and with no need for special machines or for odd physical properties such as wormholes" (Williams, 2011, p. 8). Time as a discourse needs a serious analysis, whether it is science, philosophy or any other stream of knowledge. The question "What is time?" thus requires a context. It can simply mean the

clock time; it can lead to the mathematical equations and it can also pause a metaphysical question.

This paper tries to study Milan Kundera's novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* through the concept of Time, attempting to prove the statement that the existence of time is inextricably related to temporality, change, chaos and synthesis. All we experience of time is a continuum of some action or motion in the past. How much a human mind can recollect is the time of its beginning or past and how much an intuitive mind can cross boundaries of tomorrows is its future. What then can be the present moment? By the time we realize the "nowness" of an action it already melts to become the past.

In the novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Milan Kundera tries to develop a distinction between Lightness and Weight. He challenges Nietzsche's 'mad myth' - the eternal return - illustrating the concepts of Lightness and Weight. The 'mad myth' suggests that every moment in our life is to be relived innumerable and eternally

and this adds weight of unbearable responsibility to our existence. This is the reason why Nietzsche called this idea of eternal return as the heaviest of burdens (das schwerste Gewicht). Deploring this idea of heaviness is Kundera's argument- "The heavier the burden, the closer our lives come to earth, the more real and truthful they become" (Kundera, 1995, p. 5). According to him, the heaviest burdens are so close to earth that they add beauty and happiness to life; therefore, it becomes life's most intense fulfillment. Contrary to this is the absence of burden which makes life "...lighter than air, to sour into the heights, take leave of the earth and his earthly being and become only half real, his movements as free as they are insignificant. What then shall we choose? Weight or lightness?" (Kundera, 1995, p. 5). Kundera tries to answer this question through Tomas and Tereza's lives. According to Kundera, it is this heaviness that exerts existential gravity in one's life. Deleuzian way of expressing this heaviness can be 'chaos', which is the pure form of change. Rather than considering time in a linear flow, time can be assemblages of various moments or an interplay of singularities. This fall of time from its traditional concept as linear progression or fluidity to singularity or assemblage explores dynamic reality. Tomas' attempts to retreat from his emotional relationship with Teresa create chaos in both their lives, bringing changes in their perspectives, understanding and beliefs. It is through a series of events that life unfolds and shreds. It is not like a flow of a river but like a motion picture which assembles dissimilar images.

In the eternal return, Time is perceived as a never-ending repetitious circle which adds heaviness to life. The term eternity

has limitations when compared with time, not in its original sense. In Physics, time is regarded as a dimension that can be measured and quantified. Astronomy defines movements of stars in terms of Time. Carlo Rovelli suggests that from Newton to Schrodinger's equation, the whole of physics and science, in general, is about how things develop according to the order of time. He says, "Time in equation is represented as t as measured by a clock. If two people meet after one has lived in the mountains and the other at sea level, their watches will show different times. Which of the two indicates t ? How is it possible to describe their differences?" (2018, p. 14)

Time is relative and, therefore, malleable. There exists a vast multitude of them. Therefore, our discussion on time is partial. A subjective interpretation of time is possible only when we think of time as having a beginning and an end. If we take a subjective analysis of time, it has a beginning (our birth) and an end (death). Philosophers such as Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger explore the subjective experience and perception of time. Heidegger uses the word "temporality" to describe the manner in which human existence unfolds and experiences the passage of time. The fluidity of time makes us think of the contraries like beginnings and ends, temporality and eternity, yesterdays and tomorrows and causes and effects. Nevertheless, there are aspects of existence that transcend the limits of time. In Indian philosophy, time is equated to "Kalachakra" meaning wheel of time, which is symbolic of the cyclic movement of time. It is considered that this unstoppable wheel revolves in the same circular pattern making history and life repeat.

At this juncture, Deleuze's temporality concept is worth analysis. According to Deleuze, the co-extensive emergence of the past and the present bring simultaneous actualisation. This co-existence of the past and the present makes reality dynamic. "Every determinate thing is the combination of singularities forming a multiplicity that is changing in multiple ways according to the syntheses of time and led by the work of dark precursors and the eternal return of the difference, the eternal return of the new" (Williams, 2011, p. 187). According to Deleuze, temporality is our experience of time- its dimensions, progression, rhythm and pattern, which are involved in the subjective experience of it. He also suggests that time is in constant flux because it has a mind. It is a creative force that shapes and reshapes realities.

Deleuze's concept of synthesis differs from Kant's philosophy. In Deleuze, synthesis becomes a passive process inherent in the subject and object. It becomes a conscious act performed by the subject, a part of its existence itself, which shapes the very fabric of reality. Time cannot be an external, objective framework on which Mind operates; rather, it is constituent to mind, which actively shapes and creates time. Deleuze rejects the idea of mind as a fixed entity; instead, he highlights the multiplicity of consciousness, which continuously creates and recreates itself in relation to the world and other minds – a never-ending process of becoming.

The Unbearable Lightness of Being explicates the study of the relationship between time and mind, past and present, habit and action, through the author's reflections on human relationships. The characters in the novel grapple with exis-

tential weight formed through long-term relationships. Tomas's love for Teresa is explained as a strange coincidence - love for a complete stranger with whom he had spent scarcely an hour. "He had come to feel an inexplicable love for this all but complete stranger; she seemed a child to him, a child someone had put in a bulrush basket and daubed with pitch and send downstream for Tomas to fetch at the riverbank of his bed" (Kundera, 1995, p. 6). Tomas's explanation of coincidental love contrasts with his decision to call Teresa to stay with him and exclude his mistresses from his life. Once Tomas finds love in his relationship with Teresa, there is an innate tendency for him to repeat patterns. There is always a love for this repetition of action. This love for repetition, on the one hand, is too much to receive while, on the other hand, it creates boredom. Mind, which is intrinsic to time, shows tendencies to escape this pattern. This movement of mind (aberration) can be so instinctive that it creates tension in its axis of movement, which is termed chaos. Tomas wants to set free his life of a bachelor by excluding his mistresses from his life when he met Teresa, consequently in order to purge of the boredom of his married life, he returns to his past. There is always a synthesis that happens between the past and the present and the future- a passive synthesis.

Once, when he had just lulled her to sleep but she had gone no further than dreams antechamber and was therefore still responsive to him, he said to her, 'Goodbye, I am going now'. 'Where?' she asked in her sleep. 'Away' he answered sternly. 'Then I am going with you,' she said sitting up in bed. 'No, you can't. I am going away for good', he said going away to the hall. She stood up and followed him out, squinting.

She was naked beneath her short night-dress. Her face was blank, expressionless, but she moved energetically. He walked through the hall of the flat into the hall of the building, closing the door in her face. She flung it open and continued to follow him, convinced in her sleep that he meant to leave her for good and she had to stop him. He walked down the stairs to the first landing and waited for her there. She went down after him, took him by the hand and led him back to bed (Kundera, 1995, p. 14).

Tomas could not that easily get away from the relationship this time. He came to a conclusion that “making love with a woman and sleeping with a woman are two separate passions, not merely different but opposite. Love does not make itself felt in the desire for copulation (a desire that extends to an infinite number of women) but in the desire for shared sleep (desire limited for one woman)” (Kundera, 1995, p. 14). From the angle of Deleuze and Guattari as explained by them in *Thousand Plateaus*, Tomas’ desire was above and beyond the modernist psychoanalysis view of it “Pleasure, death and reality” (Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F., 1980, p. 171). He untied the bond between desire and pleasure. This was indeed a desire for repetition. It was hard for Tomas to continue relationship with other women as he is constantly reminded of his love for Teresa. It gradually became difficult for him to live a life of his past as it gave him warnings of things that might happen in the present life. Neither could he return completely to his present as the reminiscence of the past haunted him back to his own self enjoying different woman. “He was in a bind: in his mistresses’ eyes, he bore the stigma of his love for Teresa; in Teresa’s eyes, the stigma of his exploits with the mistresses”

(Kundera, 1995, p. 22). He was practicing the art of dissimulation as said by Nietzsche:

Man himself, however, has an invincible tendency to let himself be deceived and is enchanted with happiness when the rhapsode tells him epic tales as if they were true, or when the actor in a play plays the king even more regally than he is in reality. The intellect that master of dissimulation, is free and discharged from its other slavish duties, so long as it can deceive without harming and then it celebrates its Saturnalia: never is it more exuberant, richer, prouder, more agile, more daring. (Nietzsche, 2010, Trans. Carman, p. 44-45).

Chaos leads to change which results in creation of the ‘new’. Change is inevitable to all living and non-living things in this world. “... in the denial of change in ordinary mind-independent things, we deny the reality of those ordinary things.... For example, trees grow, and kingfishers fly. But non-living things also change - rivers flow, ice breaks. What is left of an ordinary object such as a tree, kingfisher, river or ice if such a thing does not grow, fly, flow or break?” (Power, 2021, p. 154) Change is the real face of time and helps in the becoming of the new. Even though it was difficult to nudge off the repetitive patterns in life, slowly and thoughtfully, Tomas succeeded in it. Once he overcame the circle of repetition, he realized that he had reached Parmenides’ magic field, “enjoying the sweet lightness of being” (Kundera, 1995, p. 29). Tomas’ escape from his love for Teresa could not find him satisfaction. He was constantly fearful of his mind. He could not even think of Sabina as he was afraid that she would remind him of Teresa. “For there is nothing heavier than compassion. Not even one’s own pain weighs so heavy as the pain one feels with someone, for someone, a pain inten-

sified by the imagination and prolonged by a hundred echoes” (Kundera, 1995, p. 30). It was in such a crisis that Tomas took “the difficult resolution” borrowing Beethoven’s words, he took the decision “It Must Be”. This refrain is the change that is seen in Tomas. Beethoven apparently considered weight as positive. Kundera makes it clear that man has only one life to live and the choices he makes is decisive of his life thereafter. “Any schoolboy can do experiment in physics laboratory to test various scientific hypotheses. But man, because he has only one life to live, cannot conduct experiments to test whether to follow his passion (compassion) or not” (Kundera, 1995, p. 32).

Tereza’s life moved according to the pattern drawn by her mother. She always considered herself as a continuation of her mother’s fate. Looking into the mirror, she could always find her mother’s image lurking at her. While Tomas wanted to break his gravitational lightness by falling in love with Tereza, Tereza wished a cognitive destruction to completely forget her mother and her past life by accepting the seemingly light life offered by Tomas. Life sketched by Kundera is always a search for lightness and weight. Human beings have less knowledge about what to choose between the two.

She had come to him to escape her mother’s world, a world where bodies were equal. She had come to him to make her body unique, irreplaceable. But he, too, had drawn an equal sign between her and the rest of them: he kissed them all alike, stroked them all alike, made no, absolutely no distinction between Teresa’s body and the other bodies. He had sent her back into the world she tries to escape, send her to march naked with the other naked women (Kundera, 1995.p.55).

Tereza’s calculations went wrong when she rummaged the letters of Tomas. It was her life’s shock to realize the infidelities of her husband. That she was one among many naked bodies was hard for her to accept. When the life of her choice started playing with her mind, she scrupulously fell into dreams. She even thought of forgiving her mother and going back to her past life. Under the spell of existential gravity Tereza experienced Vertigo. The emptiness of relationships weaves a fear, from which develops a defense-a desire to fall. Teresa lived in constant state of Vertigo and kept on falling while Tomas picked her up each time she fell.

To see pain heal and help healing is all that a person can do for the other. Tomas proved Tereza that though his decision to love her was a part of six improbable fortuities; it was his only mission in life. He even left his career to gain her love. Towards the end of the novel, we find the surgeon in the dress of a farmer. In his new life he doesn’t complain or blame his fate. He has compromised with the world of appearances(phenomena). “...things as they appear to us by means of pure concepts” (Kant, as cited in Lavine ,1984, p.196) He seems to have agreed with his resolution “it must be” which brought contentment in his life. Teresa at last realises that this was the man she was in search of. “Missions are stupid, Tereza. I have no mission. No one has. And it’s a terrific relief to realize you’re free, free of all missions” (Kundera, 1995, p.305).

In the novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, time is found as an assemblage of diverse events which is organized disorganisedly. Though it is characterized by unpredictability, coincidences, chaos, change and newness, it has a pattern. The pattern

in which everything- living or non- living- evolve, develop and become. Each one's story is then, a story of one's time- a story of one's becoming. Kundera talks of contentment and happiness as the key for the acceptance of existential weight. As Tomas says, nobody has a mission here. We are here not to prove anything rather witness the being and becoming. There is a constant effort made by objects and subjects to swerve paths, to disrupt the repetitive motion of time. It can only create another order with a different pattern- a different curve. In the go, we are destined to create and shape multiplicities of choices in life. As Will Durant marks Henri Bergson's words,

A very small element of a curve is very near to being a straight line. And the smaller it is, the nearer. In the limit it may be termed a part of the straight line. As you please, for in each of its points a curve coincides with its tangent. So, likewise, "vitality is tangent, at any and every point to physical and chemical forces: but such points are, in fact, only views taken by a mind which imagines stops at various moments of the movement that generates the

curve. In reality, life is no more made up of physio-chemical elements than curve is composed of straight lines (1961, p.594).

Perhaps these repetitions in life which draws circles on a larger canvas can be assemblages of small straight lines with discrete events which in larger combinations form circles.

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गज़ल विधा में प्रयुक्त पारिभाषिक शब्दावली

डॉ. संगीता श्रीवास्तव

शोध निर्देशिका

विभागाध्यक्षा - संगीत विभाग

दयानंद गर्ल्स पी. जी. कॉलेज कानपुर

श्रुति मिश्रा

शोधार्थी

छत्रपति शाहू जी महाराज विश्वविद्यालय,

कानपुर

शेर :

शेर शब्द अरबी का है जिसका अर्थ है जनाना, जुल्फ या बाल। इसी कारण गज़ल को यदि सुन्दरी कहा जाय तो शेर उसके गेसू (बाल) हैं। शेर की तुलना माशूक के चेहरे पर बनी दोनों भौंहों से की जाती है। फारसी, उर्दू और हिन्दी के शब्द जब एक विशिष्ट छंद-शास्त्र में बंधकर आते हैं तो उन्हें शेर की संज्ञा दी जाती है। शेर दो पंक्तियों का होता है। शेर की पहली पंक्ति मिसरए-अव्वल या मिसरए-ऊला कही जाती है और दूसरी पंक्ति मिसरा-सानी कहलाती है। 'ऊला' का अर्थ है पहला और 'सानी' का अर्थ है दूसरा। अक्सर यह कहते हुए सुना जाता है कि 'उसका कोई सानी नहीं है'। यहाँ इसका अर्थ है कि उस जैसा कोई दूसरा नहीं है। शेर को फारसी का शब्द मानकर यह भी कहा गया है कि शेर शब्द 'शऊर' से बना है जिसका अर्थ है वह मोहक कथन जिसे कहने वाले ने किसी खास इरादे से पद्यबद्ध किया है।

सामान्यतः एक गज़ल में कम-से-कम पाँच शेर होने चाहिए। गज़ल में शेरों की संख्या विषम (ताक) अर्थात् दो की संख्या से न कटने वाली होनी चाहिए जैसे पाँच, सात, नौ, ग्यारह आदि। यदि किसी गज़ल में सम संख्यक (जुफ्त) शेर हों तो यह गज़ल का दोष माना जाता है। इस संबंध में शायद यह बात

हो कि उर्दू गज़ल का एक बड़ा हिस्सा विरह (हिक्का) में ही डूबा हुआ है। विरह 'विषम' है, संयोग 'सम' है। अतः गज़ल में विषम संख्या उचित ठहराई गयी है। गज़ल में माशूक के सौन्दर्य का वर्णन होता है और जिसकी कोई मिसाल नहीं है, इसलिए भी गज़ल के अशआर विषम रखे जाते हैं। किन्तु गज़ल में संयोग का वर्णन भी होता है और संयोग 'विषम' न होकर 'सम' है।

सम संख्या भी उचित ही है। आजकल के शायर विषम या सम संख्या सम्बन्धी इस रूढ़ि को तोड़ रहे हैं। उनका कहना है कि गज़ल में शेर की संख्या-सम्बन्धी कोई भी इस प्रकार की पाबंदी नहीं होनी चाहिए।

गज़ल में शेरों की संख्या के सम्बन्ध में कहा गया है कि एक गज़ल में अधिक से अधिक सत्रह शेर हो सकते हैं, किन्तु सत्रह शेरों के बाद यदि एक 'मतला' और फिर शेर कहे जाएं तो उसे 'दो गज़ला' कहते हैं। इसी प्रकार 'चौगज़ला' भी हो सकती है।

रदीफ़ का शब्दकोषीय अर्थ है- अनुगामी, पीछे चलने वाली। गज़ल के शेर के दूसरे मिसरे के वे अंतिम शब्द जो हर शेर के दूसरे मिसरे में दोहराए जाते हैं और काफ़िया के बाद आते हैं, रदीफ़ कहलाते हैं। गज़ल के मतले की प्रथम पंक्ति में काफ़िया-रदीफ़

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का चुनाव किया जाता है और द्वितीय पंक्ति में इसकी स्थापना की जाती है। तदनन्तर मक़ते तक, काफ़िया तो प्रत्येक शेर में बदलता है परन्तु रदीफ़ ज्यों की त्यों चलती है। रदीफ़ में किसी प्रकार का कोई परिवर्तन नहीं किया जाता है। रदीफ़ को हमेशा छोटा और मनमोहक रूप में ही उचित माना गया है। साधारणतः ग़ज़लों में रदीफ़ और काफ़िए की पाबंदी होती है, किन्तु कहीं-कहीं अपवाद भी पाया जाता है यानी कुछ शायरों ने बिना रदीफ़ के 'गैर मुरदफ़' ग़ज़लें भी कही हैं। जैसे -

**मैं ढूँढता हूँ जिसे वो ज़हान नहीं मिलता,
नई ज़मीन नया आसमान नहीं मिलता।**

**जो एक खुदा नहीं मिलता तो इतना मातम क्यों,
मुझे खुदा अपने क़दम का निशां नहीं मिलता।²**

कैफ़ी आज़मी की इस ग़ज़ल में पहले शेर (मतला) के दोनों मिसरों के अन्त में तथा दूसरे शेर के दूसरे मिसरे के अन्त में नहीं मिलता शब्द आये हैं। इन्हें इस ग़ज़ल की रदीफ़ कहा जायेगा।

काफ़िया :

काफ़िया का अर्थ है पीछे-पीछे चलना। बार-बार चलने वाला या फिर क़दम से क़दम मिलाकर चलने वाला।

ग़ज़ल के शेरों में अन्त में जो अन्त्यानुप्रास युक्त शब्द आते हैं, उन्हें काफ़िया कहा जाता है। काफ़िया को हिन्दी में तुकान्त कहते हैं। यह रदीफ़ से पहले आया हुआ वह शब्द या स्वर है जिसके वजन पर प्रत्येक शेर में एक लय उत्पन्न हो जाती है। काफ़िया दो प्रकार के शब्दों के मेल से बनता है, एक उदाहरण से हम काफ़िया को समझ सकते हैं -

**अपना ग़म ले के कहीं और न जाया जाए,
घर में बिखरी हुई चीज़ों, को सजाया जाए।**

**जिन चिरागों को हवाओं का कोई खौफ़ नहीं,
उन चिरागों को हवाओं से बचाया जाए।**

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**घर से मस्जिद है बहुत दूर चलो यूँ कर लें,
किसी रोते हुए बच्चे को हँसाया जाए।³**

उपर्युक्त ग़ज़ल में 'सजाया', 'बचाया', 'हँसाया', काफ़िये हैं।

मतला :

ग़ज़ल के सबसे पहले शेर को मतला कहते हैं। उसकी दोनों पंक्तियों में काफ़ियों का निर्वाह होता है तथा दोनों में ही एक से रदीफ़ों का प्रयोग किया जाता है। 'मतलअ' का शाब्दिक अर्थ 'उदय' है। अतः 'मतलअ' ग़ज़ल का उदय है। उदाहरण के लिए-

**तुम्हारे जिस्म जब भी धूप में काले पड़े होंगे
हमारी कल्पना के पाँव में छाले पड़े होंगे ⁴**

कुँआर बेचैन

उपर्युक्त पंक्तियों में हम देख ही रहे हैं कि दोनों ही पंक्तियों में पड़े होंगे रदीफ़ का प्रयोग हुआ है। 'काले' के वज़न पर 'छाले' काफ़िये का इस्तेमाल भी है। मतलअ भी यद्यपि ग़ज़ल का शेर ही है किन्तु अपने उपर्युक्त गुण के कारण उसे 'मतलअ' के नाम से पुकारा जाता है। ग़ज़ल में एक से अधिक मतलों का प्रयोग भी हो सकता है।

मक़ता :

ग़ज़ल के अंतिम शेर को मक़ता कहते हैं। ग़ज़ल मक़ते पर समाप्त होती है। मक़ता का शाब्दिक अर्थ है- कटा हुआ, तराशा हुआ। ग़ज़लकार इस शेर को इस तरह से तराशता है कि इसमें उसका उपनाम नगीने की तरह जड़ा जाए इसलिए इसे मक़ता कहते हैं।

**हैं और भी दुनिया में सुखनवर बहुत अच्छे,
कहते हैं कि 'ग़ालिब' का है अन्दाज़े बयाँ और।⁵**

इस शेर के दूसरे मिसरे में ग़ालिब तख़ल्लुस का प्रयोग किया गया है। यह अंतिम शेर मक़ता कहलाएगा। कभी-कभी शायर तख़ल्लुस (उपनाम) का प्रयोग नहीं भी करते हैं, कुछ विद्वानों की मान्यता

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है कि भावाभिव्यक्ति के चरमोत्कर्ष के लिए मक़ता यानी ग़ज़ल का अंतिम शेर उपयुक्त होता है।

जमीन :

जिन ग़ज़लों में छंद, रदीफ़ और काफ़िये एक ही होते हैं, उन्हें एक ही जमीन की ग़ज़लें कहते हैं। मुशायरों में पढ़ी जाने वाली सारी ग़ज़लें एक ही जमीन की होती हैं। जमीन को ग़ज़ल का बाहरी कलेवर भी कहा जाता है।

तखल्लुस :

आमतौर पर सभी कवि अपना एक कवि नाम या उपनाम रख लेते हैं, जिसका प्रयोग वे अपनी रचनाओं के अंतिम मिसरों में करते हैं, इसे तखल्लुस कहते हैं। तखल्लुस ग़ज़ल के मक़ते में प्रयुक्त होता है।

तजमीन :

तजमीन का शाब्दिक अर्थ है- स्वीकार करना। किसी दूसरे कवि का कोई शेर मसिरा या अंश अपनी काव्य रचना में ले आना तजमीन कहलाता है।

वजन (वज्ज) :

ग़ज़ल के शेरों को परखने से अभिप्राय है यह जाँच करना कि उन शेरों का 'वजन' बह के अनुसार है या नहीं। 'वजन' का कोषगत अर्थ है किसी वस्तु का 'तोल मान मर्यादा का सूचक'। अरूज़ की शब्दावली में शेर को बह की तराजू पर तोलने, उसकी कसौटी पर परखने को 'वजन' कहा गया है।⁶ शेर में वजन से अभिप्राय है उसके दोनों मिसरों में संतुलन होना, यानी उनके लघु-गुरु का क्रम और वर्णों की संख्या में समानता होना। अतः वह शेरों को संतुलन ही नहीं देती, उसे परखती भी है।

ग़ज़ल की तकतीअ करते समय वज्ज अर्थात् मात्रा क्रम का ध्यान रखा जाता है। सामान्यतः लोग वज्ज देखते समय मात्रा की ही गिनती करते हैं। किन्तु वज्ज केवल मात्रा की गिनती नहीं है, वरन् मात्रा-क्रम है। अर्थात् दीर्घ (गुरु) मात्रा के नीचे दीर्घ (गुरु) और लघु के नीचे लघु।

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इस प्रकार हम देखते हैं कि उर्दू-फ़ारसी ग़ज़लों के शिल्प-विधान में शेर, काफ़िया, रदीफ़, मिस्रा, मतला, मक़ता, रूकन, जमीन, तखल्लुस, तज्जमीन, अरूज़, वजन का विशेष महत्त्व है।

रूकन (पद या घटक) :

जब ग़ज़ल के छंदों का जिक्र किया जाता है तब 'रूकन' शब्द का भी बहुत प्रयोग किया जाता है। 'रूकन' वह पद या शब्द है जो किसी बहर (छंद) का प्रमुख आधार होता है। ऐसे संस्कृत छंदों में यगण, तगण आदि होते हैं और इन गणों का कोई एक शब्द होता है, जैसे यगण के लिए 'यमाता', तगण के लिए 'ताराज' है। उसी प्रकार ग़ज़लों को बहर में रखने के लिए विभिन्न बहरों के आधारभूत पदों (रूकन) का प्रयोग होता है।

अर्कान (सूत्र) :

छंद के सूत्र को अर्कान कहते हैं। 'अर्कान' रूकन का बहुवचन है। अर्कान रूकन के समूह से निर्मित होते हैं। किसी रूकन का शेर में कितनी बार प्रयोग हुआ है, इससे ग़ज़ल की बहर का वास्तविक रूप सामने आता है।

सबब :

सबब से आशय उस शब्द से है जो दो मात्राओं वाला हो। जैसे- 'जो', 'कल', 'कब', 'किस', 'तुम' आदि। उर्दू में ग़ज़ल की तख्ती करते समय यह नियम है कि जब दो लघु वर्णों से मिलकर एक शब्द बनता है तो वह गुरु (5) माना जाता है, जब कि हिन्दी में दो लघु वर्णों को लघु-लघु (11) के रूप में माना जाता है।

बतद :

बतद से आशय उस शब्द से है जो तीन मात्रिक है। जैसे 'कमल', 'सरल', 'बात', 'नदी' आदि। उर्दू में शेर की तक्ती करते समय यह नियम है कि जब तीन लघु वर्णों से मिलकर कोई शब्द बनता है तो उच्चारण के कारण तीन लघु वर्णों में से दो वर्णों को

एक साथ बोला जाता है और एक वर्ण अकेला रह जाता है।

मिसरा-ए-ऊला (प्रथम पंक्ति) :

ग़ज़ल के प्रत्येक शेर की प्रथम पंक्ति को मिसरा-ए-ऊला कहते हैं। मिसरा अर्थात् पंक्ति, ऊला अर्थात् प्रथम।

उदाहरण :

रहते हमारे पास तो ये टूटते ज़रूर -

(मिसरा-ए-ऊला)

अच्छा किया जो आपने सपने चुरा लिए⁷

मिसरा-ए-सानी (द्वितीय पंक्ति) :

ग़ज़ल के शेर की पंक्ति को मिसरा-ए-सानी कहते हैं। मिसरा अर्थात् पंक्ति, सानी अर्थात् दूसरा। अक्सर कहते हुए सुना होगा कि 'उसका कोई सानी नहीं है', इसका अर्थ यही है कि उस जैसा कोई दूसरा नहीं है।

उदाहरण :

रहते हमारे पास तो ये टूटते ज़रूर

(मिसरा-ए-ऊला)

अच्छा किया जो आपने सपने चुरा लिए⁸

(मिसरा-ए-सानी)

सदर :

प्रत्येक शेर को छः हिस्सों में बाँटा जाता है। उसके पहले टुकड़े को सदर कहते हैं। सदर अर्थात् प्रारम्भ। यहीं से शेर का प्रारम्भ माना जाता है। इसके अतिरिक्त शेर के अन्य पाँच भाग हश्व (मिसरा-ए-ऊला), अरूज, इब्तदा, हश्व (मिसरा-ए-सानी) एवं ज़रब हैं।

हश्व :

प्रत्येक शेर में दो पंक्तियाँ होती हैं। पहली पंक्ति के बीच के भाग को हश्व कहते हैं। हश्व अर्थात् विकास। यह शेर का विकास मार्ग है।

अरूज :

यह शेर की प्रथम पंक्ति का अंतिम अंश होता है। यह शेर का वह भाग है जहाँ शेर अपने अरूज पर आता है। अरूज अर्थात् उत्कर्ष। सचमुच यह भाग शेर के भाव का उत्कर्ष होता है।

इब्तदा :

यह शेर की दूसरी पंक्ति का प्रथम भाग है। यहीं से प्रथम पंक्ति के अनुसार किसी भाव की इब्तदा मानी जाती है। इब्तदा अर्थात् आरम्भ।

हश्व :

शेर की दूसरी पंक्ति का मध्य भाग भी हश्व ही कहलाता है। यह भाग भी शेर की विकास-यात्रा का मार्ग है। हश्व अर्थात् विकास।

ज़रब :

ज़रब शेर की दूसरी पंक्ति का अन्तिम भाग है। यहाँ आकर शेर समाप्त होता है किन्तु अपना अर्थ भी निश्चित कर जाता है। ज़रब अर्थात् अंत। इस प्रकार प्रत्येक शेर के ये छः भाग शेर को गरिमा प्रदान करते हैं और इनका ज्ञान इसलिए भी आवश्यक है क्योंकि जब परिवर्तित बहरों में मात्राक्रम लगाया जाता है तो कुछ ऐसे परिवर्तित रुक्न (पद) होते हैं जिनका प्रयोग केवल 'सदर' या 'इब्तदा' में ही हो सकता है, अन्य कहीं नहीं।

तक्तीअ :

ग़ज़ल ठीक बहर में है या नहीं इस बात को जानने के लिए ग़ज़ल की तक्तीअ की जाती है। तक्तीअ करने के लिए ग़ज़ल की बहर और उसके रुक्नों की गिनती तथा वज़न देखना पड़ता है।⁹ ग़ज़ल के पहले शेर के पहले ही मिसरे में जो शब्दावली और उसका क्रम होगा उसी को आधार बनाकर उसका सूत्र देखा जायेगा और जो सूत्र या अर्कान बनेगा वह मानक (Standard) अर्कान होगा। अर्थात् उसी अर्कान के अनुसार ही पूरी ग़ज़ल के हर एक

मिसरे को जाँचा जायेगा। पूरी गज़ल में प्रथम मिसरे का मात्राक्रम ही रहना चाहिए। इस प्रक्रिया को 'तकतीअ' करना कहते हैं।

बह :

गज़ल में 'बह' का अर्थ है छंद¹⁰। जैसे हिन्दी-संस्कृत में कविता छंदबद्ध होती है, उसी प्रकार गज़ल भी एक छंद-बद्ध काव्य है। गज़ल की मूल बह सात हैं, बारह मिश्रित बहरे हैं, इसके अतिरिक्त परिवर्तित बहरें भी हैं। मूल बहर जैसे- बहरे रमल, बद्रे मुतकारिब आदि। मिश्रित बहर जैसे- बहरे तवील, बहरे मदीद आदि। परिवर्तित बहर जैसे बहरे हज़ज़ महजूफ, बहरे रमल महजूफ।

मुखकब (मिश्रित) :

मुखकब का अर्थ होता है मिश्रित। यह शब्द गज़ल की कुछ बहरों के विशेषण के रूप में प्रयुक्त होता है। जब दो या अधिक मूल (सालिम) बहरों के 'रुक्नों' से कोई नयी बहर बनती है तो उसे 'मुखकब' बहर कहा जाता है। जैसे एक बहर का नाम है 'तबील'। यह मुखकब बहर कहलाती है क्योंकि यह बहर मुतकारिब के मूल रुक्न 'फऊलुन' तथा बहरे हज़ज़ के मूल रुक्न 'मफाईलुन' के मिश्रण से बनी है। उदाहरण -

सूत्र -	फऊलुन	मफाईलुन
शेर -	न जाने	कहाँ हो तुम
	बताओ	जहाँ हो तुम

इस 'बहर' को भी विस्तार से आगे 'बहर' (छंद) वाले अध्याय में समझाया गया है।

मज़ाइफ (परिवर्तित) :

मज़ाइफ का अर्थ है परिवर्तित। इस शब्द का प्रयोग भी गज़ल की बहर से जुड़कर किया जाता है। जब किसी बहर के मूल रुक्न के परिवर्तित रूपों से कोई अर्कान (सूत्र) बनता है और उसी अर्कान को आधार मानकर कोई गज़ल कही जाती है तो उस गज़ल की बह को 'मज़ाइफ बहर' कहते हैं¹¹। यह

बात स्पष्ट है ही कि प्रत्येक बहर के मूल रुक्न के अनेक परिवर्तित रूप भी होते हैं। मज़ाइफ बह मूल बहर के मूल रुक्न के परिवर्तित रूपों के संयोग से ही बनती है। जैसे बहरे रमल का मूल रुक्न 'फाईलातुन' है किन्तु इस रुक्न के अपने परिवर्तित रूपों में से एक परिवर्तित रूप है 'फाईलुन'। अब यदि फाईलातुन एवं फाईलुन के संयोग से कोई बह तैयार होती है तो वह मज़ाइफ बहर कहलायेगी। हाँ, यह बात यहाँ स्मरणीय है कि मज़ाइफ बह अपनी मूल बहर के रहती है।

क़सीदा :

उर्दू और फ़ारसी में क़सीदों का प्रयोग राजाओं अथवा शासनाधिकारियों की प्रशंसा के लिए किया जाता था। क़सीदों में राजाओं की वीरता, वैभव, शक्ति और दानशीलता की प्रशंसा एक ही ढंग से अत्यन्त अतिशयोक्तिपूर्ण की जाती थी। उपमाओं और रूपकों का इनमें निर्बाध रूप से प्रयोग किया जाता था और कल्पना की व्यापक उड़ान होती थी। क़सीदे में बाह्य कलेवर गज़ल की ही तरह होता है। इसमें मतलों के दोनों मिसरों और सारे शेरों के दूसरे मिसरों को एक ही रदीफ़ काफ़िये में बाँधना ज़रूरी होता है। क़सीदे सिर्फ़ दरबारों की ही शोभा हों, कोई बात नहीं है। जिन कवियों ने दरबारों से कोई सम्बन्ध नहीं रखा, उन्होंने भी धार्मिक महापुरुषों की शान में क़सीदे कहे हैं। क़सीदा और मरसिया दोनों प्रशस्ति काव्य के भेद हैं एक में जीवित की प्रशस्ति रहती है और दूसरे में मृत की जिसमें करुण रस का संचार अनिवार्य हो जाता है।

मरसिया :

मरसिया का अंगी रस करुण है, किन्तु शोक पर आधृत होते हुए उसका कलेवर उदात्त और नैतिक भावों से परिपुष्ट होता है। उर्दू का मरसिया-साहित्य इस दृष्टि से अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण है उसका शोक केवल स्त्रैण विलाप से आर्द्र नहीं है, उसमें नैतिक आवेश और उदात्त जीवन प्रेरणाओं की शक्ति है।

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A Case Study of the Gurukul Educational System : A Modern Perspective by Arsh Gurukul Mahavidyalaya, Narmadapuram

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1. Introduction

In ancient India, the Gurukul system was used to teach students in a holistic manner. In a Gurukul system, students would serve the Guru, adhere to rigorous discipline, lead modest lives and continuously practice the lessons that the Guru had taught them¹ (Karve, 2013). Famous graduates of the Gurukul educational system included Lord Shri Krishna, Lord Rama, Chanakya, Arjun and others. Despite coming from wealthy families, these individuals learned alongside the impoverished. When students study in a diverse group, they gain empathy and understanding while learning life lessons that will help them on their successful journey². In the Gurukul system, a child used to go to Gurukul at the age of seven or eight, in contrast to the current educational system, when a child starts attending pre-school at the tender age of two to three years. There was no authority to designate or assign the gurus. They teach because it is their dharma, the greatest duty they have in life and they have no other hidden agen-

das³ (Chaudary, 2017). There were no rich-poor separate schools. Education was primarily acquired by listening, not by writing. Unlike the formal relationships that are seen now, the Guru-Disciple relationship in the ancient Gurukul was close-knit and intimate⁴. The courses were designed with the student's comprehension levels in mind.

The educational system has evolved along with the times. Furthermore, it might not be possible to fully execute the traditional Gurukul education system in the current environment. Still, there are some important lessons to be learned from this antiquated yet effective educational style⁵. Numerous conceptual studies on the Gurukul Education System have been carried out in India for eg. Karve (2013), Gadadhar (2018), Kumar (2016), and Nair (2016), etc emphasized the applicability of the Gurukul education system in the current context and contrasted it with the western/modern educational system. These are descriptive studies that illustrate the bene-

fits and drawbacks of the traditional Gurukul system. Nevertheless, no comprehensive evaluation studies in the form of case studies exist that clarify the foundations of any specific educational system.

Similarly, many schools based on the Gurukul system have also been established in Madhya Pradesh, including Maharishi Sandipani Rashtriya Ved Vidhya Pratishthan Ujjain, Shaskiya Ramanand Sanskrit Mahavidhyalaya, Lal Ghati, Bhopal, Shri Goda Rangnath ved pathshala Ramanujkot Ashram ram ghat Marg Ujjain, Aarsh Gurukulam Mahavidhyalaya Narmadapuram etc. This case study aims to provide an overview of the current educational approach that Aarsh Gurukulam Mahavidhyalaya, Narmadapuram, has implemented. In the process, this setup's advantages and disadvantages are also brought to light. To write the case study, an exploratory approach was taken. Comprehensive interviews were undertaken to gain insight into Aarsh Gurukulam's operational methodology.

1.1 Background:

112 years ago, Aarsh Gurukulam Mahavidhyalaya was established on 12th of April 1912 in Narmadapuram (current name) district of present Madhya Pradesh. The plan is to build a Gurukul where students might study life lessons and India's spiritual and traditional heritage. In addition to teaching Sanskrit and the Vedas, this Gurukul aimed to create a holistic environment where kids would learn about agriculture, raising cattle, Ayurveda, yoga, music, dance, Vedic mathematics and science, several languages and most importantly, moral principles. This Gurukulam is affiliated with Shrimad Dayanand Aarsh Vidhyapeeth Gurukul, Jhajjar, Haryana, and Maharishi Patanjali Sanskrit Board,

Bhopal⁶. Out of these two Boards, Shrimad Dayanand Aarsh Vidhyapeeth Gurukul, Jhajjar, Haryana is the base Gurukul of this Aarsh Gurukulam with the help of which, they teach their Parampara. In contrast, Maharishi Patanjali Sanskrit Board, Bhopal helps teach government syllabus and it also provides affiliation through which students can get recognized degrees for increasing their future career options.

2.0 Working Model of Aarsh Gurukulam Mahavidhyalaya:

In every model or working style, there are three steps i.e. Input, Processing, and Output. In this Gurukul also, they first provide admissions to Raw students with some family Sansakaras(culture) and process them with their holistic education model, and in the end, society gets a good, well-cultured and disciplined human being with knowledge of Vedas along with modern education. While discussing with the teachers (Acharyas) of this Gurukulam, more information has been found which will be discussed in the later parts of this paper.

2.1 Student Enrolment Process:

In today's education system, schools use various criteria for admission, such as the student's ability, parental income, qualifications, and background. Some schools also conduct admission tests or interaction sessions to ensure that only capable students are accepted. This is often done to maintain the school's performance by avoiding the enrollment of weaker students.

However, this Gurukul has a unique approach to admissions. There is no discrimination based on wealth or status. The only criterion considered is the parents'

willingness to enroll their children in the traditional Gurukul system⁷. The decision to move a child away from mainstream education is critical. Therefore, once the Gurus at Aarsh Gurukulam are convinced of the parents' commitment, the child is admitted to the Gurukul.

2.2 Admission Process and eligibility criteria :

The age of the child is another important factor for admission. In the current education system, children often start attending pre-primary school at the very young age of three or even earlier. At this stage, children need the love and care of their parents and may not be comfortable in an unfamiliar and strict environment.

Aarsh Gurukulam follows the traditional practice, admitting students at the age of eight in their Gurukul's residential program. The Gurukul provides training over approximately 7 years (6th to 12th). A school student admitted at the age of eight will be educated until they pass the 12th class, which is equivalent to the modern education system.

2.3 Ambience of the school :

The Gurukul is situated in a completely natural environment, far from the noise and chaos of city life. The Gausshala and Gurukul together span several bighas (an ancient land measurement). The facility includes many classrooms and rooms for student's study and accommodation. There is also space for agriculture, a kitchen, a dining area, an area for performing yagnas, and an administrative office.

There is no air conditioning in the entire setup. The classrooms and hostel rooms are built using cow dung, clay, and limestone, which helps regulate the tempera-

ture naturally, even during extreme weather conditions, whether it's the heat of summer, the cold of winter, or the rains of monsoon. In keeping with tradition, students and teachers wear traditional clothes. In several lectures and Yagnas, Students sit on the floor with folded legs, a practice that is believed to promote blood circulation to the forehead, thereby enhancing concentration, memory, and learning abilities.

2.4 Teachers (Acharyas) Recruitment and Training Process :

At the Gurukul, teachers-referred to as Gurus or Acharyas-are selected based on their skills, character, moral values, and ability to connect with students, with preference given to those trained in the Gurukul tradition for their deeper understanding of the environment. Some serve voluntarily without monetary compensation, while paid Gurus receive honorariums based on experience and commitment. Although not all possess advanced degrees, they are highly skilled practitioners, supported by professionals who volunteer their expertise. Teaching involves practical, hands-on learning, and to address the shortage of traditionally trained Gurus, the Gurukul runs its own in-house training programs and conducts regular teacher workshops (Shivirs) to enhance pedagogical skills.

2.5 Learning Process and Curriculum:

The curriculum at the Gurukul is a thoughtful blend of the syllabi from Shrimad Dayanand Aarsh Vidhyapeeth Gurukul (Jhajjar), Maharishi Patanjali Sanskrit Board (Bhopal) and content developed by the Gurus themselves, integrating traditional Gurukul values with aspects of modern education. Rooted in Bharatiya culture and

designed around students' readiness to learn, it contrasts with conventional systems where curricula are often imposed by outsiders unfamiliar with local needs. At the Gurukul, Gurus have full autonomy over what, how, when, and to whom they teach, focusing on building character, ethical values, and self-reliance rather than chasing grades. Subjects taught include Sanskrit, Vyakaran, Science, Vedic Mathematics, Jyotish, History, Agriculture, Cow Rearing, Ayurveda, Yoga, Yagna, Self-defence, Mantra Recitation, Discipline, Hindi, English, Product Making, Cooking, Management and the history of Indian independence and great leaders.

2.6 Teaching Methodology :

The Gurukul strongly believes that the method of teaching is just as important as the subject content. In the teaching-learning process, the ancient recitation method is favoured over reading and writing. The Guru first introduces a concept verbally, the students listen carefully, and then they repeat it. In addition to recitation, role-playing techniques are also employed. When students are shown a concept through practical demonstration, it helps them retain the information for a longer period.

The teaching methodology varies depending on the age of the students. Younger students are encouraged to play and stay connected with nature. Activities such as playing with clay and separating leaves from plants not only provide enjoyment but also help develop their skills. As students grow older, they are given logical problem-solving tasks. Sometimes like traditional Gurukuls, Students of higher classes also teach students of lower classes. At a certain stage, they are assigned activities

to explore real-world events, gradually moving towards research-based exploration. Once they reach a certain age, students are allowed to choose a field of specialization. From that point, expert knowledge specific to their chosen area is provided to them by specialists in those subjects.

2.7 Evaluation of Students :

The Gurukul and formal school systems share some evaluation methods but differ significantly in approach. While modern schools follow fixed exam schedules and grade-based assessments, often without guiding students to correct mistakes, the Gurukul emphasizes spontaneous, stress-free evaluations. Gurus assess students informally and continuously, offering personalized guidance to ensure mastery and helping them learn from errors. Written tests in subjects like Mathematics and Science are conducted, but the focus remains on improvement rather than marks. External experts may also be invited and students participate in competitions, making the evaluation process holistic and growth-oriented.

2.8 Daily Routine:

The students residing at the Gurukul start their day at four in the morning. By 4:30 A.M., after finishing their morning routines, they engage in activities such as yoga, pranayama, meditation, Yagna, and other physical exercises. After that Breakfast is served to all students. Following breakfast, they spend some time cleaning their rooms, classrooms, and clothes. It was found that this developed a lifelong habit of self-reliance from an early age. After some daily routine tasks, their classes begin. Students also learn self-defence through Acharyas which includes

Lathi, Malkhamb, Kushti, Kabaddi, Rope exercises, etc.

2.9 Career Options :

After completing their education, Gurukul students emerge confident and equipped with diverse career options. The primary focus is on self-employment, though many are also absorbed into the Gurukul system itself. Their strong skills and knowledge enable them to earn well, whether within Gurukuls or in other fields. Trained students often offer consultancy in areas like agriculture, Jyotish, Ayurveda, teaching and cattle rearing and group entrepreneurship is encouraged for collaborative success. Some also secure government jobs, such as Sanskrit teachers or Pujaris in the defense forces.

3.0 Conclusion :

The case study of Aarsh Gurukulam showcases an innovative educational model that blends traditional Gurukul values with modern learning, proving that such education is both relevant and effective today. It fosters self-reliance, ethical conduct, and a strong sense of cultural pride, producing students who are skilled, honest, and deeply rooted in Indian values. Their training equips them to contribute

meaningfully to society without compromising integrity or cultural identity. This model offers a valuable framework for other Gurukuls, with scope for further research into parental attitudes and enrollment preferences.

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भारतीय ग्रामीण जीवन - समस्या और समाधान : डॉ. ब्रजलाल वर्मा की गद्य रचनाओं के विशेष सन्दर्भ में

सोनू कुमार यादव

पीएच.डी. - शोधार्थी

हिन्दी विभाग

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शोध निर्देशक

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डॉ. ब्रजलाल वर्मा हिन्दी के प्राध्यापक थे इन्होंने अपनी गद्य रचनाओं का विषय भारतीय ग्राम को बनाया है। इन्होंने अपनी रचना में भारतीय ग्राम की समस्याओं पर विस्तृत प्रकाश डाला है। इनकी रचनाओं में भारतीय ग्राम की वास्तविक झलक मिलती है। आजादी के इतने वर्षों के बाद भी कुछ आमूल चूल परिवर्तन के अलावा आज भी गाँव में कोई विशेष सुधार नज़र नहीं आता। किसान जीवन की जो समस्याएँ आजादी के समय में विद्यमान थी वे समस्याएँ आज तक पूर्णतया समाप्त करने में सरकार और सुधारकर्ता सफल नहीं हुए हैं। प्रेमचन्द जी की रचनाओं में किसान जीवन की जो समस्या नज़र आती है, वह वर्मा जी की रचनाओं में भी दिखाई पड़ती है। हर समय और हर जगह कि- “परिस्थिति नित्य नयी और असमान होती है। हर परिस्थिति की नयी समस्या होती है नया हल होता है।”¹

किन्तु एक सुन्दर ग्राम के विकास में उसकी अपनी समस्याओं को जब तक पूर्णतया समाप्त नहीं किया जायेगा। तब तक उसे एक सुन्दर सुविधापूर्ण ग्राम नहीं बनाया जा सकता। भारत आज भी गाँवों में बसता है आज भी गाँव के अधिकतर किसान गरीब अशिक्षित है। किसान शिक्षित न होने और कृषि के संसाधनों का उचित प्रबंध न होने तथा जो हैं उनके प्रयोग करने की सही जानकारी न होने के कारण

अपनी फसल से पर्याप्त लाभ नहीं उठा पाते हैं। आज सभी कम भूमि में अधिक अन्न उगाना चाहते हैं, किन्तु सही जानकारी का अभाव होने के कारण किसान को कौन-सा बीज लगाना है, कौन सी खाद कब और कितनी मात्रा में डालनी है, इन सब बातों का सही ज्ञान न होने से वे अपनी फसलों से वह लाभ नहीं उठा पाते जो उन्हें मिलना चाहिए इसके लिए सरकार को प्रत्येक गाँव में किसानों को इसका प्रशिक्षण देने के लिए व्यवस्था करनी चाहिए। इस कार्य को करने के लिए उस गाँव के व्यक्ति को भी सम्मिलित करना चाहिए। क्योंकि- “किसी गाँव की दिन प्रतिदिन बदलने वाली परिस्थितियों को दूसरे गाँव में रहने वाला नहीं समझ सकता और न उसका समय से वह उपचार ही कर सकता है।”²

आजादी के बाद सरकारों ने गाँव के विकास के लिए योजनाएँ तो चलाई किन्तु उनका ध्यान नगरों की तरफ अधिक ही रहा। यदि “हमारे देश में विकास की केन्द्रीय इकाई यदि नगर के स्थान पर ग्राम को बनाया गया होता तो अब तक समूचे भारत का नव निर्माण हो गया होता, क्योंकि यह देश मुख्यतः गाँवों में बसा है।”³

गाँव में आज भी ग्रामीण लोगों को उचित चिकित्सा व्यवस्था उपलब्ध नहीं है। आशा कार्यकर्त्री जरूर है, सरकार ने प्राथमिक उपचार हेतु सामुदायिक

स्वास्थ्य केन्द्रों की स्थापना तो कर दी है, किन्तु वहाँ पर उपचार का उचित प्रबंध नहीं है। वर्मा जी अपनी रचना में लिखते हैं कि, “कहीं चिकित्सालय है, कहीं बहुत दूर तक नहीं है। किसी गाँव में चिकित्सालय हैं तो दवा नहीं, दवा है तो योग्य ईमानदार चिकित्सक नहीं है।”⁴ इसके लिए सरकार को उचित प्रबंध करना चाहिए। ग्रामीण भोली-भाली जनता को कई बार अपनी जान गवानी पड़ती है, सही समय पर उचित उपचार न मिलने के कारण, सरकार को चाहिए कि प्रत्येक ग्राम सभा के लिए डॉक्टर को नियुक्त करें और उसे उसी ग्राम सभा में रहने की व्यवस्था करें ताकि ग्रामीण जानता को समय पर उपचार मिल सके और वे स्वस्थ रह सकें।

भारतीय ग्रामीण समाज की एक समस्या यह है कि सामाजिक और आर्थिक रूप से वे विकास की मुख्यधारा से अत्यन्त पिछड़े हुए हैं। आज जहाँ शहरों में पढ़े लिखे लोगों में छुआ-छूत भेदभाव जैसी समस्याएँ कम होती नज़र आती हैं, किन्तु भारतीय ग्राम में उन अशिक्षित जनता के बीच यह बातें आज भी विद्यमान हैं। हमारे भारतीय संविधान में अनुच्छेद-17 के तहत अस्पृश्यता को समाप्त कर दिया गया है किन्तु आजादी के बाद से लेकर- “आज तक गाँवों की शैक्षिक तथा सांस्कृतिक स्थिति में कोई परिवर्तन नहीं लक्षित होता, वहाँ आज भी शूद्र-शूद्र है भले ही उसका नाम हरिजन हो। ऊँच-नीच की भावना उसी प्रकार गाँवों में विद्यमान है जैसे वह स्वतंत्रता से पूर्व थी।”⁵

गाँवों में जो कुछ लोग शिक्षित या रसूखदार हैं वे अन्य का शोषण करते हैं, “वहाँ की सामाजिक अवमानना और आर्थिक विषमता दोनों मिलजुल कर गाँव के निवासियों को आज भी जकड़े हुए है।”⁶ गाँव में किसी के पास इतनी भूमि है कि वह परती छोड़ रखा है और कोई भूमिहीन है जो मजदूरी करने पर विवश है। कभी-कभी तो उन्हें अपनी मजदूरी का उचित मेहनताना भी नहीं मिलता। गाँव के विकास के लिए आर्थिक विषमता को कम करना होगा। जिसके

लिए गाँवों में लघु उद्योगों की स्थापना करनी होगी। साथ ही साथ इन लघु उद्योगों को बाजार से जोड़ना होगा ताकि उन्हें उनकी मेहनत का लाभ मिल सके। बीते कुछ सालों से सरकार कौशल विकास योजनान्तर्गत विभिन्न तरह के प्रशिक्षण करवा रही है, किन्तु वह सुविधाएँ गाँवों में उस रूप में नहीं पहुँच रही है, जिस रूप में उसे पहुँचना चाहिए। सरकारों के द्वारा जारी किया गया अनुदान का ज्यादातर भाग भ्रष्टाचार की भेंट चढ़ जाता है जिसके कारण वह धन गाँव तक पहुँच ही नहीं पाता। इसके लिए सरकारों को चाहिए कि ग्राम स्तर पर कमेटी बनाएँ जिसमें गाँव के लोगों को भी सम्मिलित किया जाये। उनसे उनकी समस्याएँ, गाँव की जरूरतों की सूची बनवाएँ और उसके अनुरूप उनको धन उपलब्ध कराया जाये जिससे गाँव की समस्याओं को दूर किया जा सके।

गाँव में आर्थिक सम्पन्नता न होने के कारण वे आधुनिक संसाधनों से बहुत दूर हैं। आज भी उनका काम खेती करना और पशु पालन जैसे हैं। गाँवों में कई ऐसे भी परिवार हैं जो अपने बिस्तर के पास ही गाय, भैंस और भेड़ व बकरी के बच्चों को बाँधकर रखते हैं। जिसकी वजह से जानवरों के गोबर व मूत्र की दुर्गन्ध आती है। किसान खेतों की सिंचाई करते हुए उसी खेत में मिट्टी से सने हुए हाथ को कपड़ों में पोछकर रोटी खा लेता है। उसे उतनी साफ-सफाई का ज्ञान न होने के कारण उसे कई तरह की बीमारियों का भी सामना करना पड़ता है। इसके अतिरिक्त गाँव का निर्माण किसी व्यवस्था के अनुरूप तो नहीं हुआ है। जिसकी वजह से गाँव में पानी की निकासी चौड़े रास्ते आदि की समस्याएँ सर्वत्र विद्यमान हैं। गाँव के लोगों की सहायता से इसका समुचित प्रबंध किया जाना चाहिए। जिससे- “गाँव का पानी गलियों में न रूके, नाबदान न बहे, पेशाब खाना रास्ते में न देख पड़े। बरसात का पानी सुविधा से बह जाये।”⁷

भारत के गाँवों में शिक्षा का अभाव है क्योंकि शिक्षा ही वह एक मात्र साधन है जिससे व्यक्ति का विकास हो सकता है। व्यक्ति के विकास से परिवार

का विकास, परिवार के विकास में देश का विकास होगा।

आजादी के बाद सरकार द्वारा गाँवों में विद्यालय खुलवाये गए, शिक्षा आयोग का गठन आदि तमाम प्रयास किये गए शिक्षा के प्रसार हेतु, किन्तु- “शिक्षा का प्रसार होने पर भी शिक्षा के संस्कार वहाँ सर्वथा अनुपस्थित हैं। वहाँ की सामाजिक अवमानना और आर्थिक विषमता दोनों मिलजुल कर गाँव के निवासियों को आज भी जकड़े हुए है।”⁸

“उन्हें इस जकड़न से शिक्षा ही मुक्त कर सकती है। जिसके लिए पुरुषों के साथ ही साथ स्त्रियों की शिक्षा भी आवश्यक है।” शिक्षा से मनुष्य की मुद्रा, भंगिमा, भावभंगी चेष्टाएँ, आचरण, बातचीत, चिंतन-मनन, अनुभूति सभी में एक विलक्षण दीप्ति उत्पन्न हो जाती है।”⁹ गाँव की अनपढ़ भोली जनता यदि शिक्षित होगी तो वह अपने कार्यों को सही तरीके से कर सकेंगी। गाँव का मुख्य व्यवसाय कृषि है। आज खेती में भी वैज्ञानिकता नई-नई खोज और उपकरण आ रहे हैं जिनकी जानकारी हुए बिना किसान खेती भी अच्छे से नहीं कर पायेगा। “खेती के हर पहलू में विज्ञान की आवश्यकता है। बीज का रख-रखाव, बीज बोने, सिंचाई करने, खादों का प्रयोग, गल्ले की कटाई-मड़ाई, पशु-पालन, भवनों का निर्माण, आवास की व्यवस्था यह सभी कार्य विज्ञान की प्रत्यक्ष सहायता की अपेक्षा रखते हैं।”¹⁰

गाँव की अधिकतर महिलाएँ व लड़कियाँ अनपढ़ हैं जिन्हें साफ-सफाई का विशेष ध्यान नहीं रहता। वे अपने रोजमर्रा के कामों में इतना व्यस्त रहती हैं कि उन्हें इस बात का ध्यान नहीं रहता है कि साफ-सफाई की वजह से क्या-क्या परेशानियाँ हो सकती हैं। सड़क बनाने वाली ईंट भट्टों पर काम करने वाली महिलाओं को अपने “स्वास्थ्य का ज्ञान कुछ भी नहीं होता। भोजन कैसे बनाना चाहिए, बच्चों का पोषण कैसे करना चाहिए, घर की साफ-सफाई कैसे रखनी चाहिए, वस्त्रों की सफाई का क्या अर्थ है यह कुछ भी उन्हें ज्ञात नहीं।”¹¹ ये महिलायें व युवतियाँ

दिन भर सड़कों और ईंट भट्टों पर धूल मिट्टी में काम करती हैं और वही बनाती खाती हैं। जिसकी वजह से इन्हें कई तरह की बीमारियों का सामना करना पड़ता है। किसी भी समाज की “सभ्यता और संस्कृति के सारे उन्मेष शिक्षा पर ही निर्भर करते हैं। उचित अनुचित का विवेक, सद्व्यवहार की समझ, परोपकार का भाव, नागरिक कर्तव्यों का बोध, जीवन और जगत की जटिल समस्याओं का समाधान मनुष्य को शिक्षा ही प्रदान करती है।”¹² गाँवों के विकास के लिए गाँवों में शिक्षा का समुचित प्रबंध करना आवश्यक है। बच्चों के विद्यालय के साथ-ही-साथ प्रौढ़ युवक व युवतियों के शिक्षा का भी प्रबंध किया जाना चाहिए। साथ ही उनके द्वारा लघु ग्रामोद्योग की स्थापना करनी चाहिये जिससे उन्हें गाँव में ही काम मिल सके।

गाँव में शिक्षा का अभाव पर्याप्त रोजगार उपलब्ध न होने के कारण गाँव के लोग शहर की तरफ पलायन करने को मजबूर हैं। वे शहर में भी जाकर कारखानों में 10-12 घण्टे कड़ी मेहनत के बावजूद इतनी कम मजदूरी मिलती है कि सही से गुजारा कर पाना मुश्किल हो जाता है। गाँव में कुछ ऐसे व्यक्ति हैं जो साधन सम्पन्न हैं। लेकिन वे भी गरीबों का शोषण करते हैं। गाँव में नेताओं के द्वारा दिये गये भाषणों में उनकी समस्याएँ और उन समस्याओं को दूर करने की बात तो की गयी किन्तु - “गाँव में जातीयता की संकीर्ण मनोवृत्तियाँ, ऊँची जातियों द्वारा समाज की तथाकथित छोटी जातियों के लोगों का शोषण, छोटे-छोट मामलों को लेकर ईर्ष्या और अहंकारवश, मुकदमेंबाजी तथा डकैतों, हत्यारों, चोरों और लुटेरों का आतंक, स्वार्थ प्रेरित दलबंदी, उत्पादन के साधनों का वास्तविक उत्पादक के साथ में न होना।”¹³ जैसी समस्याएँ यथावत बनी रहीं। जिसके परिणाम स्वरूप गाँव में बेरोजगारी बढ़ती गई। गाँव में यातायात के साधन न होना, किसानों के फसल का बाजार तक समय से न पहुँच पाना आदि अनेक ऐसी समस्याओं के कारण गाँव में जो थोड़े बहुत

रोजगार के साधन थे वे पर्याप्त नहीं हो सकें। बेरोजगारी के मुख्य कारणों में शिक्षा भी सम्मिलित हैं। गाँवों में शिक्षा की समुचित व्यवस्था न होने के कारण गाँव के लोग अच्छी शिक्षा से वंचित रह जाते हैं तो उनमें अच्छे कौशल का विकास नहीं हो पाता। यदि गाँव में भी उच्च शिक्षा संस्थान और लघु उद्योग प्रशिक्षण केन्द्र खोलकर गाँव के लोगों को प्रशिक्षित कर लघु उद्योग को स्थापित किया जाए और उसे बाजार से जोड़ा जाए तो गाँवों से पलायन कम होगा और उत्पादन बढ़ेगा जिससे आमदनी होगी और गाँव के लोगों का विकास होगा, तो देश का विकास स्वतः हो जायेगा।

निष्कर्ष :

भारतीय गाँवों में अनेक समस्याएँ हैं- दलबंदी, अशिक्षा, चिकित्सा, अस्वच्छता, यातायात और सामाजिक व आर्थिक विषमताएँ आदि। डॉ. ब्रजलाल वर्मा जी ने अपनी गद्य रचनाओं में गाँव की समस्याओं को यथार्थता के साथ चित्रित किया है। वर्मा जी कहते हैं कि- “भारत के समस्त ग्रामों में ईर्ष्या, फूट, संघर्ष, वैमनस्य तथा एक दूसरे को नीचा दिखाने का भाव घर-घर व्याप्त है।”¹⁴ इन समस्त समस्याओं को खत्म करने के उपाय भी बताएँ हैं - शिक्षा व्यवस्था, गाँव का पुनर्निर्माण, सिंचाई की व्यवस्था, जल निकासी, चौड़ी सड़कें और उन्हें मुख्य शहर से जोड़ने के कार्य के साथ ही साथ गाँव में लघु उद्योगों की स्थापना की बात कही है। अतः हम निष्कर्ष रूप से कह सकते हैं कि डॉ. ब्रजलाल वर्मा जी ने अपनी गद्य रचनाओं में गाँव की समस्याओं को बड़ी बारीकी से उठाया है और उसके समाधान भी बताये हैं। यदि हम इनके कथानुसार कार्य करें तो एक सुविधा सम्पन्न गाँव के निर्माण में अवश्य सफल होंगे।

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A study of ecomemory, female oppression and earth justice in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

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1. Introduction :

Excessive use of natural resources over the centuries by humans has led to environmental degradation and its scarcity. So, the Environmental sustainability is a pressing global issue of the present and future. Literature being a reflection of life, the problem of environmental degradation also is being reflected in literature. In the 1970's Ecofeminism unites the social and gender problems with the environmental problems and strengthens the bond between women and nature by critiquing the parallel oppression of women and nature. The black women writers and scholars felt that experiences of African Americans are not featured in these approaches and there is a need for a more inclusive model of sustainability.

Ecowomanism has practical application and has drawn influence from the literature. "Unlike single issue concerns, ecowomanism distinguishes the interconnections of social, political and environmental injustice. The foundation of ecowomanism is derived

from ecofeminism : a philosophical and political movement that combines ecological concerns with feminist ones, but centres religious, theological and spiritual perspectives of women of color as they confront racism, classism, sexism and environmental justice." (Karon, 2020).

Ecowomanistic Approach :

As Melanie L. Harris explained, "Ecowomanism centres the voices and perspectives of women from African descent as they engage earth justice. Drawing upon African cosmology, these perspectives understand the earth as sacred. There is a connection between humans, the divine realm, and the earth" (Rebecca Barnes, 2016).

Her book *Ecowomanism: African American Women and Earth Honoring Faiths* is a foundation of ecowomanist theory where she explains the seven step methodology of ecowomanism. Melanie L Harris defines the Seven Step Ecowa-

nistic method in the second chapter of the book and the steps are summarised as follows :

1. Honouring experience and mining ecomemory.
2. Critical Reflection on experience and ecomemory.
3. Womanist intersectional Analysis
4. Critically examining African and African American History and Tradition.
5. Engaging transformation.
6. Sharing dialogue: Honouring earth as God.
7. Take action for earth justice. (Harries, 2007 p23-59).

2. Alice Walker, Ecowomanism and *The Color Purple* :

Alice Walker is an Afro-American novelist, short story writer, poet, and social activist. Alice Walker's writings have influenced the Ecowomanists profoundly. Her definition of the term "womanism" is the conceptual foundation for ecowomanistic methods derived by Melanie L. Harris. Harris offers a fresh approach to American Environmental history by placing African American Environmental perspectives and wisdom in the centre. Harries gives credit to Alice Walker for inspiring her to think and write about ecowomanism. She writes, "Alice Walker literary artist and Pulitzer Prize winning author of *The Color Purple* has written extensively about African American connection to the earth and is heralded as one of the pioneering Ecowomanist thinkers and scholars" (Harris, 2007 p5). Her novel *The Color Purple* is acclaimed as a manifestation of Ecowomanism. Walker links ecological perspectives with womanism to bring change in the life of black women.

So, study of Walker's *The Color Purple* from ecowomanistic perspective will unfold African American Ecomemory, parallel oppression of women and earth along with call for earth justice. Walker through this novel speaks about the inseparable bond between women and earth and reflects the way in which both are being exploited. There is an appeal to care for women and earth equally in her writing. Her characters Shug, Celie, Sofia and Squeak display Ecowomanist awareness in their actions.

3. Ecomemory in *The Color Purple* :

Using ecomemory is a form of unification and allows for empowerment to create a new environmental paradigm that honors the experience of all humans, regardless of race, class and gender. (Karon, 2). *The Color Purple* is a novel which speaks about African-American and African American ecomemories. In the later part of the novel through Nittie's letters Walker describes African history, tradition and experience. There are descriptions of huge plantations where natives worked, connected to the earth without owning the land. Walker also includes history of colorization and speaks about how in the pretext of development they were exploited and looted of their wealth, land and freedom. Nittie in the novel with her African encounter discloses the ecomemories of African-American women, their struggle and strength, their rootedness to the land.

The beautiful part of ecomemory Walker brings in the novel is the story of 'roof leaf'. The story says, a long time ago one man in the Olinkan village wanted more than his share of land to plant. Out of monetary greed he used his power of being the tribe's

chief and cultivated more and more common land. As his greed grew he took more and more wives and also cultivated the land where sacred roof leaf grew. As these women too were lazy and did not pay attention to the disappearing roof leaf. At the end, as a punishment, a great storm destroyed all their huts and they suffered for the next six months. They lost half the villagers during this period. The chief was expelled and the Olinkans never again neglected the roof leaf. Exploitation of mother earth and women is brought together in the story along with the Olinkan way of nature worshiping and their awareness of sustainability. As a parallel oppression the novel speaks about the women who are deeply connected to the earth, who works in the fields very hard and at the same time the men who exploit both the mother earth and women for their profit. Walker also gives a call to women to be alert and take action against exploitation.

4. Female Oppression in *The Color Purple* :

The novel begins with the oppressive story of a helpless Celie, a girl of 14 years old. Celie symbolises all black women who are silenced, oppressed, raped and exploited physically and psychologically throughout the history. Like Celie, the black women in general have forgotten their self, their beauty, strength and capacity. Celie, who was writing only to God, at the end addresses her letter, "Dear God, Dear stars, dear trees, dear sky, dear people, dear everything. Dear God" (Walker 1983, p. 249). This shift clearly indicates her move from male dominant unkind, human centric structure to more inclusive ecocentric model.

In Celie's words one can get an idea of the way she is being treated; "He beat me like beat the children. Cept he don't never hardly beat them. He say, Celie, get the belt. The children are outside the room peeping through the cracks. It all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie you a tree. That's how come I know trees fear man". Walker also gives the comparison of women exploitation with that of nature. Celie here connects herself to nature in enduring the pain inflicted by the man.

The other women characters who are being exploited in the novel are Shug, Sofia and Squeak. Shug is influencing Celie and initiates self-awareness in her. Shug's idea of religion is different from white man's religion. Shug finds God not in church but in nature and in every human being. The concept of finding God in everyone and everything around us indicates her Eco awareness.

Nittie as a child was in a suppressive environment but safeguarded by her sister Celie. She somehow manages to escape from her sister's house and joins the missionary family. Nittie with her mission of educating Africans understands Olinkan tribes. She observes their way of life living with them. She educates her sister about African culture, history and tradition. Nittie also supports Olinkan women by giving education and persuading the women to educate their daughters.

Sofia has close association with the land and works in the farm. Her character also suggests dual oppression of Afro American women. She apart from being oppressed by her husband was also a white Mayor's maid. Though she was a strong

woman and voiced against exploitation she gets exploited by both black men and white people.

5. Earth Justice in *The Color Purple* :

Ecowomanism goes beyond a literal connection that women may have with the environment and avoids the stereotype that women have a stronger relationship to the earth than men do. Therefore, a goal of ecowomanism is to reconnect women with their roots and provide a reflection of cultural experience and connect it to problems of justice, for further empowerment and changes into society (Karon 2020, p2). The women in the novel are connected and display the knowledge of interconnectedness of nature and women. They get strength to fight against oppression from nature and each other's support. Celie and Nittie symbolically go back to farmland owned by their family which was hidden from them by their Pa.

Olinkans, who were always there, used the land and took care of the land for generations, and one day got to know that they don't own the land anymore. Their well cultivated land will be used for constructing roads by the new landowners and the Olinkan's will have to pay tax for land, water and for any resources they use. Walker along with ill effects of colonization and exploitation of Afro Americans by the Whites voices for earth justice. It was the colonizers who pushed the natives into unfavourable working conditions and snatched the lands from the natives where they were living for generations.

She also values the African way of life because Olinkans had a sustainable model in place in treating the land. They cultivated the land only to satisfy their needs not greed.

To the Olinka "the roof leaf is not Jesus Christ but in its own humble way, is it not God?" (Walker, 1983 p. 160)

6. Conclusion :

Ecowomanism tries to reconnect women with their roots and provide a reflection of cultural experience and connect it to problems of justice, for further empowerment and changes into society. In *The Color Purple* Walker has reconnected Celie, Nittie and the readers with the Afro American ecomemory by exploring Olinkan life styles, culture, traditions and beliefs. Novel also brings transformation in black man's treatment of women which is shown in Celie and her husband's appreciative behaviour towards the end. Women emerge as confident, self-sufficient and compassionate individuals who outlive their agonies. It also gives a call to black women for environmental upkeep and to own the responsibility of mother earth which was always a part of their great tradition.

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Transgressive Bollywood Fandom : An Analysis of the Egalitarian Paradigm in Select Indian Male Slash Fiction Narrative

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Introduction :

The incessant zest of cyber fandom to weave fascinating narratives that subvert mainstream media texts has intrigued fan studies scholars across the globe. With the advent of groundbreaking technological evolutions in the cyber world, the transgressive potential of liminal spaces owned by fans has escalated. The Indian media fan communities have responded to these transformative shifts by spawning subversive narratives of popular visual media productions in the cyber world. Hence, an objective inquiry into these changing trends in Indian fan reception facilitated by the digital revolution is pertinent. This helps to form a conspicuous idea about the Indian media fan culture in the twenty-first century.

The current paper focusses on the narrative expansion of the Hindi film *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan* (2020), directed by Hitesh Kewalya in *Archive of Our Own*, a popular digital fan fiction archive maintained by the Organization for Transformative Works. Slash fiction is a specific category of fan fiction narrative

that focusses on homosexual relationships between fictional characters. The male slash fiction selected for analysis in this paper, “It was not Death,” unpacks the trail of severe torments that the gay character Karthik has to endure for disclosing his authentic gender identity and “deviant” sexual orientation.

The landmark judgment made by the Supreme Court of India in September 2018 to decriminalize same-sex marriages has been celebrated as a milestone victory for the Indian LGBT community. Following the judgment that scrapped the colonial law enforced by Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, the then Chief Justice of India, Dipak Misra, stated that “criminalizing, carnal intercourse is irrational, arbitrary and manifestly unconstitutional” (Pandey, 2018, para. 9). The grand victory of the queer identities is celebrated through a slew of visual media narratives that proactively represent the psychosocial matrix of gender-fluid identities in India.

Spurred by the social upheaval, the years following the remarkable judgment witnessed a surge of Bollywood movies representing the lives of gender-fluid identities like *Hum Bhi Akele Tum Bhi Akele* (2019), *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga* (2019), *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan* (2020), *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui* (2021) and *Badhaai Do* (2022). However, the Supreme Court ruling based on the amendment of the Special Marriage Act in 2023 stated that legalizing same-sex marriages goes beyond the purview of the Supreme Court and substantial final decisions should be made by the Indian Parliament (Ellis-Petersen, 2023). This judgment inflicted a severe blow to the hopes of the LGBT community in India.

Transcending the Binaries : Transgressive Role of Indian Slash Fiction Narratives :

The American media scholar and writer Joanna Russ (2014), in “Pornography by Women for Women, With Love,” explicitly states that slash fictions translate the hidden sexual desires of fans and open up the profound possibilities of exploring sexual fantasies free from the conventional archetypes of gender and sexuality (p. 90). The liminal space of fan creativity thus promotes the exploration of noetic sexual fantasies that surpass the binaries. Members of the fan community generally encode their hidden desires in these narratives as fan fiction archives open up a safe haven for the minority sexualities to navigate and explore their favourite trope.

The slash fiction author, identified by the pseudonym Tinevisce, has inculcated Emily Dickinson’s poem “It was not Death” as a prologue to the slash narrative selected for the current analysis. The title and the prologue symbolize the power of resilience

that the gender-fluid minorities embody in their journey towards self-actualization. The slash fiction narrative revolves around the homosexual romance between Aman Tripathi and Karthik Singh, two main characters from the Hindi movie *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan* (2020). The gay couple’s sexual intimacy and emotional rapport signify an egalitarian relationship that defies the norms of heterosexual paradigms. The fan narrative is a creative re-textualization, as tantalizing titbits from the original movie are “poached” and ingeniously reappropriated to present a truthful representation of the mental agony of being trapped in a body that is incongruous with Karthik’s gender identity (Jenkins, 1992, p. 24).

The slash fiction narrative is an impassioned plea for justice as Karthik unravels the agonizing experience of coming out. Karthik’s parents are intensely scandalized by his “deviant” sexual orientation. Confessing Karthik’s genuine sexual orientation before his conservative family members stood as a major stumbling block in Karthik’s attempt to come out.

Imbued with the potential to trailblaze an endeavour of resistance, coming out narratives have gained traction after the 1970s. Coming out cannot be singled out as a separate instance of open disclosure about a person’s distinct homosexual orientation; it is a continuous process simultaneously marked by personal awareness and public disclosure. The coming out trope takes a central stage in the narrative recontextualization of this slash fiction. Evidently, the fan fiction author ingeniously explores the vulnerability of gender-fluid identities who struggle to break the silence and redeem themselves from the vicious circle of rigid gender stereotypes.

Hence, coming out represents a remarkable stage of transition in consciousness that entails a slew of positive transformations. This metamorphosis from suffering to redemption is culturally recorded (Plummer, 1995, p. 50). Admittedly, this substantial shift empowers homosexual identities to encounter detrimental adversities that prevent their self-expression.

The narrative is a harrowing account of uncharted miseries that Karthik has to endure for being a misfit in a heteronormative society. When he makes an audacious decision to assert his authentic sexual orientation, Karthik has to suffer a great deal of physical assault from his father. His attempt to break free from his cocooned self is thwarted by the spiteful responses from his family members. The omniscient narrator outpours in detail Karthik's wounded memories related to his traumatic coming-out experience:

He remembers each blow as they rained down, remembers the exact one which had split his skin open...remembers the exact way in which the blunt-force injuries hurt differently than the sharper, open, bleeding wounds; how the different tenors of pain wove together to form an inescapable net. (Tinevisce, 2020, para. 16)

Karthik's agonizing battle with the heteronormative framework has entrapped him into a web of ceaseless suffering. He starts to contemplate his "worthless" existence as a misfitting fragment. So, Karthik's insecurity about his "aberrant" gender identity stirs up overwhelming emotions of shame. In short, Karthik questions his worthiness to feel loved by someone like Aman. Thus, Karthik's distressing self-doubt makes his skin burned by Aman's compassionate fingers.

Though shattered to pieces, Karthik's indomitable power of resilience to rise from the ashes like a phoenix is admired in the narrative. The severity of the adverse circumstances has spurred him to vitalize the expression of his dormant identity, smothered by societal stigma. Hence, the narrator explicates:

In Karthik's mind, he always pictures himself rising like a glorious being, phoenix-like, from the bloodied and battered husk his father had left him that night. There is a long, beautiful rainbow cape tied to his shoulders. It's spotless, untainted, unbloodied-and he has never taken it off since. (Tinevisce, 2020, para. 10)

Karthik confides in Aman as he can comprehend the subtleties of his intrinsic sensibilities. So, Karthik realizes, "nobody else had ever seen his cape, had they? Nobody else but Aman had eyes that could peel back all his layers" (Tinevisce, 2020, para. 12). Thus, Karthik believes that Aman is the right person who is destined to redeem him in this journey towards self-acceptance. Karthik unwinds the shrouded layers of his subdued identity before Aman. The male homosexual romance between Aman and Karthik is rooted in mutual respect and compassion. Aman feels extremely empathetic towards the pathetic predicament of Karthik. Moreover, Aman empowers Karthik to fight like an invincible warrior. Emboldened by Aman's unwavering support, Karthik feels determined to create a new world that transcends gender discrimination.

Conclusion :

Indubitably, this male slash narrative dismantles the conventional paradigms of compulsory heterosexuality and emphasizes the rising demand to acknowledge non-binary sexualities. The archaic cultural

codes of gender stereotypes are destabilized through these transgressive narratives. In fact, Indian slash fictions proactively resist the conventional narrative patterns of mainstream visual media productions. Hence, these narratives knitted around gender-fluid identities formulate a creative liminal space to unleash sharp indignation.

A major corpus of Indian slash narrative tropes is thus centred around exploring the traumatic emotional experiences of gender minorities distressed by estrangement, gender dysphoria, identity crisis, and self-doubt. In a way, Indian fans engage with the creative process of transformative cultural production by re-appropriating characters beyond the context of popular media productions. Hence, these Indian slash fiction narratives are a transgressive force that surpasses the conventional preconceptions of our mainstream culture. These creative fan productions spotlight the remarkable existence of counter-heteronormative narratives from the periphery, that radically confront exclusionary gender hierarchies. Thus, the radical transition in the perception, representation and reception of these repressive forms of sexual identities signifies the growth of an atmosphere

of tolerance in the Indian cultural framework.

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Defying Destiny : The Rebellion Against the Devadasi System in *Breaking Free*

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In a patriarchal society, women face subjugation and oppression, yet their experiences are not homogeneous, as they are also shaped by the gender expectations imposed by their caste. Devadasis, traditionally from the lower rungs of society, were doubly oppressed due to their caste, class, and gender identities. K.A. Geetha (2021) highlights that Dalit women, in particular, faced marginalization on both caste and gender grounds. Their oppression manifested in both public and private spheres. In contrast, women from upper-caste Hindu families experience 'private patriarchy' but gain recognition and status as 'pativrata' or virtuous wives if they conform to caste ideologies (Geetha 89). Furthermore, Dalit women, often from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, are compelled to work in public spaces to sustain themselves, exposing them to exploitation and violence, which is evident through these lines as she states, "On the other hand, since most Dalit women are economically disadvantaged sections of the society, they will have to work in the public realm to earn their living" (Geetha 88)

The origins of the Devadasi system date back to the 8th century, with early references in the history of the Pallavas and Pandyas, indicating a deep-rooted tradition in South India. The term 'devadasi' is derived from the Sanskrit term for a woman dedicated to the service of a deity or temple, but over time, it became associated with various regional terms like 'devnar,' 'kootikal,' 'kuttiyar' in Kerala, 'jogin,' 'sanis', 'bhogam' in Andhra, 'basvi' and 'jogtis' in Karnataka and many others across India. Initially, these women, typically unmarried, were seen as chaste and spiritually devoted to the temple, where they performed sacred dances and songs. Their primary role was to serve the temple and ensure its functioning. While some were engaged in dance, others may not have been involved in prostitution. However, over time, especially during the colonial period, the system began to decline due to reduced temple patronage, leading these women into exploitation. Wealthy patrons, including zamindars, kings, and Brahmins, took advantage of the devadasis, exploiting their labour and bodies, eventually transforming many into sex workers.

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Throughout history, devadasis were predominantly from lower castes and thus suffered from triple oppression: based on caste, class, and gender. The system was widespread across India, and its evolution reflected the intersection of caste ideologies and exploitation. The decline of the temple economy during the colonial era exacerbated the devadasis' vulnerability, as they were pushed into prostitution and concubinage to survive. The British colonial authorities further stigmatized the 'nautch' dance, performed by devadasis at social gatherings, considering it morally degrading. The rise of nationalist movements also framed the protection of women's bodies as crucial to the preservation of national culture, which led to widespread calls for the abolition of the devadasi system, starting with reform movements in the late 19th century. Women in these systems were not only denied control over their own bodies but also had no autonomy over their labour or legal rights. According to Chakravarti (2018), women were made into the property of men, with control over their reproductive and productive labour. The mechanisms of this control were enacted through three primary means: ideological enforcement, the authority of male relatives to discipline them, and the legal power of the state to punish women for any deviation from prescribed norms.

Both in terms of economic autonomy, through a denial of control over productive resources, and autonomy in law, women were made appendages of men. Indeed, women themselves were the puberty, both in terms of their reproductive and their productive labour of me.... (Chakravarti, 70)

Breaking Free: A Novel, which uncovers the journey of devadasis and their descendants, illustrating the shift from

sacred roles to profane exploitation. It is a narrative of four generations of women, two directly involved in the devadasi system and the others affected by the legacy of this tradition. The temple plays a pivotal role in regulating social identity and sexuality for this marginalized group, and the devadasi system is inherently linked to caste hierarchies and patriarchal structures. Through this novel, we see the intimate connection between caste ideologies and the oppression of women, highlighting the continued struggles of devadasis and their descendants in navigating a system designed to control them.

The narrative begins by introducing Kasturi and Lakshmi, both born into the devadasi community, a lineage tied to a traditional occupation that they could not escape. While Kasturi conformed to this destiny from an early age, having been indoctrinated into the community's beliefs, Lakshmi stood in stark contrast. Filled with resentment and defiance, Lakshmi harbored deep disdain for the devadasi way of life, considering it a shameful existence. Unlike Kasturi, Lakshmi resisted learning the sacred dance that defined their heritage, instead pleading with her father, Periya Mirasu, to facilitate her education, despite her status as an illegitimate child. Understanding the importance of providing her with an opportunity, Mirasu complied, ensuring she attended high school, where she would remain distant from Kasturi for three years.

During this time, Paati, an elder in their family, revealed to Lakshmi that Kasturi's future had been preordained, one where she would 'marry God' and attain a position of honor in their community. Paati explained that Kasturi would have to declare herself a slave of God, symbolized

by the wearing of a bottu, thus surpassing even the priest in stature. Although Lakshmi initially found this concept absurd, Paati reinforced the belief that for a devadasi, this was the pinnacle of spiritual and social elevation, an opportunity few would turn down. As she states,

I am your slave, and wear bottu, you will have higher status than the priest... It's your good fortune- and ours. God is your husband. You will always be an auspicious woman, auspicious forever. There will be no ill fortune in your life. It's a position that everyone born in the clan aspires to... Go stand in the deity's chamber and dance...when you dance to this line, the gates of heaven will open for you. (Vaasanthi, 49)

On the other hand, the devadasi clan faced systematic marginalization. At a wedding in the Mirasu household, Thulasi, Lakshmi's mother, and her daughter were treated as second-class citizens. They were relegated to the backyard and only served food after the rest of the guests had eaten, a dehumanizing act that reinforced their social status as outcasts. Lakshmi keenly observed this injustice, recognizing that the Mirasus, who once held power, had reduced them to mere beggars.

For Kasturi, her passion for dance was all-consuming. Nothing mattered more to her than the art itself. However, when Paati instructed her to go to the Raja, Kasturi felt a deep sense of betrayal, questioning why she had to serve a man if God was indeed her husband. Once again, Paati manipulated her emotions, convincing her that this was the tradition, that their bodies were merely vessels for art, and that their relationship with powerful men was a necessary arrangement for maintaining the legacy of the community. Kasturi, under

Paati's influence, accepted this philosophy, which justified sexual exploitation as part of their sacred duty. As Paati said:

We are not housewives. We are born in pursuit of art. We need rich men to take care of us. If we are to develop and safeguard these arts, we shouldn't have to face problems in running our household. That's why we have this custom in our community. We are not going to make any claims on that rich man. Think of it merely as an arrangement but one that we must engage in without any reservation... This is an arrangement. You have already dedicated yourself to lord. Only dance and music are your god. You stand at the entrance to God's chamber. This body is merely a costume, a block of wood, the sages say. Sleeping with Raja will bring no dishonour to you or to your soul. (Vaasanthi, 86-87)

Kasturi's emotional and intellectual development was further challenged when she encountered Singaram, a freedom fighter and singer. She found herself attracted to him but was reminded by the devadasi code that as a 'wife of God', she was forbidden from engaging with any other man, particularly one from a lower caste. The devadasi women, as a result of their sacred union with God, were denied the ability to form romantic relationships outside of their duty to the deity. The harsh reality of this restriction became painfully clear when, during a performance, an Englishman commonly addressed as Durai, abruptly grabbed Kasturi's waist, leading to a humiliating confrontation. A wealthy Zamindar remarked by uttering "Are you going to melt if he touches you? Why are you acting shy, as if you are a chaste woman?" (Vaasanthi, 120) dismissing her outrage, cruelly mocked her chastity, calling her behavior shameful. This moment of degradation pushed Kasturi to assert her

dignity as an artist, demanding respect for her craft and identity.

Kasturi's sister, Thilakam, also bore the heavy burden of the devadasi heritage. Her love for Kalyanaraman, a man from an upper-caste family, led her to elope with him in search of a respectable life. Yet, despite her hopes, Thilakam soon realized that she had traded one form of disrespect for another. Her in-laws treated her with disdain, constantly reminding her of her devadasi roots. Despite leaving her past behind, Thilakam was never accepted as a true member of her husband's family. When Kasturi visited her sister in Madras, she found Thilakam broken and subdued, unable to speak of her suffering. She had been mentally, physically, and emotionally abused by her husband, who forbade her from singing and distanced her from her past. Thilakam was verbally abused, called derogatory names, and subjected to violent outbursts, which shattered her sense of self-worth. Her tragic fate culminated in suicide, a desperate escape from a life that had stripped her of every shred of dignity.

In essence, both Kasturi and Thilakam became trapped in a patriarchal structure that saw them as mere objects to be controlled and exploited. Thilakam's life, much like Kasturi's, reflects Simone de Beauvoir's observation that women in such circumstances are reduced to their husband's chattel, with no identity or autonomy beyond their roles as possessions. For these women, even their bodies and desires were not their own, but commodities for the benefit of men in positions of power. This is evident through these lines, "attached thereafter to her husband's hearth, she is no more than his chattel and the chattel of the clan into which she has been put. (Beauvoir, 1997, p. 115).

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Lakshmi's journey was one of resilience and determination, fighting against the oppressive forces of patriarchy and caste. Throughout her academic life, she faced constant ridicule, being the only woman in her class, often targeted for her community's background. Despite these challenges, she excelled and eventually became a doctor, dedicating herself to social activism. Her advocacy led her to a significant role as a member of the legislative council, where she delivered a powerful speech supporting the abolition of the Devadasi system. Her unwavering stance was crucial in passing the Devadasi Abolition Act, despite fierce opposition from some former Devadasis. Lakshmi eloquently argued that the system's deep ties to land and temple rituals represented a form of psychological imprisonment imposed by upper-caste men. The social structure of caste, she argued, reinforced gender purity, which in turn dictated women's roles, particularly in relations with men of lower castes. Lakshmi's stance highlighted the structural inequalities entrenched within these cultural norms.

Kasturi, another key figure in the narrative, came to understand her own tragic situation when she was wrongly blamed for her relationship with Singaram, a man from a lower caste. After his martyrdom during a protest, Kasturi sought out Lakshmi's guidance, realizing the lies that had been propagated about the Devadasi system. Reflecting on her own experience, she expressed regret for having been caught in a false ideal, understanding that her connection to the temple was merely a construct. She says,

...my relationship with the temple has
become a lie. I have lived like a fool,
not realizing that the position given to

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me is merely an arrangement for the convenience of others. I didn't know that I wouldn't have the freedom even to love someone. Why didn't I think it like Lakshmi. (Vaasanthi, 287)

The narrative transitions to Maya, who, grappling with the mystery surrounding her mother Dharini's death, uncovers a long-hidden family history. Maya's investigation leads her to a series of discoveries that reveal her mother's secret past, including her grandmother's connection to the Devadasi system. She learns that Dharini, born to Kasturi, had been part of this lineage, though her mother had tried to shield her from the harsh truths of their ancestry. Maya's search for answers brings her to Kodaikanal and ultimately reveals that her mother's death was not a suicide but a murder. By connecting the dots, Maya uncovers the oppressive weight of the past and its impact on her family.

Through this compelling narrative, Vaasanthi underscores the struggles of Devadasis, who were caught in a cycle of exploitation perpetuated by patriarchy and caste systems. While Lakshmi was a pion-

neering force for change, fighting to dismantle these oppressive structures, other women like Dharini and Maya continued to bear the consequences of this painful legacy. Despite the official abolition of the Devadasi system, the echoes of this institution continue to linger, reminding us of the deep-seated social injustices that remain in certain communities.

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The Evolving Character of *Jindan Kaur* in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Last Queen*

T. S. Kavitha

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Several themes have emerged in Indian fiction in English, some dealing with social reforms, the disintegration of agrarian life, historical romance, and problems in rural communities. In recent fiction, writers are rummaging through history to bring out stories that have yet to be told or have been hidden beneath history (Anjaria, 2015; Anjaria & Nerlekar, 2024; Chakravorty, 2014). The impact of post-pandemic theoretical turns has also deeply affected Indian fiction writing. Moreover, there is a rich tradition of Indian female fiction writers who have explored not only the mythological world of female characters but have also wrought the experience of migration with feminine sensibility and resilience. One such dominant voice is that of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, who used the power of mythological retelling with the tinge of the magical realist technique (Bala, 2016; Mishra & Mishra, 2021; Singh et al., 2022). However, Inter-thematic approaches, combining national movements for political liberation and personal feminist experiences, make the subject of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novel *The Last Queen* slightly different from her previous novels. The

combination of these two themes in the fictional category falls "between novels that deal with the national experience as the central theme, and novels that use this experience as the background to a personal narrative" (Mukherjee, 36-37).

Divakaruni skillfully balances the history of the Sikh kingdom with the personal account of Jindan Kaur and Maharaja Ranjit Singh- the first king of the Sikh Empire of Punjab. Multiple narratives created around Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign eclipsed the reign of his successors, including his youngest son under the aegis of the Queen Regent, Rani Jindan. By recounting personal accounts of Queen Mai Nikain, King Ranjit Singh's second wife, Sada Kaur, his mother-in-law and Rani Jindan, Divakaruni weaves together history's hidden narrative of the protagonist's rise to royalty and subsequently to Queen.

The present article examines how Rani Jindan, the royal character of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novel *The Last Queen*, by remaining within the traditional role of a woman and a mother, simultaneously fulfils her duties as a Queen Regent despite

having come from a different background, with no political experience. Portrayed as an ideal mother and noble queen, she often faced severe challenges, danger and difficulty and she fought back either from behind her purdah or even without it. This article will show that Rani Jindan successfully defined certain traditional norms, sometimes by pushing the boundaries imposed upon women and sometimes even crossing them. To illustrate the outreach made by Jindan Kaur, I will first explore how simply and naturally Divakaruni portrays her protagonist's faith in education, freedom, love, and rebellion. Then, I aim to show how these four beliefs evolve to take new forms when she becomes the last queen. In the final section of my paper, I aim to intervene in the personal and political aspects of Jindan Kaur's life by discussing in detail how these four are transformed and take on a new meaning after her husband's death. She evolves, and allegorically, the reign evolves with her in a synergistic manner.

From Jindan Kaur to Rani Jindan :

In *The Last Queen*, Jindan Kaur's life is distinctly divided into four stages, each of which determines the changes in identity she undergoes. She begins as a girl from a humble background who falls in love with the king and then becomes the rebel queen who, upon the death of her husband, is compelled to fight against the British and her people to protect the kingdom. Although she cannot defend her kingdom from the ruses of her people and the power of the British, she is generally perceived as a woman of power, especially in the history of Punjab. The story unravels the harsh reality of a woman's daily life as a daughter and queen. Love, faith, deception, treachery, polygamy, and passion all play major roles in the novel.

As a rebellious child, Jindan always wished to study and be educated. She believed that going away to Lahore from Guleranwala would allow her to see the world. But, when her father announces that he will take only her and not her brother along to Lahore, she revolts like a stubborn child: "If you don't take Jawahar, I'm not going". Her father tries to use force and drags her along:

He boxes my ears hard. The pain makes me gasp, but I refuse to cry it. Biji curses and attempts to pull me away. Jawahar grabs Manna's arm, begging him to stop. Manna throws him off, grabs my shoulders and shakes me. Blurry lights dance in my eyes. I make my body go slack and drop to the ground. 'you'll have to drag me to Lahore, every step' (24).

Finally, Manna, her father, is compelled to submit to her persistence and take both to Lahore. We see how she fights all the odds because she is so fond of her brother. Although, when they arrive at Lahore, they are both enchanted by the city, their life in Manna's little house in Lahore feels like a prison. The job Jawahar does is like that of a slave, while Jindan feels like a "maidservant and a prisoner" (34) because her father, Manna, did not allow her to leave the small house allotted to him as the royal kennel keeper. Coming to Lahore no longer appeals to them until her life turns around when she meets the king.

One day, when she is locked up in the house, she has her first encounter with the maharaja, who addresses himself as "Ranjith Singh" and not with the designation Maharaja, a quality not often seen in a personality of that stature. Instantly impressed by the spontaneous bond between his horse Laila and Jindan, "you must know some jaadu then" (39), the king offers to take her for a ride. Manna, witnessing the discourse between the two people, has

something else in his mind, which offends Jindan to the core. Again and again, he projects these thoughts onto Jindan, pushing her to further their relationship physically so that maybe one day, she could be close enough to the king and improve her family's status. After her subsequent meetings with the king, she finds herself falling in love with him, a very innocent, childlike love: "I want the Sarkar to fall in love with me. Because he's powerful and charismatic and didn't take advantage of me though he could easily have done. Because he tells the most fascinating stories. And because, foolishly, I'm falling in love with him" (49). She began to dare to marry him one day. No motive of becoming queen, except to be with Ranjit Singh for the sake of love, makes their relationship pure. Throughout the novel, she remains sincerely fond of both Ranjit Singh when he becomes husband and her brother, even after he becomes involved in court matters. Her attachment to her brother does not fade; they both remain on each other's side even after her responsibilities grow and change with time and circumstances.

Jindan as Wife and Mother :

Before becoming Ranjit Singh's wife by marrying his sword, Jindan admires the king for his simplicity, honesty and bravery, carefully listening and giving suggestions for state matters in her own innocent manner. Many appreciate her love for her king, including the king's Wazir, who tells Jindan to look after the king after he has experienced a small episode of stroke. He says: "Love is your greatest weapon" (88), that will break the king's stubbornness. Life after marriage also is a fairy tale especially when she is with the king.

As the days passed, Jindan learned the royal game in the zenana as well as in court.

The secret contrivances constantly at play among the queens and in court become more familiar to her, learning from experiences of deceit from Mai Nikkain. At times the king cautions her, while the Fakir looks out for her. The help and advice she receive from her loved ones prepare her, unknowingly, for the battle that is to come- the battle to preserve the throne-to rebel against the British.

When she gives birth to their son Dalip, a new transformation takes place within the queen as she realizes the depth of her emotions and the power of love. When the Sarkar dies, Guddan, one of his wives decides to become sati and burn herself on her husband's funeral pyre. Although Jindan tries to talk to her from this irrational action, Guddan does not change her mind. She explains to her how difficult life would be as one of the many queens after the king's death, including not only Jindan's life but also Dulip's, who, although remotely, could be king. Although aware of the possible dangers of remaining alive after the king's death, she does not submit to the thought of becoming sati herself as that would be a cowardly act. She want to live for her son and protect him. Her motherly instincts convinced her that she could even kill to protect him. The rebellious mother was born. Her yearning to learn more about and from life makes her want to be alive, an emotion she believes could be that of betraying the king: "*For my own sake, too, I want to live. I've barely touched the world. There's so much out there to see and feel and taste. I'm greedy for it. I'll take the bitter with the sweet. I'll endure the pain* (original italics, 170)." From here on, in the story until her death, she remains a rebel mother. However, when her son Dalip is crowned king, she assumes her identity now as rebel queen and rebel mother, a dual

responsibility- one towards her son and the other towards Punjab.

Jindan the Rebel :

The second half of the book, after the death of Maharajah Ranjit Singh, history is well documented and recorded by many historians. However, there remain only some gaps to be filled, events and personal experiences which are never recorded in historical books, but can only be known and spoken about through literature. These fine gaps are skillfully woven by the author Divakaruni who recounts intrigues in the court as well as the zenana, in which Rani Jindan finds herself at loss after she marries the king, a space to learn from after the death of her husband. She always felt cloistered in the zenana among some of the other queens who showed no interest in the king's or the kingdom's business.

Locking women behind doors is not a solution for keeping them safe. It is imprisonment as felt Jindan when she went to Jammu during her exile. The event and circumstances in which Dalip had to become king were neither pleasant nor ideal. No one is happy under the rules of Ranjit Singh's eldest heirs and the Sandhwalias now wanted Dalip to take over the throne under Jindan's regency. This news came to her as a surprise, she felt confused whether to be afraid for her son or happy. Later on she is told that she has no choice but to accept the offer as the announcement of Dalip as the new king have already been made: "We've already announced throughout the city that Dalip will be the new maharaja. You have only one choice, you can be the regent'- his hand moves towards the hilt of his sword- 'or Dalip can become an orphan whom the Sandhwalias will adopt out of love for the Sarkar (220-221)". Such incidents in the story are significant,

indicating that Jindan does not really have much control over her life but is often compelled or driven by her love for Dalip. In addition, she is not even free to choose to be with the man she loves, Lal Singh, because her status as queen and Ranjit Singh's loyal widow prohibits her from marrying a non-Sikh person.

Jindan valued personal freedom and wished it for herself from childhood. Each step of the way she was denied it, often fighting back and rebelling. As a daughter, she wished to study and not be left at home to do household chores, as we see on her arrival at Lahore. As a wife, she appreciated that she had the freedom to hold her opinion in court matters when she discussed them with the king. After her marriage, the veil became a part of her everyday attire. She found the courage to remove it at crucial moments when she wanted to prove to the court that she indeed had the smallpox or when she wished to gain the confidence of the court. Addressing the army she says: "If by Waheguru's grace I come to power, I will not forget you. In one swift move, I toss away my veil. 'You are my family. I'm entrusting you with my honour and my life. Why then should I hide my face from you?'" (253)". The army immediately appreciated the act and the queen's courage: "The cheers are deafening. I think they'll never stop. 'Victory to Mai Jindan, Mother of the Khalsa and our true ruler. We will not fail you' (253)".

The fourth and last section of the book is titled *Rebel*. However, the irony is that this part of the story does not portray any act of rebellion on Jindan's behalf. Here, we see that she has submitted herself to her son. One could justify this title as Jindan tries to lure Dalip back to Sikhism and sparks in him the desire to return to Punjab, and one day reclaims his title and position as

Maharaja.

Conclusion :

The novel's portrayal of the queen's resilience is commendable, providing both a personal account of the female characters and although not too elaborately it's historical context. The protagonist's story is compelling simultaneously capturing the intricate political, social, and historical dynamics of the era. The Sikh Empire's struggles, threats and eventual decline received adequate attention although the focus remains primarily on elevating the female protagonist. This approach enhanced the novel's ability to present a well-rounded historical account.

Furthermore, the author's characterization of the protagonist, while intended to be empowering, inadvertently romanticizes the individual, exploring the complex power dynamics of the time. This enhances the narrative's potential to offer a nuanced examination of the historical period. Although the novel's pacing is inconsistent, in which the initial chapters are slow moving, the latter part of the narrative is fast moving focusing on political issues, mother-son dynamics, with a more detailed and intricate storytelling approach.

Reading *The Last Queen* and *Royals and Rebels* side-by-side gives a somewhat complete picture of Punjab's history and the stories of some of the important people of the 19th century. They complement each other by providing accounts of personal

and collective stories and histories. Divakaruni portrays Jindan's evolution as woman, mother, and queen and on the one hand, how her experiences of love evolved with her status and position in society, and on the other hand, indicates the consistency of the love for her husband, her kingdom, and her family.

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Gaze Theory : Cultural Counter-Gaze with Reference to Myths and Folktales in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

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Introduction :

The book *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by Chinua Achebe is a powerful criticism of how colonization affected native African traditions, particularly the Igbo society of Umuofia. Achebe lights the intricacies of pre-colonial Igbo life through gaze theory, especially the idea of cultural counter-gaze to illuminate the complexities of pre-colonial Igbo society. Gaze theory in postcolonial studies examines how colonizers exert control over the colonized through ideological and visual representations. The ascendant Western gaze, as articulated by theorists like Edward Said, objectifies and dehumanizes colonized subjects, presenting them as “other” and inferior (Said, 1978).

However, in *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe overthrows the colonial gaze through traditional Igbo myths and folktales. Achebe's narrative not only reveals the complexities of Igbo culture but also resists the vulgarizations imposed by colonial narratives. By centering traditional Igbo myths and folktales within the story,

Achebe recovers the narrative space historically dominated by the colonial viewpoint. This cultural counter-gaze acts as a curative to the colonial gaze, illustrating the Igbo people as active participants in a vibrant cultural tradition with unique values, ethics and worldview. By allowing the Igbo perspective to take center stage, Achebe not only subverts the Western gaze but also places Igbo culture as a source of strength, wisdom and resilience. Hence, *Things Fall Apart* becomes a literary work and an act of cultural renovation, underscoring the importance of indigenous storytelling in countering colonial narratives and preserving cultural identity. This paper analyzes how Achebe's strategic use of folktales serves as a resistance to colonial discourse and an evidence to the enduring vitality of Igbo heritage.

Gaze Theory and the Colonial Gaze :

Gaze theory, particularly in postcolonial contexts, explores the unequal power dynamics between colonizers and colonized

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through narrative and visual representation. In her feminist analysis of film, Laura Mulvey popularized the term “gaze” by asserting that the cultural medium of cinema is based on a voyeuristic, masculine gaze that objectifies women. Although Mulvey’s concept is applicable to gender, postcolonial theorists have embraced the broader idea to comprehend how colonial powers have created ideological and visual depictions of the colonized as inferior, alien, and primitive.

In *Things Fall Apart*, this colonial gaze is personified through the advent of British missionaries and their attempt to “civilize” the Igbo people. Western colonialists, through their conspicuous actions and their portrayal of indigenous cultures, establish a framework of superiority. As Edward Said (1978) asserts in his *Orientalism*, the colonizer’s gaze imposes a static, stereotypical view of the colonized as “the other,” devoid of history, agency, or culture (Said, 1978). For the Igbo people, the arrival of colonialism not only challenges their political and social systems but also erodes their cultural identity by propagating it as backward or uncouth. In this context, myths and folktales become significant tools for the colonized to profess their own worldview and challenge the colonizer’s dehumanizing gaze. These oral traditions offer an alternative lens through which the Igbo people can express their values, spirituality, and social order, thereby resisting the hybridism of colonial narratives.

The Concept of Cultural Counter-Gaze:

The cultural counter-gaze is like looking back at someone who is looking at you in a way that feels unfair. It means that instead of just accepting how colonizers see us, we create our own stories and show who we really are. Post-Colonial theorist

Homi K. Bhabha, talks about how people mix different cultures and sometimes copy the colonizers to show they can be strong too (Bhabha, 1994). But the cultural counter-gaze is even more about standing up against the colonizers by celebrating our own traditions, stories, and beliefs.

Achebe’s integration of folklore into *Things Fall Apart* acts as a counter-gaze that challenges colonial epistemologies. Through myths and folktales, Achebe affirms the richness and complexity of Igbo culture. These stories provide a framework through which the characters, particularly Okonkwo, navigate their social realities. These myths are not just entertaining stories but cultural expressions that assert the values, beliefs, and practices. In his essay Irele argues,

Achebe integrates Igbo oral traditions and folklore to depict the cultural landscape of pre-colonial Nigeria, thereby highlighting the community’s values, beliefs, and social structures. This incorporation of folklore serves to underscore the cultural disintegration that occurs with the advent of colonialism, as the traditional narratives and practices that once unified the society begin to erode. (Irele, 2001).

The locust myth :

The locust myth is a powerful metaphorical device that encapsulates the destructive nature of colonial invasion while simultaneously reflecting the complexities of initial contact between the colonized and the colonizers. In Chapter 7, the villagers of Umuofia experience the arrival of a swarm of locusts, an event described as both rare and significant. Achebe provides vivid imagery of the locusts, portraying their arrival as a “fairly small swarm” that gradually grows into an overwhelming, massive cloud, blotting out the sun and

covering the earth (Achebe, 1958). Initially, the villagers respond with joy and anticipation, viewing the locusts as a gift from nature, a source of nourishment, and an opportunity to partake in a communal harvest. This initial excitement mirrors the curiosity and cautious optimism that often characterized the first encounters between African communities and European missionaries or traders. However, as the narrative progresses, the true impact of the locusts becomes apparent, transforming them into a symbol of something far more ominous, colonial domination.

The locusts, in this metaphorical reading, embody the imperial gaze, representing a foreign presence that initially seems harmless, even beneficial, but ultimately proves alien and destructive. Their overwhelming numbers and insidious spread mirror the relentless encroachment of British colonial forces, which gradually erode the traditional fabric of Igbo society. Just as the locusts consume the vegetation, leaving destruction in their wake, the colonial enterprise disrupts and dismantles the sociopolitical and cultural systems of the Igbo people. The imagery of locusts covering the earth suggests an unstoppable force, one that is vast and all-encompassing, reflecting the imperialist agenda of domination and control.

Moreover, the locust myth highlights the duality of colonial impact. While the villagers initially view the locusts as a source of sustenance, this perspective shifts as the larger consequences of their presence become apparent. This duality reflects the ambivalence in colonial interactions, where initial exchanges, such as the introduction of new goods or religious ideas might have seemed appealing but were later revealed to be tools of subjugation

and cultural erasure. The metaphor also underscores the strategic subtlety of colonialism. Like the locusts, colonial forces do not arrive as a sudden, devastating storm but gradually establish their presence, building momentum until their influence becomes inescapable and suffocating. This gradual, insidious invasion highlights the calculated manner in which colonial powers embedded themselves within indigenous societies under the guise of progress or salvation, only to dismantle those societies from within.

Achebe's use of the locust myth serves as both a critique of colonial practices and a testament to the resilience of Igbo culture. While the locusts symbolize destruction, the villagers' ability to adapt and turn them into a resource for food reflects a broader theme of resistance and survival. This resilience hints at the possibility of reclaiming agency, even in the face of overwhelming external pressures. In this way, the locust myth becomes a layered and dynamic metaphor, capturing the multifaceted nature of colonialism and its impact on African societies. Achebe uses this myth not only to illustrate the devastating consequences of imperialism but also to emphasize the strength and adaptability of indigenous cultures, providing a narrative counterpoint to the dehumanizing stereotypes perpetuated by colonial discourse.

The Mosquito Myth : A Symbol of Defiance and Resistance :

The mosquito myth in *Things Fall Apart* is rich with symbolic meaning, serving as a subtle yet poignant critique of colonial power structures. This myth is shared in Chapter 9, where Okonkwo dismisses it as a "silly" story, illustrating both his personal resistance to indulging in what he considers idle tales and perhaps,

a deeper discomfort with symbolic representations of defiance. In the tale, the mosquito persistently buzzes around the ear, seeking vengeance after being dismissed and insulted by it. Though the ear ignores and scorns the mosquito, this small creature refuses to be silenced, continually returning to buzz in an act of persistent, almost obsessive defiance. Achebe's choice to include this tale within the narrative reflects the resilience of those who are small and seemingly powerless in the face of larger forces. The mosquito, though tiny and easily dismissed, represents a determined resistance that refuses to be subdued, symbolizing the ongoing defiance of the colonized people in the face of imperial dominance.

This myth serves as a metaphor for the ways in which oppressed or marginalized voices can continue to assert themselves, regardless of their limited power or the overwhelming dominance of the oppressor. Colonial powers, with their vast resources, military force, and ideological strength, often perceived themselves as invincible, capable of subduing any opposition. However, the buzzing of the mosquito reveals that colonial power is never absolute; it can be constantly disturbed and undermined by small acts of defiance. Just as the mosquito's persistence prevents the ear from experiencing complete peace, so too do the subtle, everyday acts of resistance within colonized societies disrupt the colonial system's illusion of total control. Through this tale, Achebe emphasizes that even the smallest, most seemingly insignificant forms of resistance can destabilize a powerful force. This continuous buzzing is not simply an annoyance and also it represents a refusal to surrender, a reminder that colonial authority is not

omnipotent and that it cannot entirely extinguish the spirit of those it seeks to subjugate.

Furthermore, the mosquito myth challenges the colonial pretension to absolute control over the indigenous populace. The ear, representing colonial authority, dismisses the mosquito as inconsequential, mirroring how colonial administrators often underestimated the agency of the colonized. Yet the mosquito, with its repetitive buzzing, symbolizes the tenacity of indigenous culture and identity, which refuses to be silenced or erased. This buzzing also suggests a form of psychological resistance, as it becomes a persistent reminder to the colonizer that they are not as dominant as they may believe. Achebe subtly argues through this myth that colonial power, no matter how extensive, is limited and susceptible to disruption. Resistance may appear small or insignificant, but its impact is undeniable. By weaving in this seemingly simple tale, Achebe highlights the potential of even minor acts of defiance to resonate deeply, suggesting that the power of resilience and cultural endurance lies in persistent, unyielding efforts. This enduring defiance, symbolized by the mosquito's relentless return, illustrates the agency of the colonized and their capacity to resist imperial ideologies in ways that are both profound and deeply subversive.

The Tortoise and the Birds : Deception and Colonial Trickery :

The myth of the tortoise and the birds, recounted by Ekwefi to her daughter, serves as a powerful allegory of colonial exploitation, deception, and the eventual resistance of the colonized. In the story, the tortoise, a cunning and manipulative character, deceives the birds by posing as

their representative at a grand feast in the sky. Although the birds generously give him feathers so he can join them in flight, the tortoise, upon arrival, persuades the hosts to serve the feast to “All of you,” implying himself alone. While the unsuspecting birds wait, he selfishly consumes all the food, leaving nothing for them. The tortoise’s deception is soon discovered, leading the enraged birds to strip him of his feathers, forcing him to plunge back to earth, where he falls and breaks his shell. This story highlights the tortoise’s greed and cunning as he manipulates those around him, exploiting their goodwill for his own benefit, only to face the consequences of his dishonesty.

Achebe uses this myth as a symbolic critique of colonial tactics of deception and exploitation. The tortoise embodies the colonial powers who, under the guise of bringing “civilization” and “progress,” instead exploit and manipulate indigenous communities for their own gain. Just as the tortoise convinces the birds to carry him to the feast only to consume everything himself, the colonizers often persuaded indigenous peoples to accept them by presenting themselves as benevolent figures, only to seize resources, labor, and power once they had gained a foothold. The birds’ generosity and open-heartedness mirror the initial openness of many indigenous communities who extended hospitality and trust to foreigners, only to be exploited by their supposed benefactors. The tortoise’s downfall is significant; once the birds realize his betrayal, they strip him of his privileges, symbolized by the feathers that enabled him to fly. The broken shell he is left with after his fall represents the ultimate ruin that comes from deceit and exploitation.

This fable also reflects the inevitable resistance of the colonized, as represented by the birds, who eventually see through the tortoise’s manipulation and act decisively to cut ties with him. By leaving the tortoise stranded, the birds assert their power and reject further exploitation. In this way, the myth suggests that colonial systems, built on dishonesty and exploitation, are ultimately unsustainable. The birds’ collective action underscores the potential strength of indigenous resistance when communities unite to reject the colonial oppressor. Achebe’s inclusion of this myth emphasizes that deception and exploitation ultimately lead to ruin, not only for the deceived but also for the deceiver, foretelling the eventual unraveling of colonial systems. Through the story of the tortoise and the birds, Achebe not only critiques the colonial process of manipulation and exploitation but also affirms the agency and resilience of the colonized, reminding readers of the potential for indigenous resistance and the self-destructive nature of colonial greed.

Folktales as Cultural Survival and Defiance :

Achebe’s use of folktales in the novel represents a cultural counter-gaze that challenges the colonial attempt to erase indigenous identities as discussed by Gikandi. Achebe uses Igbo myths and folktales as tools to subvert the colonial gaze, presenting African societies as complex and organized, contrary to their portrayal in colonial narratives. The myths and folktales embedded in the narrative are not mere entertainment; they serve as a form of cultural survival and defiance. They provide a framework for understanding the Igbo worldview, social structure with foreign ideologies.

By incorporating these stories into his novel, Achebe resists the colonial gaze that sought to portray African cultures as primitive and devoid of complex thought. The folktales in *Things Fall Apart* are not only narrative devices but also acts of resistance, reclaiming agency for the Igbo people and asserting the validity of their cultural practices. Through these stories, Achebe challenges the colonial narrative that reduces African cultures to mere objects of curiosity or exotica, presenting instead a multifaceted and dynamic representation of Igbo society.

Conclusion: Myths as Cultural Survival and Defiance :

In conclusion, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* offers a profound exploration of the cultural counter-gaze through its integration of Igbo myths and folktales. These stories serve as tools of resistance against the colonial gaze, offering alternative perspectives that challenge the reductive, dehumanizing narratives imposed by the colonizers. The myths of the locusts, the mosquito and the tortoise exemplify the resilience of Igbo culture and the power of storytelling as a form of defiance. Achebe's novel demonstrates how cultural traditions, preserved through oral histories and myths serve not only as

a means of survival but as a means of asserting agency in the face of colonial oppression.

By embedding indigenous narratives into the fabric of the novel, Achebe reclaims the power to define African culture and challenges the colonial gaze that sought to define it. Through the cultural counter-gaze embedded in these folktales, Achebe offers a powerful counter-narrative to the colonial discourse, reaffirming the richness and complexity of Igbo culture while resisting colonial dominance.

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Identity Crisis with the Development of Capitalistic Mind-set as Reflected in Imayam's Story "Job"

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The Sahitya Academi Award winner Imayam's *Video Mariamman and other stories* includes fourteen diverse short stories, which are translated by Padma Narayanan. The present study focuses on the short story "Job" which is concerned with the changing cultural scenario as the parents, instead of hoping that they will be looked after in their old age by their son as happens in the Indian society, are trying all possible means to make their son a master, who will be able to handle large sums of money.

Due to the capitalistic mind set, people start living their life selfishly. Today close-knit joint families cannot be seen in India as they are replaced by nuclear families. Hence, there is no communication or connection with others. Their only aim is to progress in their life, unmindful of the others. The dream of Dhanusu's parents was solely their son's future, and his job I.K.S.C company.

At the beginning of the story itself Dhanusu is seen to have cleared the first round of interviews at I.K.S.C. company. Everyone is very happy when the call letter for the next round of interview arrives.

Dhanusu's parents ask him to pray to God, and open the mail. Dhanusu's father Perumal, says, "God has done something good for us today, for the first time in our lives" (293). With his parents and sister by his side, he attends the interview online. All of them keep their fingers crossed. In the first round he is asked to provide details about his educational qualifications, family, friends, likes, and dislikes. After comprehending all the instructions, Dhanusu quickly clears the first round giving the required details about himself correctly, despite his nervousness. Amir Khademalizadeh, in his article "*The Relationship between Cultural Changes and Economic Development*," remarks that,

Culture is a set of customs, traditions, norms, values, and ethics that divide it into two categories: The first category includes universal ethics, values, and norms among societies and humanity (such as trust, cooperation, truthfulness, honesty, work, and production, lawfulness, and order). This aspect of culture is transmitted biologically and the second are the values, ethics, and norms specified to one society (such as individualism versus collectivism, family ties, etc.) (196)

The second round is based on the conditions of the I.K.S.C. company and only then he could proceed to the third round. Dhanusu is able to give all the information correctly and proceeds to the third round, and is congratulated as he clears every round. The people of India have a great regard for the company and hence long to have their children placed in it. The following extensive quotation explains that :

I.K.S.C. is a wonder, a wonder that cannot be described in words. It is a world without rain, wind, heat or sun. There is no horizon for I.K.S.C.'s skies. There are no clocks here. The computer is god here. It has no place for average or even super brains, only illuminated intellect has a place. The position will be according to one's intelligence and the money befitting the position. Money is life. Money is authority, tradition, culture, respect, honour... everything is money. Love, wife, children, family will all be just money. The entire world depends on money. Earning money is a great art. As far as I.K.S.C. is concerned, time is money. Time is more valuable than everything else. There is no place for exaggerated Indian sentimentality like friendship, love, kindness, empathy, sympathy, compromise or tears. The heart should be hard like a rock. I.K.S.C.'s main redeeming mantra is that we get only what we seek. One is not allowed to talk, interact or laugh during working hours. Technology, success, money: these are paramount. Innovation is important. One of the ideals of this organization is that speech is a waste of time. Words should be used only if absolutely necessary. (295)

All the conditions given by the company are unheard of anywhere. It becomes very clear that anybody who wishes to join that will be a pure materialist and slave of capitalism. Even Dhanusu's family knows, that he would get the job only if he sacrifices his will and freedom to work for the

sake of the company. Besides insisting that the employees speak only in English, the language of the management, the company also wants the employees to dream, think and act on behalf of the management. Moreover, the company expects seamless cooperation from the employees. The company tells him, "If you are successful in the interview, you will be given an identity number. You should use only that number to communicate with the management" (298). It is worthwhile to make a note of Auden's poem "The Unknown Citizen" which talks about the condition of a citizen without a name but a number:

(To JS/07 M 378

This Marble Monument

Is Erected by the State)

He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be

One against whom there was no official complaint,

And all the reports on his conduct agree

That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a saint,

He worked in a factory and never got fired,

But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.

Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,

Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare

He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Instalment Plan

And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,

And our teachers report that he never interfered with their education.

Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:

Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.

Despite all these conditions, Danushu's parents wish that he gets the job in the company as they believe that the boy's life would be better if he secures it.

It was stated by the company that if he passes the exam, Danushu will be given training for a period of six months and that the employees might be sent abroad from time to time. The company tells him "If necessary, you may even be sent to a different planet" (296). The company acts like a capitalist boss trying to change the mentality of people, depriving them of their freedom, and making them slaves. Dhanusu notes that more and more conditions are being imposed by the company. The company's poor observations about the people of India, as shared with Dhanusu, are given below :

Indian people have not yet progressed from their beastly conditions. Indian faces are like those of animals. Their hair, mouth, teeth, complexion, manner of eating, walking and attitude are all still like animals. India has not yet become a proper human race. So, a transformation is necessary. You should be prepared for any change of personality. All these are undertaken to make India more progressive. I.K.S.C.'s goal is to serve the country. I.K.S.C. wishes to give its people the kind of life one is likely to have in the 22nd century, right now in the 21st. (296)

The company expects the employees to be open, as openness fosters trust, and trust is the basis for responsibility, output, and innovation. The interview levels promote candid communication and help people understand how and why decisions are made. Job seekers are more dedicated to their work when they have faith in the

leadership and know what is expected of them. They are aware of how their work contributes to the company's performance and how it aligns with its vision.

Dhanusu's mother Vimala's full attention is solely on her son's interview. The parents understand that in I.K.S.C., there is no room for self-will, but only compliance. They come to know that if appointed, details of the work should be kept confidential from close acquaintances, and work details might be monitored through a hidden camera. Dhanusu can read, play games, and talk to a girlfriend only with permission from the management and that he should not be easily emotional, laugh loudly, or cry loudly. There is no room for preferences, not even for dislikes. How the company acts like a capitalist boss can be clearly seen from the following quotation:

Technology is today's greatest marketing commodity. Technological ethics is the only thing that I.K.S.C. is interested in. Today, money is merely scientific technology. Just like there are horse races, motor-car races, wrestling bouts, scientific technological competition also exists. There is no challenge without competition. No challenges mean no money. No money means no life. The ideas and action programmes of I.K.S.C. belong to international society. (297)

When Dhanusu's father Perumal suggests that if he does not want to agree to all the conditions, he could decline the offer. However, his mother Vimala is not for that. She has prayed that if he gets the job in that company, she will shave her head at the temple at Tirupati. She tells Dhanusu to type ok for all the conditions. When he types ok, some more questions are posed like, "Are you a supporter of Marxist philosophy or movements? Are you a member of Marxist movements?" without consulting anybody, without any delay, Dhanusu replied instantly, "No"

(300).

The company instructed him not to get married until the company approved or until he reached the age of thirty, and also to seek permission from the company to have a child; even in the event of his parents' death, he could take leave only with the management's permission. When Dhanusu looks alternately at Vimala and Perumal, Vimala asks him to answer yes, even though she is distressed. She quickly wipes her eyes and asks,

... 'what are you going to do, coming after we die? Just because you take leave and come, will we come back to life again? Tell them that you will not take any leave at anybody's death. This is a twenty-two-year-old dream, da. From the day I took you from Virddachalam to Neyveli and put you in the pre-KG class at the Jawahar Vidyalaya there, right up to the time you were in the twelfth, I got up without fail at four o'clock in the morning. When you were in the tenth and the twelfth, until you went to bed, whether it was at one or two o'clock at night, why did your appa and I stay awake? (301)

Right from his childhood Dhanusu has been encouraged to speak only in English. He had never been allowed to play with children in the street, or visit relatives and friends. The parents had been with him till he finished his college studies. They have been working for years without owning a house, because of their dream. They have almost sacrificed everything for the sake of their son. Thus in this story, the parents' dream revolves around their son excelling academically and preparing to work for a company to fulfil his and their

desires. Throughout his school and college years, Dhanusu devoted himself entirely to his studies, setting aside sports, friends, and family. When Dhanusu asks for two lakhs as his salary, he is selected and is assigned the code 09AP151515 by I.K.S.C. His family revels at his success, they embrace each other, and his parents shed tears of joy. They lead Dhanusu to the puja room and offer prayers exclaiming, 'Somehow, our dream has come true' (302).

The rise of digital technologies and social media platforms has further complicated the dynamics of cultural identity. While these platforms provide opportunities for cultural exchange and expression, they also pose challenges such as misinformation, cultural appropriation, and the spread of globalized norms that may not align with local values. While globalization and technological advancements bring both opportunities and challenges to cultural diversity and identity formation, ongoing efforts to preserve, adapt, and celebrate cultural heritage are essential in navigating these changes, and this lesson can be taken from Imayam's story "Job".

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आधुनिक भारतीय महिला चित्रकारों की कृतियों में नारी-सम्बन्धित रूपांकन

(अमृता शेरगिल, अर्पिता सिंह, अंजली इला मेनन, गोगी सरोज पाल, अर्पणा कौर,
अनुपम सूद के सन्दर्भ में)

विनीता देवी

शोध छात्रा, चित्रकला विभाग

दृश्य कला संकाय

काशी हिन्दू विश्वविद्यालय, वाराणसी

परिचय :

भारतीय कला इतिहास में नारी का चित्रण एक महत्वपूर्ण विषय रहा है। प्राचीन काल से लेकर आधुनिक युग तक, नारी को विभिन्न रूपों में चित्रित किया गया है। कभी देवी, कभी मातृत्व के प्रतीक के रूप में, तो कभी संघर्षशील योद्धा के रूप में, भारतीय समाज की सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक संरचना में महिलाओं की स्थिति, अधिकार, एवं संघर्ष को कला के माध्यम से व्यक्त किया गया है। यह चित्रांकन केवल सौंदर्य-भावना तक सीमित नहीं रहा, बल्कि इसमें महिलाओं की भावनाओं, उनके सामाजिक दायित्वों और स्वतंत्रता की अभिव्यक्ति भी सम्मिलित रही है। भारतीय महिला चित्रकारों ने नारी-संबंधित विषयों को एक नई दृष्टि दिया है। पारंपरिक चित्रण से आगे बढ़ते हुए, उन्होंने स्त्री-जीवन के संघर्ष, असमानता, एवं सशक्तिकरण को अपनी कृतियों में स्थान दिया है। इन चित्रकारों की कला न केवल सौंदर्यशास्त्र का प्रतिनिधित्व करती है, बल्कि एक सामाजिक एवं वैचारिक आंदोलन का भी हिस्सा बन चुका है। समकालीन महिला चित्रकारों की कृतियों में स्त्री के आत्म-संघर्ष, लैंगिक असमानता, समाज में उसकी भूमिका और उसकी आकांक्षाओं

को केंद्र में रखा गया है। उपरोक्त विषयों पर आधारित चित्रों का निर्माण आधुनिक भारतीय महिला कलाकारों द्वारा निर्मित किया गए हैं जिनमें अमृता शेरगिल, अर्पिता सिंह, अंजली इला मेनन, गोगी सरोज पाल, अर्पणा कौर, अनुपम सूद आदि का नाम प्रमुख रूप से आता है।

आधुनिक भारतीय महिला चित्रकारों की कृतियाँ न केवल सौंदर्यशास्त्र का प्रतिनिधित्व करती हैं, बल्कि वे सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक, और नारीवादी विचारों को भी मुखर रूप से प्रस्तुत करती हैं। इन चित्रकारों ने नारी जीवन की जटिलताओं, उनके संघर्षों, भावनात्मक स्थितियों, और समाज में उनकी भूमिका को अपने कला के माध्यम से अभिव्यक्त किया है। इनकी कृतियाँ गहरे विचारों से प्रेरित हैं और आधुनिक भारतीय कला में स्त्री विमर्श को स्थापित करने का महत्वपूर्ण कार्य कर रही हैं।

अमृता शेरगिल :

अमृता शेरगिल भारतीय आधुनिक कला की अग्रणी चित्रकारों में से एक थीं। उनकी कला में भारतीय

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समाज की महिलाओं की स्थिति को विशेष स्थान मिला है तथा इनकी कृतियाँ गहरी सामाजिक समझ, रंगों की अनूठी संवेदनशीलता और मानवीय भावनाओं के सूक्ष्म चित्रण के लिए जानी जाती हैं। यह भारत की प्रथम महिला चित्रकार हैं जिन्होंने स्त्री के जीवन पर विचार किया और उससे बड़े साहस के साथ चित्रित किया। इनका विषय स्त्री के जीवन परिस्थितियों का चिन्ता व्यक्त करता है। अमृता शेरगिल की कृतियाँ नारीवादी दृष्टिकोण से भी महत्वपूर्ण हैं। उन्होंने भारतीय महिलाओं के जीवन की वास्तविकता को अपने चित्रों में दर्शाया, जो सामाजिक समानता और महिला अधिकारों की वकालत करता है। उनकी कला में महिलाओं की भूमिका, उनकी पीड़ा और उनकी आंतरिक दुनिया का संवेदनशील चित्रण किया गया है। अमृता ने महिलाओं की स्वतंत्रता और आत्मनिर्भरता के विचार को प्रोत्साहित किया, जो उनकी कई कृतियों में स्पष्ट रूप से दिखाई देता है। “अमृता की मौन छवियों में गरीब भारतीय की मार्मिक वेदना, कुरूपता में अद्भुत रूप, सहिष्णुता के साथ आत्म-समर्पण के भाव, सुन्दर दुबले-पतले साँवले रंग वाले शरीर, उनकी कृतियाँ उनके गहन अध्ययन की अभिव्यक्ति है।”¹ “विवान सुन्दरं ने लिखा है कि अमृता शेरगिल की कृतियों में उदास स्त्रियाँ, निर्वसना व जंगल में खोई हुई स्त्रियाँ ही दिखाई देती हैं। उनके बाद के कामों में खास तौर पर स्त्रियों के चेहरे, दमित भावनाओं की वजह से बहुत तनावग्रस्त दिखाई देते हैं”² इनकी प्रमुख कृतियाँ हैं- ‘हल्दी पीसती हुई महिलायें’, ‘मदर इंडिया’, ‘पहाड़ी महिलायें’, ‘तीन बहनें’, ‘विश्राम करती स्त्री’, ‘बालिका वधु’, ‘अछूत बालिका’, ‘नववधु का श्रृंगार’ ‘कहानी कहती हुई औरतें’, इत्यादि। इनके चित्रों में भारतीय ग्रामीण जीवन की झलक स्पष्ट रूप से मिलती है।

वधु का श्रृंगार (चित्र सं.-1) इस कृति में भारतीय विवाह के परंपरागत रीति-रिवाजों और उनकी भव्यता का एक पक्ष दिखाया गया है, लेकिन साथ ही इसमें



चित्र-1 : अमृता शेरगिल, वधु का श्रृंगार, कैनावास पर तैल, 1937, 146 ग 88.8 सेमी.

महिलाओं के जीवन की जटिलताओं और उनके दैनिक संघर्षों का संकेत भी है। चित्र में एक नवविवाहित दुल्हन श्रृंगार करते हुए दर्शाया गया है। चित्र के दायी ओर मोटी औरत को लुंगीदार घाघरा जो हरापन लिये हुये पीले रंग में है जो सम्पूर्ण चित्र को प्रकाशित करता है। मध्य भाग में दुल्हन गहरे लाल रंग का कपड़ा पहने हुये है, जिसमें छोटे-छोटे वृत्त बने हुये हैं, उसका चेहरा तथा शरीर हाथी दाँत की तरह सफेद चमकीले रंग के हैं। उसके बाँयी ओर एक स्त्री जो उसका बाल संवारती है उसका चेहरा सुन्दर सावरी लालपन लिये हुये है तथा उसके लुंगीदार घाघरा जो गाढ़े पीकॉक नीले रंग का है तथा उसका ब्लाउज एसिड ग्रीन रंग में है जिसका बाहें बैंगनी रंग की हैं आगे रखे बर्तन गहरे नारंगी रंग के तथा सम्पूर्ण पृष्ठभूमि और सामने का भाग एक प्रकार से स्लेटी धूमिल पीला या करीब-करीब एक जैसा ही रंग है, केन्द्र में जो बच्चा है वह गहरे भूरे रंग से पिरोया गया है चित्र में कहीं-कहीं हरे-काले रंग का भी प्रयोग किया गया है तथा एकदम दाहिनी तरफ का बच्चा दुल्हन को देख रहा है। उस दुल्हन के चारों तरफ सभी एकत्रित हुयी है। यह पूरा कार्यक्रम ऐसा प्रतीत होता है जैसे उसके जीवन के नये प्रवेश की सबसे गहरे रहस्य की पुष्टि करेगा। सिन्दूर के आधे भरे पात्र तथा उबटनों के बर्तन इत्यादि सभी वस्तुएँ इस बात का संकेत करती हैं कि यह उत्सव है जो खुशी का बोध करती है, जिसके लिये प्रत्येक लड़की अभिलाषा रखती है। अमृता ने इस कृति के माध्यम

से यह स्पष्ट किया कि भारतीय महिलाओं का जीवन केवल बाहरी सुंदरता तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि इसके पीछे एक गहरी और जटिल वास्तविकता छिपी हुई है। यह चित्र अमृता ने 1937 ई. के समयकाल के अनुसार बनायी है।

अर्पिता सिंह :

अर्पिता सिंह की कला में महिलाओं के जीवन के सूक्ष्म पहलुओं से गहरी संवेदनशीलता के साथ चित्रित किया गया है तथा उनके अनुभवों और गहन अध्ययन का प्रतिबिम्ब है। “आरंभ में इनका विषय खास रूप से महिलाएँ थीं। इन चित्रों में उन्होंने महिलाओं को निजी और दैनिक कार्यों में व्यस्त चित्रित किया है।”³ उनकी चित्रों में रंगों और प्रतीकों का अनूठा समावेश देखने को मिलता है। तथा रंग केवल सौंदर्य का साधन नहीं हैं, बल्कि वे उनकी कृतियों को गहराई और अर्थ प्रदान करते हैं। उनकी फूल, जानवर, बंदूक, चाकू, कार, विमानों, सैनिकों, हत्यारों, लासों, देवी-देवता, और घरेलू वस्तुएँ उनकी चित्रों में बार-बार दिखती हैं, जो उनकी रचनाओं को और अधिक प्रभावी बनाती हैं। उनकी कृतियों में महिलाएँ केंद्रीय भूमिका निभाती हैं और शक्ति, संघर्ष का प्रतीक होती हैं। वे महिलाओं की भूमिकाओं, उनकी स्वतंत्रता, उनके संघर्षों को प्रमुखता दिया है, उन्हें भारतीय कला में नारीवादी आवाज़ के रूप में देखा जाता है। उनके चित्रों में महिलाएँ घरेलू जिम्मेदारियों और सामाजिक अपेक्षाओं के बीच अपनी पहचान की तलाश करती हुई दिखाई देती हैं। उनकी चित्रकला में केवल व्यक्तिगत अनुभव ही नहीं, बल्कि सामाजिक और राजनीतिक मुद्दे भी उभरते हैं। उनकी कृतियाँ गरीबी, विस्थापन और लैंगिक असमानता जैसे विषयों पर गहराई से प्रकाश डालती हैं। उनके चित्रों में समाज की जटिलताएँ और उनकी दृष्टि का अनूठापन झलकता है।

माई मदर (चित्र सं0-02) इस चित्र में वृद्ध माताओं की भूमिका, उनके संघर्ष और जीवन के अनुभवों को दर्शाया गया है। इस चित्र में एक वृद्ध

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चित्र-2 : अर्पिता सिंह, माई मदर, 1993, तैल, 137 सेमी 182 सेमी.

महिला है, जिसकी झुर्रियों में उसका पूरा जीवन समाहित प्रतीत होता है। चित्र के रंग संयोजन और प्रतीकों के माध्यम से अर्पिता सिंह ने यह दिखाया है कि माताएँ केवल परिवार की देखभाल करने वाली नहीं होतीं, बल्कि उनके भीतर भी एक स्वतंत्र पहचान और गहरा अनुभव समाया होता है। अर्पिता की चित्रों में एक अनूठी प्रतीकात्मकता देखने को मिलती है, जिससे उनके चित्रों में समाज की स्त्री समस्या को प्रभावशाली ढंग से प्रस्तुत किया गया है।

अर्पिता सिंह का योगदान केवल कला के क्षेत्र में ही नहीं, बल्कि समाज में बदलाव लाने के प्रयासों में भी देखा जा सकता है। उनकी कृतियाँ महिलाओं के संघर्षों और उनकी अस्मिता को चित्रित करती हैं। वे भारतीय कला समाज में लैंगिक समानता और नारीवाद को बढ़ावा देती है तथा कृति भारतीय समाज की वास्तविकताओं का सजीव चित्रण करती हैं और दर्शकों को सोचने पर मजबूर करती हैं। वे कला न केवल भारतीय समाज की पारंपरिक धारणाओं को चुनौती देती है, बल्कि एक प्रगतिशील समाज की कल्पना भी करती है, जहाँ महिलाएँ स्वतंत्र, सशक्त, और आत्मनिर्भर हो सकती हैं।

अंजली इला मेनन :

अंजली इला मेनन भारतीय आधुनिक कला के सबसे प्रतिष्ठित और सशक्त हस्ताक्षरों में से एक हैं।

साहित्य (वर्ष-11, 2025)
(UGC CARE - Listed Journal)

वे भारतीय कला जगत में एक ऐसी महिला चित्रकार के रूप में उभरीं, जिन्होंने अपनी विशिष्ट शैली और दृष्टिकोण के माध्यम से भारतीय कला को एक नई दिशा दिया। उनके जीवन और उनकी कला का प्रभाव उनकी रचनात्मकता, गहन संवेदनशीलता और भारतीय समाज के प्रति उनकी गहरी समझ को प्रतिबिंबित करता है। उनकी यूरोप यात्रा और वहाँ की कला का अनुभव उनके रचनाओं में प्रतीत होता है, जहाँ पारंपरिक भारतीय और पश्चिमी आधुनिकता का अनूठा संगम देखा जा सकता है। उनकी चित्रकला में प्रमुखता से विषयवस्तु के रूप में महिलाएँ, उनके जीवन के संघर्ष, भावनाएँ और अनुभव दिखते हैं तथा चित्रों में मानवता की गहरी झलक है, जो उनके गहरे आत्मनिरीक्षण और सामाजिक संवेदनाओं का प्रमाण है। अंजली इला मेनन की चित्रकला का सबसे महत्वपूर्ण पहलू उनकी कृतियों में महिलाओं का चित्रण है। उनकी कला में महिलाएँ केवल विषयवस्तु नहीं हैं, वे सशक्त व्यक्तित्व के रूप में भी होती हैं। तथा चित्रों में संघर्ष, भावनाओं का आंतरिक दुनिया को प्रभावशाली तरीके से प्रस्तुत करती हैं। जिससे कृतियों में स्त्रीत्व का गहन अध्ययन और उसकी गरिमा का सम्मान झलकता है।

शक्ति (चित्र सं0-03)-इस चित्र में देवी दुर्गा, देवी लक्ष्मी और देवी सरस्वती को आधुनिक तरीके से दर्शाया गया है। केन्द्र में दुर्गा जी को दिखाया गया है, किन्तु उनके गोद में नीले गणेश समाहित है, जो इस तथ्य को प्रकट करता है कि उनकी अधिकाधिक चित्र कृतियाँ मातृत्व शक्तियाँ से प्राप्त होती हैं तथा दाहिनी तरफ सरस्वती जी सफेद रंग से पिरोयी, नीले साड़ी पहनी, हाथ में वीणावादनी लिये ज्ञान के सागर में, जिसके अन्दर आधुनिक विज्ञान, संगीत, कला तथा साहित्य विद्यमान है। उनके बायें भाग में लक्ष्मी जी को प्राचीनतम पूर्वमध्यकालीन रूप में कमल के साथ दिखाया गया है। पूर्व काल में धन-सम्पदा को अनेकों सहस्रों में तौला जाता था जो उत्पत्ति से सम्बन्ध रखती थी तथा लक्ष्मी की उपासना

फलदायी (उपजाऊपन) है तथा फलदायिनी देवी के रूप में की जाती थी। लक्ष्मी जी को समुद्र से प्रकट हुए, तथा मानो उनके पीछे दो हाथी एक नीले रंग का दुसरा स्वर्ण रंग में उनका स्वागत कर रहे हैं, पूरे वातावरण में लाल, पीले रंग की अधिकता है। 'जब वे परिपक्व नारी को चित्रित करती हैं तो उनका अन्तर्मन में छुपा अवसाद बड़ी सादगी से बाहर आता है।' 4 अंजली इला मेनन का यह चित्र उनकी अद्भुत कल्पना व कार्यकुशलता का परिचायक है।

अंजली इला मेनन की कला उनके व्यक्तित्व और उनके अनुभवों का प्रतिबिंब है। उनकी कला में उनकी संवेदनशीलता, उनकी रचनात्मकता, और भारतीय समाज के प्रति उनकी गहरी समझ स्पष्ट रूप से झलकती है। उनकी कला भारतीय समाज और संस्कृति का प्रतीक है और उनकी कृतियाँ आने वाली पीढ़ियों के लिए प्रेरणा का स्रोत बनी रहेंगी।



चित्र-3 : अंजली इला मेनन, शक्ति, 1993, कैनवास पर तैल रंग

गोगी सरोज पाल :

गोगी सरोज पाल भारतीय समकालीन चित्रकला की एक प्रतिष्ठित और प्रख्यात महिला चित्रकार हैं, जिन्होंने अपनी अनूठी शैली और सशक्त दृष्टिकोण के माध्यम से भारतीय कला जगत में अपनी गहरी पहचान बनाई है। उन्होंने भारतीय महिलाओं की सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक, और मानसिक स्थिति को न केवल समझा, बल्कि अपनी चित्रकला के माध्यम से उसे गहराई से व्यक्त किया। उनका बचपन ग्रामीण भारत की साधारण जिंदगी और उसकी जटिलताओं

के बीच व्यतित हुआ, जिससे उनकी कला पर गहरा प्रभाव छोड़ा। वे अपने शुरुआती जीवन से ही समाज में व्याप्त लैंगिक असमानताओं और महिलाओं की स्थिति को देखा, जिसने उनके रचनात्मक दृष्टिकोण को आकार दिया। उनकी कला में नारीवाद का जो स्वरूप दिखाई देता है, वह उनके अनुभवों और गहन संवेदनशीलता का परिणाम है। गोगी सरोज पाल की कला का केंद्रबिंदु भारतीय महिलाएँ और उनके जीवन के विभिन्न पहलू हैं। उनकी कृतियाँ महिलाओं के संघर्ष, उनकी भावनाओं और उनकी अस्मिता को उजागर करती हैं। उनकी कला में महिलाओं का चित्रण केवल एक विषय के रूप में नहीं, बल्कि एक सशक्त और स्वतंत्र इकाई के रूप में होता है। उनकी पेंटिंग्स में भारतीय महिलाओं की सामाजिक भूमिकाओं, उनके अधिकारों और उनके अस्तित्व के संघर्ष का गहन चित्रण किया गया है। वे चित्रों में महिलाएँ न केवल पीड़ा और संघर्ष का प्रतीक हैं, बल्कि वे सशक्तिकरण और स्वतंत्रता की प्रतीक भी हैं जो उनकी कलाकृतियाँ इस बात का प्रमाण हैं कि महिलाएँ किसी भी समाज की रीढ़ होती हैं और उनकी स्थिति को बेहतर बनाने के लिए समाज में गहराई से सोचने की आवश्यकता है।

किन्नरी (चित्र सं.-04)- भारत एक ऐसा देश है जिसमें नारी की महता का गुणगान सदैव से ही रहा है। विगत कई वर्षों से, धार्मिक इतिहास पुराणों पर गौर करें तो नारी की महता सदैव से ही सराहनीय रही हैं। गोगी ने इसी से प्रेरणा लेकर अपने चित्रों में नारी प्रधान आकृतियों को चित्रित किया। हिन्दू पौराणिक कथाओं के अनुसार स्वरूप दो गन्धर्व प्रेमी युगल किसी शाप के कारण महिला गन्धर्व आधा पक्षी तथा आधा महिला तथा पुरुष गन्धर्व आधा पक्षी तथा आधा पुरुष में तब्दील हो गये, तब से उन्हें किन्नर तथा किन्नरी के नाम से जाना जाता है। यह महिला आकृति स्त्री सौन्दर्य, अनुग्रह और उपलब्धि के लिये एक परम्परागत प्रतीक के रूप में है, यह चित्र 1991 में चित्रित किन्नरी नामक चित्र श्रृंखला है। चित्र में



चित्र-04 : गोगी सरोज पाल, किन्नरी, 1991,
6.5 × 10.5 inch, Gouache on Paper

एक पक्षीयुक्त महिला को सवाचश्म मुद्रा में बैठी हुई है, जिसके एक बाँह की जगह पंख दर्शाये गये हैं। यह महिला प्रसन्नचित्त भाव में निचे की तरफ निहार रही है। चित्र के किनारे काले तथा सफेद रंग के पतले बार्डर बनाये गये हैं। सम्भवतः यह दिव्य पक्षीयुक्त महिला किसी की प्रतीक्षा में यहाँ बैठी है। चित्र में रूपाकृतियाँ चंचल, माँसल सौन्दर्य के साथ आँखें मनमोह रही है। वह बोल्ड नारी आकृति दर्शक को मोह ले रही है। आकृतियों का सजीव चित्रण इस चित्र की विशेषता है, रंगों का गुण बहुत ही सुन्दर देखा जा सकता है। जिससे चित्र की उत्कृष्टता देखते ही बनती है। उनकी कला किसी पूर्वाग्रह से बंधी हुई नहीं है बल्कि उनके चित्र पूर्वाग्रह से मुक्ति का प्रयास है। किन्नरी नामक चित्रों की श्रृंखलाओं में गोगी ने पंख वाली नायिका का चित्रण अनेक भाव-भंगिमाओं में चित्रित किया है। इस श्रृंखलाबद्ध चित्रों के पीछे गोगी के जीवन की घटना है। गोगी कहती है एक बार वे कूल्हे की लम्बी बीमारी से चलने में असमर्थ थी, स्वयं को शारीरिक परेशानियों से घिरा हुआ महसूस किया। उस समय मैंने किन्नरी नामक चित्रों की श्रृंखलाओं की शुरुआत किया। “अपनी जीवन शैली में भी गोगी अपने स्त्री होने को काफी अलग तरह से सामने लाती है। वे चित्रों की रूपाकृतियों को पृष्ठभूमि के विपरीत रंगों में रचती है जिससे उनकी रूपाकृतियाँ पृष्ठभूमि पर निखरकर सामने आती है।”⁵

अर्पणा कौर :

अर्पणा कौर भारतीय समकालीन कला की एक प्रमुख महिला चित्रकार हैं, जिन्होंने अपनी अनूठी शैली, सामाजिक संवेदनशीलता, और गहरी रचनात्मकता के माध्यम से भारतीय कला जगत में एक अलग पहचान बनाई है। अर्पणा कौर की कला का प्रमुख केंद्र समाज में महिलाओं की स्थिति और उनकी भूमिकाएँ हैं। उनके चित्रों में भारतीय महिलाओं के जीवन की जटिलताएँ, उनकी भावनाएँ, और उनके संघर्ष गहराई से चित्रित किए गए हैं। उनकी कृतियों में महिलाएँ केवल विषय नहीं हैं, बल्कि वे उनकी रचनात्मकता और दृष्टिकोण का केंद्र हैं। वे महिलाओं को एक सशक्त, आत्मनिर्भर, और आत्मजागरूक इकाई के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया है। अर्पणा कौर की कला में नारीवाद का गहरा प्रभाव देखा जा सकता है। वे महिलाओं के अधिकारों, उनकी स्वतंत्रता, और उनके अस्तित्व की वकालत करती हैं। उनकी कला में महिलाओं के जीवन के विभिन्न पहलुओं का चित्रण है, जिसमें घरेलू जीवन, मातृत्व, और उनके समाज में योगदान शामिल हैं। उनकी कृतियों में स्त्रीत्व का एक शक्तिशाली और सम्मानजनक चित्रण होता है, जो दर्शकों को गहराई से प्रभावित करता है।

विडोज आर्फ वृंदावन (चित्र सं.-05)-वृंदावन की विधवाओं के चित्र शृंखला पर आधारित अर्पणा ने कई शृंखला बनायी है, जिसमें विधवा औरतों की पीड़ा कैनवास पर चित्रित किया है। वृंदावन को कृष्ण का स्थान माना जाता है जहाँ कृष्ण जी राधा और गोपियों संग रास रचाते थे, ये चित्र पौराणिक कथा का परिवर्तित रूप है। आज का वास्तविक रूप वहाँ की बिना बाल के विधवायें हैं जिन्हें उनके परिवार ने घर से निकाल दिया है अब वह यमुना नदी के तट पर प्रार्थना करती है, और कृष्ण से अपनी मुक्ति के लिये आग्रह करती नजर आ रही है, जिससे वे कृष्ण से जाकर मिल जायें ऐसी लालसा लिये हुये वे यहाँ पर आयी है। “अर्पणा कहती है कि वृंदावन में मैंने



चित्र-05 : अर्पणा कौर, विडोज आर्फ वृंदावन

1987, 60 × 72 inch, Oil on Canvas

घोर अभावों के बीच जैसे-तैसे जिंदगी गुजार रही विधवाओं को देखा, उस समय वहाँ 10 हजार से ज्यादा विधवाएँ थीं। उन दिनों उन पर ज्यादा लिखा भी नहीं गया था। उनका दुःख, दर्द देखकर मुझे गहरा धक्का लगा, वृंदावन से लौटकर मैंने इस विषय पर पूरी सीरीज बनाई।”⁶ वृंदावन का वातावरण सुन्दर हरा भरा है और धार्मिक स्थल है। अर्पणा ने चित्र में नीचे पृष्ठभूमि में यमुना नदी को नीले चमकिले लहरदार पानी के बीच तीन विधवाओं को एक पंक्ति में खड़े दर्शाया है, महिलाओं के चेहरे को देखकर यह साफ नजर आ रहा है कि, वे कितने मायुस, दुःखी हैं। इन सभी की मुखाकृति एक चश्म में बने हैं, चित्र के ऊपर धुमिल पीले रंग की पृष्ठभूमि में कई वृक्ष अंकित हैं, इन्ही वृक्ष के सबसे ऊपर कृष्ण को हाथ में बाँसुरी लिये भूरे रंग के तान में अंकित किया गया है।

अर्पणा कौर द्वारा निर्मित यह चित्र तैलरंग में निर्मित है, दृश्य के सम्पूर्ण धरातल में यमुना के जल का वृहद सुन्दर स्वरूप चित्रित है। अर्पणा का यह चित्र उनकी अब्धुत कल्पना व कार्यकुशलता का परिचायक है। तथा उनके सधे हुए हाथों ने इस चित्र कथा को जीवित कर दिया है।

अनुपम सूद :

अनुपम सूद भारतीय समकालीन कला की एक अग्रणी और विशिष्ट चित्रकार हैं, जिन्होंने प्रिंटमेकिंग

के क्षेत्र में अपनी विशिष्ट पहचान बनाई। इनके चित्र आकृति मूलक हैं जो कुछ उदासी, बेचौनी लिए हुए मानवा आकृतियां खामोशी, मौन प्रतिक्रिया को अव्यक्त से व्यक्त कर देती हैं तथा उनकी चित्रों में स्त्री-पुरुष आकृतियाँ अनावृत जरूर हैं लेकिन वह दर्शकों के मन को उत्तेजित करने के बजाय उद्वेलित करती हैं, मानो रूक कर कुछ सोचने को बाध्य करती हैं। अनुपम ने वे मुखौटा समेत स्त्री और पुरुष के सम्बन्ध को बड़े ही सरलता और कुशलता से अभिव्यक्त करती हैं।

द्रौपदी की प्रतिज्ञा (चित्र सं.-05) यह चित्र भारतीय महाकाव्य महाभारत कथानक पर आधारित है। जिसमें वर्णित द्रौपदी के वस्त्रहरण का वृत्तान्त चित्रित किया गया है।

इस कथा के अनुसार - हस्तिनापुर के राजदरबार में दुर्योधन, दुःसाशन व अन्य कौरव भाइयों के द्वारा युधिष्ठिर आदि पांडव भाइयों को छल से युद्ध क्रीड़ा में हार जाते हैं। युधिष्ठिर ने जब अपना समस्त राज-पाट व अपने भाइयों और द्रौपदी को भी दांव में लगा कर उन्हें भी हार गये, तब द्रौपदी को जीत जाने के बाद दुर्योधन ने दुःसाशन को आदेश देता है कि, द्रौपदी को भरी सभा में लाये। दुःसाशन ने अपने भाई का आज्ञा मानकर द्रौपदी का जबरदस्ती केश पकड़ कर भरी सभा में घसीटता हुआ लाया।

इस चित्र को अनुपम सूद ने आधुनिक समाज से जोड़ते हुए दिखाया है, जो एक वस्त्रहीन महिला पृष्ठभूमि के बायें ओर में नेत्र बन्द किये निराशा भाव में दिखायी गयी है, उसके लम्बे घने केश खुले हुए हवा में लहरा रहे हैं। चित्र के मध्य में सम्भवतः पाँच पाण्डवों को खुले हुए कुछ नहीं कर पाने की स्थिति में दिखाया गया है, इसी चित्र के किनारे दाहिनी ओर एक अर्धनग्न युवती को त्रिभंग भंगिमा के साथ चित्रित किया गया है। अनुपम का अधिकतर चित्र नारीवादी को बढ़ाती है।

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19.5 × 39 inch, Etching Print on Paper

इन चित्रकारों की कृतियाँ केवल एक व्यक्तिगत या भावनात्मक अभिव्यक्ति नहीं, बल्कि एक सामाजिक और वैचारिक आंदोलन का हिस्सा हैं, जो नारी जीवन को एक नई दृष्टि से देखने को प्रेरित करती हैं। इनके चित्र नारीवाद, लैंगिक समानता, और स्त्री स्वतंत्रता के गहन विमर्श को जन्म देते हैं, जिससे समाज में महिलाओं की स्थिति को न केवल चुनौती मिलती है, बल्कि उसे पुनः परिभाषित करने की आवश्यकता भी महसूस होती है। आधुनिक समकालीन महिला चित्रकारों का योगदान भारतीय कला को एक नई दिशा देने के साथ-साथ एक प्रगतिशील और संवेदनशील समाज के निर्माण में भी सहायक सिद्ध हो रहा है। उनकी कला एक क्रांति की तरह है, जो स्त्री के वास्तविक स्वरूप को समाज के सम्मुख लाने का प्रयास कर रही है।

निष्कर्ष :

भारतीय आधुनिक महिला चित्रकारों की कृतियाँ केवल सौंदर्य की अभिव्यक्ति तक सीमित नहीं हैं, बल्कि वे समाज में व्याप्त लैंगिक असमानता, महिलाओं की स्थिति, और उनके संघर्ष को प्रमुखता से प्रस्तुत करती हैं। इन चित्रकारों ने अपनी कला को केवल व्यक्तिगत भावनाओं तक सीमित नहीं रखा, बल्कि उन्होंने सामाजिक मुद्दों, नारीवाद, महिलाओं के अधिकारों को भी अपनी कृतियों का अभिन्न हिस्सा बनाया। अमृता शेरगिल से लेकर भारती खेर तक, हर चित्रकार ने अपने समय और समाज के अनुरूप नारी जीवन की जटिलताओं को अपनी कला के माध्यम से

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जीवंत किया है। इन महिला चित्रकारों की कृतियाँ एक ऐतिहासिक दस्तावेज की तरह हैं, जो न केवल भारतीय कला को समृद्ध करती हैं, बल्कि महिलाओं के अधिकारों और सामाजिक परिवर्तन की दिशा में एक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका भी निभाती हैं। उनके चित्र हमें यह सोचने पर मजबूर करते हैं कि एक महिला के जीवन में किस प्रकार के संघर्ष होते हैं, और वे समाज में अपनी जगह कैसे बनाती हैं। यह चित्रकला केवल कला के रूप में नहीं, बल्कि एक सामाजिक आंदोलन के रूप में भी देखी जा सकती है, जिसमें महिलाओं की आवाज़ को कलात्मक रूप में प्रस्तुत किया गया है।

इस प्रकार, आधुनिक समकालीन महिला चित्रकारों की कृतियाँ आधुनिक भारतीय समाज में महिलाओं की स्थिति और उनके अस्तित्व की गहरी समझ को उजागर करती हैं। ये कृतियाँ न केवल भारतीय कला के लिए महत्वपूर्ण हैं, बल्कि वे एक सामाजिक क्रांति का भी प्रतीक हैं, जिसमें महिलाएँ अपनी कहानियों को अपनी कला के माध्यम से व्यक्त कर रही हैं। उनकी कला एक आंदोलन का हिस्सा है, जो महिला

सशक्तिकरण को बढ़ावा देती है और उनकी पहचान को नए आयाम देती है।

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The Enduring Legacy of Hangi : Patricia Grace Portrayal of Moari Cultural Heritage

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Introduction :

Food culture refers to the practices, traditions, and values surrounding the production, preparation, and consumption of food within a society or community. It encompasses the social, cultural and symbolic aspects of food and eating. Maori people have a wonderful and unique traditional way of their cooking food. Māori culture, or Māoritanga, encompasses the traditional customs, practices, and beliefs of New Zealand's indigenous Māori people, whose roots lie in Eastern Polynesian culture. With a significant global presence due to diaspora and popular cultural representation, Māori culture extends beyond New Zealand's borders.

Patricia Grace is a distinguished New Zealand author, renowned for her contributions to Māori literature. As a celebrated Māori writer, Grace has made history as the first Māori woman to publish an impressive array of works, including six novels, seven short story collections, children's books and nonfiction. She has made her

novels to have the depth of food culture of Moari people. All her literary works reflects the importance of the Maori traditional cooking methods which is known as "Hangi".

Hangi :

Traditional Māori cooking methods often took place in the open air or in designated cooking sheds. One iconic method is the hāngī, a traditional earth oven. To prepare a hāngī, a shallow pit is dug, and hot rocks and water are added to generate steam. Food is then layered on top, covered with leaves, flax, or cloth and finally sealed with soil. The resulting steam cooks the food over several hours, infusing it with a unique, earthy flavor.



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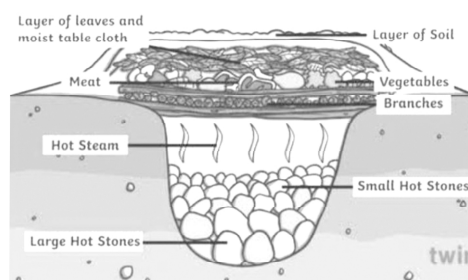
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Māori cuisine blends traditional ingredients and techniques with modern flavors, preserving cultural heritage while embracing innovation. The traditional Māori diet was diverse and resourceful, featuring an array of foods including Seafood and whitebait from coastal waters, Karengo (seaweed) and other coastal delicacies, Huhu grubs and other insect-based protein sources, Pikopiko (fern shoots) and other foraged greens, Karaka berries and other native fruits. To thrive in New Zealand's cooler climate, Māori developed innovative cultivation techniques, successfully adapting crops to the local environment.

Process of Making Hangi :

A traditional hāngī typically features a variety of delicious foods, including, Meats such as lamb, pork, chicken, and an assortment of seafood (kaimoana). Vegetables such as potato, kūmara (sweet potato), yams (oca), pumpkin, squash, taro and cabbage. These ingredients are slow-cooked to perfection in the earthy warmth of the hāngī, resulting in a truly unique and flavorful dining experience. Preparing a traditional hāngī requires careful planning and attention to detail. The process begins with digging a pit to a depth of 50-100 cm, sufficient to hold the rocks and two stacked baskets of food. Next, logs, typically mānuka or kānuka, are stacked over the pit, topped with andesite or basalt rocks. The logs are then ignited and left to burn for 3-4 hours, heating the rocks to a scorching 600-700 °C. Once the fire has burned down, the hot embers and most of the ash are removed, creating a steam-cooking environment. Alternatively, the fire can be built separately, and the hāngī pit dug while the fire burns, with the hot rocks transferred to the pit after heating.



As the hāngī pit is prepared, the food is carefully arranged in wire baskets lined with leaves or foil. The baskets are stacked in the pit, with meat at the bottom, vegetables in the middle and seafood on top. Wet sacks or cloth cover the baskets, and the pit is sealed with earth. The hāngī cooks for 2.5 to 4 hours, with a supervisor ensuring that steam is retained by covering any gaps with earth. Once cooked, the earth is gently removed and the baskets are lifted out. The food is then taken to the kitchen for carving and serving.

The Cultural Significance of Hāngī in Patricia 's Writing :

Patricia Grace is a renowned New Zealand writer celebrated for her diverse works that showcase the richness of Māori culture and traditions. Her extensive literary portfolio includes seven novels, seven short-story collections, a biography and an autobiography. Grace's writing explores the intricacies of Māori life, culture and the impact of external influences, seamlessly incorporating the Māori language throughout. One of her notable literary achievements is the novel "Cousins", first published in 1992. This compelling narrative follows the lives of three cousins as they navigate their way through life, each facing unique circumstances that shape their experiences.

Hangi on Marriage and Birthday :

Hangi is made during occasions such as birthdays and marriages. Especially for the chief's daughter's function. Makereta, a central protagonist in the novel *Cousins*, holds a revered position within her tribe. As the ceremonial puihi, or Chosen One, she is entrusted with the sacred responsibility of protecting her tribe. Under the guidance of the elderly Kuia Kinimate, Makereta is raised with the utmost care and is expected to participate in all tribal rituals and traditions.

... the potatoes, kumara and pumpkin and to take the husks off the corn. They'd seen the vegetables being stacked with the mutton and pork into the hangi baskets, along with big tins of steaming pudding, then watched the baskets as they were put down onto the hissing stones. Once the food was covered with the clothes their uncles had sent the dirt flying off the shovels, heaping it so that no stream would escape. (Patricia Grace, p. 145)

The above quoted lines taken from novel *Cousins* is a notable example of the tribe's affection for Makereta is the grand celebration held on her birthday, which coincidentally marks the day of her marriage. The entire tribe comes together to prepare a traditional hāngī in her honor, showcasing the significance of this customary Māori cooking method, particularly for special occasions involving dignitaries like the chief's daughter.

Hangi for welcoming ceremony:

A pōwhiri is a traditional Māori welcoming ceremony, particularly for soldiers, that embodies the principles of tikanga Māori. This cultural practice is designed to foster a sense of respect, harmony and connection between visitors and hosts, establishing a positive and meaningful relationship. The traditional Māori pōwhiri welcome ceremony typically comprises a formal oration, traditional singing, and a shared kai (meal) through hangi which collectively foster a sense of unity and respect among hosts and guests.

"...the marquee was already up, the fire was being lit for the hangi stones, the meat was being cut up and vegetables prepared" (Patricia Grace, p.125)

The above lines from Patricia Grace's novel *Cousins*, a poignant scene unfolds as a traditional hāngī is prepared to honor the returning soldiers of the 28th Battalion. The occasion is also a solemn one, as Makereta's father, Rere, has fallen in battle. According to custom, his spirit is welcomed by the ancestors, followed by ceremonial rites to honor his return. After the chants and rituals, the community comes together to prepare a traditional hāngī, symbolizing their respect, gratitude, and solidarity.

Conclusion :

Throughout the year, hāngī is a staple at various events and celebrations, embodying the warm spirit of manaakitanga (hospitality). Sharing a meal cooked in a traditional Māori earth oven is a truly unforgettable experience, one that fosters community bonding and togetherness. This centuries-old cooking method is per-

fectly suited for large gatherings, bringing people together through the joy of good food and warm hospitality. Patricia Grace's novel "Cousins" beautifully captures the essence of traditional Māori cooking, particularly the revered practice of hāngī, weaving it seamlessly into the narrative to showcase the richness of Māori culture and community.

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संत काव्य की परंपरा

योगेश्वर कुमार

सहायक प्राध्यापक
समाधान महाविद्यालय,
बेमेतरा, छत्तीसगढ़

संत शब्द अभिव्यक्त करता है सत् शब्द को। परंपरागत एवं भारतीय साहित्य में संत शब्द का अर्थ सदाचारी, सज्जन, पवित्र आत्मा, परोपकारी, दयालु, धार्मिक, ऋषि, ब्रह्मविद, सत्यवाचक, विद्वान, बुद्धिमान, साधु, विवेकशील, भक्त, सत्यपुरुष, महात्मा, सन्यासी, हरिभक्त, सर्वगुण संपन्न, विरक्त, त्यागी एवं परमात्मा के रूप में लिया गया है।

“गरीब निष्कामी निर्बैरता निःइच्छा निःगंध
निर्बासी लक्षण कहँ साधू शब्द समंद”¹

कबीरदास ने संतों के लक्षण में निर्बैरी स्वभाव, निष्काम, हरिभक्ति तत्पर और विषय विरक्त बताया है। संतों को समुद्र के समान संपदा से युक्त माना है व परमार्थी बताया है। संतों का स्वभाव उपकार को प्रधानता लिए होता है, जिसके द्वारा वे भक्ति और मुक्ति का दान खुले हाथ से मुक्त हृदय से करते हैं। वे साक्षात् मुक्ति के मार्ग होते हैं। परमात्मा उन संतों के साथ होते हैं। वे कहते हैं -

“दरमंद दरवेश कहावै जो मोही राम की रीझ बतावै
जो प्यासे को देवै पानी बड़ी बंदगी मोहम मानी
जो भूखे को अन्न खवावै सो सिताब साहेब को पावै
अपना सा दुख सबका मानै दास मलूका
सबको मानै”²

समस्त तीर्थ, साधना व कर्म का द्वार व पवित्र स्थान उन्ही के पास उपलब्ध होते हैं। संत संसार में

ब्रह्म का साक्षात् स्वरूप हैं। इस बात को इंगित करते हुए पलटु साहब स्पष्ट करते हुए कहते हैं -

“संत औ राम को एक कै जानिये दूसरा भेद
ना तनिक आनै
संत में राम यहि भाँति जानै राम में संत यह
सत्य मानै”³

आचार्य वामन ने अपने ग्रंथ काव्यालंकार सूत्रवृत्ति में काव्य के संबंध में कहा है -

“काव्यं खलु ग्राह्यमुपादेयं भवति अलंकरात्।
काव्य शब्दोयम गुणालंकारसंस्कृतयोः
शब्दार्थयोर्वर्तते
भक्त्यातु शब्दार्थमात्रवचनोअत्र गृह्यते”⁴

अर्थात् काव्य अलंकार के योग से ही उपादेय होता है यह काव्य-शब्द गुण तथा अलंकार से सुसंस्कृत शब्द और अर्थ का ही बोधक है किंतु लक्षणा से शब्दार्थ मात्र का बोधक काव्य शब्द ग्रहण किया जाता है। तुलसीदास ने काव्य प्रयोजन के लिए दो बातें निश्चित की स्वान्त सुख व हितकारी होना चाहिए -

“कीरति भनिति भूति भल सोई
सुरसरि सम सब कहँ हित होई”⁵

अर्थात् वही कीर्ति, कविता एवं ऐश्वर्य अच्छा होता है जो गंगा के समान सबका हित करने वाला हो काव्य प्रयोजन पर विचार करते हुए तुलसी ने बहुजन हिताय सिद्ध किया है। तुलसी के अनुसार कविता का

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मूल स्रोत उनका मानव प्रेम है। जो सत्यं शिवं सुन्दरम का अभिव्यक्त करके सर्वजन सुखाय सर्वजन हिताय मानते हैं। डॉ. बड़थवाल ने भी “हिन्दी काव्य में निर्गुण संप्रदाय में जयदेव से लेकर शिवदयाल तक प्रमुख बाइस संतों का उल्लेख व चर्चा की है।”⁶ हिंदी संत साहित्य के पथ का मार्ग जिस संप्रदाय को आधार मानकर चल पड़ी वह गरिमा वारकरी संप्रदाय के नामदेव को साथ लेकर चली। संत साहित्य का प्रवर्तक नामदेव को स्वीकार आचार्य विनय मोहन शर्मा ने किया है जिसके लिए उन्होंने सत्यानुभूति, सत्यान्वेषण गुरु के महत्व को आधार बनाया है।

संत कवियों ने नामदेव को अग्रज माना है इसके पश्चात कबीर ने इसे आगे बढ़ाया ऐसा मानते हैं जिसके पश्चात अन्य संत कवियों ने जो तत्वदर्शी थे, उन्होंने इसका पल्लवन करने का कार्य किया और इसे एक विशाल शीतल वृक्ष के रूप में परिणित किया गया। संत काव्य में जनजीवन के सांस्कृतिक पक्षों के मनोरम दृश्य व आध्यात्मिक चेतना की प्राप्ति होती है, जिसमें भारतीय दर्शन, आध्यात्म व साधना के तत्वों का समावेश हुआ है।

संत मृत्यु से भयभीत नहीं है वह सहर्ष मृत्यु का आलिङ्गन करता है वृहदारण्य में इस बात को स्पष्ट किया गया है। संत जीवित मुक्ति प्राप्त करके ब्रह्म का उपभोग करता है। संतों ने नाम रूपी महामंत्र पर जोर दिया है। राम नाम की महिमा सभी युगों में बताया गया है। उसी संत को योगी माना जाता है जो साधना मार्ग पर अग्रसर होता है -

“रावल ते चालै राह उलटी लहरि समावै मोह

ठीक इसी तरह से रज्जब ने भी स्पष्ट किया है कि -

**उलटा चलै सुऔलिया सूधि गति संसार
जन रज्जब यूँ जान ले इनका यही विचार”**⁷

संसार से विपरीत परमात्मा की ओर ध्यान आदि से गमन करते हैं वे ही संत हैं और संसार प्रवाह के

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साथ सीधे चलते हैं अर्थात् विषयों के ही लिए प्रयत्नशील हैं वे ही असंत हैं। वे कहते हैं कि -

**“संगति साधू सूर की आतम अंश समान
कुल कालिबाँ कुठौर कस सुमिरन शून्य विलान”**⁸

संत की संगति को सूर्य की रौशनी और आत्मा को जल के समान कहा है। वह तो आकाश में चला जाता है। वैसे ही संत संगति से प्राणी कुल और शरीर की आसक्ति में बंधा कैसे रह सकता है। संत साहित्य में जन संस्कृति के बहुमूल्य तत्प रूपी रत्न हैं। संत साहित्य के श्रृजन का मूल आधार ही मानव जीवन को उच्च स्तर प्रदान कर उसका आध्यात्मिक उन्नति रहा है।

संत किसी युग विशेष के साधना के मुहताज नहीं रहे हैं अतः संतों की सुदीर्घ परंपरा दिक्काल को भेद कर अक्षुण्ण बनी रही है। संतों के काव्य में लोकजीवन के तत्व व सांस्कृतिक धरोहर की छटा देखी जा सकती है। महर्षि वेदव्यास ने अपने ग्रंथ श्रावस्ती संहिता में उल्लेख किया है कि जो मानव लोक को अपने नयनों से स्वतः देखता है वही उसे सही रूप से समझ व देख सकता है। संत कवियों ने अपने साहित्यिक कृति में मानवीय संवेदनाओं से आपूरित होकर व संवेदनात्मक नजरिये का पालन किया है। इसके द्वारा उन्होंने अपने लोक साहित्य को व्यापक रूप से समृद्ध बनाने का सचेष्ट प्रयास किया है। इस संबंध में कबीरदास जी की एक वाणी है -

**“जो दर्शन देख्या चाहिए तो दर्पन गावत रहिये
जब दर्पन लागे काई तब दर्शन किया ना जाई”**⁹

जब तक मन में मलिनता है परमात्मा का दर्शन प्राप्त नहीं हो सकता है। परमात्मा के दर्शन के लिए दर्पण रूपी मन पवित्र होना आवश्यक है जिससे अपने आप को निहारा जा सके। तुलसीदास संत समाज के आकांक्षी भी हैं -

**“मूंद मंगलमय संत समाजू जो जग जंगम
तीरथ राजू**

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राम भक्ति जहाँ सूरसरि घारा सरसई ब्रह्म विचार प्रचारा¹⁰

संतों का समाज आनंद और कल्याणमय बताया गया है, संत राम भक्ति रूपी चलते फिरते तीर्थ राज हैं जिनके दर्शन से परमात्मा का विचार आने लगता है। संत साहित्य संपूर्ण मानव जाति के लिए संसार की वास्तविकता को इंगित करता हुआ चेतावनी से ओतप्रोत है ताकि व्यक्ति इस जीवन की उपयोगिता को समझ सके -

“मनुष्य जन्म दुर्लभ है होय न दूजी बार पक्का फल जो झरि परै बहुरी न लागे डार¹¹”

इस पंक्ति में मानव जीवन के मूल्य की ओर ध्यानाकर्षण करते हुए बताया गया है कि मनुष्य जन्म दुर्लभ है दूसरी बार मिले या न मिले अतः ज्ञान विचार करना ही योग्य है। शरीर तो जीर्ण होकर छूट ही जाता है। वृक्ष की टहनियों से गिरा हुआ फल फिर उसमें नहीं लग सकता। इसकी सार्थकता अन्य ग्रंथों में निरूपित की ही गई है। ‘संतों ने जिस भाव भूमि पर अपने ज्ञान व साधना को प्रतिस्थापित किया वह गृहस्त की उपेक्षा नहीं करता है।’ आचार्य हजारी प्रसाद द्विवेदी की भक्ति आंदोलन संबंधी विचारों की व्याख्या करते हुए नामवर सिंह ने लिखा है कि “मध्यकाल में मुख्य अंतर्विरोध शास्त्र और लोक के बीच द्वंद का है।”¹²

भक्ति आंदोलन शास्त्रीय धर्म का विरोध करने वाले लोक धर्म के उत्थान का आंदोलन है। उस लोक धर्म में उस युग के किसानों दस्तकारों के विविध वर्गों उपवर्गों के मिली जुली भावनाओं की अभिव्यक्ति है, जिसका प्रतिनिधित्व संत काव्य के द्वारा किया गया है।

“संत काव्य का आधार जन आंदोलन के रूप में रहा है जिसमें संतों ने दृढ़ता के साथ नेतृत्व किया है जिसमें प्रमुख रूप से देखें तो कबीर मात्र पहुँचे हुए संत व साधक ही नहीं थे, वे एक महान कर्मयोगी भी

थे। अपनी कही हुई एक - एक बात को खुद अपने जीवन में आचरित भी किया। रूढ़ियों और कुरीतियों पर प्रहार करना तो सहज है, स्वयं अपने को उस धार पर चला देना सरल नहीं है। वे कंधे से कंधा मिलाकर लोगों के साथ वे चल रहे थे। कबीरदास संत कवियों में मिशाल हैं तो इसलिए क्योंकि उन्होंने पहले अपना घर फूँका फिर दूसरों से अपना घर फूँककर अपने साथ चलने को कहा। उन्होंने अपनी कथनी और करनी को एक रखा।”¹³

संत साहित्य का विस्तार व्यापक है। इन संत कवियों ने ग्रंथ की रचना के बजाय आत्मानुभूति को अपनी धाराप्रवाह वाणी के माध्यम से जनमानस तक जन भाषा में पहुँचाने को ज्यादा महत्व प्रदान किया है। “अधिकांश संत कवियों ने प्रायः एक ही ढंग की बातें कही हैं इनके वाणियों के शीर्षक बहुत कुछ एक जैसे ही हैं।”¹⁴ इसमें काव्यगत श्रेष्ठता व सौंदर्य, अनुभूति की छटा पायी जाती है वह नैसर्गिक रूप से अप्लावन है जो उनकी परम तत्व की ज्ञानानुभूति की झलक को दर्शाता है।

संत साहित्य में तर्कविहीन शास्त्र व पौराणिक परम्पराओं के प्रति प्रतिरोध प्रकट करने का कार्य किया गया है। “संत मूलतः भक्त ही थे तात्कालीनवादों से परे आत्मिक साधना ही इनका इष्ट था यही कारण है कि संतों की प्रेमाभक्ति की सुमधुर सलिल प्रवाहिनी में सभी मत या वाद समन्वित हो जाते हैं।”¹⁵

संपूर्ण भक्तिकाल में विभिन्न रणबांकुरों ने अपने बौद्धिक समझ एवं सुझबुझ का परिचय युग परिवेश को कराया जिसमें प्रमुख रूप से कबीरदास का नाम विशेष उल्लेखनीय है। समकालीन संतों ने तमाम शास्त्र सम्मत आचार विचार का स्पष्ट रूप से अवहेलना करते हुए समस्त मानव जाति के लिए एक नया भक्ति का मार्ग दिखाया जिसे निर्गुण मार्गी कहा जाता है। इसके द्वारा उस समय दिन हीन उपेक्षित और पतित समझे जाने वाले जातियों के लिए उन्होंने एक नया मार्ग भक्ति का खोल दिया यह जनवादी घोषणा

एक अद्वितीय था। अपने समय में यह मार्ग सांस्कृतिक, आर्थिक, सामाजिक के साथ आध्यात्मिक मुक्ति का मार्ग उपलब्ध कराने वाली थी जिसे अलग-अलग संदर्भ में स्पष्टता पूर्वक समझा जा सकता है।

निष्कर्ष :

संतों के साहित्य को आचार्य हजारी प्रसाद द्विवेदी ने निर्गुण कवि साहित्य के नाम से पुकारा है। इसमें हम देखते हैं कि निर्गुण पंथ की उत्पत्ति पहले ऐसे भक्तों की वाणियों से ही प्रगट हुई जो आरंभ में या वास्तव में सुर तुलसी आदि की ही भांति सगुणोपासक भक्त ही थे। वहीं डॉ. पीताम्बर दत्त बड़थवाल ने भी “अपने प्रसिद्ध शोध प्रबन्ध में निर्गुण मत या निर्गुण पंथी कहना उचित माना है।” निर्गुण सगुण रूप में ज्ञान व प्रेम के तत्वों का सामंजस्य करते हुए अपनी निर्मित वाणी से सरल व सहज भाव से व्यक्त करना संत काव्य कहा गया है। संतों ने सामाजिक वर्गभेद एवं जाति-पाति का अलोचना करने का कार्य किया गया।

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भूमिका :

भारतीय समाज में पुरुष-वर्चस्वता तथा उच्च जातियों की वर्चस्वता का एक साथ विद्यमान होना महज संयोग की बात नहीं है बल्कि ये दोनों परस्पर एक-दूसरे से गुंथे हुए हैं। पितृसत्ता और जेंडर के बीच सम्बन्ध, सामाजिक-गठन और विकसित हुए पितृसत्ता के बीच भिन्न-भिन्न बुनियादी जुड़ाव की धारणा को पुष्ट करता है। इस कड़ी में, मैंने इस लेख में जाति विशेष ब्रजवासी (नट) में जेंडर की एक ऐसी कोटि को देखने की कोशिश की है। जिसमें यौनता, रीति-रिवाज और मिथकों के संयोजन में जेंडर (महिला) को अहमरूप से देखा जाता है। ब्रजवासी (नट) समुदाय का वरीयता प्रधान प्राथमिक कार्य विभिन्न अवसरों पर नाचना-गाना होता है। लेकिन यहाँ पर हमें समझना होगा कि आखिर इस ब्रजवासी (नट) समुदाय में महिलाओं को अधिक महत्व क्यों दिया जाता है? यह महत्व वृहत सामाजिक स्तर पर या केवल सामुदायिक स्तर पर होता है। अगर यह महत्व सामुदायिक है तो क्या ब्रजवासी (नट) महिलाओं का विभिन्न परफॉर्मेस के कारण रोजगार परक होना एक साधन या विभिन्न परफॉर्मेस में महिलाओं के संबंध में व्यावहारिक है?

रंडियन पुरवा/नट पुरवा उत्तर प्रदेश राज्य के हरदोई जिला में धोंधी नामक गाँव का एक पुरवा (मजरा) है। जिसमें (रामू) का साक्षात्कार करने पर यह दृष्टि गोचर होता है कि समाज में यह एक ऐसी जाति (Caste) है जिसमें पुरुषों की तुलना में महिलाओं को ज्यादा स्वतंत्रता प्राप्त है। साक्षात्कार और परफॉर्मेस के समय ब्रजवासी महिलाओं के प्रति लोगों द्वारा किये गए व्यवहार से प्रतीत होता है कि यह महत्व सामाजिक तो नहीं किन्तु सामुदायिक जरूर है।

जहाँ तक मैंने इस जाति के लोगों (महिलाओं) का दिग्दर्शन किया है, उससे भासित होता है कि उनका पारंपरिक कार्य नाच-गाना है, ये अक्सर नौटंकी, शादी-विवाह तथा अन्य अनुष्ठानों के अवसर पर होने वाले परफॉर्मेस में नाचते एवं गाते हुए दिख जाती हैं। अब प्रश्न यह उठता है कि ये सब वे अपने शौक के लिए करती हैं या उन्हें अर्थोपार्जन के लिए करना पड़ता है? इस प्रश्न का जबाब मेरे द्वारा लिए गए साक्षात्कार के आधार पर और एकत्रित की गई अन्य जानकारियों (नृत्य परफॉर्मेस, नौटंकी) के आधार पर खोजने का प्रयास किया गया है। ब्रजवासी (नट) समुदाय की तरह ही राहुल अपने लेख 'वेश्यावृत्ति

का समुदायिकरण और उसका परंपरा बनना' में बेड़िया समुदाय के बारे में जिक्र किया है उनका मानना है कि बेड़ियां समुदाय का जीवन-निर्वाह पूरी तरह से स्त्रियों पर टिका हुआ है। इस समुदाय की आमदनी का स्रोत राई नृत्य है। राई नृत्य के साथ ही साथ ये स्त्रियां वेश्यावृत्ति भी करती हैं या कहें कि इन्हें ऐसा करने के लिए विवश किया जाता है। बेड़ियां समुदाय की तरह ही ब्रजवासी महिलाओं का आर्थिक आधार नाच-गाना है किन्तु यह समुदाय वेश्यावृत्ति की बात झिझकते हुए पूरी तरह अस्वीकार कर देता हैं। वही शर्मिला रेगे ने लावणी परफॉर्मेंस में नाचने वाली महिलाओं के सामाजिक स्थिति को समझने के लिए विविध पहलुओं का अध्ययन किया है। उनके अनुसार 'लावणी' परफॉर्मेंस में नाचने वाली 'नाची' में पितृसत्ता और जाति एक दूसरे से मिलकर शोषण का रूप तैयार करती है। 'लावणी' और 'नौटंकी नृत्य' एक ही तरह के नृत्य पर आधारित परफॉर्मेंस हैं। ये दोनों परफॉर्मेंस एक-दूसरे से मेल खाते हैं। ब्रजवासी समुदाय को देखकर रेगे का तर्क 'पितृसत्ता और जाति एक दुसरे से मिलकर शोषण का रूप तैयार करती है' इस समुदाय के लिए सही प्रतीत होता है। ऐसा कहना गलत न होगा पुरुषों ने पितृसत्ता स्थापित करने के लिए महिलाओं का शोषण हमेशा किया है। रेगे के काम की बात किये बिना मेरे द्वारा उठाये गए प्रश्नों का उद्देश्य परिपूर्ण नहीं होगा।

परफॉर्मेंस :

ब्रजवासी महिलाएं अक्सर नौटंकी तथा अन्य नाच प्रोग्राम (शादी-विवाह एवं मुंडन) में परफॉर्म करते हुए दिख जाती हैं। दुर्गागंज गाँव में प्रत्येक वर्ष नौटंकी का परफॉर्मेंस होता है जिसे अन्धविश्वास और धर्म से जोड़कर देखा जाता है। इनका काम नौटंकी परफॉर्मेंस में नृत्य का होता है, जो पूरी तरह फिल्मी गानों तथा दिहाती गानों पर खुद से गाकर करती है। किन्तु अब इसका स्वरूप बदल गया है। अब नौटंकी में आर्केस्ट्रा आ गया है। इस पर फिल्मी गाने डी.

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जे. पर बजाये जाते हैं और ब्रजवासी महिलाएं नृत्य करती हैं। नृत्य करने वाली हर एक महिला का अपना सिग्नेचर मूवमेंट होता है। जिसके द्वारा ये दर्शकों को अपनी तरफ खिंझाती हैं। इन परफॉर्मेंस में यंग दर्शक ज्यादा संख्या में पहुँचते हैं क्योंकि ज्यादातर परफॉर्मेंस गाँव में होते हैं इसलिए परफॉर्मेंस में दर्शकों को जाति प्रभावित करती है। नौटंकी परफॉर्मेंस के आयोजन से एक दिन पहले परफॉर्मेंस मंडली आ जाती है। जिसके रुकने एवं खाने-पीने की व्यवस्था कमेटी द्वारा की जाती है। कलाकार लोगों को रुकने की व्यवस्था एक अलग कमरे में की जाती है। जहाँ पर उनकी रुकने की व्यवस्था होती है लड़कों और आदमियों की भीड़ आस-पास लग जाती है और उनके अन्दर यह जानने की जिज्ञासा होती है कि कितनी महिला कलाकार आयी है। नौटंकी परफॉर्मेंस से पहले यह एक बहुत चर्चित विषय हो जाता है बूढ़ों और जवानों में कि कितनी 'रंडी' (ब्रजवासी महिला नृत्यकाएं) आयी है। यह क्षणिक किन्तु उस समय का सबसे चर्चित विषय होता है। यह पुरुषवादी मानसिकता को दिखाता है क्योंकि इन्हें अन्य कलाकारों से ज्यादा फर्क नहीं पड़ता है। युवा दर्शकों में महिला कलाकारों का क्रेज (पागलपन) बहुत ज्यादा रहता है फिर भी रामू के अनुसार इनकी महिलाओं को एक रात के नाच-गाना के लिए 500 से 700 रुपये तक ही मिल पाता है।

'रंडी' शब्द :

वर्तमान समय में यह शब्द वेश्यावृत्ति (प्रोस्टीट्यूट) या वेश्या का पर्याय बना हुआ है। समाज इस शब्द का प्रयोग गाली के रूप में करने लगा है। पुरुष प्रधान समाज इन्हें 'रंडी' जैसे नाम से संबोधित करता है। इनके ऊपर देशी कहावते भी बनी हैं 'रंडी बुढ़ाती है तो बकरी चराती है' इस कहावत का सीधा अर्थ है। महिलाओं को पुरुष प्रधान समाज भोग-बिलास की वस्तु मानता है। जब तक कोई महिला जवान रहती है तब तक उसके रूप सौन्दर्य एवं यौवन का

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मूल्य होता है उसके बाद धीरे-धीरे उनकी उपेक्षा होने लगती है और वो सिर्फ कार्य मात्र की वस्तु बचती हैं। इसी को लेकर गांवों में उक्त कहावत प्रचलित है। रंडी शब्द के मायने और इसका प्रयोग पुरुष अपनी सुविधा के अनुसार कर लेता है, नौटंकी परफॉर्मेंस में इस शब्द से नृत्यांगना को संबोधित करता है तो किसी महिला से लड़ाई के वक्त वेश्या के लिए संबोधित करता है।

ब्रजवासी (नट) समाज में महिलाओं की भागीदारी और सामाजिक सच्चाई :

भारतीय समाज में यह एक ऐसी जाति है, जिसमें सामुदायिक तौर पर महिलाओं का महत्व पुरुषों से ज्यादा प्रतीत होता है। इनकी जाति को क्षेत्रीय लोगों द्वारा ब्रजवासी बोला जाता है जो कि भारतीय संविधान के अनुसार अनुसूचित जाति वर्ग में आती है। ये लोग अपने आपको मथुरा (ब्रज) के ग्वालों से जोड़ते हुए अपने आपको हिन्दू धर्म का मानते हैं। तथा अपने आपको राधा-कृष्ण से जोड़कर देखते हैं। इस जाति के लोग खुद को लोक कलाकार मानते हैं। अधिकतर लोग नाच-गानों और इसी तरह की विभिन्न परफॉर्मेंस जिसमें नौटंकी, ढोला, नाच आदि से सम्बद्ध रखते हैं। ये अपना पारम्परिक पेशा कलाकारी और नाच-गाना को मानते हैं। इनका समुदाय नाच-गाने के लिए सिर्फ महिलाओं को ही इजाजत देता है। लड़कियाँ इन सबसे दूर रहती हैं। इनके घर में अगर कोई लड़की जन्म लेती है तो उन्हें उतनी खुशी होती है जितनी एक पितृसत्तात्मक परिवार में लड़के के जन्म लेने पर होती है। इसके पीछे उनका तर्क होता है कि घर में एक कमाने वाले का जन्म हुआ है जिसकी वजह से घर का खर्चा चलेगा। इस जाति में लड़कियों की परवरिश लड़कों की तुलना में ज्यादा सही ढंग से की जाती है। लड़कियों को बचपन से ही प्रारंभिक शिक्षा दी जाती है। यह शिक्षा सर्वांगीण होती है जिसमें पढ़ना, लिखना, बोलना, नाचना (नृत्य)

एवं गाना आदि सिखाया जाता है। किन्तु यह शिक्षा प्रारंभिक शिक्षा ही रहती है, ये लड़कियाँ आज भी उच्च शिक्षा से दूर हैं। नाचना-गाना सिखाने के लिए इन्हीं के समुदाय से विशेष पारंगत उस्ताद (मास्टर) की व्यवस्था की जाती है। अगर उस्ताद का बंदोबस्त नहीं होता है तो इस पेशा में (समुदाय में) सबसे पुरानी कलाकार इन्हें सिखाने का कार्य करती है। ये उस्ताद बचपन से ही लड़कियों को सांकेतिक भाव-भंगिमा एवं विभिन्न मुद्राओं के द्वारा दर्शकों को रिझाना एवं मित्रवत होना सिखाते हैं। इसका दूसरा पहलू यह है कि ये खूबी जिस कलाकार में ज्यादा होगी वो उतना ही दर्शकों को अपनी ओर आकर्षित कर पायेगा। इसका फायदा उपहार स्वरूप पुरस्कार प्राप्त करने में होता है।

इनकी जाति में शादी एक महत्वपूर्ण मुद्दा है। इनमें अंतर्जातीय प्रेम विवाह निषिद्ध है अगर कोई लड़का या लड़की ऐसा करते हैं तो सामाजिक तौर पर इनका बहिष्कार कर दिया जाता है। दहेज प्रथा इनके समाज में भी प्रचलित है किन्तु वह एकदम उलट है। इनके समाज में शादी के वक्त लड़का पक्ष को लड़की वालों को दहेज देना पड़ता है। ग्रामवासियों का मानना है कि सरकार इन्हें इनकी जाति की बदौलत हीन-भावना के तहत देखती है तभी तो जाति के नाम पर सरकार पूरे गाँव की सामाजिक, राजनैतिक एवं आर्थिक उपेक्षा करती है। ग्रामीणों के मुताबिक अभी तक कोई भी विकास कार्य नहीं किया गया है। इनके समाज में शिक्षा का स्तर बहुत कम है। पुरुष एवं महिलाएं मुश्किल से हाईस्कूल करती हैं। इनके पूरे समाज में कम ही ऐसे लोग हैं जिन्होंने उच्च शिक्षा प्राप्त की हो। सरकारी सुविधाएँ एवं आरक्षण प्राप्त करने के लिए ये अपने आपको ब्रजवासी बताते हैं किन्तु नट लिखते हैं। इनका मानना है कि नट लिखने की वजह से इन्हें आरक्षण मिल जाता है। उक्त बातों से प्रतीत होता है कि ये लोग अपना पारंपरिक कार्य नाच-गाना को मानते हैं इससे ही

आजीविका चलाते हैं। परिवार का लगभग सम्पूर्ण खर्च महिलायें उठाती हैं। साल में कई बार ऐसा भी समय आता है जब ब्रजवासी महिलाओं को परफॉर्मेंस करने को नहीं मिलती तो अतिरिक्त आर्थिक मदद के लिए पुरुष मजदूरी करते हैं। तो कुछ पुरुष भीख (भिक्षावृत) मांगने का कार्य भी कर लेते हैं।

नौटंकी परफॉर्मेंस के समय लोगों के जेहन में 'रंडी' शब्द नाचने वाली के लिए प्रयोग करते हैं। दर्शकों के लिए परफॉर्मेंस के समय इस शब्द का मायना सिर्फ और सिर्फ नाचने वाली होता है। परफॉर्मेंस के इतर बाकी समय में इस शब्द के मायने बदल जाते हैं। पितृसत्तात्मक समाज में पुरुषों द्वारा ऐसी महिलाओं के लिए 'रंडी' शब्द का इस्तेमाल किया जाता है। जिनकी शारीरिक उपलब्धता आसानी से हो जाती हो। सामंतवादी व जातिवादी पुरुषों को ऐसा इस समुदाय की महिलाओं के लिए भी लगता है। उन्हें लगता है कि ऐसी महिलाओं के साथ आसानी से व्यभिचार किया जा सकता है। समाज की नजरों में खास कर पुरुषों की नजरों में ऐसी महिलाओं की कोई इज्जत नहीं होती है। स्वर्ण पितृसत्ता के पालने में जी रहे पुरुषों को लगता है कि अर्थोपार्जन के लिए नाच-गाने के साथ-साथ इनकी शारीरिक उपलब्धता आसानी से हो जाती है। महिलाओं के प्रति इस तरह की सोच सड़ी और बीमार मानसिकता की तरफ इशारा करती है। इस तरह की मानसिकता का वर्णन मनुस्मृति में भी मिलता है। नाचने-गाने वाली स्त्रियों के लिए मनु की असीम नफरत उनके इन शब्दों में देखने को मिलती हैं, 'पराई औरतों से बातचीत करने पर पाबंदी है, लेकिन यह पाबंदी नाचने-गाने वाली औरतों पर लागू नहीं होती क्योंकि अभिनेता और गवैये अपनी औरतों का हार श्रृंगार करके उन्हें पराए मर्दों को पेश करते हैं।' तभी तो आज भी ग्रामीण समाज में अक्सर लड़ाई के समय पुरुषों द्वारा महिलाओं को 'रंडी' शब्द कहकर गाली देते हुए देखा जा सकता है।

चरणदास सिद्धू के मतानुसार ब्राह्मणों-क्षत्रियों-विषयों के दिलों में हमेशा एक दहशत रही है-कहीं ये दास-दस्यु अपने कला-कौशल से, सृजन शक्ति से, हमारे प्रभुत्व की धज्जियां न उड़ा दे। मंच पर खड़ा मसखरा (जोकर), मखौलिया, मिरासी, तानाशाहों का, घमंडियों का दुश्मन है। भयभीत हाकिम जातियों ने हर कलाकार को नीच कहकर, नफरत दिखाकर, दबाने की कोशिश की है। मनु के मुताबिक- "सवर्णों को किसी अभिनेता से, रंगकर्मी से, भोजन लेकर नहीं खाना चाहिए क्योंकि वे चुगलखोर, झूठे, दरजी कृतघ्न, लोहार, मल्लाह, सुनार जैसे नीच लोगों में शामिल हैं।" जैसा कि मैंने ऊपर जिक्र किया है कि ब्रजवासी जाति में पुरुषों ने महिलाओं को ज्यादा स्वच्छंदता प्रदान की हैं। इसका अनुमान इस बात से लगाया जा सकता है। जब नौटंकी परफॉर्मेंस या नाच का कोई प्रोग्राम होता है तो उस दिन ये पुरुष खुद अपनी महिलाओं को परफॉर्मेंस स्थल पर लेकर जाते हैं।

उत्तर प्रदेश की ब्रजवासी महिलाओं द्वारा नृत्य-गायन का जिस तरह परफॉर्मेंस किया जा रहा है। उसी तरह के परफॉर्मेंस अन्य राज्यों में भी दलित महिलाओं के द्वारा किये जा रहे हैं। किन्तु ब्रजवासी महिलाओं द्वारा किये जा रहे ऐसे परफॉर्मेंस-नृत्य का अध्ययन न के बराबर हुआ है। जबकि इसी तरह के अन्य परफॉर्मेंस का अध्ययन किसी न किसी रूप में किया गया है। उन्हीं में से एक महाराष्ट्र का तमाशा है। 'तमाशा' में लावणी भी इसी तरह का परफॉर्मेंस है, लावणी परफॉर्मेंस में नाची (नृत्यांगनाओं) को लेकर शर्मीला रेगे का काम भी कुछ इसी तरह के तथ्यों को सामने लेकर आता है। यद्यपि उन्होंने लावणी परफॉर्मेंस को लोअर कास्ट महिलाओं के देह, पुरुषों की इच्छा और नाची की देह को लेकर पुरुषों में उत्तेजन परक लालसा के रूप में अध्ययन किया है। लावणी परफॉर्मेंस में नृत्यांगनायें अपने भाव-भंगिमा और नृत्य से दर्शकों को मन्त्र मुग्ध करने

की कोशिश करती हैं। लावणी तमाशा नाट्य शैली का अभिन्न अंग है, फिर भी इसका परफॉर्मेंस तमाशा से अलग होकर भी किया जाता है। उसी तरह ब्रजवासी नृत्यांगना भी नौटंकी परफॉर्मेंस के नृत्य में प्रतिभाग करती हुई नजर आती हैं और कुछ महिला नृतक नाटक का भी अंग होती हैं। ब्रजवासी महिलायें भी नौटंकी से अलग होकर नाच नामक परफॉर्मेंस करती हैं जो अक्सर शादी-विवाह और मुंडन के अवसर पर करती हैं। इसमें एक या दो नृत्यांगना रहती हैं तथा दो लोग पुरुष वाद्ययंत्र (ढोलक तथा हारमोनियम) बजाने वाले रहते हैं। इस तरह की परफॉर्मेंस में पोसाख महत्वपूर्ण पहलू होता है। इसके द्वारा कोई भी वेशभूषा धारण की जा सकती है। नर्तन की परफॉर्मेंस के समय भड़कीले रंग की पोसाख पहनती हैं और उसके ऊपर कुछ गहने भी पहनती हैं। हाथों में कंगन एवं चूड़िया पहनती हैं। पहले ये नृत्यांगना साड़ी पहनना पसंद करती थी किन्तु अभी पिछले कुछ समय से साड़ी की जगह लहंगा एवं जींस का चलन ज्यादा पसंद किया जाने लगा है।

भारतीय समाज में पितृसत्ता को नकारते ब्रजवासी समुदाय के लोग भले ही आर्थिक हित के लिए लड़कियों के जन्म पर जश्न मनाते हैं किन्तु यह पितृसत्तात्मक भारतीय समाज में लड़के पैदा होने पर खुशी मनाये जाने के एकदम उलट है। तभी तो ब्रजवासी समुदाय में लड़कियां ज्यादा महत्व रखती हैं। अनुसूचित जनजाति में महिला प्रधान समाज अभी भी कुछ जनजातियों में देखने को मिलता है। महिलाओं को एक से ज्यादा मर्दों से शादी करने का भी अधिकार प्राप्त है। मेघालय की खासी जनजाति में ये सब देखा जा सकता है। इस जनजाति में संपत्ति बेटियों के नाम की जाती है। ब्रजवासी समुदाय में बेटियों के महत्व के पीछे चाहे जो कारण हो किन्तु प्रथम दृष्टि मेरे द्वारा लिए गए साक्षात्कार (नगमा सांकेतिक नाम) को आधार बनाकर ऐसा कहा जा

सकता है कि परिवार के पालन-पोषण में आर्थिक सहयोग के लिए ब्रजवासी महिलाओं को अपने पारम्परिक नृत्य जैसे कार्य में जाना पड़ता है। ये कार्य वर्ष भर न चलने वाले हैं। जिससे अब प्रश्न यह भी उठता है कि इन परफॉर्मेंस के न होने पर ये अपना जीविकोपार्जन कैसे करती हैं? जब तक ये अपने कार्य में व्यस्त रहती हैं तो इनके बच्चों की देख रेख इनके पति द्वारा की जाती है। जिसका एक कारण आर्थिक दृष्टि गोचर होता है इसके पीछे जो तर्क दिया जाता है उसमें लड़कों को वंश का वारिस मानकर देखा जाता है जबकि लड़कियों को घर की इज्जत के आधार पर देखा जाता है।

भारत के नारीवाद डिस्कोर्स में शर्मिला रेगे ने जाति, वर्ग, जेंडर, धर्म, सेक्सुअलिटी को केंद्र में लाने का काम किया। “एक दलित नारीवादी दृष्टिकोण को मुक्तिदाता के रूप में देखा जाता है क्योंकि इसके ज्ञान का विषय मूर्त और दृश्यमान है।” शर्मिला रेगे ने जाति के प्रश्न को स्वेच्छा से चुनी गई चुनौती के रूप में नए सिरे से आत्मसात किया। उन्होंने पहले सरोकार जेंडर के साथ जोड़कर भारतीय समाज वैज्ञानिक परिवेश में एक नए शोध-क्षेत्र को आकार देने में अहम् भूमिका निभाई। यह नया-क्षेत्र दलित नारीवाद का है। शर्मिला रेगे ने लावणी जैसे परफॉर्मेंस में ‘नाची’ की सामाजिक स्थिति को समझते हुए तर्क देती हैं कि दलितत्व का पुरुषीकरण और नारीत्व का सवर्णीकरण दलित नारीत्व के शास्त्रीय बहिष्कार और उन्मूलन को जन्म देता है। वह बताती हैं कि जाति और कामुकता के बीच आंतरिक संबंधों पर ध्यान दिए बिना कोई पर्याप्त यौन राजनीति की कल्पना नहीं कर सकता।

डॉ. अम्बेडकर का एक कथन है कि ‘एक नाटक मेरे सौ भाषणों के बराबर सामर्थ्य रखता है।’ ब्रजवासी महिलाएं भी तो नौटंकी के समय मंच पर नाटक का पार्ट होती हैं किन्तु वहां पर भी इन्हें ऐसे

रोल दिए जाते हैं जिनसे दर्शकों जुटाया जा सके। मंच पर भी इनके लिए द्विअर्थी शब्दों का प्रयोग किया जाता है। ब्रजवासियों में भी जाने-अनजाने महिलाओं का शोषण किया जाता है उनको उतनी ही आजादी दी जाती है जितने में पितृसत्ता की जड़ों का पोषण होता रहे। महिलाओं को बाकी की आजादी सिर्फ इसलिए दी जाती है ताकि आय का अर्जन कर सके। अर्थात् उन्मुक्तता वहां तक है जहाँ तक यथोचित आय का अर्जन हो सके।

निष्कर्ष :

ब्रजवासी समुदाय की सबसे बड़ी समस्या सामाजिक, आर्थिक एवं राजनैतिक रूप से पिछड़ापन एवं सरकार द्वारा की गई उपेक्षा है। इस कारण कोई भी विकास कार्य अभी तक इनके गाँव में नहीं किया जा सका है। सामाजिक तौर पर भी इन्हें लोगों द्वारा हीन-भाव की दृष्टि से देखा जाता था। और अभी भी इन्हें इसी दृष्टि से देखा जा रहा है। इसलिए यह समुदाय सामाजिक, आर्थिक और शैक्षणिक रूप से पिछड़ा हुआ है। इन सब कारणों से ब्रजवासी महिलायें नाच-गाना करके गुजर-बसर करने को मजबूर हैं। इनके गाँव आज भी सरकारी योजनाओं का इन्तजार कर रहे हैं। किन्तु आजादी के 70 साल बाद भी इन्हें उम्मीद की कोई भी किरण नजर नहीं आ रही है।

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Managing Menopausal Anxiety with Music

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Introduction :

Menopause usually happens between the ages of 40 and 55. It marks the end of a woman's menstrual cycle. This change is natural but can lead to many emotional and physical problems. One of the most troubling problems is anxiety. Women often feel nervous, restless, and unable to sleep. These feelings are linked to changes in hormones like estrogen and progesterone.

Doctors often suggest hormone replacement therapy or anxiety medicines. But many women don't want to take these due to possible side effects. That's why more people are turning to natural therapies. Music therapy is one such option. It is simple, safe, and can be done at home. This paper explores how music therapy helps menopausal women feel better.

Literature Review :

Many studies confirm that anxiety is common during menopause. Freeman et al. (2014) found that 60% of women experience increased anxiety. Maki and Thurston (2020) explain that when hormone levels drop, the brain's mood centers

are affected. This makes women more likely to feel anxious or depressed.

Music therapy has been studied for many years. Koelsch (2014) writes that music affects the brain areas related to emotion. It helps release happy chemicals like dopamine and serotonin. These chemicals reduce stress and improve mood.

Yang et al. (2016) found that listening to calm music for 30 minutes every day helped reduce anxiety in menopausal women. Maratos et al. (2008) showed that singing or playing instruments can also improve emotional health. Harmat et al. (2008) noted that music also helps people sleep better, which reduces stress and anxiety.

Discussion :

Music therapy works in many ways. First, it calms the nervous system. When we listen to soft, soothing music, our heart rate slows and stress levels go down. This helps reduce anxiety.

Second, music gives emotional support. Women going through menopause often

feel lonely or overwhelmed. Music helps them express their emotions. Singing, playing an instrument, or even dancing to music can make a woman feel more in control.

Group music activities are also very helpful. Women can sing or listen together. This helps build friendships and reduces feelings of loneliness. Music also helps improve memory and concentration, which many women struggle with during menopause.

Music therapy also helps with sleep. Women often complain of insomnia during menopause. Listening to relaxing music before bedtime helps calm the mind and improve sleep quality. Better sleep also means lower anxiety during the day.

Cultural Relevance and Raga Therapy :

In India, music has always been a part of healing. The ancient system of Raga Therapy uses specific ragas to help with health problems. Each raga has its own emotional effect. Some are used to bring peace and calm, while others bring joy or energy.

For example, Raga Yaman is used to create a peaceful and happy mood. Raga Ahir Bhairav is good for calming the mind early in the morning. According to Sairam (2024), ragas can help control emotions and balance the mind.

Indian music is not just for listening. It is also spiritual. The slow rhythm and deep notes in classical ragas help connect the mind and body. Das (2021) found that women who listened to ragas regularly felt more relaxed and less anxious. Subramanian (2019) also reported that traditional Indian music helped people feel better emotionally.

Using Indian music therapy in menopause care is useful because it connects with our culture and traditions. It is also affordable and easy to follow.

Comparative Analysis with Other Therapies :

Other natural therapies used during menopause include yoga, meditation, and aromatherapy. Each has its own benefits, but music therapy has some special advantages. Yoga helps the body and mind, but not all women are able to do the physical movements. Meditation is helpful but takes time and practice. Some women find it hard to sit still and concentrate. Aromatherapy can improve mood, but its effects may not last long.

Music therapy is different. It doesn't need any training or physical effort. Women can simply listen to their favorite music while doing household chores or resting. Music brings instant comfort. It also helps both the mind and body.

Yang et al. (2016) found that women who used music therapy had better results than those using only exercise or meditation. When combined with other methods, music therapy gives even better results.

Future Research Directions :

Although music therapy shows great promise, more research is needed. Long-term studies can help us understand how it works over time. We also need to study how different types of music affect people in different ways. A woman from South India may respond better to Carnatic music, while someone from North India may prefer Hindustani ragas.

Researchers should also compare music therapy with other non-medical methods.

What works better: music or meditation? Or a mix of both? Creating special music therapy programs for menopausal women could help them more. These programs can be offered in clinics, community centers, or even online.

Doctors and mental health experts should work together to make music therapy a part of regular menopause care. When women get access to natural therapies, their overall health improves.

Conclusion :

Music therapy is a gentle and powerful way to help women deal with anxiety during menopause. It lowers stress, improves sleep, and supports emotional health. Women feel more relaxed and connected when they use music therapy. Indian classical music, especially ragas, is a special gift in this process. It not only heals but also respects our culture and traditions.

Because music is easy to use, low-cost, and safe, it should be included in menopause care. With more research and awareness, music therapy can become a trusted tool to support women during this important stage of life.

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