

**Peer-Reviewed
Yearly Academic Journal**

2023-24

VOL XXIII

ISSN: 2348-9014



KALINDI COLLEGE

(UNIVERSITY OF DELHI)

East Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008

English Section:

Editor: Dr. Shilpika Bali Mehta

Co- Editor: Ms. Shipra Gupta

Hindi Section:

Editor: Dr. Rekha Meena

Co- Editor: Dr. Sanjay Kumar Singh

Editorial Board:

Dr. Alka Chaturvedi

Ms. Aditi Chawdhary

Ms. Baljit Kaur

Dr. Divya Mishra

Dr. Manisha Tomar

Dr. Meenakshi Verma

Dr. Monika Keisham

Dr. Mohd. Nadeem

Dr. Pankaj Kumar

Dr. Raksha Geeta

Dr. Rashmi Menon

Dr. Reena Jain

Dr. Richa Gupta

Dr. Seema Mathur

Ms. Vani M. Pyarilal

Cover designed by Ms. Avni Nagar

B.A. Honours (English) 3rd Year

Principal's Message



It gives me immense pleasure and pride to present the 23rd issue of The Yearly Academic Journal of Kalindi College to the scholarly community. This year has been exceptional with our trilingual and multidisciplinary journal setting yet another benchmark by making the process double blind peer- reviewed. Our constant endeavour to promote and publish thoroughly researched, meaningful and engaging articles has been strengthened through this added feature, continuing our belief in enhancing the academic reputation of our college. This cornucopia of themes and ideas promises to be a delightful read and we are hopeful that the articles published shall continue to strengthen our aspirations of promoting an invigorating research-based environment in academia. I heartily congratulate the Editorial Team and wish them luck for future publications.

Best Wishes

A handwritten signature in green ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' and 'C'.

Principal

Prof. Meena Charanda

Editorial

“Gaining knowledge, is the first step to wisdom
Sharing it, is the first step to humanity”

With utmost dedication and tireless efforts of the editorial board, we present to you Volume 23 of The Yearly Academic Journal, published by Kalindi College, University of Delhi, Delhi. Designed to continue and take forward the growing legacy of this trilingual (English, Hindi and Sanskrit), multidisciplinary annual feature, this volume includes scholarly articles from researchers and faculty of higher education institutions pan India. In our attempt to make this platform of knowledge sharing more creditable, this volume has been double blind peer-reviewed.

This year the articles in humanities range from interrogating subaltern voices of women and Dalits to a literary analysis of some acknowledged literary works of fiction. Exploring new pedagogical tools in the classroom and harnessing the power of Artificial Intelligence in advancing research are some interesting ideas that scholars and faculty members across universities have engaged with. It gives us pride to have had contributions from various disciplines including Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. While some articles are sociological and theoretical in nature, several are based on findings of scientific and empirical research. We are hopeful that the articles published shall continue to strengthen our aspirations of promoting an invigorating research-based environment in academia.

We are grateful to our former principal, Prof Anula Maurya, for entrusting the publication of volume 23 of The Yearly Academic Journal to the current editorial team. We also thank our officiating principal , Prof. Meena Charanda, for her relentless support and guidance. We also express our gratitude to previous editor Dr. Chaity Das and her team for showing us the way and guiding us all through this journey .

We hope you will find articles of your interest here. We also hope you enjoy reading these as much as we did crafting this edition.

Wishing you a good reading time!

Editor : Dr. Shilpika Bali Mehta

Co-Editor : Shipra Gupta

संपादकीय

यह वर्ष कालिंदी परिवार के लिए अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है। नव उत्साह और आनंद के रंगों से सराबोर नए सदस्यों के साथ महापरिवार का रूप धारण करते हुए कालिंदी के ज्ञान की धारा और तेज गति से प्रवाहमान हो रही है। कालिंदी कॉलेज के वार्षिक अकादमी जर्नल के माध्यम से संस्कृत, हिंदी और अंग्रेजी की त्रिवेणी निरंतर ज्ञान की धारा को समृद्ध कर रही है। इस अंक के लिए हिंदी संस्कृत के छह लेखों में से संपादक मंडल द्वारा तीन लेखों को प्रकाशन के लिए चयनित किया गया है।

डॉ. लवकुश कुमार का विषय ' भारत दुर्दशा में व्यक्त नवजागरण और राष्ट्रीय चेतना का स्वरूप' है। इसमें भारतेन्दु हरिश्चंद्र का हिंदी साहित्य में आगमन हिंदी भाषा और गद्य विधाओं के लिए वरदान साबित हुआ। उन्होंने नाटकों की रचना जनसंवाद के लिए की। इसी वजह से भारतेन्दु युगीन नाटकों का रंगमंच से जुड़ाव स्पष्ट तौर पर देखा जा सकता है। भारतेन्दु से पहले भी कुछ नाट्य परंपराएँ तथा रंगमंचीय शैलियाँ बरकरार थी। लोक शैली और पारसी नाटकों की लोकप्रियता बनी हुई थी। पारसी नाटकों का उद्देश्य मनोरंजन था, व्यवसाय था। यही वजह है इस शैली के नाटकों में अतिनाटकीयता, फूहड़ता, अश्लीलता, भारतीय पौराणिक और ऐतिहासिक पात्रों से छेड़छाड़ की कोशिश अधिक बलवती रही। इन्हीं समस्याओं को देखकर भारतेन्दु जी ने नवजागरण परक चेतना तथा नाटकों के बीच सामंजस्य बैठाने की कोशिश की। भारतेन्दु जी के नाटक जनजागरण, राष्ट्रीय उत्थान और समाज सुधार जैसे प्रयोजन से लिखे। डॉ. रेखा मीणा का विषय "कस्बाई सिमोन उपन्यास में अभिव्यक्त स्त्री स्वर" है। इस लेख में स्त्री आकांक्षा के प्रश्नों को और स्त्री की अपनी आकांक्षा के कारण तमाम जद्दोजहद का सामना करना पड़ता है। आज भी समाज बार-बार उसे याद दिलाता रहता है कि स्त्री को पितृसत्ता की जकड़बंदी में ही रहना चाहिए। वह यदि एक आम स्त्री है तो वह अपनी शर्तों पर जीवन नहीं जी सकती है। यह उपन्यास स्त्री आकांक्षा के उन सभी पहलुओं को नायिका सुगंधा के माध्यम से हमारे सामने रखता है।

संस्कृत में ---छात्रों के व्यक्तित्व विकास में 'नीतिशतक' का योगदान डॉ. पुष्पा के लेख 'हरदेश की नींव उसके युवाओं की शिक्षा है।' (डायोजनीज) शिक्षा का केन्द्र बिन्दु विद्यार्थी है जिसके

शिक्षार्जन हेतु असंख्य नीतियों का निर्धारण और क्रियान्वयन किया जाता है। शिक्षा का उद्देश्य शिक्षार्थी के सम्पूर्ण व्यक्तित्व का विकास होता है, जिसके लिए छात्र के शारीरिक, मानसिक, संवेगात्मक, क्रियात्मक और नैतिक आदि सभी पक्षों के विकास पर समान रूप से बल दिया जाता है। वर्तमान शिक्षा जगत में ही नहीं अपितु प्राचीनकालीन शिक्षा पद्धति में भी छात्रों के सर्वांगीण विकास पर ज़ोर दिया जाता था। इस प्रकार छात्रों के व्यक्तित्व विकास में 'नीतिशतक' का योगदान छात्र अपने व्यक्तित्व में सकारात्मक पक्षों को सम्मिलित करते हुए अपने लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने की दिशा में बढ़ते हैं तो निश्चित तौर पर वह अनर्गल बातों से दूर रहते हुए केवल उद्देश्य प्राप्त की ओर ही पूरी तरह से प्रयासरत रह सकते हैं।

इस अंक के लिए महाविद्यालय की प्राचार्या प्रोफेसर मीना चरांदा के मार्गदर्शन और उत्कृष्ट नेतृत्व में यह अंक अपनी मौलिकता, गुणवत्ता और विषयों की विविधता के साथ प्रकाशित हो रहा है। मेरे लिए यह हर्ष का विषय है कि इस वर्ष के अकादमिक जर्नल के हिंदी-संस्कृत अनुभाग के संपादक के रूप में कार्य निर्वाहन का सौभाग्य प्राप्त हुआ। संपादक मंडल के सहयोगियों डॉ. संजय कुमार सिंह, डॉ. रक्षा गीता, सुश्री बलजीत कौर तथा डॉ. दिव्या मिश्रा एवम् लेखकों को हार्दिक धन्यवाद। मैं आशा करती हूँ की यह अंक ज्ञान के सागर में अपना समुचित योगदान देने में सफल होगा ।

डॉ. रेखा मीणा

संपादक

डॉ संजय कुमार सिंह

सह संपादक

(हिंदी-संस्कृत अनुभाग)

INDEX

Sr. No.	Title of the Paper	Author's Name	Page No.
1.	Harnessing the Power of Artificial Intelligence in Research: Current Trends and Challenges	Aakriti Gupta	1
2.	Exploring Ideology and history in <i>Caleb Williams</i> and <i>Maria or the Wrongs of Women</i>	Akhilesh Kumar	7
3.	Significance of Chemistry Laboratory Safety Rules and Warning Symbols in Schools	Pramila Tanwar	14
4.	Dalit Literature: Introspection of Caste Discrimination in <i>The Outcaste</i> and <i>Murdahiya</i>	Rajvir Singh	23
5.	Indian Rupee goes International	Richa Gupta, Bedika Kashyap and Chinta Bai Meena	35
6.	Use of Media Adaptations as a Pedagogical Tool in English Literature Classroom	Ruchi Singh and Gibu Sabu M	43
7.	Representing Subaltern Voices of Women in Taslima Nasrin's <i>Split: A Life as a Rebellion Against Patriarchy</i>	Sarita	49
8.	Atrocities Against Dalit Women: Remedies and Institutional Responses in India	Seema Mathur	56
9.	Imagining a Community: Unity in Diversity: Vikram Seth's <i>A Suitable Boy</i>	Vinita Chandra	71
10.	भारत दुर्दशा में व्यक्त नवजागरण और राष्ट्रीय चेतना का स्वरूप	लवकुश कुमार	79
11.	कस्बाई सिमोन उपन्यास में अभिव्यक्त स्त्री स्वर	रेखा मीणा	88
12.	छात्रों के व्यक्तित्व विकास में नीतिदशक का योगदान	पुष्पा	93

Harnessing the Power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Research: Current Trends and Challenges

Aakriti Gupta

Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University

aakriti1gupta1.ag@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative technology with enormous potential across many fields, including research. The purpose of this research paper is to explore the use of AI in research, focusing on its current applications, challenges, and promising future prospects. This paper provides an overview of various AI research techniques, including machine learning, natural language processing and data analytics. Also discussed are the effects of AI on research processes, such as data acquisition, analysis, interpretation, and decision making. In addition, the paper addresses potential concerns, such as data privacy and bias, regarding AI in research. The paper concludes with including the integration of AI with other emerging technologies and the development of explicable and reliable AI systems.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Natural language processing (NLP), Research, Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain*

1. INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative technology with profound implications for research across diverse disciplines. It significantly enhances data analysis, knowledge generation, and decision-making processes. AI is defined as a collection of computer programs and technologies designed to mimic human brain functioning and intelligence (Huang, Rust, & Maksimovic, 2019). It empowers researchers by automatically analyzing data, revealing concealed trends, patterns, and insights, which can inform better decision-making (AI In Analytics: Powering the Future of Data Analytics, 2021). This technological advancement revolutionizes data analysis, improving the efficiency and accuracy of processing vast and heterogeneous datasets. Furthermore, machine learning, a subset of AI, focuses on using data and algorithms to imitate human learning, gradually enhancing its precision (What Is Machine Learning? | IBM, n.d.). Machine learning algorithms excel at recognizing patterns, trends, and correlations within data, providing researchers with actionable insights, and facilitating the formulation of novel hypotheses. This newfound capability enables researchers to validate hypotheses and gain deeper insights into complex phenomena.

AI-driven data analysis has the potential to uncover valuable knowledge and guide data-driven decision-making. By leveraging historical data, AI empowers researchers to build intricate predictive models. Machine learning algorithms, by learning from past observations, make precise predictions and classifications, aiding researchers in anticipating outcomes, identifying trends, and making informed decisions. This automation significantly enhances the efficacy and accuracy of research by offering valuable guidance and reducing the need for manual analysis. Predictive modeling, fueled by AI, markedly improves research efficiency and productivity. Moreover, AI expedites scientific discovery by enabling efficient exploration of extensive literature, scientific papers, and datasets. When combined with AI, natural language processing (NLP) methods play a pivotal role in extracting relevant information from unstructured text, summarizing research articles, and facilitating knowledge integration (What Is Natural Language Processing? | IBM, n.d.). Natural Language Generation (NLG) then converts machine learning findings into easily understandable insights (AI In Analytics: Powering the Future of Data Analytics, 2021). This integration of AI tools for literature reviews, hypothesis generation, and experimental design accelerates and sharpens research outcomes.

The integration of AI into research practices not only brings practical benefits but also raises important ethical concerns. Researchers must prioritize responsible and ethical AI practices, addressing issues related to privacy, bias, equity, and accountability. Adhering to ethical standards ensures that AI positively impacts research and society while minimizing potential harms. AI's capacity to analyze and interpret complex and diverse data types, such as genomic data, medical images, and environmental sensor data, offers exciting opportunities for advancements in various domains. Additionally, AI fosters multidisciplinary collaboration and knowledge sharing among researchers through collaborative platforms and recommendation systems. This facilitates innovation and the exchange of ideas, ultimately fostering a thriving research community. As AI continues to evolve, it will be crucial for researchers to navigate the evolving landscape with ethical principles in mind, ensuring that AI continues to be a powerful force for positive change in research.

2. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TECHNIQUES IN RESEARCH

2.1 Machine learning algorithms (MLA) and applications have become increasingly valuable tools in conducting research across various domains. Here are some ways in which they are useful:

➤ *MLA and Their Versatility*

Machine Learning Algorithms (MLA) and their applications have emerged as indispensable tools that transcend disciplinary boundaries, revolutionizing research in diverse domains. These algorithms bring a multifaceted approach to research, offering unmatched utility in data analysis, pattern recognition, and insight extraction (Smith et al., 2019). With the capacity to efficiently process vast volumes of data, MLAs empower researchers to identify concealed relationships, uncover anomalies, and attain a profound comprehension of intricate phenomena. Such capabilities lay the foundation for groundbreaking discoveries and a deeper understanding of complex systems.

➤ *Empowering Research Across Fields*

In an era where data reigns supreme, MLAs propel research forward through their predictive modeling capabilities (Brown & Johnson, 2018). By training these algorithms on historical data, researchers can not only forecast future outcomes but also make informed predictions and simulate various scenarios, enriching disciplines such as economics, climate science, healthcare, and the social sciences. Furthermore, MLAs shine in image and signal processing tasks, automatically classifying, segmenting, and analyzing visual data, benefiting fields like astronomy, medical imaging, and remote sensing (Gomez et al., 2020)

➤ *Facilitating Informed Decision-Making and Collaboration*

Machine Learning Algorithms support data-driven decision-making, empowering researchers across domains (Smith & Gomez, 2020). By analyzing historical data and uncovering intricate patterns, MLAs facilitate evidence-based choices, resource optimization, and strategy development in realms as diverse as business, finance, and policy-making. Beyond efficiency gains, these algorithms automate repetitive tasks, allowing researchers to allocate more time to higher-level analysis and result interpretation. Additionally, MLAs foster collaboration and knowledge sharing, providing researchers with tools for data sharing, collaborative filtering, and recommendation systems, ultimately connecting them with relevant publications and potential collaborators (Gomez & Wilson, 2021).

2.2 Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques play a crucial role in data analysis and text mining for research purposes. Here are some ways in which NLP is useful in conducting research:

➤ *NLP for Text Preprocessing and Analysis*

Natural Language Processing (NLP) is an indispensable asset in modern research, facilitating various critical tasks. One such function is text preprocessing, wherein NLP algorithms meticulously clean and structure textual data, expunging irrelevant information and formatting inconsistencies (Jones & White, 2022). This initial step is pivotal as it bolsters the quality of data used for research analysis, ensuring that subsequent investigations are built on a robust foundation.

NLP extends its utility to text classification and categorization, allowing researchers to automatically organize vast datasets based on content (Johnson et al., 2021). This capability aids in the efficient organization of research materials, enabling the identification of pertinent articles or publications and streamlining the research process. Sentiment analysis, another NLP application, empowers researchers to decipher the sentiment conveyed in textual documents, offering insights into public opinion, attitudes towards specific topics, and sentiments expressed in social media content (Clark & Miller, 2019).

➤ *Information Extraction, Summarization, and Beyond*

NLP plays a pivotal role in information extraction, employing techniques like Named Entity Recognition (NER) to identify and classify named entities within text (Thompson & Davis, 2020). These entities include people, organizations, locations, and dates mentioned in documents, facilitating the extraction of valuable information for further analysis. Additionally, NLP algorithms excel in text summarization, automatically generating concise summaries of lengthy documents. Researchers can utilize these summaries to swiftly comprehend key points, findings, and conclusions within research articles, thereby enhancing the efficiency of literature review processes (Harris & Young, 2018).

Topic modeling is another powerful application of NLP, with techniques like Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) assisting researchers in uncovering hidden themes and patterns within document collections (Johnson & Martinez, 2021). This aids in literature reviews, identifying research gaps, and gaining deeper insights into the research landscape. Furthermore, NLP-based question answering systems enhance information retrieval, assisting researchers in locating specific data within extensive document collections through techniques such as document indexing and query processing (Williams & Taylor, 2017).

➤ *Beyond Language Barriers and Visualization*

NLP transcends language barriers, offering language translation capabilities that enable cross-lingual analysis and access to research literature in diverse languages (Lee & Garcia, 2022). This promotes international collaboration and broadens the scope of research analysis. Additionally, NLP harmonizes seamlessly with data visualization techniques, transforming textual data into visually compelling representations (Smith & Anderson, 2020). Researchers can present their findings through captivating visualizations, simplifying the communication of complex information and narratives to a wider audience

2.3 Data analytics, including Pattern Recognition and Predictive Modelling, plays a vital role in conducting research across various domains. Here's how data analytics is useful in research:

➤ *Pattern Recognition and Predictive Modeling*

Data analytics, encompassing pattern recognition and predictive modeling, is indispensable in diverse research domains (Smith et al., 2021). Through clustering and classification algorithms, researchers can uncover hidden patterns and relationships within datasets, unveiling complex phenomena (Johnson & Brown, 2019). Data analytics empowers the identification of anomalies and the extraction of valuable insights from extensive data volumes (Garcia & Lee, 2020). It serves as a vital tool for hypothesis generation, hypothesis testing, and empirical evidence-based decision-making.

➤ *Data Exploration, Visualization, and Feature Selection*

Data analytics equips researchers with robust data exploration and visualization tools (Clark & Miller, 2021). Visualizations aid in detecting patterns, trends, and outliers, facilitating a deeper understanding of data (Harris & Williams, 2022). Additionally, data analytics assists in feature selection and engineering, enhancing model accuracy by pinpointing critical variables (Thompson et al., 2020). This optimizes predictive models, revealing underlying factors driving research phenomena.

➤ *Time Series Analysis, Risk Management, and Data Integration*

Data analytics shines in time series analysis, vital for evolving data patterns (Smith & Patel, 2018). It offers researchers tools to assess and manage risks effectively (Jones & Taylor, 2017). By analyzing historical data, researchers can quantify and mitigate risks, improving decision-making (Baker & Wilson, 2019). Moreover, data analytics supports data integration and fusion, allowing researchers to harness insights from multiple domains or modalities (Lee & Martinez, 2022). This enhances the depth of understanding complex research problems and model accuracy.

3. KEY CHALLENGES & LIMITATIONS OF AI IN RESEARCH

While AI has brought numerous benefits to research, it also faces certain challenges and limitations that researchers need to be aware of. Here are some key challenges and limitations of AI in research:

- *Data Quality and Bias*: AI relies on quality data, but research datasets can contain biases, inaccuracies, or limited representation, affecting AI model performance and fairness. Ensuring data quality and addressing biases is essential to prevent misleading outcomes.

- *Interpretability:* Some AI models, especially deep learning ones, operate as black boxes, hindering their interpretability. Researchers may struggle to explain their decisions, impacting trust and acceptance in certain research fields.
- *Lack of Domain Knowledge:* AI models may lack domain-specific knowledge, relying solely on patterns from training data. Researchers must apply AI cautiously to ensure alignment with domain expertise.
- *Ethical Concerns:* AI research raises ethical issues, including data privacy, security, and biases. Researchers must handle data responsibly, ensure fairness, and consider societal impacts.
- *Limited Generalization:* AI models trained on specific datasets may not generalize well to new data or research contexts. Researchers should validate generalization capabilities.
- *Resource Requirements:* AI model training and deployment demand substantial computational resources, potentially limiting access for researchers with fewer resources.
- *Algorithmic Biases:* AI models can inherit biases from training data, leading to biased predictions. Researchers must identify and mitigate biases to ensure fairness.
- *Human-AI Collaboration:* Effective AI integration requires collaboration between researchers and AI systems. Researchers must understand AI limitations and work collaboratively.
- *Continuous Learning:* AI models may need updates to stay relevant. Researchers must address challenges in maintaining and updating models.
- *Adoption and Acceptance:* Widening AI adoption in research may face resistance. Researchers should address concerns and build trust for broader acceptance.

4. THE INTEGRATION OF AI WITH OTHER EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

The integration of AI with other emerging technologies, such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and blockchain, holds great potential for driving innovation and solving complex problems. Here is of the integration of AI with these technologies: AI's integration with emerging technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT) and blockchain offers substantial innovation potential.

- *AI and IoT Synergy:* Combining AI with IoT forms intelligent, interconnected systems. AI processes IoT data, enabling real-time insights, predictive analytics, and automation. This union finds use in smart cities, industrial automation, healthcare monitoring, and environmental oversight.
- *AI and Blockchain Fusion:* Merging AI and blockchain blends secure data storage with advanced analysis. Blockchain ensures trustworthy data sharing, while AI extracts insights from it. Applications span supply chain management, fraud detection, identity verification, and decentralized AI models.
- *Synergistic Benefits:* AI, IoT, and blockchain integration synergizes their strengths. IoT yields vast data, fueling AI's data-driven decision-making. Blockchain secures this data, fostering trust and preserving application integrity.
- *Privacy and Security Focus:* Integrating AI, IoT, and blockchain demands robust privacy and security measures. Protecting sensitive IoT data on the blockchain is paramount. AI algorithms should incorporate privacy-preserving techniques, while blockchain networks address scalability and privacy challenges.
- *Ethical Considerations:* This integration raises ethical questions. Ethical AI development is vital, ensuring fairness, transparency, and accountability. Blockchain's decentralization aligns with ethics, granting data control to individuals.
- *Research and Innovation Opportunities:* AI, IoT, and blockchain's convergence sparks research and innovation. Novel applications, algorithm advancements, and system architectures emerge. Collaborations between experts in these fields drive breakthroughs.

5. CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed research by revolutionizing data analysis, knowledge generation, and decision-making processes. The integration of AI techniques such as Machine Learning (ML), Natural Language Processing (NLP) has provided researchers with potent tools to extract valuable insights, predict outcomes, and explore complex phenomena. AI-driven data analytics enables researchers to unearth latent patterns, make data-driven decisions, and construct predictive models, thereby enhancing the efficacy and accuracy of their research endeavors. Through collaborative platforms and recommendation systems, AI also facilitates collaboration and the exchange of knowledge among researchers. It accelerates scientific discovery by automating mundane duties,

freeing up the time of researchers for higher-level thought and creativity. The ability of artificial intelligence to analyze diverse data types, such as genomic data, medical images, and environmental sensor data, has created new avenues for scientific advancement in numerous fields. While artificial intelligence offers numerous benefits, it also presents challenges and limitations that must be addressed by researchers. Ensure data quality, interpretability, and ethical considerations for responsible AI research practices. When employing AI techniques, researchers must be aware of algorithmic biases, generalization limitations, and resource requirements. Collaboration between humans and artificial intelligence is required to utilize AI as a tool, complementing rather than substituting human expertise. In addition, the integration of AI with emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and blockchain provides research opportunities and synergistic benefits. IoT systems propelled by AI enable real-time insights and automation, whereas AI combined with blockchain enables secure and transparent data analysis. These integrations require careful consideration of privacy, security, and ethical implications to safeguard sensitive information and uphold ethical standards. AI has significantly transformed research practices, enabling researchers to extract knowledge from enormous quantities of data, make decisions based on data, and collaborate effectively. By adopting responsible and ethical AI practices, researchers can utilize the full potential of AI to drive innovation, solve complex problems, and advance knowledge across disciplines.

REFERENCES

- [1] *AI in Analytics: Powering the Future of Data Analytics*. (2021, January 21). Dataconomy. <https://dataconomy.com/2021/01/21/ai-in-analytics-powering-the-future-of-data-analytics/>
- [2] S Baker and L Clark (2021), Text Mining and Knowledge Discovery: Unveiling Insights through NLP. *Data Analysis Journal*, **34**(6), pp. 567-581.
- [3] A Brown and P Johnson (2018), Machine Learning in Climate Science: Accelerating and Enhancing Research. *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society*, **99**(9), pp. 1807-1819.
- [4] E Clark and G Miller (2019), Sentiment Analysis: Understanding Public Opinion with NLP. *Social Sciences Review*, **47**(3), pp. 312-328.
- [5] M Gomez and S Wilson (2021), Recommender Systems and Collaborative Filtering in Research Collaboration. *Journal of Research Collaboration*, **10**(3), pp. 211-225
- [6] M Gomez et al. (2020), Advancements in Machine Learning for Medical Image Processing. *Journal of Medical Imaging*, **7**(2), 022001.
- [7] D Harris and M Young (2018), Text Summarization with NLP: Enhancing Literature Review Efficiency. *Research Efficiency Journal*, **15**(2), pp. 189-202.
- [8] M H Huang, R Rust, and V Maksimovic (2019), The feeling economy: managing in the next generation of Artificial Intelligence, *California Management Review*, **61**(4), pp.43–65.
- [9] R Johnson et al. (2021), Text Classification and Categorization with NLP: Streamlining Research Processes. *Journal of Research Management*, **44**(7), pp. 812-828.
- [10] T Johnson and A Martinez (2021), Topic Modeling with NLP: Unveiling Hidden Themes in Research Literature. *Advanced Research Trends*, **28**(4), pp.452-468.
- [11] H Lee and S Garcia (2022), NLP for Cross-Lingual Analysis and Research Collaboration. *International Journal of Multilingual Research*, **39**(1), pp. 56-70.
- [12] M Z E Mohammed and E Bashier (2017), *Machine Learning: Algorithms and Applications*, Taylor, and Francis Group.

- [13] J Smith et al. (2019), Data Mining and Machine Learning in Astronomy. *Annual Review of Astronomy and Astrophysics*, **57**, pp. 403-440.
- [14] R Smith and M Gomez (2020), Machine Learning for Data-Driven Decision-Making in Business. *Harvard Business Review*, **98**(6), pp. 45-53.
- [15] T Smith and M Anderson (2020), Data Visualization and Storytelling with NLP: Engaging Audiences in Research. *Visual Communication Journal*, **17**(4), pp. 567-582.
- [16] P Thompson and L Davis (2020), Information Extraction with NLP: Advancing Knowledge Discovery. *Information Sciences Journal*, **25**(3), pp. 423-438.
- [17] *What is Machine Learning? | IBM.* (n.d.). What Is Machine Learning? | IBM. <https://www.ibm.com/topics/machine-learning>
- [18] *What is Natural Language Processing? | IBM.* (n.d.). What Is Natural Language Processing? | IBM. <https://www.ibm.com/topics/natural-language-processing>
- [19] D Williams and K Taylor (2017), NLP-Based Question Answering Systems: Advancing Information Retrieval in Research. *Journal of Information Science*, **42**(6), pp. 752-76

Exploring Ideology and History in *Caleb Williams* and *Maria or the Wrongs of Women*

Akhilesh Kumar

Department of English, SGTB Khalsa College,
University of Delhi

akhileshkmr89@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the socio-historical realities in the works of Mary Wollstonecraft (1759 - 1797) and William Godwin (1756 - 1836). The Pitt Government and its repressive policies such as suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, along with the various women's issues are also discussed in this paper. Godwin's The Adventures of Caleb Williams; or Things as they are (1794) and Wollstonecraft's Maria or the Wrongs of Women (1798) are the primary texts used to depict the aforementioned issues.

Keywords: *habeas corpus, women's rights, ideology, history, novel.*

This paper will explore the political and historical events that lie behind the fictional works of William Godwin (1756 - 1836) and Mary Wollstonecraft (1759 - 1797). The first part will be focused on a discussion of the policies of the Pitt Government, the suspension of Habeas Corpus Act (1794) and the turbulent atmosphere which was precipitated by the war efforts of England which led to feelings of hostility, distrust, fear, and treason. In this period of ferment, women's rights also occupied people's minds. The paper will attempt to discuss these issues through Godwin's *The Adventures of Caleb Williams; or Things as they are* (1794) and Wollstonecraft's *Maria or the Wrongs of Women* (1798)

In the history of Great Britain, there were two William Pitts who dominated British politics. They were known as Pitt the Elder and Pitt the Younger. Even though Pitt the Younger was not as experienced as Pitt the Elder in policies of war, he played a prominent role during the French Revolution. He became Prime Minister of England at the young age of twenty-four to grudging acceptance by Parliament. Initially, his policies were based on peace, and he played a particularly important role in the Finance Department and tried his best for what he saw as the economic development of England.

The French Revolution broke out in 1789. The French rebels saw themselves and their cause as a struggle against the corrupt monarchy. Under Louis XVI, France had become morally and financially bankrupt. One pre-eminent cause which added fuel to the fire was the conflict between the Parliament and King over representation which led to the attack on the Bastille. The fall of the Bastille was a symbolic victory of the masses over the tyrannical French nobility. Some revolutionary soldiers also tried to propagate their revolutionary ideas as far as Ireland. This was an uncomfortable situation for the English nobility and monarchy. In both France but in England, the radical ideas of the revolutionaries were being talked about. These ideas were fanned by radical writers, also known as the Jacobins. The Jacobin writers were against emotions and passions. The Anti-Jacobins, on the other hand, were supporters of the old norms and traditions, and in their work, they talked about emotions and passion. They believed in absolute monarchy and were against the reformatory zeal of the Reformation. For instance, Edmund Burke who critiques revolutionary thought in his book *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), was worried about the spread of anarchy and unrest in England just like in France. Thomas Paine, William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Hays etc. were against this Burkean ideology. Their work was seen as threatening the peace of England, especially the Monarchy, with its radical espousal of revolutionary ideas. Pitt the Younger tried his best to crush these revolutionary ideas, and finally on 23rd May 1794 he suspended *habeas corpus*.

Habeas corpus endowed some essential rights to people. With the suspension of these rights people could be incarcerated for any kind of dissent which the authorities saw fit to prosecute. This Act had been passed as far back as 1215 AD in the Magna Carta Charter. In fact, the suspension of *habeas corpus* was a second Magna Carta. In February 1795, *habeas corpus* was suspended for six months. The Gagging Act was also passed by Pitt in the

same year. Through this Act he put a ban on radical literary works. Thomas Paine, Thomas Hardy and John Thelwall were prosecuted for their work. Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* was in wide circulation and he, along with Thomas Hardy and John Thelwall were prosecuted for their work. In the essay titled "William Godwin's influence upon Thelwall," which traces the influence of Godwin on John Thelwall, B. Sprague Allen writes about the Pitt government harassing Thelwall by planting spies amidst his lectures and acting against landlords willing to rent out their spaces to him for carrying out these discussions. Authors and even publishers of radical literature were being intimidated and arrested during this time, while newspapers like *Anti-Jacobin* were given a free rein. During the Pitt government rule, many publishers had to pay a penalty for publishing radical literature. There was even a register with the names of publishers who published such radical literature.

Anjana Sharma writes how Godwin's publication of *Caleb Williams* came close on the heels of the Treason Trials and how the suspension of the *habeas corpus* was an "immediate provocation." Through the suspension of *habeas corpus*, Pitt the Younger tried to suppress radical literature through a rule of terror. In his essay "Repression, Terror and the Rule of Law in England during the Decade of the French Revolution (1985)", Clive Emsley describes the difference between 'terror' and 'repression'. Repression and terror, while not being synonymous, are two sides of the same coin. Emsley writes that Pitt the Younger tried to enforce the harshest punishments against the Jacobins in the same way hardened criminals were punished in the eighteenth century. In other words, it can be said that radical literature was like a crime against the English Crown. Emsley is critical of the policies of terror and repression of Pitt and says that terror was used to destroy the 'good' moderate reformers by the 'bad.' Anarchy was the prevailing fear that Pitt tried to spread in England. Emsley also writes that for the English loyalists, 'terror' was a visceral fear of the Robbespierre regime. Pitt wanted to maintain English liberty through a reign of terror. But this was problematic. He was not protecting English liberty, rather he was protecting the rights of the English monarchy. Therefore, in many ways the policies of Pitt were quite close to the policies of Robbespierre. Douglas Hay has commented that even eighteenth-century law was a 'buttress' for safeguarding property. The Seditious Meetings Bill of 1795 was a similarly repressive measure that sought to place curbs on people's freedom. As has been mentioned, the war between England and France took place during the Pitt government. The war policies affected both England and France. But even before the war, certain ideas had developed in Pitt's mind. Suspension of *habeas corpus* was not too successful as William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Hays discussed radical ideas in their work even after this "suspension."

In *Political Justice*, Godwin explores peace and takes many subversive examples from Thomas More's *Utopia*. Equality and Liberty are the cornerstones for his ideal of political justice. In his novel *Caleb Williams*, he discusses the nature of tyranny and terror. After a study of this novel, it is apparent that Falkland and Tyrrell rule by terrorizing people from the lower classes. The portrayal of Falkland and Tyrrell could be seen as parallel to the repressive ideology of Pitt the Younger. Falkland, after committing murder, always tries to terrify Caleb, thus creating an atmosphere of suppression. Like Pitt's earlier stance, Falkland initially tries to maintain a harmonious relationship with Caleb. But when he admits to committing the murder of Tyrrell and discloses it to Caleb, he also immediately starts doubting the loyalty of Caleb. So, he tries to exert control over him using terror. Caleb tries to escape and leaves Falkland's house. But Falkland tries to intimidate him with threats of legal proceedings. He is successful in putting Caleb in prison where he faces different kinds of terror in the forms of bureaucracy and autocracy.

Interestingly the idea of the prison which for Godwin in *Political Justice* had become synonymous with scrutiny, inspection, and absolutist rule, is elaborated upon in *Caleb Williams*. After leaving Falkland's house, Caleb moves from place to place within England and soon realizes that he is being spied on. Even when he reaches the farthest corners of the country, where he assumes that people may not know him and that he can live peacefully, and start a new life, his plans are thwarted since the news about him – and his 'acts' – reaches before him. This surveillance becomes a characteristic feature of the terror unleashed by the Pitt government, and at the same time can be used to elaborate upon the idea of the 'prison' as used by Godwin in his treatise. The whole of England becomes a prison for Caleb, since the invisible eyes following him prevent him from leaving the shores of the country. This kind of surveillance that is used to 'tame' Caleb indicates an essential feature of the way power operates in this society. It is the Benthamite notion of the "panopticon" which is so clearly illuminated. But here this vision is available only to the powerful in society, to those who can exercise it. In the *Introduction* to *Caleb Williams*, Pamela Clemet writes:

"Godwin's protest at the intrusion of the government into private life is reinforced by historical and literary allusions which convey how, as Hazlitt remarked, 'heroes on paper might degenerate into vagabonds in practice.' For example, the name of Falkland recalls the chivalrous and cultivated Lucius

Cary, second Viscount Falkland, who fought on the royalist side in the English Civil War and died by deliberately riding into a hail of enemy bullets at the first battle of Newbury.” (xviii)

Ulrich Broich observes how prison discourses in eighteenth century English literature reflected the evolving ideologies behind its inception and later reforms. Caleb’s repeated imprisonment and Falkland becoming like Tyrrell drive home the fact that inherent hierarchies of power and individual characters are mutually exclusive. Broich writes that Godwin is not interested in prison reforms or the character of the English prison, as his interest lies in depicting the prison as a symbol of power that legitimizes violence. He also comments that *Caleb Williams* “is much more pessimistic than earlier English prison literature.” Imprisonment, incarceration, and confinement only attain a new frame from which to be looked at, as here though Caleb breaks out of one kind of institutional prison, he is incarcerated in the system itself which becomes an open – and all pervasive – prison for Caleb.

At last Falkland’s act of terror becomes the cause of his defeat. Caleb, after being released from prison, can expose the web of lies and conspiracy before the court and lays bare the crimes of Falkland. In this novel Caleb Williams describes his condition of terror. In Tyrrel and Falkland’s relationship we see that they try their best to control each other through terror. They are both representatives of the ruling class who perceive the domination of the lower classes as just and normal. In this novel Tyrrel describes Falkland as a “demon.” He vows to attain peace only after the ruin of Falkland. This reminds us of Pitt’s dispute with other parliamentary members. Many members of Parliament did not like Pitt’s policies. He even had a quarrel with the King over the issue of Catholic emancipation. During this dispute Pitt resigned from the post of Prime Minister in 1801.

Tyrrell too behaves like Falkland. He tries to suppress his cousin sister Emily. In the novel Emily is Tyrrell’s cousin. She begins to fall in love with Falkland after he rescues her from a fire. This is, evidently, much to Tyrrell’s dismay and anger. We see that Emily falls in love with Falkland, but Falkland does not exhibit any affection for her. In attempting to control Emily, Tyrrell confines her in a room. This act of Tyrrell confirms that the powerful are benevolent so long as the lower classes or the weaker sex conform to their historic roles, but once they are perceived as crossing a prescribed social limit, then this same benevolent patriarchy and authority seeks to crush such opposition mercilessly.

We can analyze how gender and power affects the relationship of Falkland and Caleb, Tyrrell, and Melville. In the initial part of this novel, we discover the feminine behavior of Falkland visible in the form of his confinement in the room. Caleb Williams is always afraid of Falkland, to the extent of always obeying and bearing his terror. His attitude changes when Falkland puts him in prison. He decides to reveal Falkland’s crime before the court. Falkland and Caleb’s relationship has also been interpreted in the form of a homo-erotic relationship where Falkland is seen as the dominating partner and Caleb as the passive one.

In this context we can see that the condition of the working classes and women are almost the same. When it comes to Emily, her situation is akin to a member of the working classes. Before discussing the gender politics in *Caleb Williams*, it is necessary to discuss the condition of women in late eighteenth century England.

In late eighteenth century British women did not have socio-political and economic rights. They were only the objects of pleasure and property of their husbands. Eighteenth century law was misogynistic. According to these laws, after marriage a woman’s property is passed over to her husband. They also did not have any rights or authority over their children. These laws also criminalized adultery by women. But the laws did not judge men in the same manner. Women could not seek prosecution or legal redress from their adulterous husbands. Women who rebelled against familiar conventions could be conveniently locked up in mental asylums by their male guardians.

During this time, women like Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Hays, Elizabeth Finch, and Hannah More were active in trying to dismantle gender hierarchy. In 1792, Wollstonecraft wrote *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. In this treatise she talks about liberty and equality for women and emphasizes the need for a comprehensive education for women. She says that with good education women can play a prominent role in nation building. They can play a much better socio-political role than what men have demonstrated so far. In this essay she also criticizes prostitution and says that a proper education would also enable women to become good mothers. She critiques Rousseau where he says that liberty should not be extended to women. In *Emile* (Book V) he says that a woman is a man but for her sex. With this rather stark generalization, he undoes any idea for the subjectivity of women, and reasserts the binary of the master – slave relationship, where women are created for man’s delight and ought to make themselves pleasing to men. After reading Wollstonecraft’s work, it is evident how her ideas are different

from those of Hannah More, who in her 1799 essay, “Strictures on Female Education”, discusses women’s education in the context of religion. She argues that women should participate in charity. While Wollstonecraft lives out her theory and does not allow for a gap to emerge between theory and practice, in More’s case, that gap is quite apparent.

In Wollstonecraft and Godwin, we find the novelization of social events in their work. In *Caleb Williams*, Emily’s mother gets married against her wish and suffers a troubled matrimonial life. Her suffering ends only with her death. Tyrell takes care of Emily but when she comes of age, he tries to force her understanding of social equations between himself and Tyrell, as a means of preventing her marriage to Falkland. When all arguments fail against the strength of her passion, he then physically locks her up. After Tyrell’s death Emily could not have access to property because of her gender. As with her mother, it is death which ends her troubles too. We thus get a glimpse of women’s condition in the eighteenth century.

In *Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman*, two prominent women, Jemima, and Maria challenge patriarchal norms. Maria fights against the tyranny of her father and her brother. As a child she sees the disturbed relationship between her parents. Her brother is cruel and tried to underestimate his sisters. These incidents remind us that Wollstonecraft is portraying her life story through a fictionalized venture. This work throws light on some interesting possibilities. To begin with, it has two prefaces - one by William Godwin and the other by Mary Wollstonecraft herself. As a fragment, the text gets placed, in retrospect, in the tradition of the Romantic fragment. Moreover, it is the narrative style of the novel that gets tied up with both issues when we see it as an autobiographical re-telling of Wollstonecraft’s life. It cuts across various genres and signals the creation of the female Gothic. Mary Poovey also locates this fragment of a novel within the tradition of the sentimental novel, where her sentimentalism “is another expression of what Hegel called the “nostalgia for transcendence;” it constitutes one more desperate attempt to construct a myth of the autonomous self and of Presence – here, now, in this world.”

The topos of sexuality, reading and female subjectivity also emerge as some of the main issues. Sexuality becomes the mainstay of the novel, since Maria is locked up because she refused the sexual advances of her husband’s friend. Godwin’s ideological legacy becomes evident when we keep *Caleb Williams* in the background. Is the presentation of Maria in some ways the presentation of the female Caleb? This connection is further strengthened by the fact that like Caleb, she too has no economic or political standing. Then, as becomes evident from the parallels in the novel, we have an interesting case of not just appropriation of a male figure from a male novelist’s very male-centric text, but the retelling and repositioning of this narrative through two more ideas – female friendship and reading.

In the Introduction to *The Autobiography of Desire: English Jacobin Women Novelists of the 1790s* (2004), Anjana Sharma writes –

There is a crucial difference, though, in the manner in which these writers projected their views on culture and gender politics. While men novelists relied on strong plot lines centered around the exposition of institutional ills, women writers adopted a more personalized and emotive approach towards social issues. (15)

In prison, it is through the friendship between Jemima and Maria that the novel in many ways wins over *Caleb Williams* as a critique of the woman’s position. Initially though the relationship is framed in the context of authority, where Jemima is the warden of the prison, the friendship moves beyond the authoritarian structures that seek to contain it. Jemima’s life history is portrayed, which curiously parallels that of Maria, though they belong to different classes of society (Jemima lives a life worse than that of Maria, since she is doubly ostracized for being a bastard child and coming from a lower class.). This parallel then makes yet another appalling fact clear about how class boundaries do not really exist when it comes to oppression of women. These boundaries dissolve and in their dissolution leaves behind the attitude of patriarchy toward women.

While in prison, one of the books that Maria reads is Rousseau’s *Heloise*. The fact that she reads Rousseau in this context is interesting and important to note. It points towards her developing subjectivity, which is only accentuated by the fact of the female community that gets established with Jemima. This is crucial because it stresses the rather subversive idea for the time that women need to bond with women, and that the bonding can lead to a fresh outpouring of empathy between them which helps them to stand up against patriarchy. Though the novel opens with the lament of Maria about the rumor of her dead child, in the latter part of the novel, Jemima is the one who brings her child to her and in many ways becomes its second mother, as she nourishes and helps the

child to grow. On the subversive nature of female friendships, Lisa Disch quotes Mary Wollstonecraft's observation on the reversals possible had Cleopatra liked Octavia. Disch, in her essay titled "Claire loves Julie: Reading the Story of Women's Friendship in *La Nouvelle Heloise* (1994)", observes that the relationship between Claire and Julie "chronicles an attempt to disrupt the very principles of the conservative patriarchal family that Rousseau meant to secure with the story of wifely virtue".

The developing relationship of Maria with Darnford, who is a fellow prisoner in the neighboring cell, provides an interesting inversion of the idea of conjugal harmony. When they escape from prison with the help of Jemima, Darnford is charged with an accusation of adultery. But Maria steps in and says that she is responsible for the act. In this interesting move where she takes the responsibility upon herself, she is challenging the notion of the simple, pure, and passive woman in more ways than one.

The issue of property highlights, once again, the position of Maria as a woman in the larger exchange system where not only is the woman seen as property, but as the possessor of property, she is fought over. The law too emerges as an extension of the patriarchal ethos and this becomes evident when the judge too declares that Maria has no right to the property that she is entitled to, although she is allowed to live separately from her husband. In her essay titled "Rights, Property and the Law in the English Jacobin Novel (1994)", Nancy Johnson describes how eighteenth-century law shaped the subjectivities of these two women, and how "Wollstonecraft's pursuit of authority, like that of other radical women novelists, is not without fundamental ambiguities about the figure of the autonomous individual". On Wollstonecraft's unfinished novel, Johnson writes how the two women, Maria and Jemima, and their fates are juxtaposed. She elaborates on how Jemima's being an "unpropertied female domestic" reduces her to becoming "common property" and Maria's access to wealth imprisons her, denying the liberty that she is entitled to. These encounters of women with the law, she writes, "foreshadows the position women acquire in civil society, which is not the safety of a domestic sphere distinguished by virtue, but a disenfranchised state of material poverty and social, economic, political and emotional vulnerability."

Though Maria tried to protect Darnford as mentioned earlier, in his attitude and behavior we get to see how he plays with her emotions, (like the ways in which Imlay played with Wollstonecraft's emotions), and then leaves for America and does not return. Since the novel is a fragment, and does not have a conclusive ending, there are many available fragments that speak about the various possibilities for the ending. According to some she commits suicide, and in others she lives for the sake of her child.

To quote Sharma once again:

Despite their diversity of interests, as novelists the Jacobins were united by their shared focus on the working out of institutional repression at both the general and the individual levels. Nevertheless, while this was the general agenda shared by the Jacobins, Jacobin women provided an additional dimension by writing novels that explored the numerous unspoken ways in which cultural and political repression took on gender dimension. Especially interesting was the way in which these women authors turned to their own lives to flesh out stories of social, economic, intellectual, and sexual oppression. (2)

She further writes that in the debate between use of reason and passion in the Jacobin novel, the infusion of the personal with their writing complicates their narratives and distinguishes them from male Jacobin novelists (19). Paul Keen writes –

Godwin announced in the preface to *Caleb Williams* (1794) that his use of the novel form represented an attempt to communicate political truths 'to persons whom books of philosophy and science are never likely to reach'. For women writers, the novel was both more accessible than the 'masculine' genres such as politics and history, and the medium through which they could reach the greatest number of their peers. (110)

To conclude, William Godwin's ideas about Wollstonecraft may become an interesting foray into the conclusion of this paper. His ideas are ambiguous and problematic. While he is appreciating Wollstonecraft's literary merit in his *Memoirs of the Life of the Author of the Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, he projects her as a sentimental, unreasonable woman, and therefore once again reinstates those very hierarchies that Wollstonecraft was willing to give up, forego and transform through her work. Moreover, through an analysis of the two novels above it becomes evident that there is a certain intermeshing between the movement toward a liberationist ideology (through the impact of the French Revolution), but at the same time the clamps that constantly put on women are

made visible. These restrictions, though irrational, arbitrary and patriarchal are still shown to be dominating the lives of women and affecting them severely. But the legacy of Wollstonecraft becomes an enduring one as the movement carries on with people like Virginia Woolf, and later, with the French Feminists like Helene Cixous and others. As Janet Todd writes –

“...for women in the later 1790s, reacting against their debasement by the sentimental myth and increasingly confident of their literary position, fiction seemed a way of inserting their works into culture as allegorical tales, ethical stories and active political agents.”

A comparative analysis reveals that both novels represent contemporary times. Even though Godwin tries to highlight the female character of Emily, his focus is criticizing the political condition of late eighteenth century Britain that was fanned by Pitt the Younger. His novel, in a way, is more about depicting a history of the prevailing conditions. Wollstonecraft's work is more socio-economic and focuses on how women challenge patriarchy. Her novel is about the history of women, as she writes in the Preface to *Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman*. Both the texts challenge prevailing conditions of terror – Godwin does it through his representation of the clash between classes, while Wollstonecraft's novel is more intersectional as she depicts the conflict between class and gender. Apart from the concerns about class and gender, prison is also an important motif. In *Caleb Williams*, the prison system is criticized, while in *Maria* it is a metaphor as readers find Maria comparing her life to Bastille.

REFERENCES

- [1] A K Mellor (1975), Introduction, *Maria or the Wrongs of Woman*, WW Norton, New York.
- [2] A Sharma (2004), *The Autobiography of Desire: English Jacobin Women Novelists of the 1790s*, Macmillan, New Delhi.
- [3] B S Allen (1922), William Godwin's Influence upon John Thelwall, *PMLA*, **37**, 4, pp. 662-82.
- [4] C Emsley (1985), Repression, 'Terror' and the Rule of Law in England during the Decade of the French Revolution, *TEHR*, **100**, 397, pp. 801-825.
- [5] D O' Quinn (1997), Trembling: Wollstonecraft, Godwin, and the Resistance to Literature, *ELH*, **64**, 3, pp. 761-788.
- [6] E Burke (1993), *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (L G Mitchell, Eds), Oxford University Press, New York.
- [7] J Todd (2007), *Feminist Literary History: A Defence*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- [8] J Todd (2008), Reason and Sensibility in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria; or the Wrongs of Woman*, *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, **5**, 3, pp. 17-20.
- [9] M Wollstonecraft (1975), *Maria or the Wrongs of Woman*, WW Norton, New York.
- [10] M Wollstonecraft (1995), *Vindication of the Rights of Men with A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and Hints* (Sylvana Tomaselli, Eds), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- [11] N E Johnson (1994), Rights, Property and the Law in the English Jacobin Novel, *Mosaic*, **27**, 4, pp. 99-120.
- [12] M Poovey (1982), Mary Wollstonecraft: The Gender of Genres in Late Eighteenth-Century England, *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, **15**, 2, pp. 111-26.
- [13] P Clemit (2009), Introduction, *Caleb Williams*, Oxford University Press, London.

[14] P Keen (2006), *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s: Print Culture and the Public Sphere*, Cambridge University Press, London.

[15] W Godwin (1960), *The Adventures of Caleb Williams; or Things as they are*, Richard & Winston, New York

Significance of Chemistry Laboratory Safety Rules and Warning Symbols in Schools

Dr. Pramila Tanwar

¹Associate Professor (Chemistry),
Department of Education in Science & Mathematics,
National Council of Educational Research & Training,
Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016

¹corresponding author: pramila.tanwar@ciet.nic.in

ABSTRACT

Experiments play a crucial role in the development of science. It is through the investigations conducted in the laboratory that new discoveries become possible. Experimental work is, therefore, considered an essential component. Consequently, when scientific experiments are conducted in the laboratory, adherence to safety rules and warnings is extremely necessary; otherwise, the consequences can be severe. The purpose of these experiments is to develop the fundamental skill of objective measurement in students, the use of equipment and chemicals, observation, data collection, presenting them appropriately, drawing conclusions, and preparing reports. Therefore, students must have a thorough knowledge of the facilities and equipment available in the laboratory and strictly adhere to the rules. Knowledge of safety guidelines is also essential so that students can work in the laboratory safely. Thus, this study investigated the present condition of chemical laboratory safety awareness and how such safety measures can be employed to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and practical hands-on exposure considering students in the secondary stage of education. The findings revealed that a student's attentiveness and safety inputs were the most impactful in enhancing laboratory safety. Additionally, the key factors driving this improvement were identified as "safety awareness," "emergency preparedness," "operational proficiency," "safety culture," and "safety training". These factors were observed to significantly promote lab safety in a relatively short period.

Keywords: *safety awareness, chemistry laboratory, equipment, hazardous, hands-on training, maintenance.*

1. INTRODUCTION

As academic institutions continue to expand, the safety concerns related to laboratories in schools at the secondary stage of education are becoming more prominent [1]. It is quite common to notice that, in numerous instances, the necessary laboratory safety precautions are either not given adequate consideration or completely disregarded. For example, gas fittings in chemistry laboratories of some schools often fail to meet the required standards and regulations. In some instances, chemicals are frequently stored in an unsafe manner and not kept under proper supervision. Additionally, some chemistry labs lack exhaust fans, fuming chambers, and appropriate provisions for waste disposal (both chemical waste and broken glass wares). Basic safety gear like laboratory coats, safety goggles, and gloves are often neglected during experimental work. In many cases, fire extinguishers are not consistently installed in appropriate locations, and the availability of first aid and medical facilities is either insufficient or non-existent. All these careless actions could lead to hazardous and unfortunate incidents, demanding urgent attention to chemistry laboratory safety rules.

Safety is a practical field of study, implying that we often gain knowledge on how to stay safe through past mistakes and incidents. While experience can be a valuable teacher, relying solely on our own mistakes to learn safety may lead to dire consequences. Most of us prefer not to encounter fires, explosions, toxic exposures, or other dangerous situations firsthand. Instead, it is wiser to adopt safety guidelines that have been developed based on the experiences of others who have faced adversity. We can minimize our exposure to hazards by consistently and diligently incorporating safety considerations into our daily decision-making, particularly in laboratory settings.

This entails being mindful of safety and taking proactive measures to prevent accidents. The outcome of unnecessary risk-taking is likely to result in injuries or harm to ourselves or others. Therefore, prioritizing safety is crucial for ensuring the well-being and security of everyone involved [2]. This involves not only possessing the requisite knowledge and planning skills to meet these objectives but also effectively engaging students in areas such as the interplay between the potential hazards in a chemistry laboratory and safety measures to prevent the same; which is feasible only when the teacher is determined towards promoting and maintaining a safe laboratory environment for the students.

2. THE FUNDAMENTALS

This study has been structured into three parts. The first part highlights the basic infrastructural facilities offered by a laboratory and how the students can be trained for the judicious use of the same. The second part focuses on the awareness of general laboratory rules and primary points of first aid that must be given against some of the most common accidents that might happen in the chemistry laboratory. Thirdly, various safety signs and symbols have been discussed in brief.

2.1 Facilities in the Laboratory

For working in the chemistry laboratory (**Figure 1A** and **Figure 1B**), there are tables and cabinets where equipment, chemicals, and glassware are kept. In the chemistry laboratory, there are provisions in the table for running experiments, such as a sink where water can be used for washing. Students should be aware that they should only use water when necessary and avoid wasting it. Acid-resistant stands are used to store frequently used chemicals. These chemicals are usually arranged in a specific order. Gas burners and spirit lamps are used for heating. Gas burners should be turned off after completing the experiment. If there is a gas leak, the teacher and laboratory staff should be immediately informed. Adequate arrangements for the collection and disposal of water should be near the water aspirator in the laboratory. Electrical and magnetic experiments require electrical arrangements on the tables in the laboratory so that they can be used when needed. There should be a proper arrangement for waste disposal to deal with solid waste, which can be placed near every table in the laboratory.



Figure 1A. *Facilities in a chemistry laboratory.*



Figure 1B. *Facilities in a chemistry laboratory.*

Following is a list of facilities and equipment commonly found in chemistry labs:

1. **Fume Hoods:** These enclosed ventilated workspaces are indispensable for the safe removal of hazardous fumes generated during chemical reactions.
2. **Laboratory Benches:** Equipped with sinks, gas, and water outlets, these benches serve as the central workspaces for experiments.
3. **Safety Showers and Eye Wash Stations:** These installations are vital for immediate response in case of chemical spills or eye exposure incidents.
4. **Chemical Storage Cabinets:** Secure storage units designed to prevent accidental exposure to chemicals and ensure proper organization.
5. **Safety Equipment:** This category encompasses fire extinguishers, fire blankets, first-aid kits, and emergency eyewash stations.
6. **Bunsen Burners:** Widely used heat sources for various laboratory experiments.
7. **Glassware:** Comprising beakers, flasks, test tubes, and graduated cylinders for precise substance measurement and mixing.
8. **Lab Equipment:** Including pipettes, burettes, balances, thermometers, and pH meters for accurate measurements.
9. **Chemicals:** A diverse array of chemical reagents essential for experimentation.
10. **Chemical Waste Disposal:** Containers and protocols for the secure disposal of chemical waste.
11. **Safety Goggles and Lab Coats:** Personal protective equipment (PPE) for safeguarding students and instructors.
12. **Ventilation Systems:** Ensuring proper air circulation and minimizing exposure to chemical vapors.
13. **Whiteboards or Blackboards:** Aiding instructors in illustrating concepts and procedures.
14. **Data Analysis Tools:** Including computers and software for data collection, analysis, and presentation.

15. **Reference Materials:** Comprising textbooks, reference books, and educational resources pertinent to chemistry.
16. **Projectors and Screens:** Facilitating presentations and demonstrations.
17. **Chemical Spill Kits:** Equipped with materials for the containment and cleanup of chemical spills.
18. **Electrical Outlets:** Providing power sources for laboratory equipment.
19. **Lab Desks and Chairs:** Furnishing students with comfortable workspaces.

These facilities and equipment are essential for creating a safe and conducive learning environment in chemistry laboratories, allowing students to conduct experiments and gain practical experience in the field of chemistry. Proper maintenance and adherence to safety protocols are crucial to ensure the safe and effective use of these facilities.

2.2 Preparing Students for Laboratory Work

It is crucial to prepare students for working in the laboratory so that when they work there, they have complete knowledge of the available tools, chemicals, etc. Science teachers must have a prior discussion with the students before conducting practical work. Through prior laboratory discussions, students should understand what precautions they need to take when conducting experiments. Furthermore, students can actively participate in the planning and organization of laboratory activities, which will lead to their development of process skills, scientific attitude, cognitive abilities, and understanding nature of science (**Figure 2**).

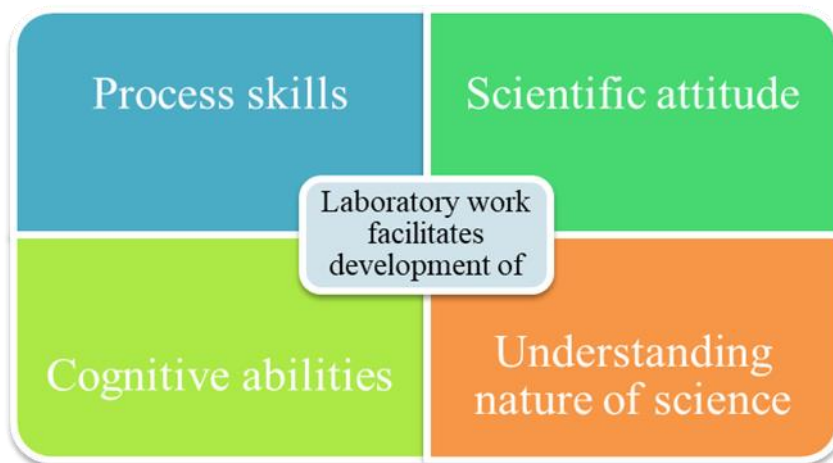


Figure 2. Skills promoted by laboratory work.

To ensure effective execution of experiments, the following guidelines should be considered:

1. The teacher should put emphasis on conceptual understanding before hands-on, which requires seamless integration, coordination between theory and practical teaching-learning situations.
2. The teacher should encourage students to come prepared for the laboratory work by referring to the laboratory manual and supplementary materials. This fosters a spirit of inquiry and self-discovery.
3. Sufficient apparatus should be available to allow all students to engage in hands-on activities. Additionally, the apparatus should be regularly checked for proper functioning.
4. The teacher should engage in extensive and critical discussions with students during the laboratory work, focusing on the theoretical aspects of the experiments. Their performance must be continuously assessed to identify any misconceptions or naive concepts, thus enabling the teacher to guide their knowledge construction.

5. An updated noticeboard should be maintained displaying safety rules, laboratory schedules, experiment lists, group arrangements, and other relevant information.
6. Good discipline must be ensured within the laboratory for a smooth and productive learning environment.
7. Safety standards in the laboratory should be prioritized and a safety-conscious attitude must be instilled in students.
8. A well-equipped first-aid box should be available in the laboratory.
9. The security of students and teachers should always be prioritized over the safety of the apparatus. At the beginning of the session, students should be familiarized with the laboratory facilities, equipment, chemicals, and glassware, and provide them with essential do's and don'ts while working in the laboratory.

2.3 General Laboratory Rules

When working in the chemistry laboratory, students must adhere to the following general rules:

- Preparation is essential before starting any experiment in the laboratory.
- Wearing lab coats, gloves, and safety goggles is mandatory while working in the laboratory.
- Understanding the functioning of instruments like microscopes, physical balances, glassware, etc., is necessary before using them.
- Before using glassware or instruments, one must be aware of their functionality.
- Labels on the bottles of chemicals must be read before using any reagents.
- While heating any substance, a preliminary smell test must be conducted to ensure safety.
- Vapors from chemicals or solutions should not be directly inhaled; instead, they should be smelled indirectly by wafting.
- Acids should not be diluted by adding water; water should be added to acid drop by drop.
- Chemicals should not be touched with bare hands, and tasting them is strictly prohibited.
- Eating or drinking in the laboratory is not allowed.
- A basic first aid kit should be available in the laboratory.

If, despite all precautions and risk minimization efforts, an accident occurs, it is crucial to respond promptly, calmly, and methodically without succumbing to panic. The following points can be noted to act accordingly in such a situation:

- Be prepared by always keeping a well-equipped first aid box readily accessible.
- Remember that first aid is not meant to replace professional medical treatment, but rather to prevent further deterioration of the condition until proper medical help is obtained. Therefore, seek medical attention from a qualified healthcare provider as soon as possible.
- Additionally, report the accident to the teacher or the lab staff members. Proper documentation and reporting are essential for follow-up actions and to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Always maintain a culture of safety awareness and continuous improvement, learning from accidents or near-miss incidents to enhance safety protocols and procedures.

It must always be noted that “prevention is better than cure.” Prioritize safety measures and continuously improve protocols to avoid accidents and ensure a safe learning environment. This can be understood by considering the following cases:

1. In a chemistry laboratory, heating substances and solutions is a common requirement for various experiments, especially during the chemical analysis of salts to detect cations and anions. Heating accelerates chemical reactions, and different heating devices like Bunsen burners, spirit lamps, or kerosene lamps are available. It is essential for the teacher to be well-versed in operating these heating devices. So, the teacher must know how to adjust the airflow of a Bunsen burner to achieve a non-luminous, blue flame, which is ideal for proper heating (**Figure 3**). If the airflow is not properly adjusted or the air vent is closed, a yellow-colored smoky flame is produced, which is unsuitable for precise heating and may blacken the test tube, flask, or beaker being heated.

Occasionally, the flame may start to strike back and burn near the base of the nozzle, indicating a fully opened air vent. In such instances, the burner should be turned off, allowed to cool, and then reignited with the air vent adjusted for a proper non-luminous flame.

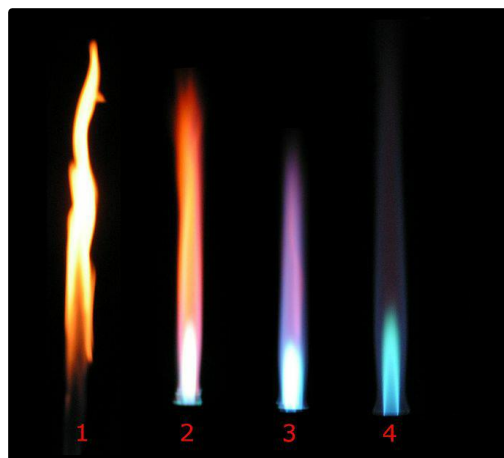


Figure 3. *Flames 3 and 4 depict blue flames which are ideal for proper heating. This photograph appears courtesy of [Wikimedia Commons contributors, 2021].*

Figure 3. *Bunsen burner flame types, [Wikimedia Commons contributors, 2021].*

2. Proper knowledge of extinguishing flames is equally crucial when using heating devices. Blowing at the flame to put it out should be avoided. Instead, for a Bunsen burner, the gas supply should be turned off, for a spirit lamp, the burning wick should be covered with a metallic cap, and for a kerosene lamp, the outer sleeve should be covered with a metallic or asbestos sheet.

3. Glass tubes and glass rods are commonly used in chemistry experiments. Glass rods are employed for mixing, stirring, and transferring chemicals and solutions, while glass tubes are used to pass gas into solutions. On occasion, it is necessary to cut glass rods and tubes to obtain the desired length. Glass tubes can also be bent into specific shapes by heating. Thus, the teacher should be familiar with the techniques of cutting, bending, and rounding/smoothing the freshly cut edges of glass rods and tubes.

2.3.1 Primary First Aid

It is essential to keep a primary first aid kit in the laboratory so that immediate first aid can be provided when needed. In case of an accident, primary first aid should be administered immediately.

2.3.1.1 First aid in case of burns

In the laboratory, burns can occur due to steam, hot water, acids, or alkalis. The primary first aid for each type of burn is different:

- If the burn is caused by steam or hot water, the affected area should be washed with cold water, and then an antiseptic cream should be applied after drying.
- For burns caused by acids, the affected area should be washed thoroughly with water, and then a solution of sodium hydrogen carbonate should be applied. After washing the wound with water, it should be dried with a clean cloth, and an antiseptic cream should be applied slowly.
- For burns caused by alkalis, the affected area should be washed with water, and then an antiseptic cream should be applied.

2.3.1.2 First aid in case of cuts and wounds from glass

The wound should be protected from dirt and dust. If glass pieces are stuck in the wound, they should be washed with cold water. The wound should be cleaned with cotton, and an antiseptic cream should be applied.

2.3.1.3 First aid in case of eye injuries

In case of an injury to the eyes, wash them immediately with cold water. If necessary, consult a doctor.

2.3.1.4 First aid in case of fire

If clothing catches fire, one should lie down on the floor and roll to put out the flames. If the fire is beyond control, one should immediately contact the fire extinguishers.

2.3.1.5 First aid in case any gases are inhaled

If someone accidentally inhales gases like sulfur dioxide, chlorine, or bromine, take them to open air immediately. Afterward, let them inhale ammonia vapor. Inform the teacher or laboratory staff immediately in case of an accident so that medical assistance can be provided.

2.4 Knowledge of Safety Signs

All personnel working in the laboratory should be familiar with safety signs. The Globally Harmonized System (GHS) is a standardized system developed by the United Nations for the classification of chemicals in laboratories. Displaying safety signs (**Figure 4**) throughout the laboratory is essential to prevent accidents and maintain a safe working environment. These signs should be available in various languages, including English, Hindi, Braille, and tactile formats for the visually impaired.



Figure 4. Some common safety signs.

2.5 Case Study on Chemical Laboratory Safety Awareness

2.5.1 Case study-01

“Teacher, students hurt after science experiment goes wrong in Delhi college.”

According to reports, an airtight flask experienced a rupture, likely due to the buildup of high pressure. It has been discovered that the faculty member at Dayal Singh College had undergone surgery to extract a fragment of glass resulting from the incident. [5]

Background: This incident took place in the chemistry laboratory of Dayal Singh College, University of Delhi.

Sequence of events:

1. **Experiment Overview:** The incident occurred during a chemistry experiment being conducted at Dayal Singh College. The experiment involved heating a chemical within an airtight flask under controlled conditions.
2. **Equipment Failure:** The mishap transpired when the airtight flask, employed to heat the chemical, burst into pieces due to high pressure. This unexpected rupture resulted in shards of glass and chemicals being expelled, leading to injuries.

3. **Injuries Sustained:** While most of the students involved in the experiment sustained minor injuries, they were immediately attended to by the college administration, which ensured they received prompt medical evaluation. The attending doctor cleared the students of any serious injuries.
4. **Guest Teacher's Injury:** Unfortunately, the guest teacher overseeing the experiment suffered a more severe injury. A fragment of glass from the shattered flask entered the teacher's left eye, causing significant damage.
5. **Medical Response:** Given the seriousness of the guest teacher's injury, the college promptly arranged for her to be transported to the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi for specialized medical treatment.

Conclusion: The unfortunate incident at Dayal Singh College serves as a stark reminder of the potential hazards that can arise in laboratory settings, even under controlled conditions. While the students involved in the experiment fortunately escaped major injuries, the incident highlights the importance of rigorous safety measures and regular equipment maintenance. The college's swift and comprehensive response, including medical attention, equipment assessment, and enhanced safety protocols, underscores its commitment to preventing similar incidents in the future and maintaining a safe learning environment for all students and teachers.

2.5.2 Case study-02

“RIE chemistry lab explosion injures 3 students.”

According to reports, three students of the Regional Institute of Education, Bhubaneswar were injured in an explosion at the Chemistry laboratory of the institute. [6]

Background: The Regional Institute of Education (RIE), in Bhubaneswar, India, a constituent unit of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), witnessed a shocking incident when an explosion occurred in its chemistry laboratory, resulting in injuries to three students.

Sequence of events:

1. **Experiment Overview:** The incident occurred during a chemistry experiment being conducted at RIE, Bhubaneswar when a test tube containing sulphuric acid reacted and exploded spontaneously.
2. **Injuries Sustained:** One of the three students sustained an injury to the right side of their head, while the others experienced only minor injuries.
3. **Medical Response and Preventive Measures:** The injured students were quickly taken to the City's Capital Hospital for medical care. Following a brief period of treatment, they were released from the hospital. To ensure the safety of all students and prevent any further accidents, the chemistry laboratory was temporarily closed. A specialized safety inspection team was assembled, comprising laboratory safety experts, chemistry faculty members, and representatives from relevant government agencies.

Conclusion: The RIE chemistry lab explosion serves as a poignant illustration of the profound significance of laboratory safety in educational institutions. It is a reminder that safety should never be compromised, and institutions must invest in comprehensive safety protocols, rigorous training, vigilant supervision, and up-to-date safety equipment to protect their students, faculty, and reputation. By prioritizing safety, educational institutions can create a secure and conducive learning environment, ensuring that accidents like the one at RIE Bhubaneswar become a thing of the past.

2.5.3 Case study-03

“Fire in IIT-K lab, 2 students injured.”

According to reports, a distressing incident occurred in the core laboratory of the Chemistry Department at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IIT-K). A fire, preceded by a sudden explosion, resulted in severe burns to a research scholar and injuries to another student. [7]

Background: A sudden fire and explosion was observed within the core laboratory of IIT-K. A research scholar in chemistry and another student got injured. The incident brought into focus the need for rigorous safety protocols and an effective response to such emergencies in laboratory settings.

Sequence of events:

1. **Incident Overview:** On the day of the incident, a group of students were engaged in laboratory experiments at the core chemistry laboratory. Fire broke out when propanol was mixed with another chemical. The students claimed that they took out fire extinguishers and controlled the situation.
2. **Injuries Sustained:** The research scholar suffered severe burns, estimated at 25 to 27 percent, resulting in critical injuries. Another student incurred minor injuries.
3. **Medical Response and Preventive Measures:** The injured students were immediately transported to Regency Hospital, where medical professionals stated that the research scholar was in critical condition. Additionally, a faculty member from IIT-K later emphasized the role played by the laboratory's advanced alarm system and fire extinguishers in controlling the fire. This underscores the crucial significance of maintaining comprehensive safety measures within laboratory environments.

Conclusion: The fire and explosion incident at the IIT-K Chemistry Department laboratory serves as a wake-up call of the critical importance of safety measures in scientific research settings. The conflicting accounts regarding the cause of the incident underscore the need for a thorough investigation to establish the root cause and improve safety protocols to prevent such incidents in the future.

3. CONCLUSION

It is crucial to exercise caution while working in the laboratory. The laboratory is a place where practical skills are learned. Adhering to general laboratory rules is necessary; otherwise, harmful consequences can occur. Based on the findings of this study, the implementation of the existing safety measures within the chemistry laboratory and science laboratories, in general, is strongly advised. Achieving this goal involves continuously developing and enhancing the workplace while maintaining strict safety conditions to safeguard the well-being of individuals and protect property. It is imperative that the safety officer overseeing this facility stays well-informed about all maintenance and development procedures to effectively ensure a safe environment. By taking these steps, the overall safety of the facility can be significantly improved, thereby, ensuring that students get a safe working environment in the laboratory.

Acknowledgements: We are very thankful to the Department of Science & Mathematics, National Council of Educational Research & Training.

REFERENCES

- [1] Laihao Ma, Xiaoxue Ma, Jingwen Zhang, Qing Yang, and Kai Wei (2021), Article in Int J Environ Res Public Health, doi: 10.3390/ijerph18126545.
- [2] Robert H. Hill, JR., David C. Finster (2016, Second Edition), Laboratory Safety for Chemistry Students, Wiley.
- [3] Wikimedia Commons contributors, Wikimedia Commons (2021), Figure in File: Bunsen burner flame types.jpg, Page Version ID: 574185694.
- [4] Pedagogy of Science, Textbook for B.Ed. Part I (2013), National Council of Educational Research and Training, pp. 279-293.
- [5] Express News Service (2023), Article in Indian Express, <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/delhi-college-teacher-student-8434001/>
- [6] The Times of India (2017), Article in The Times of India, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhubaneswar/rie-chemistry-lab-explosion-injures-3-students/articleshow/57453693.cms>
- [7] Hindustan Times (2006), Article in Hindustan Times, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/fire-in-iit-k-lab-2-students-injured/story-uMaPWDydA28yvdyT5Jdu6J.html>

Dalit Literature: An Introspection of Caste Discrimination in 'The Outcaste' and 'Murdahiya'

Dr. Rajvir Singh¹

¹Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi
Department, University

¹corresponding author: rajsinghvirdu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

*The central concern of Dalit literature is to represent the 'authentic experience' of Dalits in their writings. Dalit experiences has been represented by non-Dalit writers also. In the recent past, with the efforts by Dalit writers, activists and human rights activists, caste discrimination is considered to be equally if not more horrendous than racial discrimination. This experience is true but unpleasant as it consists of cruelty of man against his fellow human beings. Unfortunately this practice of cruelty had social and religious sanctions. Dr. Sharankumar Limbale defines the term Dalit Literature in his essay 'Dalit Literary Movement in Maharashtra', "Dalit literature is a form of agitation. It centers the common man who has been oppressed for thousands of years. The Hindu caste system has divided Indian society into castes. There are not only divisions of castes, but also the watertight compartments of Indian people and culture. One who takes birth in one's caste should live in one's caste, drink and eat in his caste, marry within his caste die within his caste. This is the case of tyranny. Dalit literature wants to destroy this inhuman caste system, which enslaved not only Dalit but also our democratic country. Our nation is politically free but socially it is still in slavery. Dalit literature is a struggle for total revolution and it is a declaration of human rights." A sense of highness and lowness or superiority and inferiority is associated with this gradation or ranking. The Brahmins are placed at the top of hierarchy and are regarded as pure or supreme. The degraded caste or the untouchables have occupied the other end of the hierarchy. The status of an individual is determined by his birth and not by selection nor by accomplishments. Each caste has its own customs, traditions practices and rituals. It has its own informal rules, regulations and procedures. The caste panchayats or the caste councils regulate the conduct of members. The caste system has imposed certain restrictions on the food habits of the members these differ from caste to caste. **Caste discrimination** is not limited to Dalits, but it extends to all the lower communities. The backward castes, who were also the Shudras, were subjected to discriminatory treatment. There is gradation of occupations also. Some occupations are considered superior and sacred while certain others degrading and inferior. Each caste has its own specific occupations which were almost hereditary. Caste discrimination, compared too many other forms of discrimination leads to more disadvantage, dispossession, dehumanization and degradation, and maintains and reinforces social segregation and exclusion. Through this article I have tried to bring out the horror of caste discrimination and humiliation with the lens of Sharan Kumar Limbale's autobiography 'The Outcaste' and Prof. Tulsi Ram's autobiography 'Murdahiya.'*

Keywords: Hierarchy, Autobiography, Caste-Discrimination, The Outcaste, Murdahiya

1. INTRODUCTION

The Dalit autobiographies are not a work of fiction but an exhibition of real-life hardships which seems to have no end. The present research attempts by studying the autobiographies to interrogate the Brahminical and nationalist discourse and also take stock of the marginalization of Dalits. Questioning of Brahminic ideals and conceptions in these autobiographies is a pertinent exercise because only such an exercise can facilitate subaltern alternatives for Dalits. Dalit writings have transformed the full dimension of the cruelties and humiliation they had suffered into literacy expression and experience. Dalit literature is based on experiences faced by authors herself / himself rather than speculation. Therefore, the authenticity and liveliness are the essential features of Dalit literature and the autobiographies are its most important tool. It is a recent phenomenon which has emerged in post-colonial India.

The practice of writing autobiography is considered an independent and respectable mode of expression. The Dalit autobiographies focus on the pathetic and challenging past of Dalit community while hoping for a better future.

Dalit literature is a complex and consistent form of massive creative corpus emerging from different regional language literatures such as Marathi, Tamil, Punjabi, Telugu, Hindi, Kannada, Gujarati etc. The basis of Dalit literature in different languages has been the burning charcoal of Dalit experiences, made available to us through English translation for all India and even for global readers. Despite having been written in different Indian regional languages Dalit literature has commonalities, tropes and thematic which confer on it the status of a distinct genre. Springing from a specific culture Dalit literature is a new literature. One of the first Dalit writers was Madara Chennaiah, an 11th century cobbler-saint who lived in the reign of western Chalukyas and who is also regarded by some scholars as the "father of Vachana poetry". Later poets of Kannada literature such as Basavanna, who was also the prime minister of southern Kalachuri for king Bijjala second (1130- 1167), held him in high regard. In modern era Dalit literature received its first impetus with the advent of leaders like Mahatma Phule and Ambedkar in Maharashtra, who brought forth the issues of Dalit through their work and writings. This started a new trend in Dalit writings and inspired many Dalits to come forth with writings in Marathi, Hindi, Tamil and Punjabi. By the 1960, Dalit literature saw a fresh crop of new writers like Baburao Baul Bandhu Madhav and Shankarao Kharat though its formal form came into being with the little magazine movement. Dalit Voices, a political magazine which started publishing in 1981, was another force in the rise of Dalit literature in India.[1]

Dalit literature includes not only autobiographies but also the rich array of fiction, short stories, narratives about personal journeys, poetry, journalism, and much else. While women, landless, the poor, the working class, laborers, the oppressed and others may make up the Dalit category in the context of the position Dalits occupy in the caste hierarchy. In this sense, Dalit literature is written by Dalits with a "Dalit consciousness" or "Dalit *chetana*." Most non-Dalit writers frame Dalit experience sympathetically but tend to objectify Dalits whereas Dalit writers shape an "agentive and transformative role for themselves as subjects" in their own writing. It is not enough therefore to argue that Dalit autobiographies reflect a uniquely similar experience despite the fact that Dalit writers bring this out through thick description, affect, and rich experiential accounts.[2]

Dalit literature is simultaneously **universal, global** as well as **glocal** since it moves from local to global for exposure and recognition with the same feelings of emotions and experiences. It is **universal** because in all ages, from the time of Greek Tragedy down to the present, most writers have raised the fundamental question, "why does man suffer?" The question has remained the same but answers have been varied: God, Fate, Chance, Choice evil and Society. In the present era Dalit writers focus on victimhood, oppression, suffering and demand of their dignity as human beings and their answer is "caste". People may go on denying that there is no such thing as caste now but the fact is that caste is in the D.N.A. of Indian society. As soon as a person is born, 'caste' determines his or her destiny. In words of Arjun Dangle says, "Dalit is not a caste but a realization and is related to the experiences, joys and sorrows, and struggles of those in the lowest stratum of society. It matures with a sociological point of view and is related to the principles of negativity, rebellion and loyalty to science, thus finally ending as revolutionary." [3]

Dalit literature is socio-historically grounded in the poetics of pain, poetics of suffering and poetics of anger as also the poetics of what is called effective aesthetics. The aesthetics of Dalit literature is discussed by Sharankumar Limbale in his essay '*Towards Aesthetics of Dalit Literature*' that Dalit literature being a revolutionary form of literature does not adhere to traditional principles of aesthetics where emphasis is put on the beauty factor of literature due to which pleasure is cited as the foremost aesthetic value. Pleasure is said to be native to Savarna literature while pain is said to belong to Dalit literature. Due to belonging to the lower caste, Dalit literature is often accused of arousing feelings of pain, suffering and anger in the reader whereas non-revolutionary literature arouses feelings such as happiness and delight. Overall Dalit literature is painted in a negative picture when it comes to aesthetic evaluation as it is accused of portraying only grief, victimization, exploitation and marginalization. It is said to not provide happiness as the literature of the upper and middle class does. However,

what needs to be considered is that the feelings of pain and suffering are the primary feelings that a piece of Dalit Literature can evoke as it is a social document of rebellion designed for social upliftment of Dalits and hence pleasure and beauty are not its chief considerations, unlike other literary works. Hence analyzing a Dalit text on these pre-established universal aesthetic principles is a meaningless futile endeavor.[4] Dalit literature is undoubtedly **global** because it shares its thematic, tonetic and aesthetic with subaltern literature all over the world such as Afro-American literature, Australian Aboriginal literature, New Zealand Maori literature, Subaltern literature and African literature.

Dalit literature is **glocal** because it translates a distinct local Dalit culture for global exposure and recognition. Whatever was written about them by the earlier Indian writers gave only external picture of the other by others. The distinct Dalit culture, as Joseph Macwan says, "The mainstream literature has not even touched" Om Prakash Valmiki's *Joothan*, Bama's *Karukku* and Joseph Macwan's *Angaliat* present a detailed exposition of the kind of Dalit culture which is missing in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchables* or Prem Chand's Dalit centric novels and short stories. Dalit writer articulate what it means to be a Dalit in India.[5] No one but a Dalit can project an insider trauma of pain, raw nerve experiences and her / his culture. That is why Dalit literature made its forceful literary debut and assertion with the genre of autobiography and memoir from all parts of India: Daya Pawar's '*Baluta and Social Claim*', Om Prakash Valmiki's '*Joothan*', Bama's '*Karukku*', Sharankumar Limbale's '*Akkarmasshi*' (*The Outcaste*), Narendra Jadhav's '*Outcaste: A Memoir*', P. Sivakami's '*The Grip of Change*', Laxman Mane's '*Upara: An Outsider*', Prof. Shyam Lal's '*Untold Story of a Bhangi Vice-Chancellor*', Lakshman Gaekward's '*Uchalya*' (*Uchakka*), Kishor Shantabai Kale's '*Against All Odds*', Mohandas Namishray's '*Apne Apne Pinjare*' and many more focus on Dalit self and several experiences it has undergone and survived.

Dalit autobiographies in fact becomes biographies of the community and a new form of socio-historical narrative emerges from them and as Arun Prabha Mukherjee says in the context of *Joothan*, they are report cards of the community. Dalit auto narratives project experiences in such an intense manner that G. N. Devy calls these autobiographies "social epiphanies". These qualities of experimental intensity emerge because of the pivotal role which never allows them to erase their painful experiences. Commenting on Dalit literature, Jasbir Jain says, "Dalit writing is often a statement about a perception of reality and has no inclination to elaborate itself into a myth. This is a reflection on the nature of memory and on cultural alienation. By rejecting the mythical frame of upper caste mythology and religious belief, it makes an assertion of independence." [6]

2. THE CASTE SYSTEM

Caste system hierarchically divides the society. It is seminary in so far as all larger castes are normally divided into sub-castes, and are sometimes further split into sub-sub-castes. From the economic point of view caste system also defines a division of labour and many occupations are caste-specific, especially in the services and artisan sector. Finally, caste system is predicated on social inequality and in principle all castes within a locality can be mutually ranked within a single hierarchy.[7] A sense of highness and lowness or superiority and inferiority is associated with this gradation or ranking. The Brahmins are placed at the top of hierarchy and are regarded as pure or supreme. The degraded caste or the untouchables have occupied the other end of the hierarchy. The status of an individual is determined by his birth and not by selection nor by accomplishments. Each caste has its own customs, traditions practices and rituals. It has its own informal rules, regulations and procedures. The caste panchayats or the caste councils regulate the conduct of members. The caste system has imposed certain restrictions on the food habits of the members these differ from caste to caste. Caste discrimination is not limited to Dalits, but it extends to all the lower communities. The backward castes, who were also the Shudras, were subjected to discriminatory treatment.

There is gradation of occupations also. Some occupations are considered superior and sacred while certain others degrading and inferior. Each caste has its own specific occupations which were almost hereditary. The low social status attached to Dalit women too by untouchability functions as an opportune reason for dominant castes to

discriminate against them and accordingly devalue their abilities as persons. Physical contact 'touching' with them is prohibited due to the stigma of impurity attached to them. Their dependency on dominant castes for their livelihood, maintains a culture of silence against untouchability and discrimination. The fear of indignity, humiliation and rape is always present. Untouchability practices are rooted in economic and political equality based on a social norm of 'graded inequality'. [8]

The word caste is denoting the four groups or categories of Hindu society called the Varnas. The first ranked are Brahmins, whose duties are religious scholarship and priest craft; second are the Kshatriyas, the kings and warriors, who protect society and supporter of rituals; third are Vaishyas, the agriculturalists, cattle herders, and merchants; and Shudras, who are usually laborers, peasants, craftsperson and servant who must serve the other three classes. At the very bottom are those who considered the untouchables and the outcaste. These individuals perform occupations that are considered unclean and polluting, such as scavenging and skinning dead animals. They are not considered to be included in the ranked the Varnas. The Varna is divided into specialized sub-castes called jatis. Each jati is composed of a group deriving its livelihood primarily from a specific occupation. The word jati, exists in more Indian languages, literary means 'kind' or 'species' and can denote a range of social categories, although one of its primary references is 'caste'. [9]

3. THEORIES OF ORIGINE OF THE CASTE SYSTEM

A unique feature of Indian society is its composition on the basis of caste. The caste system puts restriction on the range of social relations also. The idea of pollution means a touch of lower caste man would pollute or defile a man of higher caste. Even his shadow is considered enough to pollute a higher caste man. The lower caste people suffered from certain socio-religious disabilities. The impure castes are made to live on the out skirts of the city and they are not allowed to draw water from the public wells. In earlier times entrance to temples and other places of religious importance were forbidden to them. Education facilities, legal rights and political representation were denied to them for a very long time. The caste system imposes restrictions on marriage also. Inter caste marriages are still looked down upon in the traditional Indian society. The Indian caste system is considered a close system of stratification, which means that a person's social status is obligated to which caste they were born into. [10]

According to the Racial theory propounded by **Herbert Risley** (1915) in his book '*The People of India*' racial differences and endogamous marriages lead to the origin of the caste system. According to him, caste system developed after emigration of Indo-Aryans from Persia where the society was divided into four classes—priests, warriors, cultivators and artisans and this they maintained even after coming here. They differed from the non-Aryans in culture and racial traits. So, in order to maintain their superior status, they started practicing hyper gamy and imposed restriction on 'Pratiloma' marriages. **Ghurye (1932)** has described the caste system as Brahminical system and believes that the conquered non-Aryan race becomes the Shudras who were debarred from religious and social activity of the Aryans.

European writers on the subject of caste origins knew about the racial difference between castes, high and low, and consciously and unconsciously linked their findings to race. **Weale** wrote that the whole history of India, from the earliest times, had been one long story of colour prejudice and that more cruelty had probably been displayed there than in the rest of the world, believed that the Aryans races who were 'white' simply devised the iron system of caste to prevent the under mixing of a dominant race with a 'black' inferior race. **W. J. Thomas** finds marked physical contrasts in the population, correlated with superior and inferior cultures and this according to him is the basis of caste distinctions. **Dudley Buxton** thinks that caste is still of assistance in dividing up the complex races of the Indian peninsula. **Gillin** thinks that it is possible that caste in India originated in the racial differentiations between various populations, **MacIver** also leans towards the theory of the racial origin of caste structures. **The colour questions** in the formation of caste has also been considered. The colour question at the root of the varna system is apparent from the word verna, which means colour.

The class, which retained utmost purity of colour by avoiding intermixture normally, gained precedence in the social scale. The status also depends upon the extent of isolation maintained by the social groups. The Brahmins were white, the Kshatriyas red; the Vaisyas were yellowish and the Shudras were black as described in the Mahabharata. The three higher varnas have tried to maintain their claims to superior status by keeping to themselves the important professions. **Karve**, however does not accept the view that the original meaning of varna was 'colour'. She argues that in the early scanned literature and in grammatical works varna meant 'class'. Karve continues that 'at a later time the word varne to mean 'colour' and the fourfold division of the ancients was then taken to be based on physical feature, namely colour.' The social factor in the formation of the caste structure, in a sense, admitted by most of the scholars and yet the development of the caste system cannot be explained wholly on the basis of race. **D.N. Majumdar (1957)** believes that clash of culture and contact of races led to social groupings. He also believes that three superior classes assigned particular occupation for their members and to maintain their superior status, debarred other people from practicing such occupations. This led to hierarchical caste system. Thus, it appears that the racial factor has been accepted by most of the scholars but still it cannot be taken as the only factor in the development of the caste system.

There are today as many theories regarding the origin of the caste system as there are writers on the subject. Census of India done in 1931 made references of the following five theories with regards to the origin of caste. Hence, to simplify our endeavor we too would follow the same reference as-

3.1. The Divine Origin: It may be pointed out that most of the religious authorities, Shastra's and puranas have advocated the divine origin of the caste system. So, the general feeling among the Hindus is that it has been established by the order of God or at least by his wishes, and so it should be religiously followed. As per the 'Purusha Sukta' in Rig Veda, the people belong to four main castes (varnas) constituting the four body parts of the purush (the creator). The Brahmin was his (purusha's) mouth, the Rajanya (kshatriya) was his arms, the Vaisya was this thigh; and the Shudra sprang from his feet. This view has also been expressed in most of Dharma-Shastras, smirities and Puranas. Manu also supported this view. His book Manusmriti also contains reference to caste by the ten primeval rishis i.e. Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Prachetas, Vaisistha, Bhrigu and Narda. In the Mahabharata, divergent views have been expressed. In Shantiparva, Bhrigu has asserted that the world was created by Brahma and later on separated into castes in consequence of work. But in the Mahabharata, it is stated that the Lord Krishna created Brahmins from his mouth, Kshatriyas from his arms, Vaisyas from his thighs and Shudras from his feet. In the Bhagwadgita it is stated that the four-fold division of castes was created by God according to appointment of qualities and duties.

3.2. Karma and Transmigration: There is the theory of karma and transmigration of soul which seeks to justify the caste system. The various conditions of men, the highest, the middling, and the lowest are caused by karma. Whatever a man enjoys or suffers is a result of his own actions. In consequence of many sinful acts committed by one's body, voice or mind, that individual in the next birth would become a bird, or a beast, or be born as a low caste person respectively. Those who perform good karma pass into superior existence, and those who lead an ideal life obtain nirvana from birth and death. Thus, even the most wretched man with his, most degrading occupation remains satisfied with the belief that the miseries of his present life, are the result of his sins in his previous life, and if he submissively performs his caste duties in this life he will be born in a higher caste in the next life.

3.3. Occupational Theory: Nesfield (1885) advocates occupation as the lone factor for the development of this system. According to him, before this system priesthood was not the exclusive monopoly of Brahmins. But later on when hymns and rituals became more complex, a section of people got themselves specialized and became the Brahmins. Due to importance of sacrifices such people came to be more respected. Later they made this occupation hereditary. After this other sections of people also organised themselves for securing privileges. **Slater** in his book, '**Dravidian Elements in Indian Culture**' emphasizes the fact that caste is actually stronger in southern than in northern India and suggests that caste arose in India before the Aryan invasion as a result of

occupations becoming hereditary and marriages being arranged by parents within the society of the common craft because sexual maturity developed early and trade secrets were thus preserved. As a result of magic and religious ceremonies also, exclusive occupational groups were built up, marriage outside which became prejudicial and contrary to practice.

The Aryan invasion had the effect of strengthening a tendency to associate difference of colour and of strengthening also a tendency for castes to be placed in a scale of social precedence. He also maintains the existence in the pre-Aryan society of Indian of an order of priest magicians. **Denzil Ibbetson** explains caste as arising from a combination of tribal origins, functional guilds and a 'levitical religion' and lays great stress on the tribe the turning point in the career of a tribe comes when it abandons its wild and romantic life and adopts a particular occupation as its principal method of economic subsistence. This is the guild stage in caste history, and is common at some period or other of economic progress to all peoples in the world. **Chappel and Coon** trace the origin of castes to the absorption of aboriginal types, and they also explain the formation of new castes with reference to the emergence of new occupations.

3.4. Tribes and Religious Theory: From very early times, there has been a gradual and silent change from tribes to caste. This change has taken place in a number of ways, and it is believed that most of the lower or exterior castes of today were formerly tribes. **Risley** has mentioned *four processes* by which the transformation of tribes into castes is affected. The processes are:

3.4.1 The leading men of an aboriginal tribe, having somehow got on in the world became independent landed proprietors, managed to enroll themselves in one of the more distinguished castes.

3.4.2 A number of aborigines embrace the tenets of Hindu religious sect and becoming Vaishnavas and giving up their tribal name.

3.4.3 A whole tribe of aborigines, or a section of tribe enrolling themselves in the ranks of Hinduism, under the style of a new caste which, though claiming an origin of remote antiquity is really distinguishable by its name from any of the standard and recognized.

3.4.4. A whole tribe of aborigines, or a section thereof, become gradually converted to Hinduism without abandoning their tribal designation.

To these four processes, **Majumdar** has *added a fifth* in which an individual member of an aboriginal or semi-aboriginal tribe adopts the surname and gotra of a particular caste, manages to enroll himself as a member of that particular caste and gradually intermarries with the members of that caste. His wealth and influence attract members of the caste he aspires to belong and thus in the long run he may establish himself as a permanent member of that caste. Cultural contact with Hindu castes leads to the adoption by the tribes of Hindu beliefs, rituals, customs and to participation in Hindu festivals and attendance at Hindu temple.

3.5. Family and Marriage: This explanation given by **Senart** (1930) holds that the principle of exogamy is the main basis of Indian caste system. In his opinion caste is the normal development of ancient Aryan institution which assumed a peculiar form because of peculiar conditions in India like prohibition of marriage within one's gotra, pollution by touch with lower classes, prohibition of inter-caste dining etc. He has presumed beginning of caste system in the form of varna division to the Indo-Iranian period because of four-fold division of society in the Rig Vedic India. [11]

As it is evident from the various interpretations given above, caste in India is a social institution, deriving sanction from and intimately interwoven with the Hindu religion. Membership of a caste is compulsory and not a matter of

choice. A person is born into it. It is practically impossible for individuals to change their caste. Each caste boasts of a peculiar tradition of culture and tries to preserve it tenaciously. The customs by which it lives are generally different in some respects from those of any other castes and are sometimes in marked contrast to those of any other caste. The caste system provides the individual member of caste with rules which must be observed by him in the matters of food, marriage, divorce, birth, initiation and death.

4. DALITS AND CASTE DISCRIMINATION

The term Dalit literally means a specific sense of oppression, exploitation within the social organization called caste system. The etymology of the term Dalit is traceable to Hebrew and Sanskrit languages. Dalit is a vernacular form of the Sanskrit which means split, broken, destroyed, scattered, torn as under. In the late 1880s, the Marathi word 'Dalit' was used by Jyotirao Phule for the outcastes and Untouchables who were oppressed and broken in the Hindu society. Later on two interested processes can be identified with regard to the evolution of the term Dalit. First, the term denotes an affirmation action i.e. *'yes, we are Dalit; we are crushed and broken people'*. Secondly, it also indicates assertion i.e. *'no, we will not allow ourselves to be crushed by you the dominant castes anymore'*. The Dalit panthers, the group representing the Dalit community used the term in the early 1970s to assert their identity for rights and self-respect. Later, the term came to be used to include all the oppressed and exploited sections of the society.[12] They defined it as such: "Who is a Dalit? Members of scheduled castes and tribes, Neo-Buddhists, the working people, the landless and poor peasants, women and all those who are being exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion" (Manifesto of Dalit Panthers 1973). Gandhi had in the mid-twentieth century tried to give the notion a positive connotation by using the term "Harijan" (lit, child of "Hari"—God), but this was rejected by the majority of Dalits who view the term as "demeaning as well as apolitical." This movement, which opened up the space for the voice of the subaltern that needed to be heard, also led to the dominant genre of autobiographical writings that allowed the unfettered expression of the pain, suffering and humiliation borne by the authors. The experience of subalternity was not locked into a compromise with failure or acceptance of fate but with the felt need to come out of an imposed silence into the public sphere. This coming into the public sphere has been a strong assertion of Dalit identity: It has given "previously marginalized Dalit writers access to the public sphere and thus, the capacity to debate and assert an influence over the public perception of their own Dalit identity." This remarkable outpouring of their lives, through autobiographical writings, as an assertion of being Dalit, oppressed, humiliated and excluded, started in Maharashtra and has had inputs from the Hindi belt, Andhra Pradesh, and other parts of India.[13] According to Gangadharan Pantawane, *"Dalit is not a caste; Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution. The Dalit believes in humanism. He rejects existence of God, rebirth, soul, sacred books that teach discrimination, faith and heaven because these have made him a slave. He represents the exploited man in his country... Dalitness is essentially a means towards achieving a sense of cultural identity. Now, Dalitness is a source of confrontation. This change has its essence in the desire for justice for all mankind."*[14]

Discrimination is the denial of opportunities and rights to certain groups on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity, age or disability. Discrimination in various forms and intensity seems to have coexisted with humanity. Apartheid based on race is usually considered to be one of the most exploitative forms of discrimination. With regard to the Indian caste system there is a line of thinking, which holds and propagates the myth that the division of social units and placing them in a hierarchy based on caste is the basis for integration of social order. According to the Vedic texts, the chaturvarna or the caste system is supposed to have emerged from the sacrifice of the primeval being, the Purusa Sukta. But this religious myth was extended to justify the social stratification of society. Interestingly, today when the proponents of market economy are propagating the concept of a 'global village' and through this defending an ideology of monoculture as the way of existence and operation, human beings continue to be divided on the basis of caste, class creed, colour, region, language, ethnicity etc. But among all the basis of social segregation and seclusion, it is caste, which is the most dehumanizing, depriving and discriminating phenomenon of all ages.[15]

According to Gopal Guru, "*The category Dalit has faced criticism, particularly by the urban, educated middle class Dalit as socially regressive, derogatory and undesirable. These middle-class Dalit argue that this category forces Dalit to carry the load of their historical past, and hence offers a socially reactionary agenda.*" Dr. B. R. Ambedkar defined the category Dalit in his fortnightly 'Bahiskrit Bharat', "*Dalithood is a kind of life condition which characterizes the exploitation, suppression and marginalization of Dalit by social, economic, cultural and political domination of the upper caste Brahminical order.*" [16]

According to A.C. Lal, "*Dalit is a beautiful word because it embraces the sufferings, frustrations, expectations and groaning of the entire cosmos.*" All Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, neo Buddhists, labourers, landless and destitute peasants, women and all those who have been exploited politically and economically and in the name of religion are Dalit. [17] Thus, the word 'Dalit' in its special meaning is used by the erstwhile so called untouchables or the scheduled castes of India to describe their political identity. Dalit literature is, therefore written by and about such category of people.

The central concern of Dalit literature is to represent the 'authentic experience' of Dalit in their writings. Dalit experience has been represented by the non-Dalit writers also. As Mulk Raj Anand is also an authentic voice in underlining the caste-based prejudices in the mind of the Savarans. In his novel '*Untouchable*' he vividly depicts the miserable lot of the untouchables. Anand strongly detests the institution of caste as it degrades and dehumanizes those who are born in lesser castes. He believes in the dignity and equality of all men. In the novel he expresses his indignation against the ill-treatment meted out to the untouchables.[18] But Raj Kumar criticizes the upper-caste Hindu writers of the twentieth century who in their novels have tried to portray the lives of 'untouchables' with the aim of bringing about social reform or by sentimental compassion. He argues that these novels belong to genre of 'emotional' literature rather than Dalit literature because these characters are presented from the perspective of upper caste writers. The characters lacked realistic portrayal as human beings full of vitality, hope, as well as despair. Dalit literature is literature of resistance and since the 'downtrodden' had hardly any place in the established canonical of literature of India, Dalit writers tend to call the existing canon as 'Hindu Literature' and seek to challenge its hegemony.[19]

5. THE OUTCASTE

Dalit writer **Sharan Kumar Limbale** [20] in his autobiography '*The Outcaste*' narrates the various aspect of discrimination on the basis of caste. The author narrates about how an innocent Dalit couple Kamble and Masamai are discriminated and exploited by an upper caste landlord Hanmantha Limbale for whom the poor couple used to work day and night. Masamai's life speaks out how the poor Dalit families were destroyed and the innocent Dalit women were exploited by the upper caste landlords. She forced to become a whore of Patils of different villages. Masamai gave birth to Sharan Kumar Limbale. Limbale writes, "*We were all of one womb and blood. We shared a common mother but different fathers...I was born from her affair with Hanmantha Patil and others from Yeshwantrao Sidramappa Patil, the head of the village.*"

Limbale faced caste discrimination on various time of life. When he was in 3rd standard, he didn't know to write an essay. At time her teacher shouted on him, "*You, son of bitch, come on, start writing! You like eating an ox, don't you?*" Also, the untouchable children were not allowed to sit in the class and asked to sit down amidst the footwear flung all around them. Limbale states "*During the school interval, the other boys threw stones at me and teased me calling aloud Mahar.*" The hierarchy of seating plan in the classroom shows that there was no equal behavior between Dalit and non-Dalit student. At barber's shop Limbale also faced discrimination where the barber denied cutting his hair though he was ready to pay for it. It also shows that it is caste which is the most dehumanizing, depriving and discriminating phenomenon of all ages.

For applying a scholarship, the application was to be signed by the parents and forward it by the village Sarpanch but the Sarpanch refused to sign as he was confused to decide Masamai's real husband. Limbale writes, "*The*

Sarpanch was in a real fix about how to identify me. But I too was a human being. What else did I have except a human body? But a man is recognized in this world by his religion, caste, or his father. I had neither a father's name, nor any religion, nor a caste. I had no inherited identity at all... I was an alien ...In the Maharwada I felt humiliated as I was considered a bastard; they called me Akkarmashi."

Whenever Nagi, one of Limbale's sisters abused him he felt humiliated Limbale. Limbale writes about the behavior of Nagi with him, "you have no connection with us. Nobody knows where you come from. Our fathers are not the same." Listening these words, Limbale burned within self and writes, "Nagi's words pierced my heart. The feeling of alienation weighed heavily on my mind." Although there was no fault of Limbale, he was humiliated in his family, community and out of the community also.

Dalits are discriminated at the public places as Limbale also. One day when Limbale and his friend were on their way to pluck the fruits of a toddy palm, Shobhi, an upper caste girl was on other side she asked them to let her pass first. She said in an authoritative voice, "Mahars have become bold these days. They now dare to walk straight up to you. Can't you see I am carrying drinking water? Your touch will make it impure." This shows how the Dalit were treated at public roads and even shadows of Dalit were considered polluted. Dalit was condemned at every place and at every stage of life whether it was public or private. Limbale writes, "Casteism made us bitter." He experienced humiliation and discrimination at a small tea shop in his village practicing dual-cup system. Limbale writes, "Our houses were in places where other villagers used as latrines. We felt no affection for our villages. Instead, we were scared and tense. Dalit were excluded from social life."

To continue his education Limbale and his grandmother went to an upper caste money-lender who was drunk and looked at the exposed breast out of Santamai's torn blouse. He refused to give them money. Limbale writes, "His look spread like poison in my heart. I wished that the blouse of this money-lender's mother or sister was torn so that I could stare at their breasts. I burnt within. Our poverty was detestable. I wanted to rebel against such humiliation." Limbale had a new problem after marriage to find a job and a house on rent. He hides his caste to avoid discrimination because, "If they came to know my caste, they would drive me out of the house that I had rented from a high caste landlord. I would be beaten badly. They would even torture my wife." Caste shows very cruel face as Dalit were not given rented house. This discrimination is not for only Limbale but for the whole Dalit community. Thus, Limbale's autobiography speaks about many uneven conditions that he experienced as an offspring of Mahar and upper caste private relation and struggled a lot for being identifying himself as Dalit.

6. MURDAHIYA

Prof. Tulsi Ram's autobiography '*Murdahiya*' [21] is a story of caste discrimination and humiliation which he faced in his own family and outer sphere authentically. The author narrated the family structure and its construction of the Dalit society, education, poor economic condition, public culture, recognition of masses, political understanding, their consciousness and resistance through all these circumstances. Author's grandfather and forefathers were bonded labourers in the field of Brahmin landlords as other members of Dalit community. They thought that 'Harbai' (ploughman work) was their life right and if they did not do this, it would be the sin (Brahmhatya). Due to this superstition, they could not get rid of from Harbai. Author's grandmother told him that if any animal like buffalo or ox died in the village, it was the duty of Dalits to pick up the dead animal and take away from the village. After skinning it they divide the meat of dead animal to cook and remaining they dried it in the sunlight and keep it for their future use.

Further, the author narrates about his school life and Murdahiya, a multipurpose working place for the people of author's village (Dharmpur-Azamgarh). People used to go their field or any other place through the 'Murdahiya'. Dalit people also use this place for political meetings. 'Murdahiya' did not make different between human being and animals. Countless pain and sufferings of Dalit people were cremated in the 'Murdahiya.'

The teacher plays an important role in changing the society as they make learnings to the students. But many upper caste teachers have Brahminic mentality. The author narrates how he was terrorizing by his teacher as the Dalit students were beaten for the minor mistakes and abused in a very filthy language. Teacher called Dalit students '*Chamarkit*' to show their anger. When the author denied to go to the school because of the terror of the teacher, he was beaten by his father and asked, "*School na Jaiba to Chithia ke Padhi*" (If you will not go school then how will you read a letter).

Another incident of untouchability was practiced with the author when he was denied to drink the water from well and even denied to touch the floor of the well. Also, in school the upper caste children had to pour the water into Dalit children's hands from a distance so that their hands could not touch the bucket/pot. Author narrates that when he was in the fourth standard, he asked for drinking water. When Misar Baba, an upper caste boy was drawing water for the author, by mistake the author touched the floor of the well, Misar Baba left the bucket in the well and started crying loudly as Chamara (the author) had touched the well. That day the author was in terror as he was abused by the Munshi ji (teacher) whole day. After this the author never tried to ask for drinking water in the school.

Author also narrates that once a Deputy Sahab (school inspector) fixed the date for school inspection. All the teachers were very worried because the school inspector was Dalit. They were thinking that meal could cook at upper caste teacher's house but how he will serve food in his Thali to a Dalit Inspector. So, the head master asked the author to bring Lota and Thali from his house without disclosing it to anybody. This incident shows how the upper caste people could not allow eating a Dalit person in their pots whether he is school inspector or other person on the high post as untouchability is deep rooted in the veins of upper caste person.

7. CONCLUSION

Both the autobiographies show discrimination and on the basis of caste. These autobiographies describe how the authors were humiliated in the school and other public places. Limbale describes the life of a man who suffered not only through this caste system but also through the pain of not even being allowed into the caste system: he was an outcaste, below everyone else. Limbale wherever goes his caste reached first. Limbale's autobiography clearly shows how the lives of lowest citizens are completely controlled by the society around him.

The dominating theme throughout the book is the Dalit's constant battle with hunger. Economic conditions played very important role in both the autobiography. In Murdahiya author's father and grand fathers were bonded labour in the field of upper caste and were commanded by them. The author shows how Dalit used to eat dead animal's meat due to their poverty. Thus, these autobiographies show how the caste is centered in the Indian society and make different between human beings as lower and upper caste.

Untouchables experiences of untouchability are identical. The name of the village may well be different, but the nature of tyranny against Dalits is the same. Social boycott, separate bastis, wells and cremation ground; inability to find rental accommodation; the necessity to conceal caste; denial of admission to public place; injustice done to Dalit women; dragging and cutting of dead animals; and the barber refusing to cut hair- these experiences are alike for all Dalit.

Dalit literature not only attempts to establish the independent identity for the Dalits, it also questions the traditional literary aesthetics. In his celebrated work Joothan Valmiki aptly remarks, "One can somehow get past poverty and deprivation but it is impossible to get past caste." Some of the common elements in Dalit literature are suffering, violence, and anguish, or anger, protest suppression both physical and psychological. And the psychological suppression is more dangerous than the physical suppression. The anger and anguish suffered by Dalit can be

understood by a Dalit only who feels it and lives with every moment of his/ her life. Dalit literature derives its inspiration from thinkers like Buddha, Kabir, Jyotirao Phule, and Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar.[22]

REFERENCES

- [1] R.P.N. Swami (2010) *Dalit and Neo-Buddhist Movements in India*, New Delhi: M.D. Publication, Pg.-578.
- [2] Brueck, Laura R. 2014. *Writing Resistance: The Rhetorical Imagination of Hindi Dalit Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, Pg.-11
- [3] Harbir Singh Randhawa (2010) *Dalit Literature: Contents, Trends and Concerns*, New Delhi: Sarup Book, Publishing House, Pg.-3-4.
- [4] <https://criticalaesthetics2015.wordpress.com/2015/09/26/1-critical-summary-of-the-dalit-literature-and-aesthetics-by-sharankumar-limbale/>, retrieved on 10.10.2022.
- [5] Z. H. Abidi (2010) 'Eklavyas with Thumbs: Animadversions on Dalit Literature and Aesthetic' Sarup Book Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi: 2010, Pg.- 5-8.
- [6] Ibid, Pg.-12-13.
- [7] Jyoti Sekhon (2000) *Modern India*, Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2000, Pg.-39.
- [8] S. Mathur (2021) Caste Based Discrimination and Violence against Dalit Women In India, *Quest Journals*, Vol 9-Issue 8, Pg.- 46, retrieved on Dec. 2022.
<https://www.questjournals.org/jrhss/papers/vol9-issue8/Ser-2/G09084654.pdf>
- [9] Prakash Louis (2003) *Political Sociology of Dalit Assertion*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, Pg.- 37.
- [10] Arjun Dangle, (2009) *Poisoned Bread*, Orient Blackswan, Pg.-19.
- [11] <https://www.egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/26922/1/Unit-28.pdf>
- [12] Harbir Singh Randhawa (2010) Op. Cit., Pg.-5.
- [13] Sarah. Beth, (2007) *Dalit Autobiographies in Hindi: The Transformation of Pain into Resistance*, Retrieved on 10.04.2023
<http://larseklund.in/Old.sasnet.lu.se23.april/sasnet.lu.se/wwwroot/EASASpapers/4SarahBeth.pdf>
- [14] Christopher, J. Fuller (2001) *Caste: In the Oxford India Companion to Sociology and Social Anthropology* (ed), Oxford University Press, New Delhi, Pg.-47.
- [15] Prakash Louis (2003), Op. Cit., Pg.- 144.
- [16] Mulk Raj Anand (1970) *Untouchable*, Hind Pocket Books, New Delhi, Pg.-68.
- [17] Omprakash Valmiki (1997) *Joothan-A Dalit's Life*, Radhakrishna Prakashan, translated in English by Arun Prabha Mukherjee.
- [18] Sharankumar Limbale (2004) *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature: History, controversies and considerations*, Orient Longman Private Limited, Pg.-35.

- [19] Raj Kumar (2019) *Dalit Literature and Criticism*, Orient Blackswan, Hyderabad, Pg.-49-50.
- [20] Sharankumar Limbale (2003) *The Outcaste (Akkarmashi)*, Oxford University Press, India, translated in English from Marathi by Santosh Bhoomkar.
- [21] Prof. Tulsi Ram (2010) *Murdahiya*, Rajkamal Prakashan, India.
- [22] Harbir Singh Randhawa (2010) Op. Cit., Pg.-124-125.

Indian Rupee goes International

Dr. Richa Gupta¹, Bedika Kashyap², Chinta Bai Meena³

¹ Assistant Professor (Economics),
Department of Economics,
Kalindi College, Delhi University.

^{2,3} Student (Economics)
Department of Economics,
Kalindi College, Delhi University,

¹ corresponding author: richagupta@kalindi.du.ac.in

ABSTRACT

Trade settlement mechanism was set up by RBI in July 2022. The mechanism is mean of using rupees for exchange to promote international trade and reduce exchange transaction cost. The medium of exchange is facilitated by a Vestro Account, account maintained by domestic bank that keeps foreign entity is holding in rupee. The purpose of paper to examine the benefits and challenges of this mechanism. And give some suggestions to strengthen Indian economy and financial markets.

Keywords: trade, rupee, currency, vestro-account, money, international.

1. INTRODUCTION

A currency is internationalized or internationalizing when it is increasingly used by nonresidents for trade and international financial transactions in the official and private sectors. Currency internationalization is the widespread use of a currency outside the borders of its original country of issue. The level of currency internationalization for a currency is determined by the demand that users in other countries have for that currency. This demand can be driven using the currency to settle international trade, to be held as a reserve currency or a safe-haven currency, or in general use as a medium of indirect exchange in other countries' domestic economies via currency substitution.

Use of a currency as a bank's reserve currency is the easiest to measure and keep track of as an indicator of currency internationalization. The most dominant reserve currency is the USD, with the Euro (EUR) and the Japanese Yen a distant second and third. According to the International Monetary Fund, which keeps track of the foreign exchange reserves around the world, as of Q1 2021, 59% of the total foreign exchange reserves are U.S. dollars, 20.5% are held in the euro, 5.89% in the Japanese Yen, and 4.70% in the British Pound.

Having a currency involved in the internationalization process is an important factor for the issuing of debt in local currency. As the internationalization process is market-driven but also depends on supply factors, emerging countries must continue strengthening, reforming, and opening their economies: the currency internationalization continue and the investors will be reassured.

2. DETERMINANTS OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

- First, the **foreign exchange turnover**, which is a direct indicator of the internationalization. When a local currency is increasingly used in foreign exchange transactions (as a share of global FX transactions in foreign exchange market), foreign investors are more likely to include local currency bonds in their portfolios. This refers to Krugman's (1984) network effects between the main functions of an international currency.

- Second, among the drivers of internationalization (indirect measures), **Economic size** is a major determinant. When a country is economically strong, its currency is more likely to be used by international investors for international transactions.
- The other highly significant drivers are **financial depth and Governance**. A currency issued by a country that has a developed banking sector that finances growth, meaning the successful liberalization reforms of banks and interest rates, is more likely to be used, notably to denominate bonds. Moreover, a country with good practices in terms of contracts and property rights is more likely to attract foreign investors in its local debt market.
- Another important determinant is the **Current account**: a current account surplus, a sign of a country's health, may support the issuing of debt in the local currency and the purchasing by nonresidents.

3. MONEY IN THEORETICAL CONCEPT

Money is a narrow class of assets with special properties. Usually, the central bank and government of countries issue and create money. Also called cash money, it is a legal tender therefore there is a legal compulsion on citizens to accept it. It can measure the value of other goods.

Functions of money: Money is a liquid asset serve the economies as a medium of exchange, measure of value and store of value. Money can activate idle resources and put them into productive channels. hence, it contributes towards the increase in employment, output, and income levels. further it also facilitates the conversion of savings into investments. with the creation of new money governments and individuals of modern economies and spend more than what they earn.

Types of money: Regardless of many kinds of money there are two broad categories: fiat money, commodity money.

Fiat money: money is no longer backed by gold. It means that today currency is fiat money, money with no intrinsic value. It cannot be made into jewellery, backed into bread, or otherwise use. It is government issued legal tender supported by the regime and not tangible commodities. Fiat money evolved out of the original paper money, which was backed by commodities. But then government realized that the people are happier with paper money and rarely demand commodities behind it. So, government took step and stopped promising to redeem the money for commodities. Thus, paper money became the fiat money.

Commodity money: commodity money is a valuable good that also becomes the medium of exchange. When someone trades her product, he/she does not insist on receiving what he/she wants now. Instead, everyone provides goods and services in return of a particular commodity. The commodity then takes on the key functions of money. Commodity money has intrinsic value.

Although many common commodities like gold and silver are also good choices for money because they have high value relative to weight and these are durable commodities.

4. THE JOURNEY OF INDIAN RUPEE

4.1 Pre independence

Ancient period: The word 'Rupee' has been derived from the Sanskrit word 'rupyakam' which means a silver coin. The history of currency in India dates to the ancient times in the Rigvedic period. In ancient period the coins were in irregular shape and standard weight, with distinct markings like Dakshin Panchal had a Swastika, Saurashtra had humped bull, and Magadh had several symbols.

In Rigvedic period the gold coins were called 'Nishka' and it was the jewellery to worship.

In later Vedic period the light silver coin were known as krishanala and heavy silver coins were known as shatamana.

In Mahajanapada period the copper coin called Pana, gold coins called Suvarna, silver coins called Rupya (mentioned by panini in Asthadhyayi).

In 2nd CBC, After the arrival of Indo-Greek the punch marked coins started .in India Chandragupta Maurya (first Mauryan emperor) came up with the punch marked coins minting of silver (Pana), gold, copper, or lead. Chanakya (the first prime minister of Mauryan emperor) mentioned the minting of coins as- suvarnrupeya (gold), Rupyarupeya (silver), Tamararupeya , (copper) Sisarupeya (lead) in Arthashastra treatise.

In Gupta period (320-470 C.E.) large number of gold coins were produced that is why this period is also known as the “Golden period”.

By 12th century A.D. Turkish sultans of Delhi replaced the royal Indian coins designs with Islamic calligraphy .in this period the coin made up of gold, silver and copper known as ‘tanka’ and the coins with lower value were known as ‘Jittals’.

Origins of paper money: paper money appeared around the year 1000 in China and between 1500 and 1700 in Europe. originally, it was a version of commodity money, because it was backed by commodities, a piece of paper money was essentially an ownership certificate for a certain amount of gold and silver. people carried paper because it was more convenient than coins. in Europe, paper money was issued first by private banks and later by governments. Anyone who held money could turn it in to the issuer and demand the commodity that the money represented, which limited the amount of paper money that banks or government could create.

Mughal period: The Mughal empire (1526 AD) changed the monetary system. Evolution of Indian currency happened after Sher shah Suri conquered Humayun and issued a silver coin of 178 gm, known as ‘Rupiya’. and these coins were remained in use during the Mughal period, Maratha era and British India.

Colonial period: In the 18th century, the bank of Hindustan general bank in Bengal and the Bengal bank became the first banks in India to issue the paper currency.

After the revolt of 1857, the British made the rupee the official currency of colonial India.

The Reserve Bank of India was formally inaugurated on Monday, April 1, 1935 .at the time of establishment its central office was in Calcutta. the RBI Act, 1934, empowered it to continue issuing Government of India notes until its own notes were ready for issue. In January 1938 the first paper currency issued by Reserve bank of India was a 5 rupee note bearing king GEORGE VI’s portrait.

4.2 Post independence

Policy changes and Economic Impact

After gaining Independence in 1947, India’s modern Rupee reverted to the design of the signature Rupee coin. The symbol chosen for the paper currency was the Lion Capital at Sarnath. The first banknote printed by Independent India was a one rupee note.

The "Anna Series" was introduced on 15 August 1950. This was the first coinage of the Republic of India.

The King's image was replaced by Ashoka's Lion Capital. A corn sheaf replaced the tiger on the one-rupee coin. The monetary system was retained with one rupee consisting of 16 Annas. The 1955 Indian Coinage (Amendment) Act, which came into force with effect from 1 April 1957, introduced a "Decimal series". The rupee was now divided into 100 'Paisa'. To aid the blind in the country, each coin had distinctly different shapes.

In 1959 a rupee ten and Rupees One Hundred were issued for the Indian Haj Pilgrims so that they could exchange it with local currency in Saudi Arabia.

In 1969 RBI issued the Mahatma Gandhi Birth Centenary Commemorative design series on Rs 5 and Rs 10 notes.

The first demonetization in independent India took place in 1978, under the govt of Morarji Desai, when the denominations of 1000, 5000 and 10000 were taken out of circulation. The whole purpose of demonetization was to reduce the circulation of black money in the country.

In 1980 new notes were issued with symbols of science & tech (Aryabhata on Rs 2 note), progress (oil rig on Rs 1 and farm mechanization on Rs 5) and Indian art forms on Rs 20 and Rs 10 notes (Konark wheel, peacock).

In 1987 Rs 500 note was introduced due to the growing economy and fall in purchasing power.

In 1996 the Mahatma Gandhi series of notes was issued, starting with Rs 10 and Rs 500 notes. This series has replaced all notes of the Lion capital series. On July 15, 2010, India introduced a new currency symbol, the Indian rupee sign, ₹.

In 2011, 25 paise coins and all paise coins below it were demonetized. New series of 50 paise coins and Rs 1, Rs 2, Rs 5 and Rs 10 notes with the new rupee symbol introduced

On 8th November, 2016 decision of demonetization was taken by the government of India. The target of demonetization was to bring black cash out so that it can lose its anonymity and it can be mainstreamed, reduce counterfeit currency, terror financing and corruption in public life, digitization, and formalization of the Economy.

According to CBDT statistics 2018, 31 lakh tax payers added in 2014-15, 36 lakh in 2015-16 and 91 lakhs in 2016-17, 128 lakh in 2017-18. Thus, it expanded the tax base.

Operation Clean Money and Enforcement by Income Tax Department, had positive Impact on Direct Tax Collections.

Reduction in Currency under Circulation positively impacted digital transactions. Because of demonetization, small and medium businesses suffered a great deal, more so the informal sector, due to lack of liquidity, affecting employment, and creation of new jobs. There were negative Impact on Agriculture Sector.

Recent Global Events

The economy started to recover from the impact of demonetization and started to grow in 2016-17 but after this the whole economy was badly impacted by COVID-19. The lockdown because of COVID had a harmful impact on trade and global supply chains. It reduced the manufacturing activities as the people's demand declined significantly. Tourism along with employment levels in all sectors saw a downfall in the initial phase of the pandemic.

In 2022 the conflict between Russia and Ukraine started. The conflict that occurs in one part of the world has an immense ability to destabilize the whole world's economy, and so did this.

Indian rupee has declined by about 25 per cent since December 31, 2014. The value of the rupee declined from 63.33 against a dollar on December 31, 2014, to 79.41 on July 11, 2022, according to RBI data.

Currencies such as the British pound, the Japanese yen and the euro have weakened more than the Indian rupee against the US dollar and, therefore, the Indian rupee has strengthened against these currencies in 2022.

5. INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE RUPEE

5.1 RBI initiative

In July 2022, RBI permitted rupee settlement of external trade by creating a more comprehensive framework, including the flexibility of investing surplus rupees in Indian bond market. After this scheme the significance of the rupee for international trade settlement gained more attention.

A Reserve Bank of India -appointed working group recommended inclusion of the rupee in the Special Drawing Rights (SDR) basket and recalibration of the foreign portfolio investor (FPI) regime to accelerate the pace of internationalization of the rupee.

In December 2022 the international trade settlement in Indian rupees mechanism was initiated by RBI by pioneering its first settlement of foreign trade in rupee with Russia.

According to India's Minister of External Affairs (state) Rajkumar Ranjan Singh's reply to the Parliament of India's questions on July 21, 2023, the RBI permitted banks from 22 countries to open Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs) for settling payments in Indian rupees, these countries are Bangladesh, Guyana, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kenya, the Maldives, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, New Zealand, Oman, Russia, Belarus, Botswana, Fiji, Germany, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda and the United Kingdom.

In recent years, the Indian government has taken steps to promote the internationalization of the Indian rupee. In 2015, the Reserve Bank of India launched the "Scheme for Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets" (S4A), allowing foreign investors to invest in distressed Indian companies using rupees instead of dollars. In 2016, the RBI also launched the "Masala Bond" program, that allowed Indian companies to raise capital denominated in rupee from international investors. Additionally, the RBI has signed numerous currency swap agreements with other central banks, which have helped to promote the use of the Indian rupee in international trade.

5.2 Bilateral agreements

An agreement was signed between Iran and India to facilitate trade transactions in Indian rupee. In terms of existing bilateral trade agreement between India and Iran (2018), the Iranian banks are credited 100 percent in Indian Rupee by Indian importers against invoices payable for supply of goods and services from entities in Iran, without requirement of any additional certification or authorization. Other countries such as Luxembourg and Cuba, are also showing interest in Indian Rupee based trade.

In August 2022, Sri Lanka also facilitated Indian rupee-based bilateral trade between it and India. February 21, 2023 India's retail payment system, Unified Payments Interface, and Singapore's equivalent network, Pay Now, were integrated. This will allow users of both countries to access faster and more cost-efficient cross-border remittances.

On July 15, 2023 India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed a MOU to implement a Local Currency Settlement System and promote the use of the Indian rupee and AED (UAE dirham) bilaterally. This MoU will cover all current-account transactions and permitted capital-account transactions. The central bank of both countries has signed to cooperate on linking India's unified payment interface (UPI) with the UAE's Instant payment platform (IPP), it will enable users in both countries to make fast, safe, and cost-effective cross-border transfers. It will also facilitate the mutual acceptance of domestic cards and the processing of card transactions.

5.3 Trade settlements

The recent gravitation of more countries, including the like of Tajikistan, Cuba, Luxembourg, and Sudan towards the Indian rupee settlement mechanism has been very encouraging. The increasing participation of these countries

strengthens the hold of rupee as a currency in the international Forex market. The central banks of Malaysia, Bhutan and Nepal also hold Government of India securities and Treasury bills. Some sovereigns, such as Singapore, hold India equity bond asset holding (including G-secs) through their sovereign wealth funds. It involves promoting the rupee for import and export trade and then other current account transactions followed by its use in capital account transactions.

RBI's move to allow trade settlement in rupees will help in this regard. It could also facilitate wider trade with countries like Iran, which are under sanctions. "It will help the rupee against the US dollar, because we do not need so much dollar for our imports if Russia, Iran, UAE, Venezuela etc. were to trade with us in rupee. That will reduce the pressure on the exchange rate." (Shenoy)

Despite India being the fifth largest economy and its economic growth, the Indian rupee has remained a relatively minor player in international currency markets. Historically, the Indian rupee has been subject to a variety of currency crises, and hence, the Indian government has been cautious about liberalizing the country's capital account. In the 1950s, the Indian rupee was widely used as legal tender in the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar. However, the devaluation of India's currency by 1966 led to the introduction of sovereign currencies in these countries, which reduced their dependency on the Indian rupee.

5.4 Benefits of Internationalization of Rupee

- It will decrease the dependency of Indian economy on foreign currencies like the US dollar for purposes like international trade and cross border financial transactions. Thus, it will promote economic sovereignty of India.
- It enhances smooth international trade because it eliminates the need to convert Indian currency to foreign currencies and hence reduces the exposure to foreign exchange rate risks. This can lead to increased convenience and reduced transaction costs for businesses and individuals dealing with India.
- When Indian rupee will internationalize, a currency its exchange rate will tend to stabilize. This can help reduce volatility, making it more predictable and reliable for international transactions.
- It will increase the demand for the rupee in global economy. It will in return cause the value of Indian rupee to appreciate. As a result, it will attract foreign investors and promote capital inflows, leading to greater investment opportunities and liquidity in the Indian financial markets.
- Internationalizing the Rupee can enhance India's geopolitical influence. It can strengthen economic ties with other countries, facilitate bilateral trade agreements, and promote diplomatic relations. As a globally accepted currency, rupee will strengthen India's regional influence as a major economic player in Asia, boosting India's economic partnerships and collaborations.
- It will enhance the attractiveness of Indian rupee as a reserve currency. More central banks and foreign governments will hold rupee as a part of their foreign exchange reserves, increasing the diversification and stability of their portfolios.
- It will lead to the growth of financial services tied to rupee-denominated transactions, such as trade financing, currency hedging and settlement services.
- It will enlarge the sphere of the market in which Indian citizens can participate, without the need to exchange currencies and incur the related transaction costs. It provides more certainty to residents, who can denominate foreign transactions in their home currency. They can also borrow in foreign markets without incurring exchange rate risk, potentially enabling them to find cheaper funding.

5.5 Challenges

- Indian rupee has limited international demand. The daily average share for the rupee in the global forex market is only around 1.6%, while India's share of global goods trade is ~2%.
- India still has capital controls in place. These restrict the ability of foreign investors to invest and trade in Indian market. It thus inhibits the use of Indian rupee as an international currency.

- India faces a grave challenge while competing with established foreign currencies like US dollar, Euro, Yen, etc., that enjoy widespread acceptance and liquidity.
- Convincing market participants to accept Indian rupee for international transactions requires trust and confidence in the currency. Building awareness and promoting the benefits of using the rupee globally is a significant challenge.
- There are convertibility concerns involved. The INR is not fully convertible, meaning there are restrictions on its convertibility for certain purposes such as capital transactions. This restricts its widespread use in international trade and finance.
- The Demonetization in 2016, along with the recent withdrawal of the ₹2,000 note, has affected confidence in the rupee, particularly in neighboring countries like Bhutan and Nepal.
- While efforts have been made to trade with around 18 countries in rupees, transactions have remained limited. Moreover, negotiations with Russia to settle trade in rupees have been slow, hampered by currency depreciation concerns and inadequate awareness among traders. This creates challenges in trade settlement.

5.6 Steps Towards Internationalization

In March 2023, the RBI put in place the mechanism for rupee trade settlement with as many as 18 countries. Banks from these countries have been allowed to open special Vostro rupee accounts, for settling payments in Indian Rupees.

In July 2022, the RBI issued a circular on “International trade settlement in Indian Rupee”
RBI enabled external commercial borrowings in rupees.

6. WAY FORWARD

Following steps can be taken towards promoting internationalization of rupee:

- The Rupee should aim for full Convertibility, allowing free movement of financial investments between India and other countries.
- Optimizing trade settlement formalities by encouraging Indian exporters and importers to invoice transactions in Indian rupee.
- RBI should focus on increasing liquidity in rupee bond market, providing more investment options for foreign investors and trade partners.
- There is a need to recalibrate the foreign portfolio investor (FPI) regime for enhancing the speed at which the rupee is internationalized.
- The Real Time Gross Settlement System (RTGS) should be expanded to settle international transactions.
- Promoting the use of rupee by providing tax incentives to foreign businesses utilizing the rupee in India.
- Increasing currency swap agreements, as seen with Sri Lanka would facilitate trade and investment transactions in rupees.
- Consistent and predictable currency issuance and retrieval, along with a stable exchange rate regime, are essential for maintaining confidence.

7. LESSONS LEARNED FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

Several countries have successfully internationalized their currencies in recent years, including China with its renminbi, and Japan with its yen. These countries have pursued a range of policy options, including the liberalization of capital flows, the establishment of currency swap arrangements, and the promotion of the use of their currencies in international trade and investment.

One key lesson that can be learned from these experiences is the importance of building trust and confidence among foreign investors and trading partners. This requires a commitment to transparency and good governance, as well as a stable and predictable policy environment.

8. CONCLUSION

We can conclude that having a currency involved in the internationalization process is an important factor for strengthening economy and trade. As the internationalization process is market-driven but also depends on supply factors. So, India must continue strengthening, reforming, and opening their economy.

India has made significant progress in building the necessary capacity for the internationalization of the India rupee. However, there is still a long way to go. India can rely on its experience and expertise in-house, but it also needs to collaborate with other countries to learn from their experiences and best practices.

REFERENCES

- [1] P Singh (2019), Demonetization 2016 and its impact on the Indian economy and taxation, World Bank Paper.
- [2] A Raj (2023), The impact of Russia-Ukraine war on Indian economy, Feb 24, The Indian express
- [3] S Mangla (2021), Article on impact of Covid 19 on Indian economy, July 11, Times of India.
- [4] M Jayadev, professor of finance and accounting, IIM Bangalore: The Indian rupee as an international currency.
- [5] H Jin (2018), Currency internationalization and the international price] M in International Advances in economic research, South Dakota State University.
- [6] M Singh & Jain (2020), Internationalization of the Indian Rupee: An assessment of the current situation. International Journal of Financial Management, pp 1-11.
- [7] S Sinha & S K Singh (2021), Internationalization of Indian rupee: Opportunities and challenges, *Intl. J. Mang., Tech. and So. Sci.*, pp 34-48.
- [8] M Batra (2020), Internationalization of the rupee: Opportunities and challenges. Economic and Political Weekly, pp. 22-24

Use of Media Adaptations As A Pedagogical Tool In English Literature Classroom: A Case Study

Ruchi Singh¹ and Gibu Sabu M.²

¹Department of English and Modern European Languages, University of Lucknow

² Amity Institute of English Studies and Research, Amity University Uttar Pradesh

¹Corresponding author: ruchigibusingh@outlook.com

ABSTRACT

Throughout the history of literature and film studies, numerous discussions were based on the primacy of literature or the difference between them. One prominent idea in literature states that “words and literature stimulate our thoughts, while images and film provoke our senses”. In this paper, we look at how technological applications can be an apt tool in a literature classroom despite its differences and similarities. We analysed a class over a semester to see how information can be transferred and initiate problem-solving using media adaptations. This experiment in the class highlights the cooperative workings of lectures and media that eventually facilitate the aggregation and organisation of knowledge, while at the same time enhancing learning for all. The paper presents how technology can help teachers mediate and enhance their instruction and at the same time promote active learning for students of literature in a non-honours class. The attainment of students is evaluated on the basis of Bloom’s taxonomy of learning outcomes.

Keywords: *Detective fiction, media adaptations, Bloom’s taxonomy, learner-centered, pedagogy*

1. INTRODUCTION

Media adaptations of literary texts have a long tradition. In academia, many departments of various universities in India and abroad are engaged in a comparative study of media adaptations and literary texts. Most of the early scholars like Allardyce Nicol (1936), George Bluestone (1957), and Robert Richardson (1969), who worked in this field considered the media adaptation as an inferior work as it is an imitation of the original text. According to Cartmel, these writers, following the Platonic concept of imitation, considered media adaptation as a copy of the literary texts. In the same vein, later scholars, Jack Jorgens (1977), Dudley Andrew (1984), and Kamilla Elliott (2003), started classifying media adaptations based on how faithful they are to the literary texts. Robert Ray was one of the first scholars who wanted to change this tradition because he believed that literature is inimitable. Furthering Ray’s claim, Robert Stam considered media “adaptations as readings, as part of a continuing dialogical process” (Cartmell & Whelehan, 2007).

The potential of films and television serials for an effective understanding of subjects and topics is indisputable in a technology-driven world (Dudacek, 2015). The language and communication skills instructors have tremendously used audio-visual media to illustrate and explain their points to the classrooms (Shams & Khan, 2017), (Mellit, 2021). In recent years, the use of films and television series in the teaching-learning process has received much attention in literature classrooms as well (Bousted & Ozturk, 2004). Most of the early works on literature and media adaptation focused on novels as illustrations, to study the means of expression in various media (Milyakina, Ojamaa, Pilipo, & Rickberg, 2019), or even to occupy time (Bazilewich, 2009). Now scholars have started including media “adaptations of literature as varied as the Bible to the fairytale, to different genres, such as fantasy, romance, heritage, and popular fiction” in their studies (Cartmell & Whelehan, 2007). Traditional means of teaching - learning is supplemented by multimodal pedagogy to help reach out to all students, facilitate agency, develop creativity and the critical bend of mind (Newfield, Andrew, Stein, & Maungedzo, 2003), (Gambarato & Dabagian, 2016). “Entertainment media can provide learning opportunities that would be difficult or impossible to create through traditional means...Learning styles and other pedagogical considerations, student characteristics, and possible contributions of the media to learning all warrant attention in considering the value of using entertainment media” (Forney, 2004).

2. OBJECTIVE

In this paper, we have presented a case study in which we analysed a group of students within a literature classroom where the media adaptations were employed. Our purpose in this paper is neither to qualify literature and media adaptation as superior or inferior since each has its own merits nor is it to compare media adaptations with the source texts. We take the position that literature and films are just two mediums of dealing with the same narrative, one through words and the other through images and sounds. Our objective is to ascertain the learning efficacy of introducing media adaptations in a non-honours literature classroom as a pedagogical tool in the teaching-learning process. As a corollary, we will also analyse how literary theory and literature-specific approaches can enhance the understanding of media adaptations, as Morris Beja states “what a film takes from a book matters; but so does what it brings to a book” (Beja, 1979).

3. UTILIZING MEDIA ADAPTATION PEDAGOGY FOR ENHANCING LITERARY ENGAGEMENT

The study of media adaptation of the prescribed texts as a pedagogy was employed in the class with the presupposition that media adaptation can create or develop literary tastes among students who are otherwise not interested in reading literature or reading in general. For all those who are interested in reading, we looked at how media adaptations can give an opportunity to enhance their reading experience. The thought was also to use media adaptation of literary text as an entry point to literary studies.

There were many other considerations for showing media adaptations in this classroom. Firstly, Generation Z or centennials who were brought up on the internet and social media are more inclined to watch than read. Film and series have established itself as the preeminent narrative form (McFarlane, 1996) and an accessible means to explore literature (Griggs, 2016). The contemporary youth is immersed in popular culture that is defined by media that includes Google, social media, films, over-the-top platforms, music, so on and so forth. Even the uninitiated are media literate in today’s world. “Especially for this generation, entertainment media can be powerful tools for teaching because of their ability to connect with students and engage them in the learning process, whether the learning occurs in a classroom or on a residence hall floor” (Forney, 2004). They spend more time with the media than anything else. Howe and Strauss said that in the history of pop culture, the media has accommodated the interests of millennial generation the most from childhood through adolescence (Strauss & Howe, 2009). This has resulted in media becoming the primary storyteller not just for centennials but also for millennial generation, in this case, us, the teachers.

Secondly, many new educational technologies were introduced in educational institutions during covid and post-covid times. Blackboards were essentially replaced by power-point presentations and screen sharing. Sharing limited video content for criticism, research and scholarship has also become easy. Further, the availability of cheaper handheld devices that can stream multimedia content and the internet has made it available to use in the classroom. This has also revolutionised the way classroom teaching is conducted.

Thirdly, with enough of our teaching experience, we know that all students are not the same. This is particularly true of the course we have taken into consideration where students arrive in English classrooms with different expectations than honours students, different levels and kinds of support, and different sets of language skills. Lastly, in the post-National Education Policy 2020 era, educational institutions in India will be increasingly multidisciplinary. In this context, a multidisciplinary approach to literature has become even more important.

4. PEDAGOGY

This was a class of non-honours undergraduate students who were studying English Literature as an elective. The objective of this course was to provide an opportunity to these students to study three years of English Literature courses that enable them to pursue a Master of Arts in English if they desire. The course helped the students by imparting them a working knowledge of reading and analysing literary texts. Since it was a non-honours course, there was no rigorous training for students in literary theory and literary criticism. The course familiarised them with literary texts through different genres and time periods, contemporary literary ideas, and issues in a complex world. Students were admitted to the course if they had studied English in school and they qualified for the cut-off percentage for the course set by the college. Even though these students met the required cut-off, many of them found it difficult to grasp the language in terms of comprehension and fluency in spoken and written English. In

general, such classes are a mixed bag of students coming from varied educational backgrounds (science, commerce, humanities). The proficiency level of English as a second language also varies.

In this paper, we look at the genre of detective fiction in literature and media. The students were offered “Detective Fiction” in their fifth semester. The following texts were a part of the syllabus.

- a. Arthur Conan Doyle: *The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist*
- b. Saradindu Bandopadhyay: *The Menagerie*
- c. Agatha Christie: *A Murder Is Announced*
- d. Edgar Allen Poe: *Murders at Rue Morgue*

The following media adaptations were screened for the students in the classroom.

- a. The Granada TV version of Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist* with Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes.
- b. *Chiriyaghar*, Doordarshan or DD National version of Saradindu Bandopadhyay: *The Menagerie* with Rajit Kapur as Byomkesh Bakshi
- c. The 1971 movie *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, a loose adaptation of Poe’s story.
- d. Apart from these media adaptations of the prescribed texts, *The Mentalist*, an American television series was also shown.

The students were engaged in pre-viewing activities (before watching the film) and post-viewing activities (after watching the film).

➤ **Pre-Viewing Activities**

Before watching the film, the students were engaged in pre-viewing activities. They were first familiarised with the genre of Detective Fiction and its development in Britain, India, and America, including a discussion on cultural and historical context. The general introduction was followed by a close reading of the texts focusing on the analysis and comprehension of the following elements within the narrative:

- i. The central mystery or crime in the story, the nature of the case, the clues, and the potential suspects.
- ii. The significance of the setting and how does it contribute to the atmosphere and the unfolding of the mystery?
- iii. The detective characters, their deductive methods, and the central crime’s nature.
- iv. The characters, including suspects, victims, and witnesses, examine their motives and relationships.
- v. The motifs of justice, morality, and the search for truth
- vi. The author’s narrative style, point of view, character development, and dialogue, including their use of symbolism, motifs, clues, red herrings, and foreshadowing.
- vii. Social and historical context of the plot
- viii. A comparative study of the prescribed texts.

➤ **Post-Viewing Activities**

The media adaptations were introduced later in the stage of teaching. We watched the adaptations together during the class. The students were instructed to analyse and discuss the following aspects:

- i. How are characters portrayed visually, and do these portrayals align with their descriptions in the text?
- ii. How does the adaptation capture the setting and atmosphere of the original text?
- iii. Analyse the film’s storytelling structure compared to the text.
- iv. How do visual elements contribute to the interpretation of themes in the text?
- v. Discuss any changes, omissions, or additions made in the adaptation and their impact.
- vi. Address the similarities and differences between the text and the film adaptation.

5. LEARNING OUTCOME

When we analyse the learning outcome, a taxonomy in tune with the objective should be introduced. A taxonomy gives us the framework wherein we can categorise learning outcomes from the student's perspective. It also equips the teachers with tools to evaluate their teaching methods. We have employed Bloom's taxonomy to assess the learning outcomes of the students. Since the course itself was for non-honours students, the objective to introduce media adaptations was to achieve lower-level skills of knowledge and comprehension for all the students. But there were a few students who wanted to go beyond the syllabus and enhance their critical thinking (Bobkina & Domínguez, 2019).

The following were the observations after the media adaptations of the prescribed texts were introduced as part of the teaching-learning methodology. We have discussed the inferences drawn based on the interests and responses of the students in the classroom and the assignments and presentations submitted by them as part of the continuous evaluation. Additionally, insights from focused group discussions were incorporated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the students' perspectives and experiences with the introduced media adaptations. There were total of sixty-five students in the class. According to the learning outcome of the students, we can categorize them into three. The first group of students were able to do higher-order skills of Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation. They constituted thirty percent of the total students in the classroom and scored 80 percentage and above in continuous internal assessment. The second group was able to do Comprehension and Application. This group had the highest number of students that is fifty-five percent of the total number. They scored between 65 and 80 percent. The third group remained at the lower hierarchical level of Knowledge and Comprehension. It was fifteen percent of the total students and their scores range was 50 to 65 percent.

The students who read the text as well as watched the media adaptation were able to use a comparative framework to analyse the written texts and the media adaptations. Jelena Bobkina and Elena Domínguez have stated that film adaptations facilitate the comparative analysis of written and visual language. The experience of watching the media adaptation and reading the book differed. Most of these students who were in the habit of reading, found written texts to be more engaging. It allowed them to comprehensively discuss the differences in terms of the elements added, omitted or altered. They were also able to engage in discussion about how the changes affect the scenes. Barbara F. Tobolowsky writes "...using these visual media constitutes a novel classroom approach that encourages discussion, critique, and personal reflection, which is ideal for engaging all learners" (Tobolowsky, 2007). Here we are sharing some observations of these students. They were of the opinion that written text forces them to think and imagine while reading it. Since the media adaptations are moving images, fast-paced, using technology leaving hardly any space to imagine and think while it plays. Written texts offer multiple connotations and encourage the reader to think beyond what is presented to them on the surface. For instance, the themes of repression of sexuality and race perspective in *Murders in the Rue Morgue*; the position of women in the Victorian period in *The Solitary Cyclist*; and post-independence Calcutta culture as reflected in *The Menagerie*. The film adaptations closely reflected the cultural and historical context in which it was made. There was very less or complete absence of the introduction of modern elements and cultural references that were not present in the original text. Narrative structure in the written works is cohesive like in the order of exposition, conflict, climax, and then denouement but films meddle with it and may leave the audience a little confused. For instance, in the film based on *Murders in the Rue Morgue* story, the identity of the perpetrator is revealed to be an orangutan in the middle of the story whereas in the text it is disclosed towards the end which creates a lasting impact on the reader. The director has taken the liberty of interpreting the sequence of events. This in turn has impacted the narrative and the audience's assessment of the story. Further, they analysed both the medium of narratives and could break them down into their constituent parts to see how they differed in their organisation. They were able to clearly determine the difference in the point of view of the author and director. Finally, they evaluated both the media based on objective criteria and made judgements about which medium is more effective. The written text and the script were analysed with regard to the language, tone and narrative style. Judgements were made based on the nuances that the script captured and those which were lost. This experiment helped the students from being passive viewers to learners who could deconstruct the elements of films and discuss the layered complexities therein. They became familiar with media and film studies which led to a discussion on the subject. In the process, the students understood the concept of transcreation. Moreover, this group of students could understand how a media adaptation is the vision and imagination of the director. It is less of the author's perspective, and even less of the readers, it is more like a ready-to-consume perception for the audience. Certain tropes like locked rooms or death under mysterious circumstances are represented in a more realistic way than those in the books. The use of technology makes films more effective such as the use of music and soundtracks. The presence of suspenseful

music and the sound of footsteps played in the background in detective films helps to create suspense and thrill the audience. Music also helps heighten the emotional impact of key scenes and emphasise certain themes. The students also attempted to answer the question whether media adaptations, from the pedagogical perspective, can be seen as literature. Can media adaptations in the literature classroom be taken as an entry point to literature, to teach literary analysis and appreciate literature? After deliberating upon these questions students concluded that both literature studies and media studies complement each other as much as they are mutually exclusive.

The second group of students who watched the media adaptation first were drawn into reading the texts. Watching the movie enabled them to grasp and retain that text better. The vivid verbal imagination found expression in moving pictures. They showed their interest by participating in the classroom discussion. These students were of the view that it helped them to relate to and retain the subject for a longer time. Some of the students in this group even stated how they wished this method of using media in the classroom could be used in other subjects too. Some believed the use of media should be introduced at the level of schools itself to better equip them with knowledge of their subjects. If not adaptation, just illustrations would help them to vividly imagine and memorise the subject matter. Hence, media can be used in the classroom as a motivator for reading the original text. As Barbara F. Tobolowsky mentioned, "Film and television were more flexible, immediate, and familiar, so students would be more engaged" (Tobolowsky, 2007). These students responded more to the feelings, themes, and issues of the characters. They did not participate much in the technical aspects of the production, such as editing, writing, lighting, or music. But these students could now provide a more detailed summary of the text as well as more thoughtful explanations than they did in early classroom sessions.

There were others in the classroom who only watched the media adaptations. They constituted the third group of students that were very less in number in the classroom. These students, with the help of classroom notes, were able to understand the plot, characterisation, and themes. They have gained factual knowledge of the genre, literary terms, poetic devices, etc. which are the basics of literary study. They were able to recognise these devices present in the texts prescribed in the syllabus and recall them for evaluation purposes. Though it did not make much difference to their activity and participation in the classroom. Unlike most students, this group of students neither responded to the themes and issues nor to the technical aspects of the film adaptations or the differences. Their purpose was just to know the story and pass the exams.

We also realised that the use of film and visual media in a complex mix of classrooms provided students with opportunities for engaging in the reflected experience of other cultures. The activity addressed the issue of complex linguistic, cultural, and psychosocial backgrounds, and unmatched English language skills in an Indian classroom. The problem of language is one of the issues that needs to be addressed. Not all students in a non-honors classroom have competent English language skills. For such students reading at their own pace and referring to a dictionary as and when required helps to understand the text. Watching it on screen with or without subtitles is ineffective. All things considered, incorporating movies and serials proved to be a utilitarian pedagogical practice. Further, it is also an effective way to promote the development of intercultural awareness and competencies, values, beliefs, customs, and attitudes in the classroom.

6. CONCLUSION

The introduction of media adaptations in a literature classroom proved to be successful because, regardless of their learning preferences, most students could engage in profuse discussions and reflections that went beyond the genre of detective literature. It pushed many of the students to use and develop their analytical skills. It turned into an inclusive classroom since most students could break communication barriers and shed their anxieties about speaking in the classroom, not questioning their own ability to think and analyse. As teachers, we learned that films and television serials can encourage a group and engage them in classroom discussion more effectively. As Anderson said this also enhances the rapport between the group and instructor as well as improves students' skills in taking different or new perspectives (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

REFERENCES

- [1] Anderson, L., & Krathwohl, D. (2001). *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing: a Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. ennsylvania : Longman.
- [2] Andrew, D. (1984). *Concepts in Film Theory*. Oxford, London. Glasgow: Oxford University Press.

- [3] Bazilewich, A. (2009). *Beyon Adaptation: Using Film to Enhance the Teaching of Literature in the Secondary English Language Arts Classroom. Graduate Paper.* Unpublished
- [4] Beja, M. (1979). *Film and Literature: An Introduction*. New York: Longman.
- [5] Bluestone, G. (1957). *Novels into Film*. Berkeley : University of California Press.
- [6] Bobkina, J., & Domínguez, E. (2019). Towards an Inclusive Model for Teaching Literature in Multimodal Frameworks. In C. H. (ed.), *Using Film and Media in the Language Classroom: Reflections on Research-led Teaching* (pp. 141-146). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- [7] Bousted, M., & Ozturk, A. (2004). "It came alive outside my head." Developing literacies through comparison: the reading of classic text and moving image. *Literacy*, 52- 57.
- [8] Cartmell, D., & Whelehan, I. (2007). *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [9] Dudacek, O. (2015). Transmedia Storytelling in Education. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 197 , 694 – 696.
- [10] Elliott, K. (2003). *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [11] Forney, D. (2004). Introduction to Entertainment Media Use. *New Directions for Student Services*, 1–11.
- [12] Gambarato, R., & Dabagian, L. (2016). Transmedia dynamics in education: the case of Robot Heart Stories. *Educational Media International*.
- [13] Griggs, Y. (2016). *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Adaptation Studies: Adapting the Canon in Film, TV, Novels and Popular Culture*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- [14] Jorgens, J. (1977). *Shakespeare on Film*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- [15] Jorgens, J. (1977). *Shakespeare on Film*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- [16] McFarlane, B. (1996). *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- [17] Mellit, D. (2021). The Effects Of Film Adaptations On The Egagement Of English As A Foreign Language Students With English Literary Texts: The Attitude Of Teachers And Students . *Journal of Studies in Language, Culture, and Society* , 65-77.
- [18] Milyakina, A., Ojamaa, M., Pilipo, T., & Rickberg, M. (2019). Literature on screen: teaching adaptations in a multimodal course,. *Media Practice and Education*, 10.1080/25741136.2019.1673029.
- [19] Newfield, D., Andrew, D., Stein, P., & Maungedzo, R. (2003). 'No Number Can Describe How Good It Was': Assessment issues in the multimodal classroom. *Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 10:1, 61-81.
- [20] Nicol, A. (1936). *Film and Theatre. London, Bombay*. Sidney: George G. Harrap & Company.
- [21] Richardson, R. (1969). *Literature and Film*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- [22] Shams, A., & Khan, A. (2017). Media Adaptations Of Literature And ESL Context. *International Journal of English Language, Literature & Translation Studies Vol. 4. Issue.1.*, 506-513.
- [23] Strauss, W., & Howe, N. (2009). *Millennials Rising*. Vintage Books USA.
- [24] Tobolowsky, B. F. (2007). In practice-Thinking Visually: Using Visual Media in the College Classroom. *About Campus*, 12(1), 21–24

Representing Subaltern Voices of Women in Taslima Nasrin's *Split: A Life* as a Rebellion Against Patriarchy

Sarita

Assistant Professor, Department of Germanic and Romance Studies, University of Delhi

corresponding author: saritadichterin.grs@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Women have always been victims of patriarchy. They have been marginalized, discriminated and subjugated from time immemorial. This article aims to show how Taslima Nasrin's autobiography Split raises the voice of marginalized women through self-representation. Nasrin has previously been known for her controversial works - in particular Lajja, that saw her political expulsion from her country - Bangladesh. Nasrin's insistence on providing a voice to the subaltern by writing about the subjugations faced by women in the modern world and the repercussions she has thus faced, are testament to the patriarchal institutions that work persistently to silence the female voices. At the same time, they are evidence of the status of women as the subaltern.

Keywords: feminism, subaltern, feminist voices, resistance, patriarchy

1. INTRODUCTION

Taslima Nasrin is recognized around the world for her bold writing. Driven into foreign exile, she remains devoted to the improvement of women in her Islamic country, where they have been persistently oppressed through institutionalised patriarchy. Nasrin unapologetically condemns religion for suppressed literary expression and women's low place in society. Of her seven memoirs, *Split: A Life*, is 500 pages long and was originally published as *Dwikhanditho* in Bengali. The West Bengal government banned it in India in 2003 for supposedly offending Muslims, until a court order in 2005 lifted the injunction ("Taslima Nasreen Book," 2018). Nasrin's life is depicted in this voluminous book in a raw but insightful way. This is particularly so in the context of Mymensingh and Dhaka - two of Bangladesh's most prominent cities. The author takes off the proverbial veil from her life as she narrates her experience of living in a despotic democracy that oppresses women and creates an environment of fear in which they are not allowed to thrive. There are numerous instances of patriarchy that take precedence over basic human rights and morality, in the book. Nasrin and the women around her suffered at the hands of the men around them. In her book, the author does not shy away from discussing sensitive issues such as rape and domestic abuse. As a result of her father's ruthless retaliation, she herself underwent physical abuse and house arrest. She portrays these instances as patriarchal tools to keep women in line and to assert their own dominance.

Within such a system where women's voices are systematically silenced, Taslima Nasrin's insistence on speaking out through her literary works itself is an act of rebellion. Taslima Nasrin has shown what happens when a woman stands up against patriarchy. This is evident in her life: the radical Islamist group called "Council of Islamic Soldiers" issued a fatwa against her over her novel *Lajja*, and the government refused to back her. Her passport was confiscated and she was asked to cease writing about the violence by fundamentalists against members of different religions. It's not that she aims to discredit

any faith, but she rather criticizes oppressive interpretations of religion and misogyny that have become deeply entrenched. Her novels such as *Lajja* and collection of essays such as *No Country for Women*, all focus on the fight against patriarchy and on highlighting the plight of Bangladeshi women who suffer under its rule. Through her writings, she lends her voice to the oppressed women of Bangladesh. Her main focus is to shed light on the mistreatment of women under the patriarchal institutions (Devi, 2015). In the following sections I will try to unravel Nasrin's feminist approach to life through the lens of feminist literary criticism. The first section discusses how women of Nasrin's world – including Nasrin herself, are the subaltern. It is followed by a discussion on how Nasrin becomes the voice of the oppressed women and the personal consequences of this rebellion against patriarchy. I argue that in *Split*, Nasrin not only chronicles her own struggles with patriarchy, but also insists on bringing attention to the condition of women in South Asia and the means they often use to subvert institutionalized patriarchy.

2. THE VOICES OF THE SUBALTERN IN NASRIN'S *SPLIT*

2.1. *Nasrin as a Feminist Writer*

Since the 1980s, Taslima Nasrin, a Bangladeshi physician, has been a pioneering figure in discussing women's issues. She wrote nineteen books between 1989 and 1994, which included seven novels, one collection of short stories, seven collections of poems and four volumes of articles from her newspaper columns. Her straightforward and controversial style caused a sensation in Bangladesh; for example, *Nirbachito Column (Selected Writings)* was a best-seller in 1992 and sold over 100,000 copies, but it also attracted widespread anger and controversy. She typically attacks the status quo, religion, and men as oppressive agents in her writings. Her writing is a recurring theme of sexual discrimination and violence against women in Bangladesh. For her autobiographical account in *Split*, she uses graphic language to express herself and depict the situation of women in the country. In one instance, she writes,

"I wanted to scream, gather the people and demand justice. I did nothing. I was afraid that people would only gather around me to watch, to witness the spectacle of my pain, my screams, my rage and my tears. The scar remains on my skin to this day, a reminder of that violence that I carry. I also feel fortunate that no one has yet thrown acid at me, I have not been blinded and I am especially grateful that a group of men has not ambushed me on a road and raped me. I am grateful to be alive. What is my great crime for which I fear such horrific retribution? I am a woman." (p. 188)

Nasrin's story highlights the plight of women in Bangladesh, as well as the dichotomy of shame and honour that is seen in relation to gender. Jayawardena and De Alwis (1996) echoed her views when they wrote about embodied violence in South Asia. They have discussed how female inviolability had been leveraged as a cultural tool for resisting modernisation and westernisation. However, the nation's use of women's bodies as a symbolic space has often involved their oppression. This is what Nasrin identifies as what is wrong with the Bangladeshi society, and this is what her literary body of work is directed against. Hers therefore, becomes a voice that represents the subaltern, as well as a voice of rebellion against institutionalized patriarchy.

Oppression and injustice towards women have been significant themes in all of Nasrin's works. For an instance, in the novel, *Split*, Taslima revealed how women were dominated by men. The intention was to oppress the women and turn them into subservient individuals without any free will, freedom, and choice of their own. She has claimed in her writings that women have been conditioned to act passively in every sphere of life - be it authority in their own homes or their workplace, or control over their own

bodies and sexual pleasures. The women were therefore conditioned to be rigorously mastered and controlled. As per the experiences chronicled by Nasrin in her autobiographical account, it has been understood that the immutable rights made for human beings are often practiced exclusively to favour the men and women were denied these rights due to the vicious conspiracy that occurs between the society and religion to oppress the free will of the women. Against this backdrop, Nasrin's writings rouse the sentiments of an entire people – often against her. At the same time, they also amass support from unlikely quarters – often her male peers from the literary world. Her voice, therefore, becomes the voice of rebellion and it becomes the beacon of hope for the subaltern.

2.2. *Women as the Subaltern*

Renowned in the arenas of Post-colonialism, Feminism, Deconstruction and Marxism, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's work revolves around the notion of the Subaltern. This idea, inspired by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, initially denoted individuals of lower military status. In her piece *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, Spivak asserts that early political historiography has suppressed the voices of these marginalized groups. Borrowing the term from Gramsci, Spivak characterizes subaltern individuals as those lacking authority, relegated to merely following instructions. In her work, she typically looks at Muslim women as subaltern, because they lack agency. In her own case, for instance, despite being a practicing doctor, and coming from an influential family, she found herself lacking agency in many areas of her life.

Right from the very first chapter of her book, Nasrin takes to illustrating the order of gender discrimination entrenched in the Islamic society of Bangladesh. The book opens with the recollection of an outbreak of Cholera in Bangladesh, and how young Taslima helped her doctor father tend to those who suffered in the outbreak. Her narrative is based on her subordination to her father – who despite his need for her assistance in his work, insists on maintaining control over where she goes, who she meets and what she says to them. The male privilege is not only limited to her father but extends to all males – including the doctors she works with and even the patients on the brink of demise, who she tends to. At one instance, when she tried to convince a fellow doctor to help a homeless family, she not only received staunch opposition, but authority was clearly exerted over her. Nasrin writes, "Suffice it to say I lost the argument because Rehman had more authority than I did - he was a man" (p. 8). Nasrin puts across this point simply enough in the opening chapter of her book, but later substantiates it well through other claims as well. In the seventh chapter, for instance, she writes, "the only course had been the one available to most women if they wished to escape their father's house - exchange it for their husband's" (p. 101). Where earlier she simply mentions the loss of an argument – because of her opponent's gender, in this quote from chapter 7, she exemplifies the helplessness and the subaltern status of a woman. She points out how an independent woman unaccompanied by a man, could not even rent a house because no one would sublet their property to her. She was an outcast, an anomaly to be kept at a distance. She explains later in that chapter, that even her mother's presence with her could not secure her the sympathies of potential landlords. They insisted that "some male relative or the other had to live with her" (p. 141).

Nasrin also talks about her own experiences as a doctor – a profession which allowed her a peek into the intimate lives of her patients. She writes, "I learnt about women who were being forced into pregnancy for the seventh or eighth time because their husbands were waiting for a male child" (p. 18). It was not enough that women in Bangladesh did not have their own identity. What was worse was that they did not have control over their own bodies or the important decisions related to their own lives. Even the biological urges, and their satisfaction, belonged to the males. A naive Nasrin reports of her

lack of sexual knowledge, that "Masturbation was something that was quintessentially male, at least as far as I knew" (p. 314). This indicates a deep-rooted conditioning in the Bangladeshi society, that treated women with disdain, and viewed them as being devoid of any physical sensations or desires. In fact, Nasrin's accounts suggest that young Muslim women were conditioned to believe that carnal pleasures were banned for them and could only be enjoyed by their male counterparts.

2.3. *Nasrin's Voice as Rebellion*

Amidst this raucous denigration of women and their needs, desires and identities, comes the strong voice of Nasrin as a foghorn, calling out to the society and asking them to create space for women to exist as they are. Nasrin, though she talks about equality, first calls for the need for space for women – and this too has been seen as an act of rebellion. Nasrin's insistence to step into her own identity and her refusal to abide by the patriarchal rules that were applicable to all by default, is an act of defiance and is seen as such. She writes of her experience with the family planning and fertility clinic,

"The family planning office, always a place of disarray, was in dire straits. Medicines were being pilfered, money was being stolen, the male employees oversaw everything, and the pretty female employees always had to be careful about wayward hands. While trying to speak out against such rampant violations I realized mine was the only voice crying out aloud. I was losing and the male overseers were waiting for an opportunity to get back at me." (p. 116).

She was immediately tagged as a "troublemaker" and persecuted as such – both in her employment in the medical field, as well as her rise among the literary circles. In chapter 16, Nasrin chronicles her rise in the field of literature and the receipt of the prestigious and much coveted *Anand Puruskar*, a literary honour bestowed only on the best in the field of Bengali literature. She chronicles the words of Shamsur Rehman – a respected male poet of Bangladesh, who came to her support. Rehman praised her rebellious spirit and sought to quell the unrest that her works had stirred in many quarters of the Bengali Muslim communities of Bangladesh. Following Shamsur Rehman's lead, other well-known male figures from the Bengali literature community, such as Rashid Karim, Najim Mahmud and Majhrul Islam began to write in Nasrin's favour. Impressed with her skill and the strength of her spirit which refused to give in, in a country that favoured men so much, and powerful men even more, Nasrin's ability to amass support from powerful men, is a testament to her indomitable spirit and her success in becoming a voice of the subaltern. It represents the success of her rebellion against patriarchy, while also demonstrating how the patriarchy often made way for brave and uncompromising voices such as those of Nasrin's. Nasrin's voice continued to rouse discomfort in a society that was unwilling to examine itself closely and acknowledge its mistreatment of a major segment of its population. She writes,

"The debate raged on for and against me. The ones against me were decidedly more in number, their pens sharper, more spirited and brimming with discontent. I also noticed that the tag 'popular', which was hitherto associated with my name, had been replaced by 'controversial', because apparently my writing caused controversy the likes of which no other author's did. Whatever I wrote affected people in some way or the other; either it made them laugh, or cry, or it made them think and get angry. Everyone who read it had something or the other to say." (p. 443).

However, at the same time, Nasrin also faced staunch opposition. In September 1993, the Sahaba Sainik Parishad was hastily set up to join the anti-Taslima movement, and a price of 50,000 takas (roughly \$800) was placed on Nasrin's head in the form of a fatwa. This death threat caused shockwaves around the world, leading Pen International and Amnesty International to step in to safeguard her life and secure her rights. In order to prevent any more issues due to her writing, Nasrin's passport was

retrieved thanks only to the intervention of the American consulate; it had been taken away previously by the Bangladeshi authorities. In *Split*, Nasrin writes about the backlash she received after her *Nirbachito Column* was published in 1991. Attempts were made to ban her book, because they stirred the Bangladeshi intelligentsia and Bangla writers began to question the status quo regarding women's place in the society. In one of the lawsuits filed against her, the advocates claimed

"In her various columns the plaintiff has repeatedly spewed unnecessary insults and obscenities against men in the name of women's liberation, in order to stir up antagonism between the classes. Not just that, she has not even shown any respect for women in any of her columns and has "constantly tried to pollute them... The plaintiff has attempted to push her readers to confusion again and again by challenging naturalized laws and social norms, and destabilizing acceptable boundaries of taste and civility through repeated discussions of all manner of lewd and explicit sexual matters."" (p. 598).

Nasrin was astounded in *Split* that the Prime Minister and Opposition leader of her country were both women. Yet, they remained quiet with regard to the violation of women's rights and disregarded fatwas against women. She writes, "It was amazing that we lived in a country where both the prime minister and the leader of the opposition were women" (p. 384). Ultimately, they imposed bans on books such as Taslima's in order to remain in their positions of power, and preserve support from fundamentalists who constituted a relevant portion of the population. It became clear that while religion endorsed the patriarchy that was taking away the very fundamental rights of women, nobody could speak out against it. She thus became the voice of the voiceless - the women who were the subaltern.

3. FEMINIST LITERARY CRITICISM

During the British colonial era in South Asia, religion was considerably employed by Hindu and Muslim leaders alike, both for combatting the colonizer and against each other. The independence movement proposed to offer comprehensive rights to religious minorities and women in a society of fairness and democracy. Yet, the post-colonial countries of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan promptly solidified their territorial and state power. Around 1990, intolerance in its different forms started to breakout across nations of the sub-continent. This included the demolition of Babri mosque in India (1992) and subsequent slaughter of Muslims throughout diverse parts of India as well as aggression against Hindus in Bangladesh and Pakistan (Hossain 2015; Sarkar and Butalia 1995; Jayawardena and De Alwis 1996). This has emphasized how communalism is still at large within post-colonial countries, and how it has become a fundamental part of the national fabric. National liberation in South Asia, unfortunately took on a chauvinist hue, resulting in increasing violence and atrocities against women. Examples include sati and dowry deaths in India, acid burning, rape, and trafficking in Bangladesh. This leads us to ask: what is the relationship between religious fundamentalism and rising violence against women? In fact, Sangari and Vaid (2013) claim,

"... far from enjoying the benefits of so-called development, the majority of women have in fact been pushed to the margins of the production process. Alongside this "invisible" economic process, there is a visible escalation of communal conflicts and an increasing politicization of "religious" identities. These later developments have given a new lease of life to patriarchal practices under "religious" sanction." (p. 2).

Alexander and Mohanty (1997) advocate for a "local feminist praxis," while emphasizing the necessity to also comprehend the connection to larger, cross-national processes. Examining the communal revivalism and violence against women in Bangladesh and India, transnational processes involving politics and religion become evident; playing a part in every aspect of social life. The situation of Taslima Nasrin can be better chased when analysing this transnational context. Her situation recognizes

"a purely locational politics of global-local; disregarding national boundaries; thus, patiently contesting all inadequate and inaccurate binary and divisions" (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, 13).

3.1. Role of Feminist Groups – Ambivalence Against Patriarchy

The roots of female activism in Bangladesh can be traced back to the Liberation Movement. Women from different circles, such as students, authors, peasants, laborers, academics, journalists and left-oriented groups participated actively in protests and marches against the Pakistani military junta in 1969. This propelled them to become aware of themselves and their potential. As a result, Mahila Parishad (Women's Council) was formed in 1970. It currently stands as Bangladesh's most prominent women organisation with over 30 thousand members. As Bangladesh gained independence in 1971 and the 1975 UN International Women's Conference took place in Mexico, various women's associations were set up to challenge sexist policies and promote gender equity.

Despite the diversity present among the women's groups in Bangladesh, they have come together from time to time to oppose forces which are oppressive, as well as the ruling government. This level of solidarity and collaboration has drawn attention to their movement. One notable example of this was when the various factions joined forces in 1995 - in response to the horrific rape and murder of a twelve year old girl, Yasmin - pushing for action to be taken against the policemen responsible, along with those in high ranking positions who had failed to take initiative. Over time, these women's organisations have been increasing their presence and power base; bringing attention to important issues such as sexual violence, women's rights, divorce settlements and child custody cases.

In the early reactions to the controversy surrounding Nasrin, liberal writers, poets, literary critics and journalists praised her boldness and defended her right to free speech. Intellectuals, secularists and activists from all over coalesced in support of her work, though its confrontational nature - attacking public figures through her columns - as well as its geopolitical implications of book *Lajja* defied what Grewal and Kaplan (1994) label "inadequate and inaccurate binary divisions". However, as Nasrin's reputation became more and more contested (Mortaza and Rahman 1994), she began to lose the support of those in Bangladesh. Despite backing from international organisations such as Amnesty International, PEN and NFIW, Bangladeshi women's associations showed a reluctance to stand behind her. This posed a difficult issue for them since they feared potential extreme backlash from traditionalists; their fears were confirmed when fundamentalists attacked various offices and burned NGO-run schools in rural areas under the false assumption that NGOs opposed Bangladesh and Islam. Despite this, some feminist/women's organisations attempted to show their solidarity with her. The Pioneer - an Indian English daily newspaper - reported on June 12th, 1994, that multiple Bangladeshi women's organisations had signed a statement: "The case against Taslima must be withdrawn. It is the mullahs who should be put on trial for committing repression on women through fatwas and unauthorised Islamic courts" (Fazl 1994, 7).

Clearly, Nasrin – controversial as she has remained, was successful in becoming the voice of the oppressed. Despite the controversies that surrounded her, Nasrin was able to bring about significant change through her writings and even the women's organizations or her literary peers who would have held their peace fearing popular backlash, were forced to join ranks with her.

4. CONCLUSION

The feminist concerns in the case of Taslima Nasrin's works examined in this paper, cast against a backdrop of both local and transnational processes that shape contemporary feminist perspectives in Bangladesh. It attracted the attention of numerous local, national and international entities, which eventually compelled her to escape the country. Nasrin's fight against women's oppression and by that

extension - the fundamentalist forces was unquestionably driven by a genuine idea to support feminism. However, colonialism's effects and aftershocks, inter-religious tensions and consequent violence, state's role as well as transnational socio-economic and political processes, all were instrumental in establishing Nasrin as a controversial figure.

On her part, Nasrin, through her literary works and her attempts to give momentum to feminism in Bangladesh, continue to be a voice for the subaltern. In her book, *Split*, Nasrin represented both the geopolitics in the subcontinent and feminist views in Bangladesh. Although Nasrin broke the structural silence of her society on women's issues, her writings and remarks may have jeopardized their gains since they went beyond what feminist groups could support. There was no discussion of Nasrin's case in a public forum in Bangladesh after her exile to Sweden in 1994. Today, Nasrin continues to be in exile – all because of her act of rebellion against patriarchy. I hope this paper will spark dialogue and interest among feminists and activists (Bangladeshi/international) regarding postcolonial, transnational feminist issues in the subcontinent, especially in Bangladesh and India. Nasrin's exile and controversy should not be considered a local or Islamic fundamentalist issue, but as a global feminist issue that transcends national boundaries.

REFERENCES

- [1] M J Alexander and C T Mohanty (1997), *Genealogies, legacies, movements*. Routledge
- [2] A A Devi (2015), Theme of Suppression in the Selected Novels of Taslima Nasrin-Lajja and French Lover. *Language in India*, 15(1), pp. 74-84.
- [3] A Fazl (1994), A pawn in the political game. *The Pioneer*. Published June 12, 1994, p. 7
- [4] I Grewal and C Kaplan (Eds.). (1994). *Scattered hegemonies: Postmodernity and transnational feminist practices*. University of Minnesota Press.
- [5] A A Hossain (2015), Contested national identity and political crisis in Bangladesh: Historical analysis of the dynamics of Bangladeshi society and politics. *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 23(3), pp. 366-396.
- [6] K Jayawardena and M De Alwis (1996), Embodied violence: Communalising women's sexuality in South Asia. *Reproductive Health Matters*, 4(8), 162-166.
- [7] K Sangari and S Vaid (2013), Recasting women: An introduction. *Recasting women: Essays in colonial history*. Zubaan.
- [8] T Sarkar and U Butalia (1995), *Women and the Hindu right: A collection of essays*, Kali for Women

Atrocities Against Dalit Women Remedies and Institutional Responses in India

Seema Mathur¹

¹Department of Political Science, Kalindi College,
University of Delhi

¹corresponding author: seemamathur@kalindi.du.ac.in

ABSTRACT

*Atrocities are the combinations of violence against Dalits by non-Dalits to teach them lessons. It is used by dominant castes as a social mechanism for humiliating entire Dalit communities. In a male dominated society like India, where all the decisions for the family including women's life within the house walls and in out spheres are taken by male, social position of women which is lowest because of caste discrimination and untouchability makes them more vulnerable to a number of human rights violations, such as, physical and verbal abuse, forced labour and slavery, trafficking, abduction, naked parading, and sexual violence including rape and gang rape. In this situation **Dalit women** suffer unimaginable oppression, not only gender based but **caste** based too from which there is no scope to escape. Dalit women are also subjected to **discrimination** based on specific social customs and religious practices, including the Devadasi, Jogini and Badi systems of forced prostitution.*

*Atrocities prevent the overall development and enjoyment of human rights for Dalit women and their community as well. In most of the cases of atrocities Dalit women have been threatened by the perpetrators to remain silent about the incidents or withdraw police cases or pressurized for 'compromises' when cases have been registered. Though there are many **Laws and Acts** exist to address atrocities against Dalit women, but due to many reasons they are not able to take advantages of these legal provisions to get **justice** against atrocities done on them by the dominant castes' perpetrators. In this context, this article is based on the empirical research study done by the author[1] in Jaipur District of Rajasthan.. The research study was based on the primary data which was collected through the interviews of with 200 study samples with the help of questionnaire. Thus, this article reveals the experiences, challenges and struggles face by 200 Dalit Women who were the victims or survivors of the atrocities due to the caste-based and gender-biased discrimination and the untouchability practices as well.*

Keywords: Atrocities, Dalit Women, Caste-Discrimination, Laws and Acts, Justice

1. INTRODUCTION

“We shall overcome and success will be ours in the future. The future belongs to us.”

- Savitribai Phule and India's first female teacher.

Dalit women are more vulnerably placed in the society due to their caste and gender subordination this situation persists even today despite constitutional guarantees of non-discrimination on the basis of caste and gender, The caste system which drives from the 'Brahmanical Varna' are largely responsible as one

of the prime factor of natural suppression and hierarchal exploitation. Worst is the plight of Dalits who are treated as outcaste in this Brahmanical parlance. Per centuries the dalit women were victims of atrocities and they continue to remains so. Thus, placed at the bottom of the social hierarchal ladder Dalit Women in India, as per the 2011 National Census, are 16.68 percent of the total female population which is 58.7 crore. As per the 2011 National Census Dalit women are populated around 9.79 crore which is 48.59 percent of the total Dalit population in India. Social position of a dalit women makes them more vulnerable to a number of human rights violations, such as, physical and verbal abuse, forced labour and slavery, trafficking, abduction, public display of nudity, and acts of sexual aggression, including rape and gang rape. Dalit women are also subjected to discrimination based on specific social customs and religious practices, including the *Devadasi or Jogini* (a female servant/slave of deity) and *Badi* (community in Nepal) systems of forced prostitution.

Thus, in a male dominated society Dalit women face systematic and structural discrimination and suffer unimaginable oppression, not only gender based but caste based and economic based also. Dalit women along with their male counterparts continue to suffer decent and work-based discrimination, untouchability practices and violence arising out of caste system. Dalit women are at a higher risk of experiencing collective and public threats or acts of social violence compared to women from dominant castes, who are more commonly exposed to violence within their own families. The National Commission for Women has made this observation, “In the commission of offences against the Scheduled Caste women the offenders try to establish their authority and humiliate the community by subjecting their women to indecent and inhuman treatment, including sexual assault, parading nakedly, using filthy language, etc.”[2]

2. ATROCITIES AGAINST DALIT WOMEN

Atrocities against Dalit women are not a new phenomenon. The specific forms of discrimination that Dalit women struggle against are based on caste, class and patriarchy. The lives of Dalit women are particularly challenging due to the combination of social beliefs surrounding pollution, economic dependencies on upper castes for work and livelihood, and the vulnerabilities arising from gender subordination. The Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, defines "atrocities" as offenses committed against Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe members by individuals who do not belong to either of these communities, as specified in the Indian Penal Code, *where caste consideration is really the root cause of the crime even though caste consciousness may not be the immediate motive of the crime.*” Atrocities against Dalit women occur at two levels: as an inherent part of the caste system where Dalit women are seen as available for all forms of violence especially sexual violence and when they transgress caste norms such as untouchability norms or assert their rights over resources, public spaces or cultural spaces. Violence is socially legitimised through the impunity with which perpetrators of violence against Dalit women too often operate.[3] Incidents of mass killing of Dalits and their women like Jhajjar (2002), Gohana (2005), Khairlanji (2006), Mirchpur (2010), Dankaur (2015) and many more occur just to teach them a lesson by the dominant castes. Recorded instances indicate that Dalits have been disproportionately affected by various forms of discrimination and violence, with a significant number of victims being women. Atrocities against Dalit women are an increasing trend. As per statistics provided in NCRB report, atrocities or crime against schedule castes have increased by 12 percent in 2021 (50,900) over 2020 (50, 291) cases.[4]

For Dalit women, the fact that their labour outside the family is crucial for the survival of the family, leads to the lack of stringent control over their labour, mobility and sexuality.[5] Therefore, the face

violence and exploitation not only from the dominant castes, but also within their own families and Dalit communities. Physical assault, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, rape, forced prostitution and kidnapping by male members of the dominant caste are common experiences for Dalit women. But certain kinds of violence seem to be reserved for Dalit women like extreme filthy verbal abuse and sexual epithets, naked parading, dismemberment, forced to drink urine and faeces, tied to a pole and beaten, branding, pulling out the teeth/tongue/nail and murder by proclaiming witches. Forced prostitution through dedication to Goddess is a practice that specifically targets Dalit women, and a significant majority of manual scavengers are also Dalit women. According to **Noeleen Heyzer**, the executive director of UNIFEM and a prominent women's rights leader, “a shocking 15 percent of women and girls experience rape or other forms of sexual assault before they reach the age of 17. Worldwide, studies also highlighted that 1 out of every 3 women has been beaten, forced to have sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime, usually by someone known.[6] Dalit women are disproportionately subjected to demands for sexual relationships, sexual exploitation, rape, mental harassment, and torture, often perpetrated by police and other administrative authorities.” These forms of abuse are more frequently imposed on Dalit women compared to non Dalit women. Dalit women are the victims of landlord’s oppression, police excesses and *goondaism*. Many of the women who have stood against the local landlords or supported inter-caste marriage or try to stop child marriage are punished by being paraded naked or raped. (ex. *Bhanwari Devi*). All these forms of violence exist – known as atrocities - continues in India despite the fact that provisions of laws to prevent them have existed for many years.[7] The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, has also noted that Dalit women, “*face targeted violence, even rape and death from state actors and powerful members of dominant castes, used to inflict political lessons and crush dissent within the community, or the women are used as pawns to capture their men folk. These women are gang raped, forced into prostitution, stripped, paraded around naked, made to eat excrement or even murdered for no crime of theirs...Young Dalit girls are married at an early age mainly as protection against sexual assault from dominant caste men.*”[8] The only caste and gender disaggregated crime reported by the Government of India is rape. The National Human Rights Commission has stated that “*the number of rapes against Scheduled Caste women shows an increasing trend. Mass rape is used by ‘upper’ caste militias as a weapon to break morale of the entire community. Rape is used as a political instrument, and these women become the targets for anger and wrath of the dominant castes.*”[9]

The study highlights that Dalit women commonly experience various atrocities in both private and public spheres. These include verbal abuse and public humiliation, which deeply affect their psychological well-being. They also face physical assaults that violate their bodily integrity, as well as sexual assaults that infringe upon their bodily and sexual integrity. Additionally, attempts to murder are among the alarming and severe acts of violence perpetrated against Dalit women. These findings underscore the urgent need for addressing the intersecting issues of caste and gender-based violence and providing effective support and protection for Dalit women against such atrocities. The following table presents the percentage and numbers of women facing various types of atrocities in both rural and urban areas (see Table 1) -

Table 1. Major Forms of Atrocities against Dalit Women

Forms of Atrocities	Total*	Percent
Public Humiliation by using Filthy Language	151	75.5

Physical Assaults	57	28.5
Sexual Harassment	15	7.5
Attempt to Rape	10	5.0
Rape	2	1.0
Attempt to Murder	30	15.0

Source: Field Data * Out of total 200 study samples [10]

It reveals that most of the atrocities have taken place in the rural areas. Illiterate and labourer women are the easiest target for the dominant castes to humiliate their community through women whenever they try to assert their rights. When Dalit women stand up for their dignity and advocate for their fundamental human rights, they often receive little to no support from their families and communities. The prevalence of discriminatory caste, gender, and cultural norms makes Dalit women highly susceptible to becoming victims of various forms of atrocities.

3. CONFRONTING POST-ATROCITIES SCENARIO

This paper reveals that Dalit women face both short-term and long-term effects of atrocities. Psychological trauma from atrocities affects Dalit women even in the absence of physical harm. The wide extent of psychological harm to the women shows that over half of the two hundred Dalit women told us about their feelings of helplessness to stop the violence, constant fear, low self-esteem and feeling of shame and depression after the atrocities committed against them. At the level of social interaction and freedoms, a number of women reported the negative effects on their social interaction with their husbands, families and communities arising from the atrocities. Similarly denial of their education led to denial of information and interaction with peers. The economic punishment or loss accompanied by other effects of atrocities imposed by the perpetrators is to cut away Dalit women's economic base in order to destroy their economic security and independence.

At the level of their own community to which Dalit women belong, the social effects of atrocities enjoyed by the dominant caste perpetrators and it reinforce the socio-political dominance against Dalit women as seen in terms of dividing the communities into those who supported the women and those who did not. These divisions in community come due to fear of the dominant castes, fear of loss of livelihood as being economically dependent on the dominant castes, and control of women's sexuality. But there is the inability of the community to protect its women, particularly their sexuality of the dominant castes in the villages and towns on the one hand and the low caste –class status and powerlessness of Dalit men and the Dalit community as a whole on the other hand.

All these three forms of effects - physical, psychological and social together, of atrocities against Dalit women ultimately destroy Dalit women's personal and social identity and strengthen their caste-class-gender subjugation. Women are denied any sense of belonging to themselves through attacks on their physical, sexual and mental integrity, social integrity and economic base. These effects of atrocities against Dalit women serve as evidence of the dominant castes' objectives of caste-class-gender exclusion at two levels: internal, by reinforcing Dalit women's negative self-perceptions of themselves shaped by caste-class gender oppression and at the external level by reinforcing negative perceptions of Dalit women by others in their family, Dalit community and the village and town. The overall effect is

to reproduce and reinforce both patriarchy and the caste system to benefit the dominant castes economically and politically.

Numerous illustrations of women's courage and boldness in the face of atrocities reveal that Dalit women are engaged in a constant struggle today to redefine their identities as subjugated people who live with rights and dignity. Dalit women feel strong and confident when they are encouraged and supported by their families, communities, police and administration to fight against atrocities against them. Now they are facing police and courts strongly without any hesitation. In the words of Santosh, *"If anybody says something wrong, I oppose."* For the empowerment of Dalit women and their communities, the important factor is to strengthen a culture to counter the caste-class-gender based culture of atrocities. It would help counterbalance the negative effects of atrocities and also proactively protect women from atrocities by the dominant castes. In spite of residing in separate areas known as basties or colonies, Dalit women endure mistreatment and torture from dominant caste individuals. They are unjustly barred from entering public temples and accessing water from public tanks. Even passing through public pathways is denied to them. Additionally, they are forbidden from collecting fodder for their cattle from public fields and grasslands. If they dare to voice their concerns, they are subjected to verbal abuse and physical violence. These Dalit women are objectified and constantly monitored by the perpetrators.

Moreover, after consuming alcohol, these perpetrators target Dalit women and their families, pressuring them to leave their homes and land. The situation is no different for Dalit women who have relocated to cities to escape such atrocities. Discrimination persists, making it incredibly challenging for them to secure new jobs for the welfare of their children. *After being beaten up and abused publicly for filling water before dominant caste women, Sona Devi shifted to another place. She was advised to maintain silence. (Study Sample No. 123)*

They don't have much space for living on land for livelihood. They are struggling with poverty and social backwardness. For Dalit women, it is also very difficult to get work under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). They could not enjoy their entitlements such as getting work for 100 days, unemployment allowances and basic amenities like toilets creche for children at worksites. To continue education is a big challenge for Dalit women after facing atrocities due to caste-based discrimination and gender biased behavior. In this study, two Dalit girl students decided not to go to school due to the discriminatory behaviour of dominant caste teachers. There was a big challenge to continue the education for their children as many Dalit women were shifted to another place or compelled to leave or sell their houses after facing atrocities. To provide 'good' education for their children is another big challenge for them.

Land allotted to the Dalit women by the government have been occupied by the dominant castes and they are still unable to possess their land. Whenever they tried to possess it they were attacked, beaten up, raped or attempted to rape. Now to get back the land from illegal possession of Brahmins and Gurjjars is a big challenge for Dalit women in Bhatari village, a study village. Atrocities related to the destruction of homes, assets and property also harmed and even destroyed women's sense of security and social identity. Attacks focus on harming women's economic development, security and independence and sense of belonging to their village or town. In other words, attacks on Dalit women's economic capital aimed to reinforce their class identity as poor, voiceless and helpless person. The denial

of freedom from fear to Dalit women keep their sense of personal insecurity and reinforce their feelings of continuous vulnerability to atrocities as linked to their ascribed low caste, class and gender identity. The result was to reinforce their overall identity as both socio-economically excluded and socially-isolated from mainstream society. In most of the cases, Dalit women have feelings of fear and anxiety for their children not to face such incidents as they faced.

4. EREMEDIES TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS OF DALIT WOMEN

With the realisation that violence is one of the potent threats to the peaceful existence of Dalits and Dalit women as human beings, whole hearted and all-round efforts are made at the international, national and local levels. These efforts have been made through societal reforms and movements and legal provisions. Various legal provisions under the Indian Constitution, laws and acts have been introduced to provide socio-economic equality, and empower the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

4.1 THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND LAWS

The preamble of Indian constitution adequately empowers the central and state governments to eliminate human right violation. **Article 17** of the Constitution provides for removal of untouchability. **Article 46** promotes the educational and economic interest of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections, **Article 330 and 332** provides reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People and Legislative Assemblies of the States and **Article 335** claims of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to services and posts in the Governments.

Based on Article 17 of the Constitution, the **'Protection of Civil Rights Act'** (PCR) was passed in 1955. However, there was no conviction/ under this Act. Hence, 34 years after introducing the PCR Act, **the Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989** was enacted to bring various forms of atrocities to an end. There are also stringent provisions against the police for negligence and special courts for speedy trial. The provisions for relief amount as compensation for the victims of atrocities are given in the Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, 1995.[11]

4.2 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LAWS

Besides, the international human rights instruments provide an additional mechanism to ensure the protection and promotion of Dalit Human Rights within the country. The provisions of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights (ICESCR), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention Against Torture (CAT), Convention on Child Rights (CRC) and International Labour Organisation (ILO) have set progressive and universal standards against which the human rights status, access and violations experienced by the Dalit communities can be measured. These provide further scope for creative interventions in establishing the freedom, equality and dignity of the Dalit community. The issue of caste-based discrimination and untouchability has been brought by the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)—a collective of Dalit NGOs, other NGOs, academicians, activists and large number of supporters in the World Conference against Racism (WCAR) held in Durban, South Africa in 2001.

Many laws and Acts exist to address violence against Dalit women, found in the study, but due to many reasons they are not able to take advantages of these legal provisions to get justice against the atrocities inflicted against them by the dominant castes' perpetrators. Fear of shame and dishonor, threats by the perpetrators, informal justice by the local bodies in the form of compromise and hurdles from state actors such as police, administration and the court are the major barriers in the way of seeking justice for Dalit women. Some of the legal provisions for addressing violence against Dalit women are the following:

Table 2. Legal Framework for Addressing Violence against Dalit Women[12]

Form of Violence	National laws	International Standards
1. Verbal Abuse and public humiliation using filthy language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Atrocity of verbally abusing or intimidating a SC/ST person with intent to humiliate, such as by using her/his caste name, in any place in public view: Section 3(1)(x) SC/ST (PoA) Act ● Crime of criminal intimidation – threat to another person of any injury to her/his person, reputation or property, with intent to cause alarm or cause person to do anything s/he is not legally bound to do: Section 506 IPC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person: Article 6(1) & 9 ICCPR ● Everyone has the right to life without discrimination on the basis of race to security of person and protection by the state against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual group or institution: Article 5(b) ICERD ● No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment: Article 7 ICCPR
2. Physical Assault	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Right to life and personal liberty which includes a life with dignity: Article 21 Indian Constitution ● Atrocity of forcibly removing clothes or parading naked or forcibly tonsuring a SC/ST person: Section 3(1) (iii) SC/ST (PoA) Act ● Atrocity of forcing a SC/ST person to eat human excreta or other obnoxious, inedible substances: Section (1)(i) SC/ST (PoA) Act ● Crime of voluntarily causing hurt to another person: Section 323 IPC ● Crime of voluntarily causing hurt to another person by dangerous weapons and other means: Section 324 IPC ● Crime of vulnerability causing previous hurt to another person: Section 325 IPC ● Crime of voluntarily causing grievous hurt to another person by dangerous weapons and means: Section 326 IPC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person: Articles. 6(1) & 9 ICCPR ● Everyone has the right to life without discrimination on the basis of race to security of person and protection by the state against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual group or institution: Article5 (b) ICERD ● No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment: Article 7 ICCPR

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Crime of using assault or criminal force against another person: Section 352 IPC 	
3. Sexual Assault and Attempt to rape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Crime of sexual harassment where use word, gesture or act intended to insult modesty of a woman: Sections. 294 & 509 IPC ● Crime of assault or use of criminal force against woman with intent to outrage her modesty: Section 3(1)(xi) SC/ST Act ● Crime of attempted rape: Sec 376 read with Section 511 of IPC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person: Articles. 6(1) & 9 ICCPR ● Everyone has the right to life without discrimination on the basis of race to security of person and protection by the state against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual group or institution: Article 5(b) ICERD
4. Rape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Crime of rape: section 376 IPC ● Crime of rape when sexual intercourse with minor girl under 16 years with or without her consent: Section 375(6) IPC read with 376 IPC ● Atrocity of a non-SC/ST man who, being in a position to dominate the will of a SC/ST woman, uses that position to exploit her sexually against her will: Section 3(1)(xii) SC/ST Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person: Article 6(1) & 9 ICCPR ● Everyone has the right to life without discrimination on the basis of race to security of person and protection by the state against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual group or institution: Article 5(b) ICERD
5.Domestic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Crime of cruelty against wife by husband or in-laws: Section 498 A IPC ● Offence of demanding dowry, whether the demand is made at the time of, or even after, marriage: Section 4 Dowry Prohibition Act 1961 ● The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 aims to provide effective protection of the rights of women who are victims of any kind of occurring in the family-any act, commission, omission or conduct of any adult male person who has been or is in domestic relationship with the women which threatens, harms, injures, or endangers the health, safety, life, limb or well-being, whether mental or physical of a women including causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The state should take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and ensure them equality in marriage: Article 16 CEDAW ● The state should take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parents, legal guardians or any other person who has the care of the child: Article 19 CRC ● No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment: Article 7 ICCPR

In spite of having apparent legal provisions punishing atrocities against Dalit women, justice is not accessible to them. **In Lali Devi's case**, the Indian Penal Code, 1860 punishes the physical assault, sexual harassment; and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 penalises the derogatory use of Dalits' caste names in public and social boycotts but perpetrators are moving freely and harassing the victim continuously. Her narrative in the study illustrates a common scenario of Dalit women who face atrocities continuously. Because of the fear, pressure and threats to 'see' from the perpetrators, they do not approach the police. Panchayat's attempt to make a compromise and relatives' advice to go to another place to live in peace are the evidences of no support from the so called local legal body and their own families and community for justice.

5. INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES ON ATROCITIES AGAINST DALIT WOMEN[13]

5.1. RESPONSE OF DALIT WOMEN AS VICTIMS OF ATROCITIES

This paper reveals that due to feelings of shame or dishonour, ignorance of violence as an 'illegal' or seeing it as 'normal' in the sense 'it happens to Dalits', irresponsive behaviour of police in previous cases of atrocities, fear of perpetrators' threats and filing false and fabricated cases and lack of support from their family and community in 58 percent instances of atrocities Dalit women have been unable to obtain legal or community remedies for justice against atrocities. And finally, their lack of financial position to approach the police is the major hurdle in the way of seeking justice. These factors indicate that the culture of atrocities feeds a culture of silence when it comes to atrocities against Dalit women. Perpetrators of atrocities threaten Dalit women and their families for their livelihoods in order to keep silence after committing atrocities. The lack of legal information and economic situation also leave Dalit women unable to approach the legal system to seek justice. Most of the Dalit women due to abject poverty and illiteracy are unaware of the laws. Their ignorance is exploited by the perpetrators, by the police and by the judiciary. Even where cases are registered, the lack of appropriate investigation, or the judge's own caste and gender biased mentality towards Dalit women help the perpetrators release in spite of the availability of circumstantial evidence or prosecution witnesses.

5.2 RESPONSE OF VILLAGE PANCHAYATS OR LOCAL LEADERS

Whenever women attempt to lodge a complaint against atrocities, they were blocked at the community level by *the perpetrators or the village panchayat or local leaders*. Often, Dalit women, their families and their communities are put into moral, social, psychological and economic pressure to compromise with the perpetrators by the panchayat or local leaders. In the true meaning, 'compromise works as a solution to a situation of atrocities and violence between two equal parties balancing as equally as possible the interests of both. But in a hierarchical caste, class and gender structured society, a compromise between a socio-economically and politically dominant caste person and a Dalit Women means to stop or keep away Dalit women from seeking justice'. A meagre sum of money as compensation is paid to Dalit women victims, which is not sufficient to even cover for her medical treatment and is not according to laws and natural justice also.

The study represents that in 8.5 percent cases of atrocities, women were forced or pressurised into compromises with or without monetary compensation by the dominant caste perpetrators, communities or police or non-governmental organisations. Many Dalit women are forced to compromise by the

perpetrators' community and panchayat through the threats or social and economic pressure and boycott so that they withdraw their complaints against the atrocities on the ground of apologies or promise of good behaviour in future by the perpetrators. The dominant castes tactfully and skillfully exploit the women's fear and anxiety in order to make them vulnerable. They are forced to do imposed and agreed upon compromises. For dominant castes, Dalit women as their low caste, class and gender, are exploitable objects against whom crimes can be committed willfully. This way of thwarting and denying justice to Dalit women is a far cry. For example-

- Hira Devi, a Sarpanch registered a case against the dominant caste perpetrators for practicing untouchability and denial to touch head-pump and entry into the temple for Dalits. As a result, she was abused with caste name and harassed repeatedly and physically abused and went to jail for one day in the false and fabricated case registered by the dominant caste perpetrators, charging her of the misuse of panchayat money. Later, a compromise took place with the mediation of neighbors and community people on the ground of saying 'sorry' and a promise not repeat such incidents in future. But, by this incident Hira Devi's public image was spoiled. (Study sample No. 133)

In this way Dalit women expressed that the caste minded *local leaders and politicians* both protected and helped the perpetrators in institutionalised atrocities against them. In most of the cases of atrocities against Dalit women, the dominant caste perpetrators have approached the M.L.A. (Member of Legislative Assembly) of the area, *Dada type 'Gundas'* and local leaders such as Sarpanch and associated with various local or state level political parties. They influence Dalit women by compromising or threatening them not to make complaints against the dominant caste perpetrators. If Dalit women endeavor to file atrocity cases, the dominant caste perpetrators approach the police and put political pressure not to register the case against them. In many cases of atrocities these politicians did not support Dalit women victims against the dominant caste perpetrators.

5.3. RESPONSE OF POLICE

The study reveals that 23 percent Dalit women have shown the courage to reach police station to make complaints against the dominant caste perpetrators. When the victims reached to the police stations, in 8.5 percent cases of atrocities **police refused to register the complaints**. Thus, the First Information Report (FIRs) are rarely registered or registered very late. The dominant caste perpetrators and the caste minded police jointly use various unlawful methods to discourage and threaten Dalit women and their families and communities from filing complaints. They dilute the seriousness of the violence to protect the perpetrators from arrest. In some cases, the police themselves inflict atrocities on the complainants inside the police station. For instance-

- *When Vimla approached police station to lodge the complaint against public humiliation by caste name and physical assault by the dominant caste 'Rajput' perpetrator, police did not register her complaint and put her in the jail for the whole night. (Study sample No.157)*

The study also reveals that the caste-minded *police and politicians both helped the dominant caste perpetrators* in the case of atrocities committed against Dalit women. Police never visits the place of occurrence of crime on time, though the intimation of atrocities is communicated to them by Dalits. Perpetrators influence and give bribes to the police not to take action or investigate against them. No proper references are made to the medical assistance for the injured Dalit victims (though Medico-Legal examination of the victim is a must). In all such cases police fail to do their duty properly. In some cases

of atrocities, victims also approach the higher authorities for justice but they are also given deaf ears and fail to support the Dalit victims.

In the case of atrocity or untouchability practice, police block all the means and ways of Dalits to assert their legal rights by not registering FIRs on the complaints of Dalit Victims or by filing incorrect sections of the Act to save the perpetrators. The police willfully leave the provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (POA) Act 1989. The police also threaten the Dalit victims in the police stations not to speak about the incident or filing complaints by saying ‘these are normal and rant incidents.’ According to Mr. Shyam Sundar, IPS, Chennai, “...about 40 percent victims (Schedule Caste victims) go to police stations to register complaints only when they have the support of their fellow caste people, though about 30 percent of them do it even without such support. About 10 percent of them go to police station only when they have the support of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and about 20 percent do so on instigation by the caste Hindu enemies of the accused. ...on an average in about 30 percent cases, the victims (Schedule Castes) are threatened in overt and covert forms by the police, and thereby discouraged from filing cases.[14]

5.4. RESPONSE OF JUDICIAL SYSTEM

The case of Bhanwari Devi is a typical example of the influence of *caste bias on the justice system* and the inability of lower-caste women to obtain justice. It is also an example of rape as a weapon of revenge used to punish and silence women’s rights. Bhanwari was told by the police, when she approached to police about the crime done against her, how she was attracted by young men as she was old and unattractive. The trial judge released the accused on the reasoning that “rape is usually committed by teenagers, and since the accused are middle-aged and therefore respectable, they could not have committed the crime. An upper-caste man could not have defiled himself by raping a lower-caste woman.” Those accused of raping Bhanwari also enjoyed political support. BJP (Bhartiya Janta Party) leader Kanhaiya Lal Meena reportedly organised a rally in support of the accused.[15] Bhanwari’s case, handled by the police and the courts, is not a lone incident. These biases based on caste, class and gender close all the ways to seek justice for women against atrocity cases.

- After this happened, Bhawari Devi is still facing discrimination and humiliation as she is making people aware about girl’s education, female feticide, Vaccine, Child marriage etc.. (Study sample No. 74)

It is very clear that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (PoA) Act, 1989 is the only and direct road to seek legal justice for Dalit victims of atrocities, but this road is very long and has many pitfalls. If the case is registered, the police often delay in preparing the FIR or file with improper sections of laws. In most of the cases, the police do not arrest the dominant caste perpetrators either under political pressure or due to corruption. In several cases, ‘willful negligence’ has been found in performing their duties and supporting the perpetrators to violate Dalit rights.

As a result, out of 200 Dalit women more than 75 percent women faced atrocities by the dominant caste perpetrators but only 23 percent (Dalit women report of their rights violations. Out of the 23 percent cases registered in police station, only 14.5 percent cases reached to court and 8.5 percent cases has been closed before reaching the court, in the police station or in the panchayat with compromise or without punishment for the perpetrators. The conviction rate is very low as only 3 cases were convicted in favour

of Dalit women victims by the court, out of 200 study cases. This inaction has created a situation where Dalits women have lost their faith in the administrative and judicial system. If Dalit women attempt to access the state authorities for legal redress by registering complaints, the dominant castes make great efforts to stall them by using threats, force, pressure and further violence. A large section of the police becomes willing with the dominant castes. Simultaneously, the dominant castes also offer compromise and monetary compensation to close down the women's process of legal redress.

Most of the Dalit women reported depression as a result of the atrocities which they experience in their day-to-day life. Depression among Dalit women is a direct result of the atrocities they endure, compounded by the lack of support from their families, the police, panchayats (local governing bodies), and the court system. The absence of backing from these key actors leaves them feeling utterly isolated in their journey to recover from the trauma and violence they experience. The combination of the atrocities they face and the inadequate responses from various entities, including family, community, and the state, contributes to a prolonged sense of depression and a loss of hope for attaining justice.

6. CONCLUSION

The atrocities inflicted upon Dalit women pose a significant challenge to the country's social justice system. This paper sheds light on the grim reality of the daily suppression, struggles, and torture that Dalit women endure in their miserable lives. It becomes evident that the hardships faced by Dalit women are not merely a consequence of poverty, economic status, or lack of education. Instead, they are a direct result of severe exploitation and oppression imposed upon them by dominant castes. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that tackles both systemic discrimination and social injustice to ensure a more equitable and just society for Dalit women. The analysis of atrocities against Dalit women reveals the fact that there are various patterns and forms of atrocities. Old forms are still continuing and new forms of atrocities are being invented every day. Untouchability, which was an everyday phenomenon in the lives of Dalits before independence, is still continuing. Another study[16] reveals that 74 percent Dalit women face caste based discrimination and untouchability practices. In rural areas, more than 90 percent and in urban areas more than 85 percent Dalit women are still facing caste-based discrimination and untouchability practices. Some of the forms of discrimination and untouchability practices in vogue are, residential segregation, denial of accessing public resources, i.e., water tanks or headpumps, grasslands, fields, roads, panchayats, denial to enter in the temples, discrimination in the ration shops (PDS), health centres or clinics, wage discrimination, and many more. In spite of the having many governmental initiatives in bringing up the new laws and the consistent administrative inaction to protect, promote and fulfill rights of Dalit women, the official data like NCRB reports 2021-22 indicates the increasing rates of crimes against women and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It's a failure to register many cases of violence against Dalit women and low conviction rates of Scheduled Caste atrocity cases prove structural injustice.

The conclusions drawn in this study are supported by the justice-seeking endeavors of the Dalit women who were part of the research. Their experiences and struggles provide real-life evidence of the challenges they face and the injustices they encounter, reinforcing the validity of the study's findings. Through their courageous pursuit of justice, these Dalit women contribute to shedding light on the pressing issues and urgent need for social change to address the plight of marginalized communities. Hence, it is not enough to feel that Dalit women are struggling with pain and suffering. There is more

need for effective action for the upliftment of Dalit women. To uphold the rights of Dalit women, it is essential to establish comprehensive protection mechanisms, encompassing investigation, prosecution, fair punishment, and compensation for acts of violence. However, it is equally crucial to diligently implement laws and policies that aim to ensure equal citizenship rights for Dalit women in the country. This includes fulfilling both national and international obligations to shield Dalit women from violence. Moreover, the focus should extend to improving the socio-economic conditions of Dalit women, providing them with greater opportunities and support to lead dignified lives free from discrimination and oppression. By taking these steps, society can work towards creating a more just and inclusive environment for Dalit women.

To stop violence against Dalit women and strengthen them socially, psychologically, economically, legally and politically, the important suggestions must be taken into consideration.

- The provisions under the Indian Constitution, various Law and Acts with Rules and the commitments done by the governments with International bodies for the protection of women and Dalit women in particular should be implemented. The most important is that the *Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989* and various sections of the *Indian Penal Code* should be strictly implemented in order to contribute and strengthen towards eradicating the culture of violence and impunity and close watch monitoring of atrocities against Dalit women.
- Government should strictly implement the existing law for eradicating social untouchability and liberating Dalit women from scavenging work.
- The facilities should be provided to Dalit women such as nutrition, accommodation, safe drinking water, electricity in village, essential goods and medicines, ensure minimum wages, self-employment program for women as basic needs. Emphasis should be on legal literacy to ensure Dalit women know their legal rights and police obligations.
- Academic institutions need to be encouraged to undertake studies to assess the problems of violence and atrocities against Dalit women. Thought provoking sessions on harmful social religious practices namely, *Chira, Devdasi, Jogini* need to be held for basic understanding and effective state interventional strategies.
- Special exposure visits may also create a sense of we and them in the new minds by organizing educational trips for school and college students to the Dalit localities to make understanding about the problems and challenges faced by the dalit women and how they are tackling those.
- Widespread literature and readings available can be referred to young generation to understand the profile and problems of Dalit women with factual incidents and success stories as well.

In fact, the two hundred Dalit women's narratives reveal that some women have begun to challenge this impunity of the state and the caste system. Now they feel confident and can confront those who want to humiliate and exploit them. This stand by the women is itself a challenge to state actors, dominant castes and supportive agents and a step for women's empowerment and emancipation process in the future. At the end, Dalit women continue to struggle to overcome from centuries old practices of humiliation and systematic exploitation unleashed by dominant castes to keep them in their place in social hierarchy 'low' in the society. Now every Dalit woman wishes to educate their children to the best possible extent under the democratic state. They are breaking impunity against structural discrimination, exclusion and violence to attain their human rights. They are opposed to calling themselves by using only derogatory caste names. Dalit women have turned their 'suffering' into 'resistance' to get their identity and human dignity as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said, "Educate, Unite and Agitate."

REFERENCES

- [1] Seema Mathur, (2013) *Atrocities on Dalit Women in India: A Study of Selected Patterns and Forms*, Eklavya Prakashan, India.
- [2] National Commission for Women (1996), *Women of Weaker Sections: Socio-Economic Development of Scheduled Caste Women*, New Delhi, p.33.
- [3] Mangubhai, P. Jayshree, Irudayam, S.J Aloysius and Lee G. Joel, (2006), *Dalit Women Speak Out*, NCDHR, Delhi p. 3.
- [4] <https://cjp.org.in/2022-a-look-back-at-hate--crimes-against-dalits-and-advivasis/>
- [5] Rage, Sharmila, (1995) *Caste and Gender: The Violence against Women in India*, in P.G Jogdand (ed.), p.30.
- [6] Pat Orvis, (2005), *For Women: Violence - A Universal Threat*, p.1.
- [7] Ruth Manorama, (2006) *The situation of Dalit women: Formerly Known as Untouchables/Scheduled Castes*, presented before the Committee on Development of the European Parliament, p.2.
- [8] Report of the UN Special Rapporteur, (2002) *Violence against Women, Its Causes and Consequences*, United Nation Commission on Human Rights, p.18, para-53, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3d6ce3cc0.html>, retrieved on September 8, 2008.
- [9] The National Human Rights Commission, (2004) *Report on Prevention of Atrocities against Scheduled Castes: Policy and Performance, Suggested Interventions and Initiatives for NHRC*, p.161.
- [10] Seema Mathur, (2013) op. cit.
- [11] Mukesh Gupta, (2003) *Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act & Rules*, Bare Act, Jain Law House-Gwalior, pp.33-9
- [12] P. Mangubai, Jayshree, Lee, G., Joel and I. Aloysius, (2006) *Op. Cit.*, pp. 54, 57 and 511
- [13] Seema Mathur, (2013) op. cit.
- [14] Interview on November 16, 2001, by Mr. Shyam Sundar, IPS, Chennai, in Ramaiah, A., *Growing Crimes against Dalits in India Despite Special Laws: Relevance of Ambedkar's Demand for Separate Settlement*, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, November 8, 2011, p.3, <http://www.academicjournals.org/jlcr/PDF/pdfpercent202011/Nov/Ramaiah.pdf>, retrieved on December 28, 2011.
- [15] Human Rights Watch report, (1999) *Attack on Dalit Women: A Pattern of Impunity*, http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/india/India994-11.htm#P1982_417054, retrieved on July 6, 2009.

[16] Seema Mathur, (2021) Caste Based Discrimination and Violence against Dalit Women In India, Quest Journals, Vol 9-Issue 8, pp46-54, available on

<https://www.questjournals.org/jrhss/papers/vol9-issue8/Ser-2/G09084654.pdf>

Imagining A Community: Unity In Diversity Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*

Vinita Chandra
Ramjas College, Delhi University

corresponding author: vinitamihir@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Vikram Seth's A Suitable Boy was published in 1993 and was immediately hailed as being an important work of literature due to its length of 1349 pages and the immense scope of the novel. In the last thirty years since its publication it has been recorded as audio shows, made into a mini series by BBC, and been introduced into the syllabus of Delhi University for non-English Honours students. The novel is set in post-Independence India spanning a short but crucial period of time from the tail end of 1950 to the beginning of 1952, portraying the nation in a phase of transition between the end of colonial rule and the first general elections. It strives to encompass the plurality, heterogeneity and complexity of a nation composed of diverse cultures, religions, languages and socio-economic conditions. In covering such vast, comprehensive grounds Seth is deliberately undertaking the task of representing the nation, of constructing a national identity, one that takes into account its disparate population and culture. Seth's project of interrogating the kind of country he wants India to be remains an urgent one even today. It takes us back to the birth of the nation to explore the hopes, dreams, desires, and disillusionments that come together to construct the identity of a nation.

Keywords: nation, identity, Indian English Literature, post colonialism, plurality

"Do you believe in the virtue of compression?" asked a determined academic lady.

"Well, yes," said Amit rather warily....

"Why, then, is it rumoured that your forthcoming novel to be set, I understand, in Bengal - is to be so long? More than a thousand pages!" she exclaimed reproachfully, as if he were responsible for the nervous exhaustion of some future dissertationist.

"Oh, I don't know how it grew to be so long," Amit admitted...I still bear the scars of *Middlemarch*." (1254)

This encounter between the poet/novelist Amit Chatterji, who bears many resemblances to Seth himself, occurs after the reader has waded through more than a thousand pages of the novel. It serves to underline the project that Seth undertook in writing this magnum opus in the tradition of Eliot's *Middlemarch*. In his 1,349 page work, modestly entitled *A Suitable Boy*, published in 1993, Vikram Seth very consciously sets out to write *the* definitive great Indian novel. The novel is set in post-Independence India spanning a short but crucial period of time from the tail end of 1950 to the beginning of 1952, portraying the nation in a phase of transition between the end of colonial rule and the first general elections. Although the actual period covered by the novel is short, the scope of the novel is tremendous. It strives to encompass the plurality, heterogeneity and complexity of a nation composed of diverse cultures, religions, languages and socio-economic conditions. Seth attempts to sympathetically represent members of different castes, religions, economic backgrounds, political affiliations and class status. At the same time Seth also endeavors to depict the fragility of the newly acquired institutions of the country, the upheaval caused by the passage of the Zamindari Act for land reforms and the failed attempt to pass the Hindu Code Bill, the hostility between Hindus and Muslims enhanced by Partition, the degeneration of political leaders in the absence of a foreign enemy to unite against and of course the first general elections held in the country with

universal franchise. In covering such vast, comprehensive grounds Seth is deliberately undertaking the task of representing the nation, of constructing a *national* identity, one that takes into account its disparate population and culture. In the wake of the destruction of the mosque at Ayodhya and the spate of bombings in Bombay soon after, Seth identified part of his goal in writing this novel in an interview with Eugene Robinson of *The Washington Post* (1 May 1993):

I never imagined things would flare up to this extent...It's sad and distressing. India has weathered a lot of final crises, but this one is very, very serious indeed. It requires for us to speak out and say *that this is not the kind of country we want India to be* (my emphasis).

Seth's representation of India was thus informed by his sense of disquiet with the way that Indian identity seemed to be emerging through the events of the late 1980s to early 1990s, the period in which he was writing the novel, and he therefore tries to articulate the kind of country he would want India to be.

Three decades after the novel was first published the question of constructs of national identity has become even more contested, finding itself at the 'centre of a raging debate. The novel itself has remained in the public eye through these thirty years as it was broadcast by BBC World Service radio in 1997, dramatized by Saeed Jaffrey on tape soon after, adapted for BBC radio again in 2002, translated in Hindi by Gopal Gandhi in 2013, and most recently produced as a six part mini series by BBC in 2020 with Mira Nair as Director. In 2022 Delhi University introduced the massive novel in the undergraduate syllabus in a course that can be taken by students across the university. Seth's project of speaking out for the kind of country India should be remains an urgent one in which the spaces for imagining co-existing plural identities, a return to the erstwhile motto of unity in diversity, seem to be narrowing. *A Suitable Boy* takes us back to the birth of the nation to explore the hopes, dreams, desires, and disillusionments that come together to consolidate the idea of a collectivity in the framework of a nation.

A Suitable Boy is an important work to study in interrogating the ways in which contemporary fiction at the turn of the century attempted to construct a national identity not only because of its subject matter but also due to the circumstances of its publication. These conditions created quite a stir in India and abroad at the time. Seth was paid \$1.1 million in advance from Indian, British and American publishers, an unprecedented sum of money for an Indian writer. Harper-Collins paid \$600,000 in advance, backed by \$200,000 for marketing campaigns, and hoped that it would be the first novel to become a bestseller with a \$30 price tag. The release of the book was staggered over a period of several months in India, Britain and America so that the marketing campaigns could concentrate on one country at a time. In the interview in London with Eugene Robinson, an exhausted Seth said, "I've been doing 10 or 12 interviews a day, radio, television, and then readings with questions afterwards,...I didn't expect the kind of attention that the book received." Most of the reviews of the book in India focused much more on the circumstances of its publications rather than its subject matter; many reviewers did not seem to have read much of the book. In Britain it was greeted as a "massive" and "major" work by an accomplished "Writer" with a capital 'w'. *A Suitable Boy* was also favoured as the winner of the Booker award and there was some indignation when it did not even get nominated.

The judges that awarded it the 1994 Commonwealth Writer's Prize for the best book commented that the novel "is destined to become a classic of modern literature."¹ What is remarkable about this project then is not only the length of the book, allegedly the longest modern novel in English, but also the hype surrounding its publication, the media attention, the large sums of money involved and its reception as a major work, one which was immediately canonized.

In his essay 'Nationalism, Gender and the Narrative of Identity', R. Radhakrishnan questions Partha Chatterjee's assertion that "the imagined community' of nationalism is authorized as the most authentic unit or form of collectivity," (78) and points out that in this framework, any issue that wants to be considered 'political' must take on a nationalist expression. Radhakrishnan then asks what it means to speak of "one" politics in terms of an "other". In order to speak for "a genuinely representative national consciousness", he argues that

If one specific politics is to achieve a general significance, it would seem that it has to possess a multiple valence, i.e., enjoy political legitimacy as a specific constituency and simultaneously make a difference in the integrated political or cultural sphere. Without such access to an integrated cultural politics, any single subject-positional politics risks losing its interventionary power within that total field. (79)

Radhakrishnan turns his attention to the writings of Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru which focused on their "discovery" of India; they raise the questions of where and what is the real India, and "from what perspective is the real India to be represented so that the representation may be unified, inclusive, even total?"(88) Radhakrishnan comments that the search for the real India presupposes that there exists a certain India waiting to be known and narrativized. He writes, not any and every narrative can claim to the signifier of the real India. Also, the criterion of reality serves two purposes: first, of demystifying the existing urban-elitist versions of India, and second, of securing an ethico-political alignment between the knowledge produced about the real India and the socio-political transformations that are to follow on the basis of such knowledge. (89)

In *A Suitable Boy*, Seth is attempting to create an "inclusive" narrative that can legitimately lay claim to signifying the 'real' India. His project encompasses the two-fold aim that Radhakrishnan perceives as informing the search for the real India in the texts of Nehru and Gandhi: he is trying to narrativize an India that is more plural than that represented through the dominant urban-elitist versions, and since he is writing from a sense of disquiet at the current state of affairs within the country, he is also trying to align the knowledge he constructs about it with the potential for transformation. Unlike the focus on specific issues and their effect on the formation of a national identity in the works of most other writers, Seth is attempting to portray "the integrated political or cultural sphere". His contemporaries Mukul Kesavan and Amitav Ghosh, for example, articulate concerns with the uneven construction of national identity through their focus on the dominant historiography that is founded on the suppression of other histories; expatriate writers like Rushdie produce knowledge about India from their trans-national positions, situating it in a larger, neo-imperial global world-view. But it is not one of many aspects of the country that Seth sets out to narrate; rather, through his endeavor to encompass an impressive multiplicity of issues in his novel, he seems to be trying to make a representative reading of the nation. Like Nehru and Gandhi, Seth is trying to "discover" the "real" India for the reader rather than acknowledging his own position of constructing a national identity from a certain angle.

In his attempt to portray the "real" India, Seth immersed himself in research prior to writing the novel. Almost all the reviews of the book discuss the authenticity of its representation of India, many critically comparing it to the documentary style so that it seems as if the plot of Seth's novel is contingent on his attempt to "discover" the country. Seth himself mentioned in all his interviews the fact that he took a year off from writing the book in order to do research: he said he spent months among old newspapers from the period, plunged into legislative proceedings, pored over old maps, interviewed old freedom fighters, musicians and people who had visited courtesans in the time of the Nawabs, brushed up his Urdu and lived for a while in a remote village, spending time with leather workers. Seth's almost obsessive concern seems to be in making a representation that is as accurate as possible in order to lend legitimacy to his construction of India.

In *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* Benedict Anderson defines the nation as "an imagined political community" (15) and his discussion of the nation as an invention or a creation rather than a given fact is pertinent in examining Seth's construction of nationhood. Anderson quotes Gellner's

observation that "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist." However, Anderson disagrees with Gellner's use of the word 'invents' to imply 'fabrication' and 'falsity'; he redefines this concept of inventing to mean "'imagining' and 'creation'". Anderson considers the novel and the newspaper as the two ideal forms of imagining: "For these forms provided the technical means for 'representing' the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation"(30). Anderson goes on to say, "Nothing perhaps more precipitated this search, nor made it more fruitful, than print-capitalism, which made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways." (xii-xiii)

The idea of imagining and creating a national identity, or nationhood, becomes specially significant in relation to young, postcolonial nations which bear the burden of having been invented and created as subordinate, inferior and always Other by the dominant colonizer. The responsibility of recreating and reinventing then becomes enormous under the shadow of the existing - and still dominant - representations, and the task gets far more complicated as the euphoria of independence fades away and reality and disillusionment with the nation-state set in. Seth's representation of an Indian identity is then influenced by his awareness of the image of India in the Western imagination as constructed by the dominant rhetoric of the colonizers and perpetuated by Raj nostalgia and neo-imperialism; and it is equally shaped by his sensibility as a modern, secular, citizen of contemporary India with its myriad problems at social, political and economic levels almost half a decade after decolonization and Independence.

It is significant, then, that Seth chose the genre of the realist novel as the mode for his project of constructing an Indian identity. His earlier work has all been in verse except for his non-fictional travelogue on China. Social Realism was thus not the natural, or inevitable, choice of genre for him; in his career as a writer this choice can be located as experimenting with another form. Discussing the importance of narrative fiction in the production of knowledge of self as a means of grasping power, Edward Said writes in his Introduction to *Culture and Imperialism*,

My basic point [is] that stories are at the heart of what explorers say about strange regions of the world; they also become the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history. The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future - these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative. As one critic has suggested, nations themselves *are* narrations. (xii-xiii)

Said is making a far more complicated argument for the choice of the realist narrative as the mode of writing for the Third World writer than Frederic Jameson does in his article 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism'.

Jameson writes,

All third-world texts are necessarily, I want to argue, allegorical and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call *national allegories*, even when, or perhaps I should say, particularly when their forms develop out of predominantly western machineries of representation, such as the novel. (69)

Jameson argues that the relationships between the private and the public are wholly different in third-world cultures than they are in Western culture. He then supports his theory through readings of just two Third World texts, one Asian and the other African, which he posits as representative of third-world literature. By arguing that the third-world writer's narrating of the individual experience inescapably involves the "telling of the experience of the collective itself" in the form of national allegory, Jameson is not only constraining the choice of Third World writers to the genre of the realist novel or short story but is also essentializing the use of realism by them as bearing

only the potential of conveying national allegories. In his critique of Jameson, Ahmad points out that it is possible to combine the private and the public without involving the category of the nation or referring to the experience of colonialism at all, for collectivity could also be conceived in terms of "class, gender, caste, religious community, trade union, political party, village, prison" (110). Ahmad argues that

this wider application of 'collectivity' establishes much less radical difference between the so-called First and Third Worlds, since the whole history of realism in the European novel, in its many variants, has been associated with the ideas of 'typicality' and 'the social', while the majority of the written narratives produced in the First World even today locate the individual story in a fundamental relation to some larger experience. (110)

Ahmad locates the Third World writer's choice of the realist novel in "the whole history of realism in the European novel", instead of restricting the function of realism to that of an anachronistic code, the only one available to this group of writers due to the culture and conditions of the Third World. He thus breaks down the binaries between novelistic production of knowledge of the nation in the First and Third worlds and allows Third World literature to be aligned with canonical texts like *Middlemarch* and *War and Peace*, novels to which *A Suitable Boy* has been compared by many commentators.

Vikram Seth's project in writing *A Suitable Boy*, then, seems to be one of documenting comprehensively the turbulent birth of the Independent Indian Republic and in delineating its defining characteristics retrospectively as they have emerged forty-five years later. He sets out to write India's version of England's *Middlemarch* or Russia's *War and Peace*, consciously modelling his own work on these two canonical texts. But while Tolstoy and Eliot wrote in their native tongues, Seth limits his audience by writing in English, the language spoken by fluently by a small percentage of the population of India. *A Suitable Boy* is then aimed at a particular, narrow audience in India and perhaps at a larger readership in the western metropolis. However, Seth's use of English incorporates many non-English words and terms for which he provides no glossary, although many of them are context specific and therefore self-explanatory. A significant portion of post-colonial fiction attempts to portray the 'real' previously-colonized country in reaction to its representation by colonialist texts, and therefore very consciously writes back to the 'centre, striving to make this work accessible to a non-native readership by providing glossaries of words and terms unfamiliar to the West. Seth liberally uses Hindi and Bengali words and makes numerous references to religious and cultural terms that are not easily translatable. By not providing a glossary he chooses not to privilege a metropolitan audience, forcing this readership to engage with the text much in the manner that the typical Indian reader approaches Western texts in English which are sprinkled with Latin, French and Italian. He was thus striving to write equally for multiple audiences; a Western audience outside India and a largely English-educated audience - with all the cultural baggage that comes with this education - within the country. Perhaps Seth's choice of English as the language used for constructing a *national* identity is an appropriate one for India. Although the Constitution of India had stipulated that Hindi should gradually be adopted by all the states as the national language, the probability of this event has become increasingly remote since Independence. Apart from the states in the Hindi-speaking belt, all other states are far more resistant to Hindi than to English. So many years after decolonization, English is still the language used by the Central government, while most of the states use English and the regional language in administrative and educational work. A large number of schools and universities can be found across the country that still use English as the primary language of education.

In 'The African Writer and the English Language', Achebe argues, A national literature is one that takes the whole nation for its province and has a realized or potential audience throughout its territory. In other words a literature that is written in the *national* language. An ethnic literature is one which is available only to one ethnic group within the nation.

Although a very small percentage of the population of India is fluent in English, it is this colonially imposed language that would still be more representative of the language of a "realized or potential audience" of the nation than Hindi or any other regional - to replace Achebe's category of "ethnic" - language.

Seth's choice of the time period of the early 1950s as the setting of his novel is significant to his construction of a post-colonial, post-Independence Indian entity. Unlike texts emanating from the metropolitan West, like Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet* and Collins and LaPierre's *Freedom at Midnight*, which are comparable in size and scope to *A Suitable Boy* and endeavour to represent a national identity, Seth does not dwell on the period of colonization or the trauma of de-colonization and Partition. The focus on colonization and its legacy to the post-colonial nation is one that dominates the field of postcolonial theory as well. In her book *Critical Terrains*, Lisa Lowe recapitulates the studies concerned with recuperating the position of the Other in recent critical theory. She writes,

The analysis of how nondominant races, cultures, economic groups, and sexualities are marked and figured as Other, or as the subordinated counterpart of the dominant privileged categories, has been crucial to the current project of cultural criticism...[But] I argue finally against the recuperation of any binary version of difference. For I suggest that binary constructions of difference...embody a logic that gives priority to the first term of the dyad while subordinating the second... to conform to binary difference is inevitably to corroborate the logic of domination, to underdevelop the spaces in discourse that destabilize the hegemony of dominant formations. (21, 24)

As an example of the kind of work she is undertaking, she points to the project of the Subaltern Studies group who articulate counternarratives to the dominant colonialist discourse of Indian history, and thus take into account the different Indian resistances to British occupation. While Lowe theorizes the need to adopt strategies that do not continue to privilege the dominant discourse, it is still this discursive field with which she engages in her attempts to recuperate suppressed acts of resistance. But for the writer born into a post-Independence Indian identity, the accomplishment of Independence provides ample proof of the weaknesses inherent in "a century and a half [of] British discourses," (Lowe, 25) and the power of the "ignore[d]...ongoing and quite different Indian resistances that occurred throughout the British occupation" (25). Thus Seth, like other contemporary Indian writers in English, concentrates on issues that seemed more urgent to the current situation of the country at the time, issues that could not easily and reductively be grafted onto the problematics of colonialism.

In distancing himself from the moment of Independence and Partition Seth was able to focus on the country's struggle to undo the colonial legacy while adopting and adjusting to colonial institutions, and to govern itself democratically. By 1950 India had already fought one war with Pakistan over Kashmir; its spiritual leader, Mohandas Gandhi, had been assassinated, and the euphoria of Independence had begun to fade under the reality of enormous problems. In the novel Seth makes several references to British rule, the freedom struggle, Partition and Independence but his narrative is one of post-Independence India and the opposition between Britain and India, colonizer and colonized, is one that he is interested in circumventing. He is then trying to downplay the moment of rupture between colonization and de-colonization and the trauma and jubilation that accompanied it as much as possible so as to concentrate on the 'creation' of an Indian Republic by the newly Independent citizens of the country. It is significant that apart from those dislocated by Partition, none of the characters in the novel discuss any major changes in their lives with the end of imperial rule; the focus is much more on the continuities in their lives between the colonial and post-colonial periods rather than the disruptions. Seth's construction of India emphasizes the agency of the Indian citizens in shaping their identity before and after 1947 rather than placing the majority of the responsibility at the door of the British colonizers; at the same time, however, throughout the novel he is grappling with the useful and adverse effects of the Raj on post-colonial India and the struggle of the people to come to terms with these remnants, mostly of great significance, of imperial rule. What emerges, then, is an intricate, complex, constantly slipping narrative of the birth and formation of a post-colonial nation.

By its very length and scope *A Suitable Boy* strives to encompass a heterogeneous, plural cross-section of the population in its representation of India. Geographically, Mrs. Rupa Mehra's "Annual Trans-India Rail Yatra" takes us from Delhi to Lucknow, Kanpur and Calcutta. Maan's restless travels extend from Banaras to the villages of the fictional state of Purva Pradesh and its capital, the town of Brahmpur. Seth's representation thus includes the vastly different lifestyles of the inhabitants of big cities like Calcutta, of provincial towns such the fictitious Brahmpur and the rustic existence of the villagers of Debaria and its neighbouring villages. Even within the three broad categories that Seth forms, he is careful not to homogenize the people that inhabit these spaces. Calcutta, the commercial 'centre, is home to the sophisticated, wealthy, westernized corporate culture with all its emphasis on profit-making, insincerity and hypocrisy, but it also contains the upper class, cultured Justice Chatterji who represents the importance of using this privileged, educated, elite position to serve the needs of the newly independent country. The village of Debaria is portrayed as much through the landowning family of Rasheed as through the hopeless existence of their landless peasant, Kachheru, who is close to the lowest rung in the feudal system that the government is trying to abolish. But it is Seth's fictional creation of Brahmpur that includes the greatest multiplicity of peoples - politicians, lawyers, doctors, academicians, musicians, businessmen, the upper castes and the 'untouchable' lower castes, Hindus and Muslims. And it is in Brahmpur that these diverse people meet, forge friendships and clash in destructive riots and acrimonious parliamentary debates.

Apart from representing a cross section of peoples and places, in his attempt to explore a national identity, Seth concentrates on the birth of India's institutions and the manner in which they have defined themselves as distinctly Indian, developing after Independence under the influence of the conditions of India which are very different from those of Britain. These institutions that came as a legacy of colonial rule have now become an intrinsic part of the national identity and have been Indianized to suit Indian conditions. So, for instance, the study of English Literature which was introduced by the British in India to instill British culture and values in the 'natives' and thus facilitate British rule now includes a large variety of literature written by Indian writers as well as Post Colonial theory and literature which challenges colonial discourse. Parliamentary democracy is intrinsic to the identity of the Indian nation even though it is a legacy of British influence. Seth tests the strength of the systems and foundational structure of the newly formed nation in which communities across religions, castes, ethnicities etc must learn to, or to be forced to, find a harmonious balance. The real protagonist of the novel is the nation as being defined through its Constitution, its changing laws, parliamentary debates, police force, educational institutions, and also the observance of all religions as equal in accordance with secularism.

A Suitable Boy thus begins as an imaginative gathering together of the disparate elements of the country, a narrative of Unity in Diversity, which has been one of the most famous slogans of Independent India. It opens on a note of deep bonds between the Hindu and Muslim families in the novel, the optimism of improving the lot of the rural poor through the passage of the Zamindari Abolition Act and a general atmosphere of hope that things would soon improve among the people of a newly Independent country. But the mood at the end of the novel is much darker. In most areas matters have deteriorated rather than showing any improvement, as was expected under Indian rule. The friendship between the families of the Nawab of Baitar and Mahesh Kapoor, carrying the symbolic weight of Muslim-Hindu relationships, has survived, but in a badly shaken form. The Zamindari Abolition Act, which was supposed to give greater rights to the landless rural farmers, has instead been indirectly responsible for their being permanently cut off from the land they had cultivated for years; as landlords realized that they would have to give ownership of land to those who cultivated it, they threw them off the land by way of getting rid of evidence, and showed that land as being cultivated by various family members. The defeat of Mahesh Kapoor in the General Elections by the unscrupulous Waris is representative of the actual functioning of democracy through the people's power to elect their own leaders.

Seth gestures toward the crises of his contemporary India throughout the novel. The plan of the Raja of Marh to build a Shiv temple adjacent to a mosque is clearly a reference to the situation in Ayodhya; the demand of the scheduled castes to be admitted into the ramlila at Misri Mandir carries within it the seeds of the Mandal

Commission furor; the debates between Begum Abida Khan and L.N. Aggarwal over Hindi, Urdu and English have flared up all over the country with a spate of self-immolations in protest in the South. Seth's novel is written and published - since it took the better part of a decade to write - in a period when most of these situations had reached crisis point. The mosque in Ayodhya was destroyed in 1992 followed by Hindu-Muslim riots through most of the country. The battle over reserved seats for the scheduled castes in the Indian Administrative Services as proposed by the Mandal Commission was taken to the streets in 1991 by housewives bearing pots and pans, and students forcing the university to shut down. When the national electorate did show their desire for change in throwing out the Congress Party in 1977 and 1987, they were rewarded with coalition governments that soon fell apart due to in-fighting. This is the perspective that informs much of the writing of the novel; the period immediately following de-colonization that Seth chooses to portray, then, is not simply one of transition, since it has not led to a resolution of the crucial issues that destabilized the newly formed nation; rather, the novel traces the nascent forms from which the nation was developing. Seth's depiction of the newly independent India is then also an attempt to imagine or invent an alternative identity for the country, one that has the potential to deal with its problems in different, more effective ways. It is also able to portray the continuities in the simple hopes, dreams and aspirations of the common people. Seth himself says, "Clearly my book is partly a plea for tolerance."

Seth's plea for tolerance has not lost its relevance three decades later. In *Vikram Seth: An Introduction*, Rohini Mokashi Punekar writes, "In *A Suitable Boy* there is no gap between the representation of the nation and the conviction that it is meaningful and desirable, that it is, in the context of the time, still an incomplete project." (122) Seth's painstaking, laborious, massive portrayal of the vast diversity and plurality that is India is a testament to his hope that tolerance and acceptance are possible in forging the identity of an inclusive nationalism. His choice to set his novel in the period from 1950 to 1952, that is, between the adoption of the Constitution and the first general elections, is one which enables him to foreground the ideals and the vision on which the nation was founded. Almost three quarters of a century later it is crucial to keep those founding ideals in mind when constructing a national identity for India.

REFERENCES

- [1] Achebe, Chinua. *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays 1965-1987*. Suffolk: Heinemann, 1988.
- [2] Ahmad, Aijaz. 'Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'Nationalist Allegory'.' *Social Text* 15 (1986): 3-25.
- [3] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.
- [4] Jameson, Frederick. 'Third World Nationalism in an era of Multinational Capitalism.' *Social Text* 15 (1986): 65-88.
- [5] Lowe, Lisa. *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.
- [6] Mokashi-Punekar, Rohini. *Vikram Seth, An Introduction*. New Delhi: Foundation Books, 2008.
- [7] Radhakrishnan, R. (1992) 'Nationalism, Gender and the Narrative of Identity', in A. Parker, M. Russo, D. Sommer and P. Yaeger (eds) *Nationalisms and Sexualities*. New York: Routledge, 1992
- [8] Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993

भारत दुर्दशा में व्यक्त नवजागरण और राष्ट्रीय चेतना का स्वरूप

लवकुश कुमार

सहायक प्रोफेसर, हिन्दी विभाग

कालिंदी महाविद्यालय, दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय

kumarluvkush@gmail.com

शोध सार

भारतेंदु हरिश्चंद्र का हिंदी साहित्य में आगमन हिंदी भाषा और गद्य विधाओं के लिए वरदान साबित हुआ। उन्होंने नाटकों की रचना जनसंवाद के लिए की। इसी वजह से भारतेंदु युगीन नाटकों का रंगमंच से जुड़ाव स्पष्ट तौर पर देखा जा सकता है। भारतेंदु से पहले भी कुछ नाट्य परंपराएँ तथा रंगमंचीय शैलियाँ बरकरार थीं। लोक शैली और पारसी नाटकों की लोकप्रियता बनी हुई थी। पारसी नाटकों का उद्देश्य मनोरंजन था, व्यवसाय था। यही वजह है इस शैली के नाटकों में अतिनाटकीयता, फूहड़ता, अश्लीलता, भारतीय पौराणिक और ऐतिहासिक पात्रों से छेड़छाड़ की कोशिश अधिक बलवती रही। इन्हीं समस्याओं को देखकर भारतेंदु जी ने नवजागरण परक चेतना तथा नाटकों के बीच सामंजस्य बैठाने की कोशिश की। भारतेंदु जी के नाटक जनजागरण, राष्ट्रीय उत्थान और समाज सुधार जैसे प्रयोजन से लिखे।

बीज शब्द- भारत दुर्दशा, नवजागरण, जनजागरण, राष्ट्रीय उत्थान और समाज सुधार।

'हिंदी साहित्य का इतिहास' पुस्तक में आचार्य रामचंद्र शुक्ल आधुनिक काल के अंतर्गत गद्य साहित्य की परंपरा का विश्लेषण करने के क्रम में भारतेंदु हरिश्चंद्र के व्यक्तित्व पर प्रकाश डालते लिखते हैं "विलक्षण बात यह है कि, आधुनिक गद्य साहित्य की परंपरा का परवर्तन नाटकों से हुआ।" आचार्य शुक्ल को विलक्षण इस बात से लगा होगा कि, हिंदी साहित्य में नाटक लगभग पांच शताब्दियों से अनुपस्थित रहा और आधुनिक काल की शुरुआत इसी विधा से हुई। दरअसल, तत्कालीन परिस्थितियों को देखा जाए तो नाट्य साहित्य अन्य साहित्यिक विधाओं की अपेक्षा अधिक सामाजिक है। जिसके माध्यम से जनता से सीधे संवाद किया जाता है। राष्ट्रीय चेतना का प्रसार के लिए यह सर्वोत्तम साधन था। दृश्य-श्रव्य होने के कारण भावों और विचारों को संप्रेषित करने में यह अत्यंत ही समर्थ है। इन्हीं तथ्यों को ध्यान में भारतेंदु जी ने नाटकों की रचना की। इसी वजह से आचार्य शुक्ल आगे लिखते हैं, "भारतेंदु काल से हिंदी साहित्य की चेतना जनोन्मुखी होने लगी।" हिंदी साहित्य में आधुनिकता के पुरोधे भारतेंदु हरिश्चंद्र जी हैं। उन्होंने गद्य और खड़ी बोली की शुरुआत के साथ साथ हिंदी साहित्य को मध्यकालीन बेड़ियों से आजाद कराकर राष्ट्रीय चेतना और समाज सुधार की ओर मोड़ा।

‘भारत दुर्दशा’ पहला राजनीतिक नाटक है। जो तत्कालीन सामाजिक, राजनीतिक तथा आर्थिक परिस्थितियों का अत्यंत मुकम्मल तस्वीर पेश करता है। भारतेंदु हरिश्चंद्र ने ‘भारत दुर्दशा’ को ‘देशवत्सला’ नाम दिया। जो देश के प्रति ‘स्वदेशानुराग’ उत्पन्न करता है। इस नाटक की केंद्रीय चेतना ‘नवजागरण परक’ है। ‘नवजागरण’ का अर्थ नवीन चेतना से है। इसके लिए हिंदी में पहले ‘पुनरुत्थान’ और बाद में ‘पुनर्जागरण’ शब्द का प्रयोग होने लगा। ‘पुनर्जागरण’ अंग्रेजी के ‘रैनेसां’ का हिंदी रूपांतरण है। इसी को डॉ. रामविलास शर्मा ने ‘नवजागरण’ की संज्ञा दी। अब यही नाम प्रचलन में है। ‘पुनर्जागरण’ में फिर से जागने का भाव निहित है जबकि ‘नवजागरण’ में नई जागृति का। भारतीय संदर्भ में ‘नवजागरण’ की शुरुआत बंगाल से होती है। जिसके जनक राजा राममोहन राय माने जाते हैं। सन् 1828 में राजा राममोहन राय ने ‘ब्रह्म समाज’ की स्थापना की। और सन् 1875 में ईश्वर चंद्र विद्यासागर ने ‘आर्य समाज’ की। इन संस्थाओं की स्थापना के पीछे कोई धार्मिक उद्देश्य नहीं था। बल्कि, धार्मिक और सामाजिक सुधार था। जिससे कि भारत में धार्मिक और सामाजिक रूढ़ियों को दूर कर एक नवीन चेतना का प्रसार किया जा सके। राजा राम मोहन राय ने सती प्रथा उन्मूलन करवाया। ईश्वर चंद्र विद्यासागर ने विधवा-विवाह को कानूनी स्वीकृति दिलवाई। इन्हीं महापुरुषों के प्रयासों से समाज में बाल विवाह जैसी कुप्रथा पर प्रतिबंध लगना शुरू हुआ, अनमेल विवाह रुकने लगे।

‘नवजागरण परक’ चेतना की सशक्त अभिव्यक्ति स्त्री शिक्षा और दलित चेतना के रूप में देखी जा सकती है। महाराष्ट्र के ज्योतिबा फुले अपनी पत्नी सावित्रीबाई फुले के साथ मिलकर इस आंदोलन को अंजाम देने का कार्य किया। महात्मा फुले ने सबसे पहले अपनी पत्नी को शिक्षित किया; इसके बाद वे इस आंदोलन में सक्रियता से जुड़ गए। हिंदी प्रदेशों में यह कार्य मुख्य रूप से साहित्यकारों द्वारा शुरू किया गया। जिसकी अगुवाई भारतेंदु हरिश्चंद्र जी ने की। भारतेंदु जी ने ‘नवजागरण परक’ चेतना के सभी बाधक तत्वों को एक साथ उजागर करने की कोशिश की। इस नाटक का शीर्षक का आशय भारतीय दुर्दशा अर्थात् पराधीनता से है। भारतेंदु जी ने यह दर्शाने का प्रयास किया कि, भारतीय पराधीनता का कारण जितना ‘बाह्य’ है उससे कहीं अधिक ‘आंतरिक’। हमारे स्वाधीनता के शत्रु बाह्य आक्रांता नहीं थे, बल्कि हमारे समाज में बरकरार रूढ़ियां और जड़ताएं थीं। यही वजह है कि, इस नाटक का स्वर जितना आलोचनात्मक और भ्रत्सनामूलक है! उससे कहीं अधिक आत्म मूल्यांकन परक। भारतेंदु जी ने भारत की दुर्दशा अथवा पराधीनता के लिए एक तरफ साम्राज्यवादी औपनिवेशिक शोषण को जिम्मेदार माना तो दूसरी तरफ भारतीय समाज की रूढ़ियों, धर्मांधता, छुआ-छूत, जाति- पाति, भाग्यवाद, संप्रदायिक घृणा और अकर्मण्यता आदि को भी जिम्मेदार माना।

भारतेंदु युगीन चेतना अंतर्विरोधमूलक रही है। इसलिए इस नाटक का स्वर अंतर्विरोध से ग्रसित है। भारत दुर्दशा में राष्ट्रभक्ति बनाम राजभक्ति, मध्यकालीन प्रवृत्तियां बनाम आधुनिक प्रवृत्तियां, गद्य बनाम पद्य और ब्रज बनाम खड़ी बोली के रूप में इस अंतर्विरोध को स्पष्ट रूप में देखा जा सकता है। इस नाटक में कुल 6 अंक हैं। प्रथम और पांचवे अंक में सजीव पात्रों की योजना रखी गई है

(भारत, भारत भाग्य, भारत दुर्देव, सत्यानाश फौजदार, सभापति, बंगाली, कवि और एडिटर इत्यादि) जबकि अन्य चार अंकों में भावों- विचारों और परिस्थितियों (निर्लज्जता, आशा, मदिरा, रोग और आलस्य) को पात्र के रूप में खड़ा किया गया है। इसी वजह से यह नाटक व्यंगात्मक और प्रतीकात्मक स्वरूप का नजर आता है। इसकी प्रतीकात्मकता अनायास उभर कर नहीं आई। बल्कि, औपनिवेशिक सत्ता के दबाव में लगे तीव्र प्रतिबंध के कारण आई। पराधीन भारत के साहित्यकारों ने प्रतीकात्मकता को अपनी अभिव्यक्ति का माध्यम बनाया था। क्योंकि तत्कालीन अंग्रेजी सत्ता के विरोध में कोई भी बात अभिधात्मक रूप में नहीं की जा सकती थी।

नाटक की शुरुआत मंगलाचरण से होती है "जय सत्यजुग-थापन-करन, नासन म्लेच्छ आचार। कठिन धार तलवार कर, कृष्ण कल्कि अवतार।।" 'भारत दुर्दशा' आधुनिक नाटक है। जिसमें कृष्ण के कल्कि अवतार की कामना अपने आप में अंतर्विरोधमूलक है। ईश्वरीय अवतार की परिकल्पना मध्ययुगीन चेतना से जुड़ी है। इसका कारण यह था कि, भारतेंदु जी राधावल्लभ संप्रदाय से प्रभावित थे। उन्होंने इस भक्ति को 'देशानुराग' भक्ति से जोड़ने का कार्य किया। नाटक के प्रथम अंक की शुरुआत योगी की लावनी से शुरू होता है। भारतेंदु जी के लगभग सभी नाटकों में योगी, सन्यासी अथवा महंत की चर्चा मिलती है। योगी के माध्यम से नाटककार ने सत्य तथा मूल्यपरकता की नींव रखी है। क्योंकि, योगी की अंतर्दृष्टि वस्तु परख होती है जो स्वार्थ और मोह से दूर सत्य का पक्षधर होता है। योगी की लावनी गीत तत्कालीन भारत के तमाम समस्याओं को उभार कर रख देता है। वह भारतीय पराधीनता को दूर करने के लिए समस्त भारतीयों को सामूहिक रुदन के लिए आवाहन करता है-

"रोवहु सब मिलिकै आवहु भारत भाई।

हा हा! भारत दुर्दशा न देखी जाई।।"

यहाँ भारतेंदु जी सामूहिक रुदन के मारफत शोक प्रकट करना नहीं चाहते थे। बल्कि इसके मारफत समाज को राष्ट्रभक्ति के लिए एक जुट होने का आह्वान करते हैं। इस सन्दर्भ में श्रीनारायण सिंह लिखते हैं, "इस पृष्ठभूमि में 'भारत-दुर्दशा' का योगी निश्चित ही भारतवासियों को सामूहिक आह्वान रौने भर के लिए नहीं करता। क्योंकि रौने की यह तैयारी प्रचलित अर्थ में दिल को हलका करने का उपक्रम मात्र नहीं है, बल्कि रौने के कारणों की वस्तुगत छानबीन भी है और ऐतिहासिक गौरव की पृष्ठभूमि पर देश की दयनीय दशा का मार्मिक चित्रण भी है।" लावनी की अगली पंक्तियां एक तरफ अंग्रेजी राज की प्रशंसा करती है, तो दूसरी तरफ अंग्रेजों के शोषण और दमन के विरोध में भारतीय जनता को जगाने का प्रयास करती है। इस नाटक में राजभक्ति और राष्ट्रभक्ति का द्वंद तत्कालीन परिस्थितियों के दबाव में उभरा। भारतेंदु जी ने योगी के माध्यम से भारत के अतीत और वर्तमान स्वरूप के दो चित्रों को खींचकर यह दर्शाने का प्रयास किया है कि, हमारा अतीत स्वर्णिम रहा है। जिससे प्रेरणा लेकर वर्तमान की जर्जर अवस्था को समाप्त किया जा सकता है-

"सबके पहिले जेहि ईश्वर धनबल दीनों।

सबके पहिले जेहि सभ्य विधाता कीनो।।
 सबके पहिले जो रूप रंग रस भीनो।
 सबके पहिले विद्याफल जिन गहि लीनों ।।
 अब सब के पीछे सोई परत लखाई।
 हा हा! भारत दुर्दशा न देखे जाई।।"

‘नवजागरण परक’ चेतना दो संस्कृतियों की टकराहट से उत्पन्न होती है। भारतेंदु काल में भारतीय तथा पश्चिमी पूंजीवादी संस्कृति एक-दूसरे के सामने खड़ी थी। इस टकराहट से जो अंतर्दृष्टि उत्पन्न होती है उसे ‘नवजागरण परक’ चेतना का नाम दिया जाता है। यह चेतना वर्तमान की दशा को टटोलकर स्वर्णिम अतीत से प्रेरणा अर्जित करती है। भारतेंदु युगीन इस चेतना के अंतर्विरोधमूलक होने का एक निश्चित प्रयोजन रहा है। भारतेंदु सरीखे रचनाकार इस बात से परिचित थे कि, अंग्रेजों का प्रत्यक्ष विरोध नहीं किया जा सकता। इसका प्रमाण बंकिमचंद्र चटर्जी की रचना ‘आनंदमठ’ के रूप में देखी जा सकती है। बंकिम जी ने सन्यासियों के माध्यम से अंग्रेजों का सशक्त विरोध करने की कोशिश की। परिणाम स्वरूप ‘आनंदमठ’ को प्रतिबंधित किया गया। इसलिए उन्होंने एक तरफ अंग्रेजों की राजभक्ति की; तो दूसरी तरफ उसी राजभक्ति के आड़ में भारतीय जनता को राष्ट्रीय मंच पर एकल रूप में लाने की कोशिश की।

"अंगरेज राज सुख साज साजे सब भारी।
 पै धन बिदेशी चलि जात इहै अति ख्वारी।।"

नाटक का दूसरा अंक ‘श्मशान’ से शुरू होता है। नाटककार भारतेंदु जी ने कुशल रंग संकेतों का इस प्रकार किया है जिससे यह समझने में देर नहीं लगती है कि, भारत की स्थिति जर्जर है यह मरणासन्न है! श्मशान जैसे दृश्य के साथ टूटे-फूटे मंदिर का चित्रण, बिखरी हुई हड्डियां तथा कुत्ता-कौवा और यारों के बीच भारत का फटेहाल रूप में उपस्थित होना इन बात का संकेत है कि, भारत शोषण से बदहाल है। नायक भारत भारतीय अतीत के गौरव याद करता कहता है, "हा ! यह वही भूमि है जहां साक्षात भगवान श्री कृष्णचंद्र के दूतत्व करने पर भी विरोत्तम दुर्योधन ने कहा था, 'सूच्यग्रम् नैव दास्यामि बिना युद्धन केशव' और आज हम उसी को देखते हैं कि श्मशान हो रही है।" अतीत के पौरुष तथा शौर्य कोई याद करता भारत भारतवासियों के आज के पौरुष हीनता को कोसता है। भारतेंदु ने पराधीन भारत के हाथपसारू तथा परामुखपेक्षी स्थिति पर करारा व्यंग्य किया है। नेपथ्य से भारत दुर्देव की कर्कश ध्वनि सुनकर नायक भारत अपना धैर्य खो देता है। वह अपनी रक्षा के लिए कभी ब्रिटिश की महारानी से गुहार लगाता है तो कभी ईश्वर से! यह भाग्यवादी भारत है जो भाग्य के सहारे चलता रहा और इसी कारण इसने स्वनिर्भरता को त्याग कर परनिर्भरता की शरण ली है। आत्मनिर्भरता और स्वाभिमान को खो देने की दशा में जीवन का मात्र दो ही आधार बच जाता है

निर्लज्जता और आशा! नायक भारत के द्वारा की गई रक्षा की उम्मीद अनावश्यक है क्योंकि, गुलाम बनाने वाले शक्ति कभी स्वतंत्रता नहीं दे सकती। भारत का कथन है- "हाय! परमेश्वर बैकुंठ में और राजराजेश्वरी सात समंदर पार अब मेरी कौन दशा होगी? हाय अब मेरे प्राण कौन बचा लेगा? अब कोई उपाय नहीं। अब मरा, अब मरा।" ऐसे असहाय भारत के लिए मात्र निर्लज्जता और आशा का संबल वरेण्य हो सकता है। क्योंकि निर्लज्जता इसे घोर यातना और दुर्दशा की स्थिति में मरने नहीं देती और आशा ऐसी विषम परिस्थिति में भी इसमें जीने की चाह उत्पन्न करती है।

नाटक का तीसरा अंक मैदान के दृश्य से शुरू होता है। जहां फौज के डेरे लगे हैं। इसी अंक में पहली बार भारतदुर्देव उपस्थित होता है। जिसकी वेशभूषा आधा क्रिस्तानी और आधा मुसलमानी है। भारतदुर्देव की रंग दृष्टि ने भारतदुर्देव की वेशभूषा को लेकर यह स्पष्ट संकेत दिया है कि, भारत सदियों से गुलाम है जो कभी मुसलमान आक्रांताओ और कभी ईसाई आक्रांताओ से आक्रांत रहा है। भारतदुर्देव अपनी प्रकृति को उद्घाटित करते कहता है-

"मुझे तुम सहज न जानो जी, मुझ एक राक्षस मानो जी।

कौड़ी कौड़ी को करूं मैं सबको मुहताज।

भूखे प्राण निकालूं इनका, तो मैं सच्चा राज। मुझे।

फूट बैर और कलह बुलाऊँ, और बुलाऊँ रोग।

पानी उल्टा कर बरसाऊँ, हाऊँ जग में सोग। मुझे।

मरी बुलाऊँ देस उगाऊँ, धन है मुझको धन्य।

मुझे तुम सहज न जानो जी, मुझे इक राक्षस मानो जी।"

यह भारत की मूर्खता को उद्घाटित करता हुआ कहता है कि, कहां गया भारत मूर्ख जिससे अब भी राजराजेश्वरी और परमेश्वर का भरोसा है। देखो तो अभी उसकी क्या दशा होती है। भारतदुर्देव हरिश्चंद्र ने इस नाटक के माध्यम से यह दर्शाने की कोशिश की है कि, पश्चिमी पूंजीवादी शक्तियां विज्ञानवाद तथा कर्मवाद के सहारे भाग्यवादी शक्तियों का शोषण कर रही थी। और विडंबना यह थी कि, ऐसे शोषणकारी शक्तियों का हाथ स्वयं भाग्यवादी शक्तियां ही मजबूत करती आ रही है। भारतदुर्देव का सेनापति कोई और नहीं बल्कि सत्यानाश फौजदार है। सत्यानाश फौजदार की सेना में धर्म, संतोष, रोग, आलस्य, मदिरा, अंधकार, फूट, डाह, स्वार्थ, अपव्यय, अदालत, फैशन और सामाजिक विभेद जैसे सैनिकों की मुख्य भूमिका में हैं। भारतदुर्देव जी ने सत्यानाश फौजदार के मारफत भारतीय पराधीनता के आंतरिक कमजोरियों तथा सामाजिक रुढ़ियों को जिम्मेदार माना है। उनका व्यंग्य धार्मिक-संप्रदायिकता तथा इससे उत्पन्न सामाजिक विभेद को उभरना है। सत्यानाश फौजदार भारतदुर्देव से कहता है-

"महाराज! धर्म ने सबको पहिले सेवा की।

रचि बहु विधि के वाक्य पुरानन मांहि घुसाए॥

शैव शाक्त वैष्णव अनेक मत प्रकट चलाए।

जाति अनेकन करी नीच अरु ऊँच बनायो।।

खान पान संबंध सबन सों बरजि छुड़ायो।

विधवा व्याह निषेध कियो बिभिचार प्रचारयो।।"

अर्थात् धर्म नामक सेना ने भारतीयों को जर्जर बना दिया। जिसके कारण भारतीय समाज में जाति-पाती, हिंदू-मुसलमान, वैष्णव, शैव, शाक्त जैसे सांप्रदायिक भेद, बाल-विवाह, बहु-विवाह और विधवा-विवाह निषेध तथा बहुदेववाद जैसी संस्थाओं को बढ़ावा दिया है। वेदांत जैसे दर्शन की गलत व्याख्या ने किस प्रकार से हिंदुओं को देश प्रेम से वंचित कर रखा है तथा संतोष ने अकर्मण्यता को किस कदर बढ़ाया है उसको भी बताता है- "महाराज फिर संतोष ने बड़ा काम किया। राजा प्रजा सबको अपना चेला बना लिया। अब हिंदुओं को खाने मात्र से काम, देश से कुछ काम नहीं। राज न रहा, पेनसन ही सही, रोजगार न रहा सूद ही सही। वह भी नहीं, तो घर ही का सही, 'संतोष' परम। सुखमा।" नाटक के चौथे अंक में भारतीय समाज को कमजोर बनाने वाले चार प्रमुख कारकों की चर्चा की गई है। जिसका चित्रण रोग, आलस्य, मदिरा और अंधकार के नाम से किया गया है। भारतेंदु जी ने माना कि, भारतीय समाज की जर्जरता संकीर्णता और रूढ़ियों के कारण ही उत्पन्न हुई। जिसका लाभ लेकर विदेशी आक्रान्ताओं ने इसका आर्थिक दोहन किया। रोग नामक सैनिक भारतदुर्देव से कहता है कि, "महाराज! धन्वंतरि और काशीराज दिवोदास का अब समय नहीं है और न सुपुत्र, वाग्मादद चरक ही हैं।" रोग के मारफत भारतेंदु जी ने चिकित्सा की जगह टोना टोटका और झाड़-फूंक जैसी संकीर्णता पर भरोसा करने को लेकर व्यंग्य किया है। आलस्य के कारण भारतीय समाज का पतन हुआ। भारतेंदु ने तुलसी और मलूकदास के पदों के द्वारा भारतवासियों की आलस्य प्रियता पर करारा व्यंग्य किया है-

"जो पड़तव्यं सो मरतव्यं जो न पढ़तव्य सो भी मरतव्य।

अजगर करै न चाकरी, पंछी करै न काम।

दास मलूका कह गए, सबके दाता राम।"

मदिरापान के कारण युवा शक्ति का छय और नैतिक पतन को उजागर किया गया है। भारतीय समाज ने किस प्रकार मदिरापान को धर्म का आश्रय देकर जीवन का अभिन्न अंग बना दिया है। मदिरा नामक पात्र का व्यंग्य है कि, महाराज भारत में मुख्य चार धार्मिक समुदाय है "हिंदू, बौद्ध, मुसलमान और क्रिस्तान। इन चारों में मेरी चार पवित्र प्रेममूर्ति विराजमान हैं। सोमपान, विराचमन, शराबुनतहूरा और बापटैजिस्म वाइन।" भारतेंदु जी ने भारतीय समाज में व्याप्त अंधकार को अज्ञानता के रूप में देखने की कोशिश की है। जिसकी वजह से देशी नरेशों के वैभव का अंत हो गया। अंधकार कहता है-

“छोटे चित अति भीरु बुद्धि मन चंचल विगत उछाह।
 उदर भरत-रत, ईस-विमुख सब भए प्रजा नरनाह।।
 इनसों कछु आस नहीं ये तो सब बिधि बुधि बलहीन।
 बिना एकता-बुद्धि-कला के भए सबहिं बिधि दीन।।”

अंधकार के इस कथन से भारत की दुर्दशा का यथार्थ उजागर किया है। भारतेंदु जी ने जिसकी शुरुआत की तो महाकवि निराला अपनी कविता में उसका पर्दाफाश यों किया है-

“राजे ने अपनी रखवाली की
 राजे ने अपनी रखवाली की,
 किला बनाकर रहा,
 बड़ी-बड़ी फौजें रखीं।
 चापलूस कितने सामंत आये
 मतलब की लकड़ी पकड़े हुए

कितने ब्राह्मण आये। पोथियों में जनता को बांधे हुए।
 कवियों ने उसकी बहादुरी के गीत गाये, लेखकों ने लेख लिखे,
 ऐतिहासिकों ने इतिहासों के पन्ने भरे
 आँख-कान मूंदकर जनता ने डुबकियाँ लीं।”

नाटक का पांचवा अंक सजीव पात्रों के साथ किताबखाने की बैठक से शुरू होती है। इस बैठक में सात सभ्य हैं। जिसमें एक सभापति, एक मराठी, एक बंगाली, दो देसी, एक कवि और एक एडिटर हैं। भारतेंदु जी ने इन सातों सभ्यों के मारफत तत्कालीन बौद्धिक वर्ग पर करारा व्यंग्य किया है। डॉ.रामविलास शर्मा का मानना है, “भारत-दुर्दशा के पांचवें अंक में प्रतीक-व्यंजना को छोड़कर भारतेंदु यथार्थ-चित्रण की भूमि पर आ गए हैं।” उन्होंने बंगाली तथा मराठी सदस्य को निर्भीक दिखाया जबकि कवि, एडिटर और दो देशी सदस्यों को हास्यास्पद तथा कायर। बंगाली और मराठी सदस्य की निर्भीकता के माध्यम से भारतेंदु जी का इशारा बंगाल और मराठा ‘नवजागरण’ की ओर था। किस प्रकार भारत में पहले बंगाल और महाराष्ट्र में यह नवजागरण पर चेतना सामाजिक और वैचारिक आधार लेकर आई। कवि का सुझाव बड़ा ही हास्यास्पद है। वह कहता है, “मुहम्मदशाह ने भांडों ने दुश्मन को फ़ौज से बचने का एक बहुत उत्तम उपाय कहा था। उन्होंने बतलाया कि नादिरशाह के मुकाबले में फ़ौज न भेजी जाए। जमान किनारे कनात खड़ी कर दी जाएँ, कुछ लोग चूड़ी पहने कनात के पीछे खड़ी रहें। जब फ़ौज इस पार उतरने लगे, कनात के बाहर हाथ निकालकर उँगली चमकाकर कहें “मुए इधर न आइयो इधर जानने हैं।” इस प्रकार भारतेंदु जी ने दिखाया कि, किस प्रकार प्रायः मध्यम वर्गीय बौद्धिक समुदाय समस्याओं के प्रति बौद्धिक वाद जाल बुनता है। किंतु उसके समाधान हेतु सक्रिय भूमिका से कोसों दूर रहता है।

नाटक का छठा अंक जंगल के दृश्य से शुरू होता है। जहां वृक्ष के नीचे नायक भारत अचेत अवस्था में पड़ा हुआ। जो नाटक के दूसरे अंक में भारत दुर्देव की कर्कश ध्वनि को सुनकर मूर्च्छित हो गया था। इस अंक में पहली बार भारत भाग्य नामक पात्र की उपस्थिति हुआ है। यह भारत भाग्य भारत को जगाने तथा उसकी मूर्छा को तोड़ने की कोशिश करता है। कोशिश में असफल होने के पश्चात अपनी कमर से कटार निकालकर अपनी छाती में घोप कर आत्महत्या कर लेता है। आत्महत्या के साथ ही इस नाटक का अंत हो जाता है। नाटक अंत में आत्महत्या के चित्रण को कुछ आलोचकों ने यह माना कि, यह पश्चिमी नाटकों का प्रभाव है। जो निराशा के साथ समाप्त हो जाता है। नाटक दुखांत श्रेणी का है। लक्ष्मीसागर वाष्पण्य, बाबू ब्रजरत्न दास तथा बाबू श्यामसुंदर दास का मानना है कि यह नाटक राष्ट्र के लिए एक अच्छा संदेश तो देता है परंतु इसका अंत निराश से पूर्ण है। बाबू ब्रजरत्न दास जी ने भारत भाग्य को ही नायक मानते हुए यह कहा कि, “भारत भाग्य की आत्महत्या इस नाटक को दुखांत बना देती है।” इन विद्वानों के विपरीत बाबू गुलाब राय ने यह माना कि, “भारतेंदु जी ने भारत की दो तस्वीर पेश की है। एक भाग्यवादी भारत तथा दूसरा कर्मवादी भारत। भाग्य के सहारे चलने के कारण भारत भाग्य पर निर्भर बना रहा उसकी यह दुर्दशा भाग्यवादी बने रहने के कारण ही हुई। अतः ऐसे में भारत भाग्य भारत का सच्चा मित्र नहीं हो सकता बल्कि; मित्र के रूप में छद्म शत्रु है। इसकी आत्महत्या निराश पूर्ण नहीं है बल्कि आशान्वित करती है। कि भारत इस भाग्य से पीछा छोड़कर कर्मवाद का सहारा लेगा। अब जब वह अपनी मूर्छा से उठेगा तो परनिर्भरता को त्याग कर स्वनिर्भर तथा स्वाधीन होने का प्रयास करेगा।” इसप्रकार यह कहा जा सकता है कि, इस नाटक का अंत भी ‘नवजागरण परक’ चेतना के राष्ट्रीय प्रसार को लक्ष्य बनाकर सुखांत होने की संभावना को तलाशता है। मौजूदा वक्त में भी इसी प्रकार की चेतना का प्रसार देखा जा सकता है। जो पूर्व से प्रचलित शिलाखंड को तोड़कर नवीन राष्ट्रीयता का प्रसार हो रहा है।

संदर्भ

- [1] आचार्य रामचंद्र शुक्ल, हिंदी साहित्य का इतिहास, पृ-325, संस्करण-2011, प्रकाशन संस्थान, नई दिल्ली-02
- [2] बच्चन सिंह, हिंदी आलोचना के बीच शब्द, पृ-57, प्रथम संस्करण, 2015, वाणी प्रकाशन, नई दिल्ली-02
- [3] भारतेंदु के सम्पूर्ण नाटक, पृ-198, संस्करण- 2014, शिल्पायन प्रकाशन, दिल्ली-32
- [4] वही
- [5] हिंदी नाटक: नई परख , पृ -69, प्रथम संस्करण-2010, स्वराज प्रकाशन, नई दिल्ली-02
- [6] भारतेंदु के सम्पूर्ण नाटक, पृ-198, संस्करण- 2014, शिल्पायन प्रकाशन, दिल्ली-32

- [7] वही, पृ- 199
- [8] वही
- [9] पृ- 200
- [10] वही, पृ- 201
- [11] वही, पृ- 202
- [12] वही, पृ- 203
- [13] वही, पृ- 205
- [14] वही, पृ- 207
- [15] वही, पृ- 208
- [16] वही, पृ- 211
- [17] निराला रचनावली-2, पृ-178, प्रथम संस्करण, राजकमल प्रकाशन, नई दिल्ली-02
- [18] डॉ.रेवतीरमण, भारत दुर्दशा, पृ-60, प्रथम संस्करण-1999, अभिव्यक्ति प्रकाशन, इलाहाबाद- 04
- [19] भारतेन्दु के सम्पूर्ण नाटक, पृ-212, संस्करण- 2014, शिल्पायन प्रकाशन, दिल्ली-32

कस्बाई सिमोन उपन्यास में अभिव्यक्त स्त्री स्वर

रेखा मीणा

हिंदी विभाग

कालिंदी कॉलेज

दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय

E-mail: rekhakalindi@gmail.com

शोध सार

इस उपन्यास में स्त्री आकांक्षा के प्रश्नों को और स्त्री की अपनी आकांक्षा के कारण तमाम जद्दोजहद का सामना करना पड़ता है। आज भी समाज बार-बार यही बताता है कि स्त्री को पितृसत्ता की जकड़बंदी में ही रहना चाहिए क्योंकि वह यदि एक आम स्त्री है तो वह अपनी शर्तों पर जीवन नहीं जी सकती, समाज बार-बार उसे याद दिलाता रहता है। यह उपन्यास स्त्री आकांक्षा के उन सभी पहलुओं को नायिका सुगंधा के माध्यम से हमारे सामने रखता है।

बीज शब्द -पितृसत्ता, नारी विमर्श, आन्दोलन, विवाह संस्था, सहजीवन

हमारे समाज में स्त्री को कानूनी रूप से तो समानता का अधिकार प्राप्त है परन्तु आज भी पितृसत्ता की गठंत ने स्त्री को व्यवहारिक तौर पर उसकी अपनी आकांक्षा के साथ स्वीकार नहीं किया है। आज भी स्त्री दोगले दर्जे का जीवन जीने को अभिशप्त है। “स्त्री विमर्श पितृसत्तात्मक व्यवस्था की पड़ताल करने के उपक्रम में विवाह संस्था, धर्म, न्याय और मीडिया की स्त्री विरोधी भूमिका को प्रकाश में लाता है।”

कस्बाई सिमोन उपन्यास की नायिका आधुनिक पढ़ी-लिखी और स्वतंत्र विचारों की स्त्री का प्रतिनिधित्व करती है। वह अपना जीवन अपनी शर्तों पर जीना चाहती है। उसके अपने सपने हैं, अपनी आकांक्षाएँ हैं जिन्हें वह अपनी मेहनत से पूरा करना चाहती है। वह समाज द्वारा स्वीकृत विवाह संस्थान में विश्वास नहीं रखती और सहजीवन को अपनाती है। सहजीवन को अपनाते का विचार उसका अपना है परन्तु समाज उसे स्त्री होने के नाते उसके सहजीवन को अपनाने के चुनाव को स्वीकार नहीं कर पाता।

स्त्री क्या चाहती है? क्या उसे कुछ चाहने का अधिकार भी है? विशेष रूप से अपनी स्वतंत्रता के संदर्भ में। ये प्रश्न हर युग में उपस्थित हुआ है। मनुष्य होने के नाते एक मनुष्य (पुरुष) की तरह मिलने वाले अधिकार, स्वतंत्रता और सम्मान उसे मिल पाया है? छद्म रूप से स्त्री-पुरुष समानता का जो स्वांग रचा जा रहा है। समय-समय पर स्त्रियों ने वैश्विक स्तर पर इस असमानता को दूर करने

के लिए आवाज उठायी है। नारीवादी आन्दोलन की बाइबिल कही जाने वाली किताब 'द सैकण्ड सैक्स' 1949 में प्रकाशित हुई जिसकी रचना विश्वप्रसिद्ध फ्रेंच लेखिका सिमोन-द-बोउवा ने की थी। उन्होंने जिंदगी को अपनी शर्तों पर जीने की ठानी और वैसे ही जीवन जीते हुए सबके सामने आयी।

सिमोन-द-बोउवा (The Second Sex 1949) "मैंने जिन्दगी को प्यार किया, शिद्दत से चाहा, उसका दायित्व संभाला, उसको दिशा-निर्देश दिया। यही मेरी जिन्दगी है, जो बस, एक बार मिली है।"

सिमोन का जन्म पेरिस के एक कैथोलिक परिवार में हुआ। उन्होंने दर्शन और गणित का अध्ययन किया, दर्शन पर विचार विमर्श किये उन्हीं दिनों उनकी मुलाकात अस्तित्ववाद के मसीहा महान दार्शनिक 'ज्यां पाल सार्त्र' से हुई उनकी आपस की दोस्ती प्रेम में बदल गयी। लेकिन दोनों ही विचारों से बहुत स्वतंत्र थे वह विवाह और वंश परंपरा के खिलाफ रहे। सिमोन विवाह को जर्जर ढहती हुई संस्था मानती थी और विवाह के बिना साथ-साथ जीवन जीने पर बल दिया। दोनों आजाद ख्यालात के थे। वे गृहस्थी के झंझटों से बिल्कुल मुक्त रहना चाहते थे। सारा समय अध्ययन लेखन और अध्यापन में व्यतीत होता था। कैनेडियन सरकार उनकी विवाह संस्था और नास्तिकता तथा कैथोलिक धर्म विरोध की नीतियों का विरोध करती है। सिमोन और सार्त्र अपने ही विचारों के धुनी थे जिन्होंने व्यक्तिगत स्वतंत्रता पर जोर दिया था।

सिमोन ने स्त्री शरीर और मन के बारे में पितृसत्ता द्वारा बनाए गए तमाम मिथकों और पारम्परिक विश्वासों को खुली चुनौती दी है उन्होंने सिद्ध किया कि 'स्त्री पैदा नहीं होती बनाई जाती है'।

कस्बाई उपन्यास की नायिका सुगन्धा सिमोन से प्रभावित है और इन्हीं की तरह अपना जीवन अपनी शर्तों पर स्वतंत्रतापूर्वक जीना चाहती है। वह सिमोन की तरह ही विवाह संस्था का विरोध करती है उसके अनुसार समाज में पितृसत्ता अपने हिसाब से, अपनी जरूरतों, संस्कारों और अभिरूचियों के अनुसार स्त्री की छवि गढ़ती है और निर्मित करती है। यहाँ विवाह के नाम पर समझौता स्त्री को ही करना होता है। अधिकार स्त्री के ही छिने जाते हैं और शोषण भी स्त्री का ही किया जाता है जबकि त्याग, बलिदान और समर्पण की अपेक्षा भी स्त्री से ही की जाती है या स्त्री को ही करना पड़ता है।

'लिव इन रिलेशन' महानगरों की जीवनचर्या के रूप में अपनाया जा रहा है। महानगरों में अपिरचय का वातावरण होता है, जिससे पड़ोसी परस्पर एक-दूसरे को नहीं पहचानते हैं। कस्बों में सामाजिक स्थिति अभी धुर परम्परागत है। ऐसे वातावरण में एक स्त्री यदि 'लिव इन रिलेशन' को अपनाती है तो उसे क्या मिलता है? वह क्या खोती है? ... क्या वह एक कस्बाई और 'लिव इन रिलेशन' में मानसिक सुकून पा सकती है? उसे किन-किन स्तरों पर समझौते करने पड़ते हैं। यह सब इस उपन्यास के माध्यम से समझा जा सकता है।

सुगन्धा पढ़ी-लिखी, नौकरी-पेशा, स्वतंत्र विचारों वाली स्त्री है। वह जबलपुर जैसे छोटे शहर में नौकरी करती है। सुगन्धा के जेहन में विवाह संस्था के प्रति नकारात्मक छवि अंकित है। उसके माता-पिता का वैवाहिक जीवन असफल था जिसमें पीड़ित उसकी माँ ही होती है।

“उफ! ये विवाह की परिपाटी! गढ़ी तो गई स्त्री के अधिकारों के लिए जिससे उसे और उसके बच्चों को सामाजिक मान्यता, आर्थिक सँबल आदि-आदि मिल सके किंतु समाज में ही उसे तमाशा बनाकर रख दिया। मैं इस तमाशे में नहीं जीना चाहती थी। मैंने सोच रखा कि मैं कभी विवाह नहीं करूँगी।”

वह नायक रितिक के साथ सहजीवन में वास करती है परन्तु कस्बाई जीवन में उसके सहजीवन को स्वीकृति नहीं देता और इसका खामियाजा सुगन्धा को ही भुगतना पड़ता है लाँछन, मानसिक प्रताड़ना, सुगन्धा ही झेलती है। रितिक को कोई कुछ नहीं कहता।

“लड़का आवारा भी हो तो उसे कोई कुछ नहीं कहता है, उसका घर मजे से बस जाता है लेकिन लड़की का जीवन तो कांच की तरह होता है, एक भी खरोंच आई तो सबको दिखाई देने लगती है।”

नायिका को समाज की इस दोहरी नीति का गहरा क्षोभ है कि स्त्री और पुरुष भी जीने के विरोधी मापदण्ड है। वह पितृसत्ता के प्रति विरोध दर्ज करवाते हुए समाज को खुलकर चुनौती देती है और उसका सामना करती है। वह समाज में अपनी स्वतंत्रता के लिए जद्दोजहद करती दिखती है। सुगन्धा के ऑफिस के अकाउंटेंट जो उसके हितैषी भी है उसे आगाह करते हैं - “तुम नीना गुप्ता, सुष्मिता सेन या करीना कपूर नहीं हो, तुम एक कस्बे की और मध्यवर्ग की लड़की हो, ये सब पैसेवालों और महानगरों के जीने के तरीके हैं, तुम जैसी लड़कियाँ दुःख पाती हैं, चैन-सुकून, अधिकार और सम्मान नहीं।”

सुगन्धा लिव इन रिलेशन में अपने को सुरक्षित अनुभव करती है। इसमें जीवनसाथी द्वारा दी जाने वाली प्रताड़ना सहने को विवश नहीं होना पड़ता वह हर मामले में स्वयं को स्वतंत्र पाती है। परन्तु स्त्री स्वतंत्रता की वकालत करने वाली सुगन्धा को भी कहीं न कहीं समझौते करने पड़ते हैं उसे अपने सम्बन्धों को छिपाने के लिए झूठ भी बोलना पड़ता है और करवा-चौथ का व्रत भी करती है और अपने आप को जस्टिफाई करती रहती है। रितिक के साथ सहजीवन में रहते हुए भी उससे अलग होने की सोचने को भी तैयार नहीं है उसे लगता है वह उससे अलग होकर उसका जीवन ही निरर्थक हो जाएगा। बिना विवाह के रहने के बावजूद वह अपने में पारम्परिक पत्नी के गुणों को आने से नहीं रोक पाती वह रितिक भी पारम्परिक पति की भाँति ही व्यवहार करने लगता है। “स्त्री का अपना दोष

हैं कि वह पुरुष को धीरे-धीरे कर असीमित छूट देती चली जाती है। सुगन्धा ने भी रितिक को छूट दी इस छूट का लाभ उठाते हुए रितिक ने बराबरी कर सबक भूल दिया।”

सामाजिक दबाव में आकर सुगन्धा को मानसिक प्रताड़ना देने लगता है। नतीजतन दोनों का संबंध-विच्छेद हो जाता है। प्रेम पाने के लिए सुगन्धा के जीवन में एक के बाद एक पुरुष आते हैं लेकिन मानसिक स्तर पर उसका जुड़ाव किसी से नहीं हो पाता है।

सुगन्धा की माँ जो स्वयं समाज के दोगलेपन की शिकार है समाज को चुनौती देती दिखती है परन्तु वह भी सुगन्धा को समझाती है कि “हमारा समाज अभी भी पुरानी परम्पराओं का कट्टर पोषक है, वह तुम्हें चैन से जीने नहीं देगा।” स्त्री और पुरुष के बीच का मामला हो तो दोषी स्त्री को ही माना जाता है, विशेष रूप से चरित्र के प्रश्न पर।

सुगन्धा आधुनिक सोच वाली स्त्री है वह सोचती है जब पुरुष एकाधिक स्त्रियों से संबंध रख सकता है तो एक स्त्री क्यों नहीं रख सकती और स्त्री क्यों इसके लिए अपराधबोध का वरण करें।

इस उपन्यास को पढ़ते हुए 2019 से आयी हिंदी फिल्म ‘लुका-छिपी’ की ओर बरबस ध्यान चला जाता है जिसमें मूल कथा सहजीवन का पक्ष लेती नजर आती है। जिसमें लड़का-लड़की विवाह पूर्व एक-दूसरे को जानने, समझने के लिए ‘लिव इन रिलेशन’ में रहने लगते हैं और उन्हें किस प्रकार की समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ता है यह इस फिल्म में दिखाया गया है।

हमारे समाज की मानसिकता कुछ ऐसी है कि सहजीवन को समाज हजम नहीं कर पाता है समाज की नजर में यह एक बहुत बड़ा गुनाह है। लिव इन रिलेशन को हमारे कानून ने भले ही मान्यता दे दी हो, मगर आज भी समाज का बहुत बड़ा वर्ग उसे अच्छी निगाह से नहीं देखता है। युवा अपने जीवनसाथी के मामले में अंधा फैसला करने के मूड में नहीं हैं वह अपने जीवनसाथी को जाँच-परख कर चुनना चाहता है।

‘लुका-छिपी’ बॉलीवुड का सिनेमा है जहाँ हैप्पी एंडिंग होती है। परन्तु हमारा यथार्थ ऐसा नहीं है जहाँ दो प्रेम करने वाले जोड़े ‘ऑनर कीलिंग’ का शिकार हो जाते हैं वहाँ सहजीवन की बिसात ही क्या?

उपन्यास में नायिका संघर्षरत है। यह अपने देह और अपने मन को सिर्फ अपने सम्पत्ति मानकर उससे प्रेम करना चाहती है। और नायिका आर्थिक, शारीरिक और मानसिक स्वतंत्रता को ही इसका आधार मानती है। वह कहती है कि “कस्बाई औरत के लिए लांछनायुक्त शब्दों से परे अपनी इच्छानुसार ‘रिलेशन’ बनाकर सम्मानपूर्वक रह पाना आज भी आसान नहीं है फिर भी मैं हार नहीं मानूँगी, न जिंदगी से और न संबंधों के समीकरण से।”

वस्तुतः इस उपन्यास में स्त्री आकांक्षा के प्रश्नों को और स्त्री की अपनी आकांक्षा के कारण तमाम जद्दोजहद का सामना करना पड़ता है। आज भी समाज बार-बार यही बताता है कि स्त्री को पितृसत्ता की जकड़बंदी में ही रहना चाहिए क्योंकि वह यदि एक आम स्त्री है तो वह अपनी शर्तों पर जीवन नहीं जी सकती, समाज बार-बार उसे याद दिलाता रहता है। यह उपन्यास स्त्री आकांक्षा के उन सभी पहलुओं को नायिका सुगंधा के माध्यम से हमारे सामने रखता है।

संदर्भ

- [1] 'कस्बाई सिमोन' उपन्यास, लेखिका शरद सिंह, सामयिक प्रकाशन, संस्करण-2012.
- [2] स्त्री उपेक्षिता - प्रभा खेतान, (राजकमल प्रकाशन)।
- [3] स्त्री लेखन - स्वप्न और संकल्पना, रोहिणी अग्रवाल, (राजकमल प्रकाशन)।
- [4] चूड़ी बाजार में लड़की - कृष्ण कुमार, (राजकमल प्रकाशन)।
- [5] स्त्री की दुनिया - मधुरेश, प्रकाशन नयी किताब। [1]
- [6] स्त्रीलिंग निर्माण - मल्लिका सेनगुप्ता, बांग्ला से अनुवाद - साधना शाह, रेमाधव पब्लिकेशन्स प्रा.लि., प्रथम संस्करण-200

छात्रों के व्यक्तित्व विकास में 'नीतिशतक' का योगदान

पुष्पा
सह-आचार्य, संस्कृत
मानविकी विद्यापीठ इग्नू,
नई दिल्ली

शोधसार

'हरदेश की नींव उसके युवाओं की शिक्षा है।'

(डायोजनीज)

शिक्षा का केन्द्र बिन्दु विद्यार्थी है जिसके शिक्षार्जन हेतु असंख्य नीतियों का निर्धारण और क्रियान्वयन किया जाता है। शिक्षा का उद्देश्य शिक्षार्थी के सम्पूर्ण व्यक्तित्व का विकास होता है, जिसके लिए छात्र के शारीरिक, मानसिक, संवेगात्मक, क्रियात्मक और नैतिक आदि सभी पक्षों के विकास पर समान रूप से बल दिया जाता है। वर्तमान शिक्षा जगत में ही नहीं अपितु प्राचीनकालीन शिक्षा पद्धति में भी छात्रों के सर्वांगीण विकास पर जोर दिया जाता था। इस प्रकार छात्रों के व्यक्तित्व विकास में 'नीतिशतक' का योगदान छात्र अपने व्यक्तित्व में सकारात्मक पक्षों को सम्मिलित करते हुए अपने लक्ष्यों को प्राप्ति करने की दिशा में बढ़ते हैं तो निश्चित तौर पर वह अनर्गल बातों से दूर रहते हुए केवल उद्देश्य प्राप्ति की ओर ही पूरी तरह से प्रयासरत रह सकते हैं।

बीजशब्द-

परोपकार, आलस्य, कर्म, शील, विद्या, महत्व, नीति, सदाचार, आचार

भूमिका

परिवर्तन प्रकृति का नियम है, इसी नियम का अनुसरण शिक्षण पद्धति के निर्धारण में भी किया जाता है। संयुक्तराष्ट्र संघ द्वारा सितम्बर 2015 में आयोजित 193 देशों ने (भारत सहित) मिलकर सतत विकास लक्ष्य 2030 की कार्य सूची निर्मित की जिसमें 17 लक्ष्य तथा 169 उपलक्ष्य स्वीकार किए गए। इन लक्ष्य अथवा संकल्पना को 2016 से 2030 की समयावधि में प्राप्त किया जाना है। सतत विकास की कार्य सूची में शामिल इन 17 लक्ष्यों में से एक लक्ष्य यह भी है कि प्रत्येक राष्ट्र यह सुनिश्चित करें कि उनके नागरिकों तक समावेशी और न्याय संगत गुणवत्ता युक्त शिक्षा सुनिश्चित करने के साथ ही, सभी को सीखने के समान अवसर प्राप्त हो। राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 में भी इसी तथ्य को स्वीकार किया गया है कि- (4.17) संस्कृत संविधान की आठवीं अनुसूची में वर्णित एक महत्वपूर्ण आधुनिक भाषा होते हुए भी, इसका शास्त्रीय साहित्य इतना विशाल है कि सारे लैटिन और ग्रीक साहित्य को भी यदि मिलकर इसकी तुलना की जाए तो भी इसकी बराबरी नहीं कर सकता। 4.28 विद्यार्थियों में नैतिक बोध के चलते पारम्परिक भारतीय मूल्यों और सभी बुनियादी मानवीय और संवैधानिक मूल्यों को (जैसे सेवा, अहिंसा, स्वच्छता, सत्य, निष्काम कर्म, शांति, त्याग, सहिष्णुता, विविधता, बहुलवाद, नैतिक आचरण, अनेकता में एकता, लैंगिक संवेदन शीलता, बुजुर्गों के प्रति सम्मान, सभी लोगों और उनकी अन्तः निहित क्षमताओं का सम्मान, पर्यावरण के प्रति सम्मान, मदद करना, शिक्षा, शिष्टाचार, धैर्य, क्षमता, सहानुभूति, करुणा, देशभक्ति, लोक तांत्रिक दृष्टिकोण, अखण्डता, जिम्मेदारी, न्याय, समानता, स्वतंत्रता और बन्धुत्व) विद्यार्थियों में विकसित करना।

शतकत्रय के रचयिता महा कवि भर्तृहरि के तीनों शतकों में प्रत्येक शतक में 100 श्लोक हैं। इसी प्रकार नीति शतक में 100 श्लोक हैं। महाकवि भर्तृहरि के शतक मुक्तक काव्य की श्रेणी में आते हैं। नीति शतक में वर्णित इन श्लोकों में जीवन के महत्वपूर्ण पहलुओं पर प्रकाश डाला गया है जिनके माध्यम से हमें यह बात ज्ञात होती है कि हमें किस प्रकार का आचरण करना चाहिए जिस से हमारा विकास हो और किन-किन बातों को अथवा तत्वों को अपने आचरण से त्याग करना चाहिए जिससे कि हम पतन की ओर अग्रसर होने से बचे। इसी प्रकार संगति का प्रभाव भी हमारे जीवन पर किस प्रकार से पड़ता है सत्संगति हमें उन्नति की ओर जब कि बुरी संगति

हमें पतन की ओर अग्रसर करती है। सज्जन व्यक्ति की क्या विशेषताएँ होती हैं? दुर्जन व्यक्ति का किस प्रकार का आचरण होता है? विद्या की महिमा, राजनीति, धर्म, परोपकार, अहिंसा, सत्य, कर्म व भाग्य सिद्धांत इत्यादि विविध पक्षों पर महत्वपूर्ण और सजीव रूप से प्रकाश डाला गया है जो वास्तव में हमारे लिए सदैव पथ प्रदर्शक का कार्य करते हैं। नीति शास्त्र ही एक मात्र ऐसे शास्त्र हैं जो मनुष्य की समस्याओं से उसे मुक्त करवा कर उसे जीवन में सही मार्ग की ओर बढ़ाते हैं। नीति शतक में वर्णित सूक्तियों के माध्यम से बालक के सही दिशा में बढ़ाने का रहस्य छिपा है, जिससे बालकों को अवगत कराना अत्यन्त ही आवश्यक है क्योंकि वह भ्रमित होकर गलत मार्ग का चयन ना करके अपितु सही दिशा की ओर प्रवृत्त हो सकें और जीवन में सफलता का उपभोग करे। छात्रों के व्यक्तित्व विकास में नीतिशतक का योगदान महत्वपूर्ण है। नीतिशतक की नीति परक शिक्षाएँ सार्वकालिक तथा सार्वभौमिक सत्य है। छात्रों के व्यक्तित्व विकास में नीतिशतक के योगदान को निम्नलिखित रूप में जान सकते हैं-

परोपकार-

पर+उपकार=परोपकार जिसका अर्थ है दूसरो पर उपकार करना। लेकिन ध्यान रहे इस उपकार में कोई स्वार्थ नहीं होना चाहिए। तुलसीदास जी का कथन है "परहित सरिस धर्म नहिं भाई": इसका अर्थ है की हम सभी को परोपकारी होना चाहिए। इसे बड़ा कोई धर्म नहीं होता है। ये एक सामाजिक भावना है जो लगभग सभी में होती है बस कुछ लोग सभी लोगों के लिए महसूस करते हैं और कुछ लोग अपने और अपनों के बारे में। परोपकार का भाव हर धर्म में देखने को मिलता है हर जाति के लोग इसको मानते हैं बिना स्वार्थ के लोगों को मैंने रास्ता पार कराते हुए देखा है। कोई एकसीडेंट होने पर बिना स्वार्थ के लोगों को दौड़ते हुए देखा है, बिना स्वार्थ के लोगों को एक दूसरे के लिए रक्त का दान देते हुए, नेत्र का दान देते हुए यह परोपकार ही तो है। कोई एक परोपकारी व्यक्ति ही कर सकता है क्योंकि उसे दूसरों की जरूरत अपने आप से ज्यादा समझ में आती है वह दूसरों को तकलीफ में नहीं देख सकता। अगर देखा जाए तो परोपकार का अच्छा उदाहरण हमें प्रकृति देती है जो बिना कुछ लिए बिना किसी स्वार्थ के हमें सिर्फ देती है। यदि परोपकार की परिभाषा के बात की जाए तो इसकी कोई एक निश्चित परिभाषा नहीं है यह अपरिभाषित है क्योंकि यह एक भावना है जो हमें हमारे अंतःकरण से आती है। मगर फिर अगर आसान शब्दों में इसके परिभाषा की बात करे तो निस्वार्थ रूप से दूसरों की भलाई करना है। हम अपनी भारतीय संस्कृति की बात करें तो हमें बचपन से ही सिखाया जाता है कि हमें दूसरों की भलाई के बारे में कैसे सोचना है यदि हम किसी को तकलीफ में देखें तो हमें क्या करना चाहिए। इस तरह से यह हमारे अंदर बिल्कुल बसा हुआ है और हम भारतीय करते भी है। संत कबीरदास जी कहते हैं कि एक दिन हमारे पास न धन रहेगा और ना ही हमारे साथ हमारा यौवन होगा। हमारा घर भी छूट जाएगा उस वक्त रहेगा तो सिर्फ अपना यश हमने जिन पर परोपकार किया है उनके आशीष। एक सच्चा परोपकारी वही है जो परोपकार के बदले कुछ नहीं चाहता हो।

इस प्रकार छात्रों में परोपकार की प्रवृत्ति का विकास करना अनिवार्य है जैसा नीतिशतक में बताया है परोपकारी का जन्मजात स्वभाव होता है कि वह समृद्धि प्राप्त होने पर अत्यन्त नम्र हो जाते हैं। ऐसे परोपकारी जनों की शरीर की शोभा उनके परोपकारों से होती है। चन्दन का लेप करने से नहीं, जिस प्रकार कानों की शोभा शास्त्रों को सुनने से होती है। कुण्डल से नहीं हाथ की शोभा दान करने से होती है, कंगन पहनने से नहीं।

श्रोत्रं श्रुतेनैव न कुण्डलेनदानेनपाणिर्नतुककणेन।

विभातिकायः करुणापराणां परोपकारैर्नतुचन्दनेन॥

(नीतिशतक, 73)

इसी प्रकार परोपकारी व्यक्ति की शोभा परोपकार करने से ही होती है अभिप्राय है कि भौतिक वस्तुओं से शरीर की शोभा नहीं होती है अपितु उनके द्वारा किए गए गुणात्मक कार्यों से ही उनके शरीर की सच्ची शोभा होती है हमें छात्रों में प्रारंभ से ही ऐसे गुणों के विकास पर बल देना चाहिए। ऐसे लोग सच्चे हितैषी होते हैं। परहित कल्याण इनके व्यक्तित्व में समाहित होता है। अतः छात्रों को परोपकारी बनना चाहिए।

विद्या की महिमा-

शिक्षा ही व्यक्ति को वास्तविक रूप से मानव बनाती है। शिक्षा व्यक्ति में अच्छे गुणों का आधान करती है, हमें अज्ञान के अन्धेरे से निकाल कर ज्ञान के प्रकाश में लाती है। असभ्य से सभ्य बनाती है। इसी भाव को नीतिशतक में भी बताया है-

साहित्य संगीत कला विहीनः साक्षात् पशुः पुच्छविषाणहीनः।

तृणं न खादन्नपिजीवमानस्तद् भागर्धयपरमंपशूनाम्॥

(नीतिशतक, 13)

अर्थात् साहित्य, संगीत, कला से रहित व्यक्ति को पशु सदृश्य बताया है हमारे जीवन में साहित्य कला संगीत ऐसे ज्ञान की महती आवश्यकता है। यह कला ही हमें पशु से मानव बनाने में सहयोगी है। इसी प्रकार हितोपदेश में भी वर्णित है-

सर्वदव्येषुविद्यैवद्रव्यमाहुरनुत्तमम्।
अहार्यत्वादनर्घ्यत्वाद् अक्षयत्वाच्चसर्वदा।।
(हितोपदेशः, प्रस्ताविका, श्लोक-4)
विद्या नाम नरस्य रूपमधिकप्रच्छन्नगुप्तं धनं
विद्याभोगकरी यशः सुखकरीविद्यागुरुणागुरुः।
विद्याबन्धुजनोविदेशगमनेविद्यापरंदैवते
विद्याराजसेपूज्यते न हि धनंविद्याविहीनः पशुः।।
(नीतिशतकम्, श्लोक-21)

विद्या ही रूप, छिपा हुआ धन, यश, भोग, सुख देने वाली, गुरु, विदेश में बन्धु, सबसे बड़ा देवता, राज सभा में पूजन योग्य और विद्या विहीन पशु है। छात्रों को विद्या की महिमा के विषय में प्रारंभ से ही अवगत कराना चाहिए। इसी प्रकार जिस मनुष्य में व्याकरण, साहित्य इत्यादि शास्त्रों का ज्ञान, तप, दान, धर्म, विवेक, सदाचार इत्यादि नहीं है वह मनुष्य इस मृत्यु लोक में भार स्वरूप है। हमारे जीवन में विद्या सभी प्रकार की कलाओं की अत्यंत आवश्यकता है जो हमें सभ्य समाज का सभ्य नागरिक बनाती हैं। सबके लिए विद्या अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण है अतः सभी को विद्यार्जन करनी चाहिए।

विवेक का महत्त्व-

सत् असत् की पहचान करना ही विवेक है हमें बालक को बाल पन से इस बात से अवगत करा देना चाहिए कि क्या सही है और क्या गलत। सही और गलत में भेद करके सही का चयन करना ही बालक का उद्देश्य होना चाहिए तभी उसका हित होगा अन्यथा वह गलत मार्ग की ओर प्रवृत्त होगा। इसी तथ्य को नीतिशतकम् में बताया है-विवेकभ्रष्टानांभवतिविनिपातः शतमुखः (नीतिशतक, श्लोक 11द) अर्थात् विवेक से रहित लोगों का सैकड़ों प्रकार से पतन होता है जिस प्रकार गडगा का सैकड़ों बार पतन हुआ इसलिए हमें जीवन में विवेक के आधार पर निर्णय लेने चाहिए। विवेक का भाव धीरे-धीरे विकसित होता है परन्तु जैसे बड़ों का आदर करना, अतिथि का आदर करना, बड़ों को अभिवादन करना, जानवरों के साथ गलत आचरण नहीं करना इत्यादि यह व्यवहार अच्छा है इसके विपरीत केला खाकर छिलका बीच रास्ते में फेंक देना, चोरी करना, झूठ बोलना, किसी को सताना, सही और गलत के बीच भेद दृष्टि का विकास बालकों में शिक्षा के माध्यम से अथवा सदुपदेश कहानियों के माध्यम से किया जा सकता है।

धैर्यशाली मनुष्य न्याय के मार्ग से कभी भी विचलित नहीं होते हैं अतः हमें कभी भी न्याय के मार्ग से विचलित नहीं होना चाहिए जो सही है हमेशा उसी का ही साथ देना चाहिए। इस तथ्य को नीतिशतकम् में बताया है-

निन्दन्तुनीतिनिपुणा यदि वा स्तुवन्तु
लक्ष्मी समाविशतुगच्छतु वा यथेष्टम्।
अद्यैव वा मरणमस्तु युगान्तरे वा
न्याय्यात् पथः प्रविचलन्तिपदं न धीराः।।
(नीतिशतक, श्लोक 85)

धैर्यशाली व्यक्ति कभी न्याय के पथ से घबराते नहीं हैं। जीवन में असंख्य कष्ट आये परन्तु हमें सत्य के रास्ते का ही अनुसरण करना चाहिए क्योंकि लाख असफलताओं के बाद सत्य की ही जीत होती है।

परिवर्तन शाश्वतसत्य-

परिवर्तन प्रकृति का शाश्वत नियम है जिसे किसी भी प्रकार से परिवर्तित नहीं किया जा सकता। इस तथ्य को निम्न सूक्ति में देखा जा सकता है-

चक्रकारपडि.क्तरिवगच्छतिभाग्यपडि.क्त।

(स्वप्नवासवदत्तम् प्रथम अंक 05)

चक्र में लगी अरों की भाँति भाग्य परिवर्तित होता रहता है। कहने का अभिप्राय है छात्रों को कभी भी विपरीत परिस्थितियों से घबराना नहीं चाहिए क्योंकि दुःख के बाद सुख और सुख के बाद दुःख यह क्रम अपरिवर्तनीय है। आज यदि छात्र किसी बात से हताश और निराश है तो कल उसे अवश्य ही अच्छे अंकों से सफलता मिलेगी या जो भी उसके जीवन में परेशानी है उस परेशानी का भी निश्चित तौर पर हल मिलेगा। इस तथ्य को निम्न श्लोक के माध्यम से समझ सकते हैं-

छिन्नोअपिरोहतितरुः क्षीणोअप्युचीयतेपुनश्चन्द्रः।
इति विमृशन्तः सन्तः सन्तप्यन्ते न दुःखेषु॥

(नीतिशतक, श्लोक-88)

प्रस्तुत श्लोक में बताया है कि पेड़ काटने पर फिर उग जाता है, चन्द्रमा क्षीण होने पर भी वापिस बढ़ जाता है। इसी प्रकार सज्जन व्यक्ति कभी दुःखों से पीड़ित नहीं होते हैं। अतः हमें धैर्य पूर्वक अच्छे समय की प्रतीक्षा करनी चाहिए दुखों के अन्त होने का इंतजार करना चाहिए धैर्य को धारण करना चाहिए छात्रों को इस तथ्य को याद रखना सदैव उपयोगी है क्योंकि छात्र जीवन में अनेकों ऐसे अवसर आते हैं जब हम निराशा और अवसाद से ग्रस्त होते हैं ऐसे समय में हमें धैर्य धारण करना चाहिए अपने विवेक के आधार पर हमें उसे समय को अच्छी क्रियाओं में लगाना चाहिए और पुनः प्रयास करना चाहिए।

कर्मशील प्रवृत्ति-

जिस प्रकार से श्रीमद्भगवतगीता में भी बताया है कि-

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मातेसङ्गोस्त्वकर्मणि॥

(श्रीमद्भगवतगीता, 2/47)

अभिप्राय है कि हमें सदैव हमारे कर्मों को करने पर बल देना चाहिए। इसी प्रकार नीतिशतकम् में भी कहा है कि-

आलस्यं हि मनुष्याणां शरीरस्थो महान् रिपुः।
नास्त्युद्यमसमो बन्धुः कृत्वा यं नावसीदति॥

(नीतिशतक, श्लोक-87)

अर्थात् आलस्य मनुष्य के जीवन का सबसे बड़ा शत्रु है हमें किसी भी प्रकार से अपने शरीर में आलस्य को घर नहीं बनाने देना चाहिए अपने शरीर से आलस्य को दूर भागना चाहिए। जब तक हम कर्मशील नहीं बनेंगे तभी सफल होंगे और यदि हम कर्मों को नहीं करेंगे तब तक हमें किसी भी प्रकार की सफलता प्राप्त नहीं होगी। यदि हम जीवन में सफल होना चाहते हैं तो आलस्य से को अपने से दूर करना होगा। आलस्य मनुष्य का सबसे बड़ा शत्रु होता है क्योंकि आलस्य मनुष्य को कभी भी जीवन में उन्नति नहीं करने देता है। आलस्य मनुष्य को इतना निकम्मा बना देता है कि उसे परिश्रम से घृणा हो जाती है और वह सदैव आराम की अवस्था में ही रहना चाहता है। आलस्य आलसी मनुष्य को अत्यंत ही प्रिय लगता है क्योंकि आलस्य का असली रूप देखने के लिए परिश्रमी रूपी चश्मे की आवश्यकता होती है जो आलसी मनुष्य के पास नहीं होता है। आलसी मनुष्य को आलस्य दिन प्रतिदिन अपनी चपेट में लेता जाता है, जिसके फलस्वरूप वह दिन प्रतिदिन परिश्रम से दूर भागने लगता है। इस प्रकार आलस्य नामक शत्रु को समाप्त केवल परिश्रम नामक मित्र ही कर सकता है। इसके अलावा इसे समाप्त करने का अन्य कोई दूसरा मार्ग नहीं है। परिश्रम से मित्रता करने के पश्चात ये शत्रु अपने आप ही समाप्त हो जाता है परिश्रम ही सफलता की कुंजी है, यह बात केवल परिश्रमी व्यक्ति ही समझ सकता है क्योंकि वह परिश्रम की अहमियत अच्छे से जानता है। उसे यह ज्ञात होता है कि परिश्रम ही उसका सच्चा मित्र है और इस मित्र की सहायता से वह अपने जीवन में सदैव उन्नति ही करेगा।

इस प्रकार छात्र जीवन में इस बात की महती आवश्यकता है क्योंकि इसी प्रकार के भाव को लिए हुए अन्यत्र भी एक श्लोक आता है जिसका अभिप्राय है कि विद्यार्थी जीवन में सुख कहाँ? सुख चाहने वाले को विद्या कहाँ? अतः विद्यार्थी को चाहिए कि जब तक उसे सफलता प्राप्त न हो जाए तब तक वह अपने कर्मों को भली-भांति करता रहे क्योंकि परिश्रम के जैसा कोई मित्र नहीं है। परिश्रम का कोई विकल्प भी नहीं है अतः परिश्रम करने की प्रवृत्ति को व्यवहार में अपनाना चाहिए।

असफल होने पर अपनी कमियों को देखते हुए उनमें सुधार करते हुए लगातार प्रयत्न शील बने रहना चाहिए। निश्चित तौर पर उसे सफलता प्राप्त होगी क्योंकि नीतिशतक में बताया है कि तीन प्रकार के पुरुष होते हैं-निम्न, मध्य और उत्तम श्रेणी। उत्तम श्रेणी के वही लोग हैं जो कितनी भी बधाएँ आए जब तक किसी कार्य में सफलता प्राप्त नहीं हो जाती उस कार्य को बीच में अधूरा नहीं छोड़ते हैं इसी भाव को लेकर विद्यार्थी को आगे बढ़ना चाहिए कि जीवन में कितनी भी निराशा, कितनी भी असफलताएँ क्यों ना आए परंतु हमें सदैव अपने कर्मों को करते हुए विजयी होना है, सकारात्मकता का विकास करते हुए नकारात्मकता का त्याग करना, ऐसा भाव रखना चाहिए।

दुर्जनों से दूरी-

संसार में भाँति-भाँति के लोग हैं सभी मनुष्य एक जैसे प्रकृति के नहीं होते हैं कुछ अच्छे होते हैं और कुछ बुरी प्रवृत्ति के लोग होते हैं। हमें बुरी प्रवृत्ति के लोगों को पहचान कर उनसे दूरी बनानी चाहिए। नीतिशतक में इसी भाव को बताया है-

अकरुणत्वमकारणविग्रहः परधनेपरयोषिति च स्पृहा।
सुजनबन्धुजनेष्वसहिष्णुताप्रकृतिसिद्धमिदं हिदुरात्मनाम्॥
(नीतिशतक श्लोक-87)

दुर्जन लोग करुणा से रहित, बिना किसी कारण से झगड़ा करने वाले, दूसरों के धन और स्त्री में इच्छा रखने वाले सज्जनों और बंधुजनों के प्रति असहिष्णुता का व्यवहार रखने वाले क्योंकि दुष्ट व्यक्तियों का यह स्वभाव है कि वह अकारण दूसरों से ईर्ष्या करते हैं। महाकवि भर्तृहरि जी ने उन्हें दुर्जन सर्प की तरह बताया है, जिस प्रकार सर्प किसी भी प्रकार से स्वीकार्य नहीं है उसी प्रकार से ऐसी बुरी प्रवृत्ति के लोग स्वीकार करने के योग्य नहीं हैं-

मणिनाभूषितः सर्पकिमसौ न भयंकर।
(नीतिशतक, श्लोक-54)

जिस प्रकार मणि से युक्त होने पर भी सर्प त्याग करने के ही योग्य है, उसी प्रकार से दुष्ट व्यक्ति भी कितना भी सुख सुविधाओं से संपन्न क्यों ना हो हमेशा त्याज्य है। दुष्टजन का साथ सदैव ही अमंगलकारी होता है। दुष्टों और सज्जनों की मित्रता में भी पर्याप्त अन्तर होता है। दुष्ट और सज्जनों की मित्रता में अंतर करने के लिए दृष्टांत के माध्यम से कवि कहते हैं कि दुष्टों की मित्रता प्रारंभ में गहरी और क्रमशः क्षय होने वाली पहले छोटी और बाद में बड़ी, दुष्टों की मित्रता दिन के प्रारंभ की छाया के समान पहले अधिक और बाद में धीरे-धीरे कम होती जाती है दूसरी ओर सज्जनों की मित्रता पहले कम और बाद में बढ़ने वाली होती है अपने निर्मल गुणों के कारण सज्जन सदैव ही वन्दनीय होते हैं।

सज्जन का स्वभाव-

सज्जन का व्यवहार और आचरण इस प्रकार का होता है कि उनके व्यवहार में लालच, अहंकार रहित व्यवहार, पाप में अनासक्ति, सत्य कथन, सत्पुरुषों के मार्ग का अनुसरण, विद्वानों की संगति, सम्मानित लोगों का सम्मान, शत्रु का भी आदर, विनय को प्रकट करना, कीर्ति की रक्षा, आपत्ति में आने पर दया, यह सभी महापुरुषों के आचरण अथवा लक्षण नीतिशतक में बताए गए हैं। नीतिशतक में कहे गए इन अनमोल नीति वचनों का अनुसरण कर छात्र उच्च प्रतिमान स्थापित कर सकते हैं। अतः हमें छात्र जीवन में छात्रों को इस बात का परिचय अच्छी तरह से देना चाहिए कि हमें सज्जन के गुणों का आचरण करना है और दुर्जनों के गुणों को अपने व्यक्तित्व में किसी भी प्रकार से शामिल नहीं करना है क्योंकि सज्जन अनुकरणीय होते हैं और दुर्जन त्याग करने के योग्य होते हैं।

कर्मों के प्रतिआस्था-

भारतीय संस्कृति कर्मों के प्रति आस्थावान संस्कृति है जिसमें बताया है कि हमें अपने कर्मों का फल अवश्य ही मिलता है कर्म अच्छे और बुरे दोनों रूपों में ही किए जाते हैं। हम छात्रों में इस प्रकार की भावनाओं का विकास करें कि वह सत कर्मों को करने की ओर प्रवृत्त हो और बुरे कर्मों को करने से बचें क्योंकि हम जैसे कर्म करते हैं हमें उसी के अनुरूप फल का भोग करना होता है इसलिए मनुष्य को सावधानी पूर्वक कर्म करने चाहिए। ऐसी भावना के प्रति छात्रों को सचेत करना कि वह अच्छे कर्मों को करने की ओर ही प्रवृत्त हो बुरे कर्मों को करने की ओर उनकी किसी भी प्रकार की आस्था अथवा प्रवृत्ति ना जागे। इस सत्य को नीतिशतक में बताया है कि-

कर्मायांफलपुसांबुद्धिः कर्मानुसारिणी।
तथापिसुधियाभाव्यसुविचार्यैवकुर्वता॥
(नीतिशतक श्लोक-90)

हमारे भाग्य का निर्णायक हमारे कर्म ही होते हैं इसलिए हमें अपने कर्मों को करते समय अत्यंत ही सचेत रहना आवश्यक है। वृक्षों की भाँति ही कर्म भी समय के अनुसार फल देते हैं और भारतीय संस्कृति में इस अवधारणा को भी हमने कई बार सुना है जैसा हम बोयेंगे वैसा ही हम काटेंगे, जिस प्रकार के हम कर्म करते हैं उसी प्रकार का हमें फल मिलता है। अतः हम अच्छे कर्म करें जिसे हमें अच्छा फल प्राप्त हो। भारतीय संस्कृति में विद्यमान कर्मफल सिद्धान्त अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण सिद्धान्त है, जो हमारे जीवन जीने की दिशा में सकारात्मक योगदान प्रदान करता है। अतः इस तथ्य से छात्रों को अवगत कराना अत्यन्त ही महत्वपूर्ण है।

अहिंसा का अनुकरण-

पतंजलि के योगसूत्र में अष्टांग योग के अंतर्गत पांच प्रकार के यम बताए गए हैं जिसमें अहिंसा, सत्य, अस्तेय, ब्रह्मचर्य और अपरिग्रह परिगणित किए गए हैं। सबसे पहले यह अहिंसा हमें किसी भी प्रकार से किसी जीव की मन, वाणी, कर्म से किसी भी प्रकार से हिंसा नहीं करनी चाहिए। हमारे शब्दों का प्रभाव दूसरों पर अच्छा या बुरा हमारे शब्दों के चयन द्वारा होता है अतः हम किसी को भी बुरे शब्दों का प्रयोग नहीं करें अपनी वाणी को नियंत्रित करते हुए संतुलित रूप में शब्दों का प्रयोग करें। महाकवि भृत्हरि भी कहते हैं-क्षीयन्ते खलुभूषणानिसततवाग्भूषणभूषणम् (नीतिशतक श्लोक-20) अर्थात् वाणी रूपी आभूषण ही सच्चा आभूषण है और सभी आभूषण नष्ट हो जाते हैं परन्तु वाणी रूपी आभूषण सदैव भूषित करता है। अतः हमें वाणी का प्रयोग करते हुए ध्यान रखना चाहिए हम अपने कटु शब्दों से किसी के मर्मस्थल पर घाव न दें, सबके साथ अच्छा व्यवहार करें, मीठी वाणी का प्रयोग करें।

कामंदुग्धविप्रकर्षत्यलक्ष्मीं
कीर्तिसूते, दुर्हदोनिष्प्रलाति।
शुद्धां शान्तामातरंमड.गलानां
धैनु धीराः सूनृतांवाचमाहुः ॥
(उत्तररामचरितम् 05/30)

सारांश-

उपर्युक्त शोधपत्र के माध्यम से अभी तक आपने यह जाना कि नीतिशतकम् के अनमोल वचनों के माध्यम से किस प्रकार से छात्रों के सर्वांगीण विकास में सहायता प्राप्त हो सकती है। मनुष्य लोक में मानव देह प्राप्त करने के पश्चात् सदगुणों से युक्त होकर अपने जीवन को कल्याण पूर्वक लोक मंगल कार्यों में लगाना देश के अच्छे नागरिक की पहचान है। एक श्रेष्ठ अध्यापक भी वही है जो श्रेष्ठ नागरिकों का निर्माण करता है उसके छात्रों में ईमानदारी, सत्यनिष्ठा, आत्मविश्वास सहनशीलता, करुणा, परोपकार, दया, मानवता इत्यादि गुण विद्यमान होंगे तो ऐसा बालक न केवल स्वयं तथा अपने से जुड़े सभी लोगों में इन गुणों का ही आदान करेगा यह तो स्वतः ही सिद्ध है किसी भी देश के नागरिकों से ही देश का निर्माण होता है। यदि उसमें रहने वाले नागरिक उत्तम कोटि के व्यक्तित्व से युक्त होंगे तो वहां का प्रत्येक कार्य उनके श्रेष्ठ आदर्शों का ही प्रतिफल होगा। ऐसा समाज उन्नत समाज के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित होता है नीति शतक में बताए गए ऐसे सिद्धान्त सदैव ही मानव कल्याण करने में अपना अभूतपूर्व योगदान देते रहे हैं, दे रहे हैं और भविष्य में देते रहेंगे।

संदर्भ

- [1] शास्त्री राकेश, नीतिशतक 2003 परिमल प्रकाशन, दिल्ली
- [2] नीतिशतकम् व्याख्याकार एवं सम्पादक, डॉ शर्मा श्याम वशिष्ठ, नितिन पब्लिकेशन, अलवर
- [3] नीतिशतक, डॉ शुक्ला अरुण, कात्यायन, वैदिक साहित्य प्रकाशन, होशियारपुर
- [4] उत्तर रामचरितम्, स्वरूप आनंद, मोतीलाल बनारसीदास प्रकाशन