



*Swapnesh Shankar Rangnekar
& Manisha Nitin Kulkarni*

*Parmil Kumar, Shamshad Ur
Rasool & Ankita Sharma*

*Assadullah Sheikh, Anil Pawar
& Shikha Bharti*

Raj K. Mahajan

Arvind Kumar

Jai Bhawani Singh

*Vivek Sharma
& Ajay Kumar Chalotra*

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Avian diversity of Ismail Yusuf College - A growing need of conservation

Swapnesh Shankar Rangnekar* and Manisha Nitin Kulkarni**

ABSTRACT

The suburban based Ismail Yusuf College has acquired best heritage status of dry deciduous campus of sixty acres. The campus is blessed with a diverse flora and fauna. The region's flora is uniformly divided into the indigenous and exotic plants. The research conducted for one year showed 36 species of birds within this suburban realm including resident and migratory ones. Index of Dominance (C) and Index of Species Richness (D) were used to determine diversity on different routes within the research area. The study established that the campus harbours a sizable number of bird species from grassland and other vegetation biomes. The study concludes that the birds are excellent indicators of a region's ecological health. They assist in maintaining ecological balance but the biodiversity is under threat in the research area. It needs help from all strata of community to conserve this pristine wilderness.

Key Words: Bird, Conservation, Indicator, Diversity, Urban, habitat

Introduction

In the current world of urbanization and industrialization; it is important to understand the relationship between natural flora, fauna and urban habitats. Urban biodiversity has received very little attention from conservation biologists, developers and policy makers as compared to natural protected ecosystems. Many cities in India contain vast biodiversity of flora and fauna but due to rapid urbanization there has been an alarming reduction in biodiversity [1] Mumbai is one such city, capital of Maharashtra, economic capital of India - trying to thrive the natural green spaces in competition with modernization.

The suburban based Ismail Yusuf College is one such natural green area that has acquired one of the best heritage status of dry and deciduous beautiful campus of sixty acres. The oldest college in North Mumbai, the campus is blessed with rich flora as well as abundance of fauna including resident and migratory avian varieties. It is really miraculous that many birds survive in this deteriorating habitats with fearsome noise pollution of this densely populated suburb of Jogeshwari, Mumbai.[2]

Of all the 1.4 billion species known to science, one of the communities is the 'Aves'. Also colloquially called as birds they are aptly and precisely described as the 'feathered bipeds'. Birds are vertebrate warm blooded animals. To maintain their body temperature to a desired level, the body of a bird is covered with non-conducting feathers - its chief characteristic. [3] An important factor which affects bird diversity is habitat destruction. Many birds unknowingly enter, acclimatize and helplessly survive in urban areas. Changes in land use and vegetation pattern also affect bird behaviour in terms of food, water and shelter. This in turn affects species diversity, abundance and distribution. [4] , [5]

* Department of Environmental Studies, S.I.W.S. N.R. Swamy College, Mumbai 400 031, India

** Department of Zoology, Institute of Science, Madam Cama Road, Fort, Mumbai -32, India

The current study focuses on the evaluation of bird diversity in the research area, and using them as bio indicators to check the eco health of the campus. The study will be helpful to prepare a baseline data on bird diversity among varied bio-geographical areas.

Research Area:

The Ismail Yusuf College is located on Jogeshwari Hill in the western suburbs of Mumbai (19.13334°N and 72.854022°E). [6]It is a green localized patch surrounded by urban settlements. Climate and topography affect every regions biodiversity as seen in the campus. The area is generally warm and humid with considerable variation in seasonal temperature. Summers approach from beginning of March till mid of June. Rippling brooks and glittering ponds add to the beauty in the rainy season with the onset of monsoon from June till September. The city receives an average rainfall of 1800mm. during these four months.[7]The region's flora is uniformly divided into various herbs, shrubs and trees, medicinal plants, indigenous forest trees, fruiting trees and the exotic ones. The trees such as *Mangifera indica*, *Cocos nucifera*, *Ficus benghalensis*, *Ficus religiosa*, *Cassia fistula*, *Phyllanthus emblica*, *Nerium oleander*, *Ficus hispida*, *Bauhinia racemosa*, *Syzygium nervosum*, *Borassus flabellifer*, *Azadirachta indica*, *Tectona grandis*, *Butea monosperma*, *Samanea saman*, *Tamarindus indica*, *Bombax ceiba*, *Caesalpinia pulcherrima* and many more blossom to add to the beauty of the campus. Thus a profusion of flowering, fruiting trees overflowing with refuse and derelict patches of green provide a vast variety of habitats for birds. The medicinal plants like *Acacia catechu*, *Terminalia bellirica*, *Asparagus racemosus*, *Ocimum gratissimum*, *Sapindus mukorossi*, *Curcuma aromatica* etc, are also found within the campus.

Materials and Methods:

The methodology of research is quantitative, habitat specific survey method widely applicable in most habitats and useful for diversity measurements. The method is also suitable for public education and training. [8],[9] Three different observation routes were randomly marked each of the length one Kilometer with a fixed width of 200 meters (100 meters on either side which offers reasonable visibility for clear identification of birds). Existing paths were used as line transects. The line transect method as stated by Burhman et al., was employed for data collection. [10][11]The bird diversity was assessed using time constrained survey of standard walk along the line transects each requiring 1hour duration, preferably in the morning (7 A.M. to 8 A.M.). All the birds visually recognized were systematically recorded in the year long survey period. Counting was avoided on cloudy, rainy and windy days as such type of weather condition significantly affect bird activity and may provide biased results. Most birds were identified by direct observations using binocular. (Olympus 8 × 40 and Olympus 10 × 50 binoculars)Some birds such as Black Drongo (*Dicrurus macrocercus*) are excellent in mimicry with their calls resembling many other birds. Hence the birds were not recorded only from their calls. The birds identified by observing were directly recorded. Unidentified birds were photographed and identified later on using guide books.[3], [12], [13] A camera with 18X optical zoom was used for photographs. Species identification was done at the Department of Zoology of the college.

Analysis of Data:

Bird community analysis for each block was calculated using Index of Dominance (Simpson Index) (C) and Index of species diversity or Index of species richness (D) given that:

$$C = \sum \left(\frac{N_i}{N} \right)^2$$

Where, N_i = Number of species in each order

N = Total number of individuals of all the orders for a specific route

$$D = \frac{S}{\sqrt{N}}$$

Where, S = Number of orders

N = Total number of individuals of all the orders for a specific route

Results:

The suburban realm showed rich bird diversity, comprising 36 species of birds belonging to 09 orders. The post monsoon period marked the beginning of the finest birding period with the arrival of masses of wintering birds. It is evident from the study that insectivorous birds constitute majority in the target area. A similar trend was found by Dey and Ghosh (2016) in their study.[14] Frugivorous birds were found to be in second position. This shows that research area has good food availability in terms of insects and fruits to support the food chain. Omnivorous bird species for example, Oriental Magpie Robin (*Copsychus malabaricus*) and Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) were also found in considerable number. Their role in environmental conservation must be appreciated as they help in seed dispersal, insect control and maintenance of ecological balance. Grainivorous birds were found to be mainly restricted to grasslands. Nectarivorous birds were very less in number. Scavengers were mainly composed of crow species. The species richness varied according to season.

Thirty different species were recorded on route I, while 26 and 16 species were recorded on route II and route III, respectively.

66.66 % birds were found to be resident (R), while 22.22 % birds were migratory (M) and 11.11 % were Resident Migrant (RM). Thus the area showed dominance of resident birds, however importance of area for migratory birds cannot be overlooked. A similar trend was observed by Bellanthudawa B.K.A. et al., while working of avian diversity. [15] The results also show that the study area acts as staging, wintering and roosting ground for a number of migratory bird species as was seen by Verma et al., (2004) [16]

Discussion:

The statistical calculations indicate the Index of Dominance (C) of the different orders of birds for the three different routes. The C value was observed to be the highest among the entire three routes for the order Passeriformes. A similar trend was observed by R. B. Singh (2016) while studying avian diversity in nearby Palghar district. [17] This shows that the passerine birds show dominance in the research area among the other orders of birds. The route I among all the routes shows the highest dominance ($C = 0.4525$) as compared with the others, namely 0.4009 and 0.3587 for route II and route III. This indicates that route I shows highest avian dominance which can be directly correlated with diversity in floral varieties. The species dominance decreases with route II and route III.

The diversity in order of birds, however, is the highest on route III ($D = 0.50$) as compared with the other routes. The other routes show the D value, 0.30 for route I and 0.34 for route II, very close to each other. This indicates that the avian diversity is similar on route II and I, while route III is highly diverse.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) conservation status (2016) of the birds in the study area was encountered. Out of 36 species encountered, 35 were categorized under

Least Concern (LC) stage, while one species namely, Alexandrine Parakeet (*Psittacula eupatria*) was found to belong to Near Threatened (NT) category. [18] This implied that threatened and endangered bird species are not found in the study area at current condition. This may be attributed to anthropogenic disturbances, small size of study area, high diversity of resident bird population despite of small size, availability of nearby ecologically rich area such as Aarey Colony and Sanjay Gandhi National Park around, etc. Presence of Near Threatened species underlines the significance of such areas which provide these species a safer feeding ground, roosting places and habitat. [19]

Conclusion:

The study established that the campus of Ismail Yusuf College harbours a number of bird species from grassland and other vegetation zones, even if the primarily vegetation is forest. Birds are often considered as vital indicators of a regions eco-health. Studies in some parts of the world have not only revealed that cases of birds adapting to urban conditions, surrounding farmlands and grooves are increasing in number but also bird densities are sometimes higher here than in the protected woodlands. [20] It has been quite the same in the campus of Ismail Yusuf College too. Birds eat the fruits, seeds and nectar and hence help in pollination and seed dispersal. Some birds devour insects thereby controlling insect population. Rodents are also the food of birds like raptors and owls thereby controlling pest population. Hence birds assist in maintaining ecological balance- a growing need of conservation and sustainable development.

The college campus is a green oasis encircled by a wholly man made landscape. It is under regular threats from ever-expanding and ever-demanding urban settlements. It is at a risk from intruders, performing activities that damage the flora and fauna resulting in general forest degradation. This adversely affects bird species.

As there is no authentic data available about avian diversity of this green oasis, this is the first preliminary study report for the target area. The study will be beneficial for ecological comparisons and assessment. Further continuation of this research and more and more detailed surveys are recommended for understanding ecological wealth. This will help to understand ecological health and diversity of this region. It is recommended that an awareness centre should be established within the research area which can look after the biodiversity and keep a check on the nuisance. It is said that awareness is the robust tool for conservation of natural wealth. All the stakeholders like students, teachers, management, morning walkers as well as policy makers should be made aware of this natural wealth. Furthermore, new regulations should be enforced by the authorities in the area with severe punishments applied to offenders to serve as a deterrent. Traditional award ceremonies should be instituted as one of the highlights of the annual festival to serve as incentives to individuals who contribute to biodiversity conservation initiatives.

Table 1: Checklist of birds according to their orders in the research area indicating their status and occurrence

Order	Species	Status / Abundance	Diet Habit	Occurrence on Transacts (Routes)			IUCN Status[21]
				I	II	III	
Piciformes	Coppersmith Barbet (<i>Psilopogon haemacephalus</i>)	R / C	F, I	+	+		LC
Coraciiformes	Kingfisher, White throated (<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>)	R / C	C	+	+	+	LC
	Asian Green Bee-eater (<i>Merops orientalis</i>)	M / Ra	I			+	LC
Cuculiformes	Greater Coucal (<i>Centropus sinensis</i>)	R / C	F, I	+	+		LC
	Koel, Western (<i>Eudynamis scolopacea</i>)	R / C	F, I	+	+		LC
Psittaciformes	Parakeet, Rose-ringed (<i>Psittacula krameri</i>)	R / C	F	+	+	+	LC
	Parakeet, Alexandrine (<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>)	R / O	F	+	+		NT
Columbiformes	Yellow-Footed Green-Pigeon (<i>Treron phoenicoptera</i>)	M / Ra	G, F	+			LC
	Rock Dove (<i>Columba livia</i>)	R / C	G, F	+	+	+	LC
Apodiformes	Asian Palm-swift (<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>)	R / C	I			+	LC
Strigiformes	Owlet, Spotted (<i>Athene brama</i>)	R / C	I, C	+	+		LC
Ciconiiformes	Egret, Cattle (<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>)	R / O	C			+	LC
	Kite, Black (<i>Milvus migrans</i>)	R / C	C, S	+	+	+	LC
	Shikra (<i>Accipiter badius</i>)	M / Ra	C		+		LC
Passeriformes	White Throated Fantail (<i>Rhipidura albicollis</i>)	R / O	I	+	+		LC
	Common Tailorbird (<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>)	R / C	I	+	+	+	LC
	Prinia, Plain (<i>Prinia inornata</i>)	RM / Ra	I	+	+		LC
	Common Chiffchaff (<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>)	M / Ra	I	+			LC
	Wire-tailed Swallow (<i>Hirundo smithii</i>)	R / Ra	I	+		+	LC
	Sparrow, House (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	R / C	G	+	+	+	LC
	Sunbird, Purple-rumped (<i>Leptocoma zeylonica</i>)	R / C	N	+	+		LC
	Sunbird, Purple (<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>)	RM / Ra	N	+			LC
	Warbler, Greenish (<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>)	M / O	I	+			LC
	Pale-billed Flowerpecker (<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>)	M / Ra	N	+			LC
	Bulbul, Red-vented (<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>)	R / C	F, G, I	+	+	+	LC
	Bulbul, Red-whiskered (<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>)	RM / Ra	F, G, I	+	+		LC
	Myna, Common (<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>)	R / C	Ov	+	+	+	LC
	Starling, Chestnut-tailed (<i>Sturnus malabarica</i>)	M / Ra	Ov		+	+	LC
	Robin, Oriental Magpie (<i>Copsychus saularis</i>)	R / C	Ov	+	+		LC
	Robin, Indian (<i>Saxicoloides fulicatus</i>)	R / C	Ov		+	+	LC
	Drongo, Black (<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>)	R / C	I	+	+		LC
	Drongo, Ashy (<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>)	RM / O	I	+	+		LC
	— (<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>)	M / Ra	I	+			LC
	Oriole, Indixan Golden (<i>Oriolus kundoo</i>)	R / O	I, F	+	+		LC
	Crow, Large-billed (<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>)	R / C	Ov, S	+	+	+	LC
	Crow, House (<i>Corvus splendens</i>)	R / C	Ov, S	+	+	+	LC
Total				30	26	16	

Avian diversity of Ismail Yusuf College - A growing need of conservation

*Abbreviations Used:

C: Common: The birds seen regularly	O: Occasional: The birds not frequently seen
Ra: Rare: The birds seen exceptionally	R: Resident: The birds permanently seen
M: Migrant: The birds which occur seasonally in the area	RM: Resident Migrant: The birds which have seasonal local migration but otherwise seen locally
I: Insectivorous	G: Grainivorous
N: Nectarivorous	F: Frugivorous
Ov: Omnivorous	C: Carnivorous
S: Scavenger	‘+’ indicates presence and ‘-’ indicates absence of a species.
LC: Least Concerned	NT: Near Threatened

Table 2: Bird Diversity according to order in the research area on three different routes

Order	Species on Route I	Species on Route II	Species on Route III
Piciformes	1	1	0
Coraciiformes	1	1	2
Cuculiformes	2	2	0
Psittaciformes	2	2	1
Columbiformes	2	1	1
Apodiformes	0	0	1
Strigiformes	1	1	0
Ciconiiformes	1	2	2
Passeriformes	20	16	9
Total	30	26	16

Table 3: Index of dominance (C) and Index of Species Richness (D) according to orders in the research area

Order	Index of Dominance (C)		
	Route I	Route II	Route III
Piciformes	0.0010	0.0014	0.0
Coraciiformes	0.0010	0.0014	0.0156
Cuculiformes	0.0043	0.0057	0.0
Psittaciformes	0.0043	0.0057	0.0039
Columbiformes	0.0043	0.0014	0.0039
Apodiformes	0.0	0.0	0.0039
Strigiformes	0.0010	0.0014	0.0
Ciconiiformes	0.0010	0.0057	0.0156
Passeriformes	0.4356	0.3782	0.3158
Total	0.4525	0.4009	0.3587
Index of species diversity (D)	0.30	0.34	0.50

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Comparison of β -entropy , (α, β) -entropy and Shannon entropy using Gamma Distribution

Parmil Kumar*, Shamshad Ur Rasool** and Ankita Sharma***

Abstract

In this paper, various classes of the generalized measures of entropy. We evaluated β -class , (α, β) -class entropies and Shannon entropy for Gamma distribution. Most of the literature on entropy has paid attention only to the Shannon entropy and Kullback-Leibler measure of divergence. Moreover, most of the extensions of these two are purely mathematical results. In light of this, the motivation behind the present paper was to study the generalized class of entropy measures to prove that the parametric generalized measures of entropy for a given probabilistic distribution are more advantageous than Shannon entropy as these contain more information ,with appropriate choice of parameters.

Keywords: Shannon's Entropy, Conditional Entropy, Gamma Distribution, Digamma Function, Generalized Entropy

1 Introduction

The concept of the entropy ,which is a measure of uncertainty of a random variable, was first introduced by Shannon(1948) and many extensions have been proposed by various authors from time to time . Most of these extensions are purely mathematical in nature. The quantitative measure of degree of uncertainty or disorder associated with the random variable of a probability distribution was propounded by Shannon(1948) in his epoch paper and named as Entropy. Subsequently various authors have defined the other information measures viz. Havrda and Charvat (1967) gave β - class of entropy measures ,Renyi(1961)and Kapur(1967)obtained measures of entropy of order α and β ,

* Associate Professor, Department of Statistics, University of Jammu, Jammu, India

** Research Scholar, Department of Statistics, University of Jammu, Jammu, India

*** Research Scholar, Department of Statistics, University of Jammu, Jammu, India

Ullah (1996), Sharma and Taneja(1977), Sharma and Mittal(1977), Sharma and Taneja(1975), Kumar and Hooda(2008), Taneja(1989) ,Das(2017) , Kundu and Singh(2020), Rajesh and Sunoj(2019), Singh and Kundu(2019), Dar, Sofi and Baig(2019) . The idea of the generalized parametric entropies started with Renyi(1961) of order α , that includes Shannon entropy as a limiting case if $\alpha \rightarrow 1$. Renyi(1961) also studied on the measures of entropy and information .In this paper ,we have presented the results in the form of theorems discussed different sections. In Section 2, a brief review about the generalized measures of entropy studied by different authors is highlighted . In section 3, we have evaluated the β -class entropy and finally in section 4 , (α, β) -class of entropy is derived for the Gamma Distribution.

2 Generalized Classes of Entropies

Let $Y = (y_1, y_2 \dots y_n)$ be the random vector and suppose $f(y)$ be the associated probability density function such that $\int_{y \in Y} f(y) dy = 1$ then the information content in observations obtained from the population having probability density function $f(y)$ is given by $-\log f(y)$ and the measure of average information in Y is expressed as

$$H(f) = -E[\log f(y)] = - \int_Y f(y) \log f(y) dy \quad (2.1)$$

This measure is used to measure the randomness or the uncertainty associated with any probabilistic phenomenon. The measure (2.1) has many generalized forms defined by various authors viz. Renyi(1961), Harvard and Charvat (1967) and many others. Numerous applications of entropy measure originated in the nineteenth century in the field of Statistical Mechanics and Thermodynamics which now has been extended to almost every branch of science. Shannon's entropy is the expected value of the function $\phi(f) = -\log f$ that satisfies $\phi(1) = 0$ and $\phi(0) = \infty$.As a measure of information ,one can choose any convex function such that $\phi(1) = 0$. Therefore,the expected information is given by

$$H(f) = E[\phi(f)] = \int_Y \phi(f) f dy \quad (2.2)$$

The measure (2.2) is referred as a class of ϕ - entropies. Ullah(1996) has considered a β -class of function given as

Comparison of β -entropy, $(\alpha-\beta)$ entropy and Shannon entropy using Gamma Distribution

$$\phi_{\beta}(f) = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{\beta-1}(1-f)^{\beta-1}; & \beta \neq 1, \beta > 0 \\ \log f; & \beta = 1 \end{cases} \quad (2.3)$$

where β is a non-stochastic constant. So, we write a class of generalized entropy measure as;

$$H_{\beta}(f) = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{\beta-1}[1 - \int f^{\beta} dy] \\ \frac{1}{\beta-1}[1 - E(f^{\beta-1})]; & \beta \neq 1, \beta > 0 \\ -E(\log f) = H(f); & \beta = 1 \end{cases} \quad (2.4)$$

This is called β -class entropy and was given by Havrda and Charvat(1967). For $\beta \rightarrow 1$, the above equation reduces to Shannon's entropy as given in (2.1).

(α, β) -class entropy :

Hooda and Kumar (2008) propounded the generalization of β -class entropy and defined it as

$$H_{\alpha,\beta}(f) = \frac{1}{\beta - \alpha} \left[\int_Y f^{\alpha} dy - \int_Y f^{\beta} dy \right]; \alpha \neq \beta, 0 < \alpha \leq 1, \beta > 1 \text{ or } 0 < \beta \leq 1, \alpha > 1. \quad (2.5)$$

3 Evaluation of β -class Entropy for the Gamma Distribution

In this section, we consider $f(y)$ to follow the Gamma distribution. We have used this distribution to showcase the improvement over other class of β -class entropy. We evaluated the β -class entropy for the Gamma distribution which is expressed and proved in the form of following theorem.

Theorem 1: The β -class entropy measure defined by

$$H_{\beta}(f) = \frac{1}{(\beta - 1)} \left\{ 1 - \int_y f^{\beta}(y), dy \right\}; \quad \beta \neq 1$$

contains more information than that of Shannon's entropy in case density function $f(y)$ follows Gamma distribution.

Proof:

A random variable Y is said to have a gamma distribution with the parameters a, b if its probability

density function is given by

$$f(y) = \frac{b^a}{\Gamma(a)} e^{-by} y^{a-1}; \quad y > 0, \quad a, b > 0 \quad (3.1)$$

Therefore, the average information is given as

$$H_\beta(f) = \frac{1}{(\beta-1)} \left[1 - \int_y f^\beta(y) dy \right]; \quad \beta \neq 1 \quad (3.2)$$

Substituting (3.1) in (3.2), we get the β -class entropy for the Gamma distribution as

$$\begin{aligned} H_\beta(f) &= \frac{1}{(\beta-1)} \left[1 - \int_y \frac{b^{a\beta}}{\Gamma(a)^\beta} e^{-\beta(by)} y^{\beta(a-1)} dy \right] \\ &= \frac{1}{(\beta-1)} \left[1 - \frac{(a-1)\Gamma\beta(a-1)}{\Gamma(a)^\beta} \frac{b^{\beta-1}}{(\beta)^{\beta(a-1)}} \right] \end{aligned} \quad (3.3)$$

This is the required average information contained in the Gamma distributed random variable.

Next we obtain the analogous results for the p.d.f $f(y)$ by using the Shannon's entropy. By the definition of Shannon entropy, we have

$$H(f) = -E[\log f(y)] = - \int_y f(y) \log f(y) dy$$

Substituting the (3.1) in the above equation, we obtain the Shannon entropy for the Gamma distribution as

$$H(f) = - \int_0^\infty \frac{b^a}{\Gamma(a)} e^{-by} y^{a-1} \log \left(\frac{b^a}{\Gamma(a)} e^{-by} y^{a-1} \right) dy$$

Re-writing the above equation as

$$\begin{aligned} H(f) &= - \int_0^\infty \frac{b^a}{\Gamma(a)} y^{a-1} e^{-by} \log \left(\frac{b^a}{\Gamma(a)} y^{a-1} e^{-by} \right) dy \\ &= -a \log b + \log \Gamma a + \frac{b^{a+1}}{\Gamma a} - \frac{\Gamma(a+1)}{b^{(a+1)}} - (a-1) \int_0^\infty \frac{b^a}{\Gamma(a)} e^{-by} y^{(a-1)} \log y dy \\ &= -a \log b + \log \Gamma a + a - (a-1) \int_0^\infty \frac{b^a}{\Gamma(a)} e^{-by} y^{(a-1)} \log y dy \end{aligned} \quad (3.4)$$

In order to get the Shannon entropy for the Gamma distribution entropy, we need to find the value

Comparison of β -entropy, $(\alpha-\beta)$ entropy and Shannon entropy using Gamma Distribution

of

$$\int_0^\infty \frac{b^a}{\Gamma(a)} e^{-by} y^{(a-1)} \log y \, dy$$

Since

$$\int_0^\infty b^a e^{-by} y^{(a-1)} \, dy = \Gamma(a)$$

Differentiating partially the above expression w.r.t a , we have

$$\int_0^\infty (\log b) b^a e^{-by} y^{(a-1)} \, dy + \int_0^\infty b^a e^{-by} y^{(a-1)} (\log y) \, dy = \frac{\partial \Gamma(a)}{\partial a}$$

or,

$$(\log b) \Gamma(a) + \int_0^\infty b^a e^{-by} y^{(a-1)} (\log y) \, dy = \frac{\partial \Gamma(a)}{\partial a}$$

Dividing throughout by $\frac{1}{\Gamma(a)}$, we have

$$\int_0^\infty \frac{b^a}{\Gamma(a)} e^{-by} y^{(a-1)} \log y \, dy = \frac{1}{\Gamma(a)} \frac{\partial \Gamma(a)}{\partial a} - (\log b)$$

or,

$$\int_0^\infty \frac{b^a}{\Gamma(a)} e^{-by} y^{(a-1)} \log y \, dy = \frac{\partial \log \Gamma(a)}{\partial a} - (\log b)$$

From the (3.4), we get the expression for Shannon entropy as

$$\begin{aligned} H(f) &= -a \log b + \log \Gamma a + a - (a-1) \left[\frac{\partial \log \Gamma(a)}{\partial a} - (\log b) \right] \\ &= \log \left(\frac{\Gamma a}{b} \right) + (1-a) \frac{\partial \log \Gamma(a)}{\partial a} + a \end{aligned} \quad (3.5)$$

it can also be written as

$$H(f) = \log \left(\frac{\Gamma a}{b} \right) + (1-a) \Psi(a) + a \quad (3.6)$$

where $\Psi(a) = \frac{\partial \log \Gamma(a)}{\partial a}$ is the Di gamma function.

To see the value of β for which $H_\beta(f)$ is large, consider $a = b = 1$. We have $H_\beta(f) = \frac{1}{\beta-1}$ and $H(f) = 1$. Hence, it can be inferred that for $\beta > 2$, the maximum information about the given density function is provided by β -class entropy and least information given by the Shannon entropy.

4 Evaluation of (α, β) - class entropy for the Gamma Distribution

In this section , we considered $f(y)$ to follow the Gamma distribution . We have used this distribution to show the importance of (α, β) -class entropy and have evaluated (α, β) -class for the Gamma distribution which has been stated and established in the form of a theorem as follows

Theorem 2: For the given density function $f(y)$, the (α, β) -class entropy defined as

$$H_{\alpha,\beta}(f) = \frac{1}{\beta - \alpha} \left[\int_y f^\alpha(y) dx - \int_y f^\beta(y) dy \right] ; \alpha \neq \beta; \alpha, \beta > 0$$

contains more information than information given by the Shannon's entropy and beta class entropy.

Proof:

Let $f(y)$ be the Gamma distribution with pdf given as

$$f(y) = \frac{b^a}{\Gamma(a)} e^{-by} y^{a-1}; \quad y > 0, \quad a, b > 0 \quad (4.1)$$

Therefore, the average information is given as

$$H_{\alpha,\beta}(f) = \frac{1}{\beta - \alpha} \left[\int_y f^\alpha(y) dy - \int_y f^\beta(y) dy \right] \quad (4.2)$$

Here,

$$\int_y f^\alpha(y) dy = \frac{(a-1)\Gamma\alpha(a-1)}{\Gamma(a)^\alpha} \frac{b^{\alpha-1}}{(\alpha)^{\alpha(a-1)}} \quad (4.3)$$

Similarly,

$$\int_y f^\beta(y) dy = \frac{(a-1)\Gamma\beta(a-1)}{\Gamma(a)^\beta} \frac{b^{\beta-1}}{(\beta)^{\beta(a-1)}} \quad (4.4)$$

Substituting (4.3) and (4.4) in equation (4.2) , we obtain the (α, β) -class entropy for the Gamma distribution as

$$H_{\alpha,\beta}(f) = \frac{1}{\beta - \alpha} \left[\frac{(a-1)\Gamma\alpha(a-1)}{\Gamma(a)^\alpha} \frac{b^{\alpha-1}}{(\alpha)^{\alpha(a-1)}} - \frac{(a-1)\Gamma\beta(a-1)}{\Gamma(a)^\beta} \frac{b^{\beta-1}}{(\beta)^{\beta(a-1)}} \right] \quad (4.5)$$

Particular cases :

Case 1:

Comparison of β -entropy, $(\alpha-\beta)$ entropy and Shannon entropy using Gamma Distribution

In case $\alpha = 1$, the equation (4.5) reduces to

$$H_{1,\beta}(f) = \frac{1}{(\beta-1)} \left[1 - \frac{(a-1)\Gamma\beta(a-1)}{\Gamma(a)^\beta} \frac{b^{\beta-1}}{(\beta)^{\beta(a-1)}} \right]$$

which is same as (4.3) and hence contains the same information as the β -class entropy. Therefore, it can be inferred from equation (4.5) that when $\alpha \neq \beta$, $0 < \alpha \leq 1$, $\beta > 1$ or $0 < \beta \leq 1$, $\alpha > 1$ for the given gamma distribution, (α, β) -class entropy $H_{\alpha,\beta}(f)$ contains more information than information given by the Shannon's entropy and β -class entropy. Hence, we conclude that the parametric generalized measures of entropy for a given probabilistic distribution are more advantageous than Shannon's entropy as these contain more information, with appropriate choice of parameters.

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Coherent study on cognizance about malaria among college/university students of Jammu District

Assadullah Sheikh*, Anil Pawar** and Shikha Bharti***

ABSTRACT

The present communication was designed to study cognizance about malaria among college/university students of Jammu district with respect to their changing attitude and behaviour. Questionnaire based survey was conducted, where 400 students (UG and PG) were selected, comprising equal number of males and females in age group of 18-23 years for the present study. The present study revealed that, overall knowledge about malaria among young students is below optimum. Majority of the participants were not aware about the exact cause of disease, symptoms, mode of transmission and had some misconceptions also. There was no significant difference in knowledge between males and females. Health education should be compulsory in all educational institutes to improve student awareness. Strengthening of the malaria awareness through media such as television, newspaper and social network is needed. The present work suggested the effective strategies and novel method is needed for the maintenance of accurate awareness among people.

Key Words: Malaria, Jammu district, Health Education and Awareness.

Introduction

Malaria is one of the most prevalent among all human infections. Despite the existence of many national and international control programs, the disease is very rampant in society. Malaria is an infectious and life threatening disease. It is caused by protozoan parasite of the genus Plasmodium. Mainly there are four species of Plasmodium- Plasmodium falciparum, Plasmodium malariae, Plasmodium ovale, Plasmodium vivax that affects humans. P. falciparum and P. vivax are the important species that increased the morbidity and mortality in humans (Hay et al., 2004). Malaria spreads through transfusion of blood, sharing needles or from infected mother to child (Murphy et al., 2012). Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease and hence it can be controlled at the level of both human and mosquito (Greenwood, 2008). Malaria is the major public health problem in tropical and subtropical countries of the world (Sharma et al., 2015). It is responsible for high morbidity and mortality in the tropics with 300500 million cases and 1.52.7 million deaths annually (Snow et al., 2005). Globally, about 3.4 billion people live in malaria risk areas (WHO, 2015). Malaria killed more than 600,000 individuals during the year 2010, mostly children and pregnant women (WHO, 2011), 627,000 deaths in the year 2012 which constitutes 90% from sub-Saharan Africa (WHO, 2013a). 438,000 deaths during the year 2015 (WHO, 2015) and during the year 2017, malaria affected about 219 million people and caused 435,000 deaths globally.

This disencumber of morbidity and mortality is a result of more than a century of global effort and research aimed at improving the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of malaria (WHO, 2018). The WHO report on malaria showed that it is difficult to achieve two crucial goals of a Global Technical Strategy for Malaria viz. reduction in mortality and morbidity by at least 40% by 2020 (WHO, 2017). Since 2010 (239 million cases), there has been a significant reduction in the burden of malaria but an

* Research Scholar, Department of Environmental Sciences, University of Jammu, Jammu, J&K, India

** Assistant Professor, Department of Zoology, DAV University Jalandhar, Punjab, India

*** Research Scholar, Department of Environmental Sciences, University of Jammu, Jammu, J&K, India

increase in the number of cases between 2015 (214 million cases) and 2017 (219 million cases) (Talapakote et al., 2019). The diagnosis of malaria involves the identification of malaria parasites or antigen in the patient blood. Malaria control can be affected through chemotherapy viz. quinine and chloroquine (Lalloo et al., 2007), vector control and effective anti-malarial vaccines. WHO's global technical strategy for malaria control and elimination is planned for the period 2016 to 2025, in addition to a global plan to control and eliminate *Plasmodium vivax* malaria (Makanga, 2014). Many countries are actively attempting to eliminate malaria and the leaders from East Asian Countries have declared their intention to eliminate malaria from their regions by 2030 (PAHO, 2013 and APLMA, 2014). In this backdrop an analytic cross sectional study was designed to check the awareness about malaria and personal health among the youth of Jammu city.

Materials and Methods

Purposive samples of 400 participants comprising equal number of males and females were recruited in the city of temples, Jammu (Fig.1). Participants were colleges/universities students (UG and PG) from different streams viz. arts, commerce and science, in the age group 18-23 years, and belonged to rural as well as urban areas. A questionnaire based survey was conducted among participants, with basic questions regarding the malaria disease as well as general practices leading to a healthy life to check their general awareness about malaria and personal health. The nature and purpose of the study was explained to the participants and their written consent was taken. Responses of participants on questionnaire were collected and analyzed statistically.

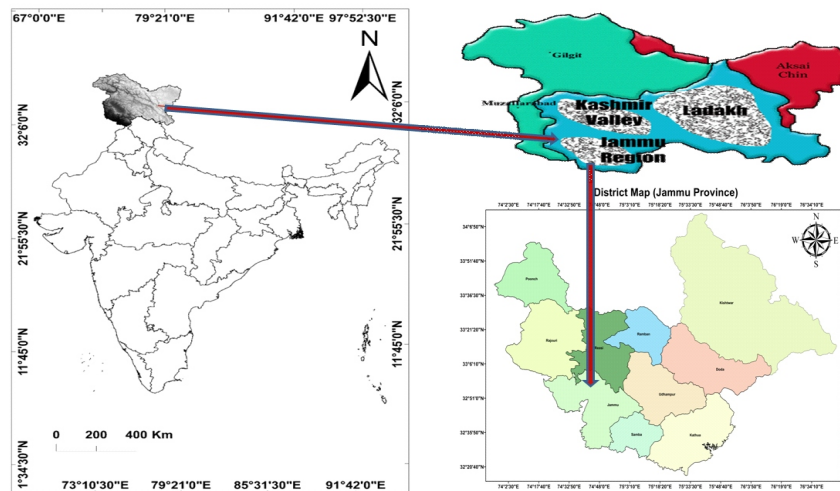


Fig. 1: Showing location of study area (Jammu District)

Results and Discussions

A number of health awareness programs are being conducted by many organizations, yet awareness about the disease among students is not enough as evident by various studies carried out nationally and internationally on malaria (Matta et al., 2012 and Vala et al., 2013).

Demographic profile

The demographic profile of the respondents (N=400) is shown in Table-1. The sample included

Coherent study on cognizance about malaria among college/university students of Jammu District

equal number of male and female students. Maximum participants (30%) were from age group of 21 years and minimum (8%) were from age group of 23 years. Undergraduate participants (70%) were more than that of postgraduates (30%). Students were from a Arts, commerce and science streams with highest respondents from science stream (40%) and lowest from commerce stream (26.5%). Participants were from rural (35%) as well as urban (65%) areas.

Table-1: Demographic profile of the respondents (N=400)

Demographic variable	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	200	50
Female	200	50
Age (in years)		
18	100	25
19	48	12
20	52	13
21	120	30
22	48	12
23	32	08
Education (year of study)		
Undergraduate		
1 st	72	18
2 nd	64	16
3 rd	144	36
Postgraduate		
1 st	64	16
2 nd	42	14
Education (Stream)		
Arts	134	33.5
Commerce	106	26.5
Science	160	40.0
Native place of living		
Rural	140	35
Urban	260	65

Knowledge about malaria

The present study demonstrates that although participants heard about malaria but most of them were not aware about the causative agent that is. Plasmodium parasite. Only $63.75 \pm 5.3\%$ participants were aware of the potential serious complications of cerebral malaria. Males (67.5%) and females (60%) were familiar with the term 'cerebral malaria' which is caused by *P. falciparum*. Cerebral malaria is responsible for about 90% of all deaths due to malaria worldwide. One should have the basic knowledge of malaria symptoms viz. chills, high fever, sweating, headache, nausea and vomiting, so that medical advice can be taken as soon as possible. During the present study it was found that only $42.25 \pm 7.4\%$ respondents knew about symptoms of malaria, the female students as compared to males seemed to be more familiar with malaria symptoms. Surprisingly, most of the students ($67.25 \pm 1.8\%$) revealed malaria as an ordinary disease; whereas, few participants ($21.5 \pm 1.4\%$) were aware of its deadly nature as if not treated properly may prove fatal (Fig. 2).

Malaria is transmitted by the female *Anopheles* mosquito, which acts as a primary host of Plasmodium. $96.5 \pm 2.1\%$ respondents were aware of the fact that malaria spreads by mosquitoes and $3.5 \pm 2.1\%$ respondents opined that malaria spreads by contaminated food and water. According to 13.5% female and 9% male participants, malaria is a communicable disease (Fig.2). Plasmodium being a parasite needs both humans and mosquitoes to reproduce. The malaria infection can last for years, so an infected person can keep infecting new mosquitoes for long time.

Awareness among people about the infectious diseases can play an important role in disease control and prevention. Lack of knowledge regarding infectious diseases contributes to low detection

rates, interruption of treatment and discrimination (Yin et al., 2013). Also the knowledge and awareness of diagnosis, treatment and prevention of malaria is very important to those who are infected or suspected (Dawson and Joof, 2005). Malaria can be controlled by the adoption of practicable long-term programmes.

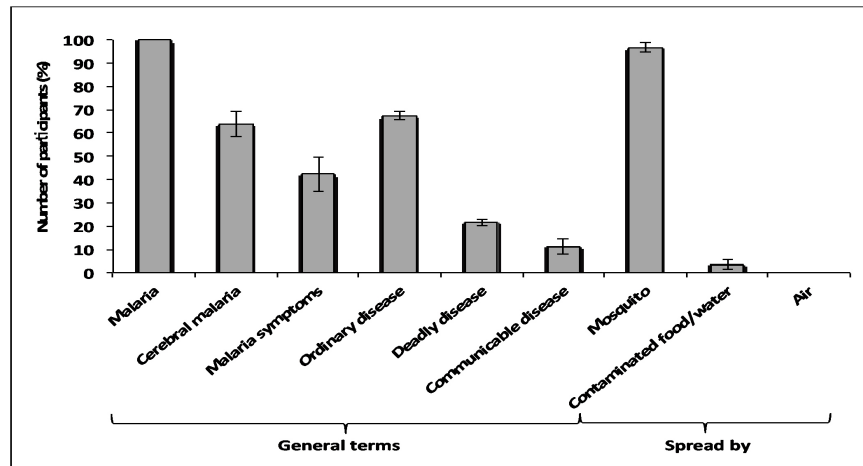


Fig. 2: Showing respondent number regarding awareness about malaria

Knowledge about mosquito vector

The study has revealed that respondents ($56.25 \pm 14.5\%$) correctly identified female *Anopheles* mosquito as the vector of malaria, with high percentage (66.5) from females and low from male participants (46%). Whereas, some respondents ($38.75 \pm 17.3\%$) opined that *Aedes* mosquito as the vector of malaria which is a vector of dengue fever. Only a handful of participants ($30.5 \pm 1.4\%$) were aware about the breeding site of mosquitoes (stagnant water) with high percentage (31.5) from females and low from male participants (29.5%). On the other hand, 14.5 \pm 2.1% students considered plants and vegetation as their breeding sites. Although there is no fix time for mosquitoes bite but it has been observed that they are most active during night ($53.0 \pm 1.45\%$), with high percentage (54) from males and low from females participants (52%) and evening hours ($33.25 \pm 2.5\%$) (Table-2).

Table-2: Gender based awareness regarding mosquito vectors, bite, breeding site and preventive measures among participants.

Terms	Number (n)		Percentage (%)	
	Male (200)	Female (200)	Male	Female
Mosquito vector				
Female <i>Anopheles</i>	92	133	46.0	66.5
<i>Aedes</i>	102	53	51.0	26.5
<i>Culex</i>	06	14	3.0	7.0
Breeding site of <i>Anopheles</i>				
Standing water	59	63	29.5	31.5
Plants/Vegetation	32	26	16.5	13.0
Garbage	09	11	4.5	5.5
Mosquito biting time				
Sun rise	18	21	9.0	10.5
Day time	11	05	5.5	2.5
Sun set	63	70	31.5	35.0
Night	108	104	54	52.0
Preventive measures				
Mosquito bed nets	20	25	10	12.5
Mosquito repellants	80	100	40	50
Smoke	10	15	5	7.5
Nothing	90	60	45	30

Preventive measures

In the absence of prompt diagnosis and effective treatment of malaria and uncontrolled growth of mosquito vectors, prevention is the best remedy to avoid malaria. The main preventive measures includes, use of bed nets, mosquito repellants and smoke. Smoke produced by burning of dried leaves of various plants like Eucalyptus and Azadirachta is used for protection against mosquitoes (Karunamoorthi et al. 2009). Unfortunately, about $37.5 \pm 10.6\%$ participants are not using any kind of preventive measure. Most of the people were aware about the fact that bed nets are effective in preventing malaria, but the usage of bed nets in their houses was very low ($11.25 \pm 1.76\%$). According to the present study, most of the people use mosquito repellants ($45 \pm 7\%$). As per gender difference, 40% male and 50% female participants prefer mosquito repellants. However, only 5% males and 7.5% females use smoke to avoid mosquitoes. The most common reason given for non-use of mosquito bed nets and other preventive measures was their belief that there were no mosquitoes in their houses and therefore there was a low risk of contracting malaria (Fig. 3)

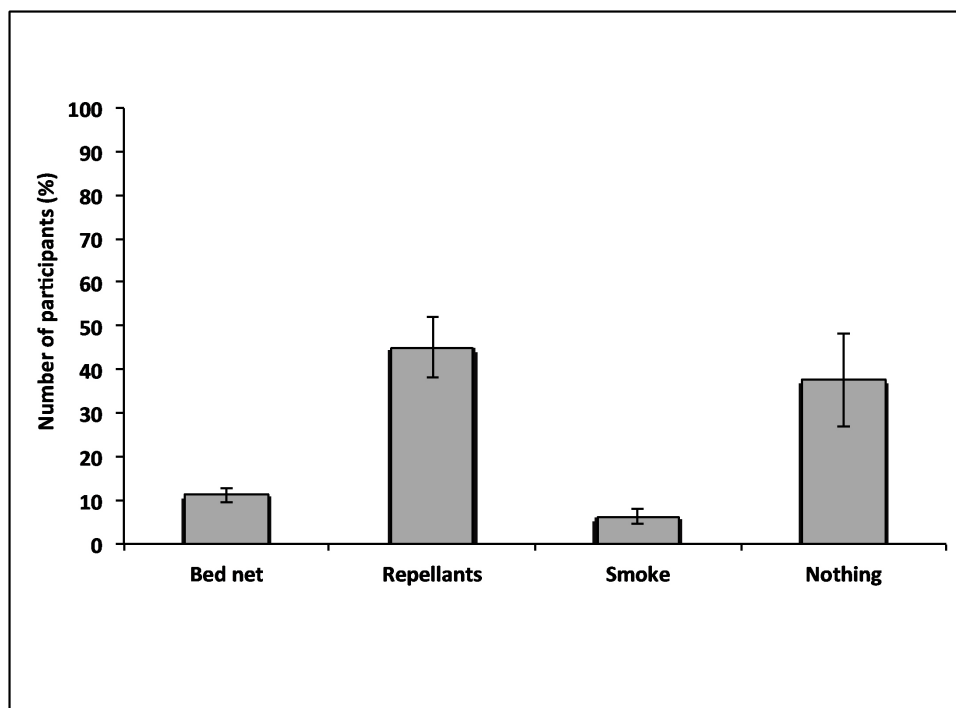


Fig. 3: Showing preventive measures used by respondents to avoid mosquito bites

Knowledge source

A variety of media sources are there in society which disseminate the information about various diseases and health related issues. In the present study, it was observed that students received information about malaria from one or more sources. The majority of the respondents had received disease information from health professionals ($34.5 \pm 6.36\%$) and Television ($30.5 \pm 0.70\%$). Among several interpersonal sources of information, ($22 \pm 2.82\%$) respondents had received information regarding malaria from family members and friends. Among media sources newspapers and magazines were also the sources of information for respondents ($25.5 \pm 14.84\%$). Newspaper was more popular source of information among males as compared to females (Fig. 4).

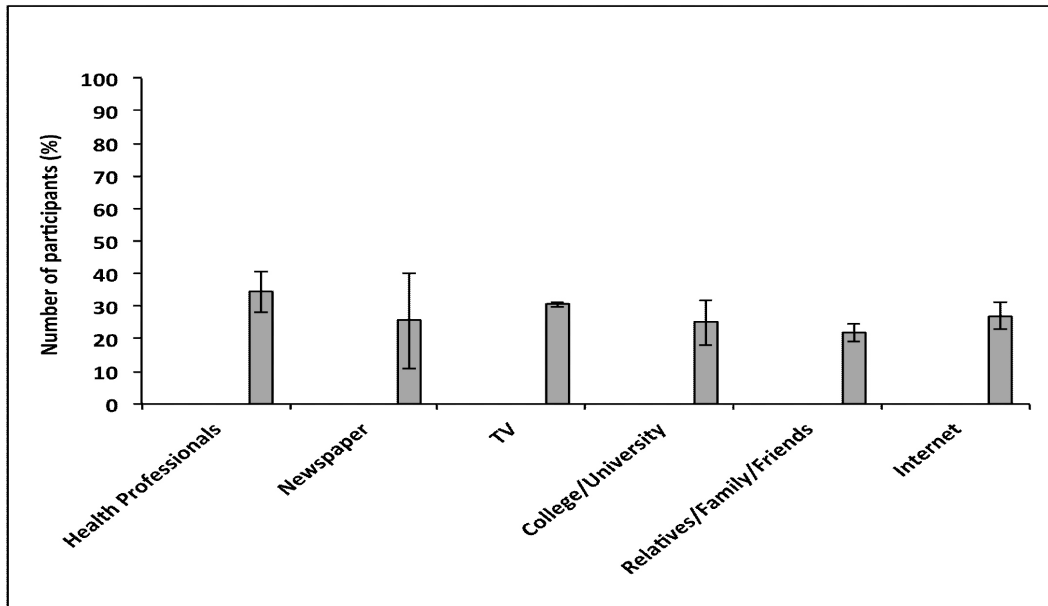


Fig. 4: Sources through which participants get information about malaria

Personal Health Awareness

General awareness about the health issues and practice of the methods leading to a healthy life-style is the key to avoid common infections. People should be made aware through newspapers, advertisement, radio and other programmes. Prevention of the disease through better knowledge and awareness is the appropriate way to keep disease away and remain healthy, as illness and health-seeking behavior may enhance or interfere with the effectiveness of control measures (Klein et al., 1995). In this study, general health awareness was checked among young students by taking information on different issues such as their feeding habits, physical work out and medical advice (Table-3).

Table-3: Gender based awareness among students about general health

Terms	Number (n)		Percentage (%)	
	Male (200)	Female (200)	Male	Female
<u>Consult physician for</u>				
Mild fever	20	30	10	15
Headache	30	50	15	25
Vomiting	20	20	10	10
Loss of appetite	08	10	04	05
<u>Feeding habits</u>				
Skip breakfast generally	86	120	43	60
Prefer junk food	110	140	55	70
Consume alcohol	70	22	35	11
<u>Physical exercise</u>				
Walk	120	90	60	45
Running	46	18	23	09
Heavy exercise	40	14	25	07

Coherent study on cognizance about malaria among college/university students of Jammu District

- i) **Consult Physician:** During the present study it was found that only a very small number of students take any medical advice on issues of mild fever ($12.5 \pm 3.5\%$), headache ($20.0 \pm 7.0\%$) and vomiting (10%). Surprisingly, very few males (4%) and females (5%) consulted physician in case of appetite loss. However, most of the students not visit doctor. Study showed that only during serious illness/mild fever and headache participants preferred to consult a physician ($12.5 \pm 3.5\%$) and ($20.0 \pm 7.0\%$) respectively (Fig. 5).
- ii) **Feeding habits:** Eating habits have been a major concern among students. Most of the respondents ($51 \pm 12.02\%$) skipped their breakfast regularly. According to study participants ($62.5 \pm 10.6\%$) preferred junk food, particularly females, due to its availability, convenience and taste. However ($23.0 \pm 16.97\%$) participants consume alcohol which is injurious to health, weakens the immune system and causes many problems (Fig. 5). Nutritional education among students needs to be encouraged. It is of great importance as it would dictate health behavior and prevent the spreading of disease.
- iii) **Physical exercise:** The role of regular physical exercise cannot be ignored when we talk about health issues. Regarding physical exercise $52.5 \pm 10.6\%$ participants preferred walking, whereas, only $16.0 \pm 9.8\%$ preferred regular running and responses regarding heavy exercise was low (Fig. 5).

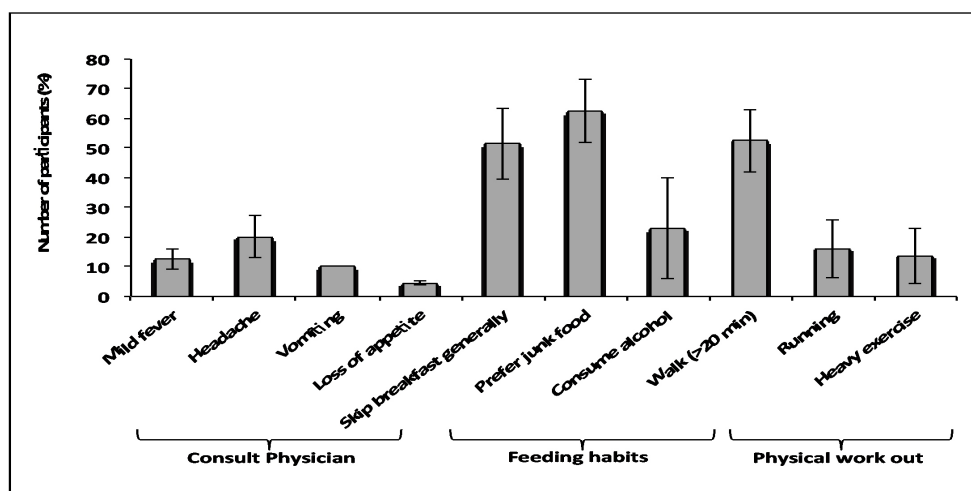


Fig. 5: Various health practices exhibited by study participants

Conclusion

Malaria is still uncontrolled due to non-availability of effective anti-malarial drugs, resistance acquired by parasite against available drugs and resistance acquired by mosquito vectors against insecticides. A number of health awareness programs are being conducted by many organizations, yet awareness about the disease among students is not enough as evident by various studies carried out nationally and internationally on malaria. Present study is an analytical cross sectional study in which general awareness about malaria and personal health was checked among college/university students of Jammu district.

Majority of the respondents opined that malaria is an ordinary disease and were not taking preventive measure. However, very few knew that it is a deadly disease. Although the participants knew that mosquito bite causes malaria, but only a few knew the mosquito vector name that is, female

Anopheles. Knowledge and practices towards malaria prevention and control among students was poor. Most of the participants were not aware about the exact cause of disease, symptoms, mode of transmission. Moreover, participants not even had enough information about the ways of healthy life style. So, a complete lack of comprehensive knowledge about disease and personal health was observed among young students despite available information media. So, there is a need to increase awareness among the youth for malaria elimination and other serious diseases.

Conclusively, the overall knowledge about malaria among young students is below optimum. There was no significant difference in knowledge between males and females. Health education should be compulsory in all educational institutes to improve students' awareness. There should be lectures by specialists on disease and personal health in schools and colleges. By educating college students about malaria, consequences and preventive aspects and latest facts about malaria, it is possible to make them ambassadors to create awareness and spread knowledge among their families, friends, relatives and in the community. Strengthening of the malaria awareness media such as television, newspaper and social network is needed. Also the search for better strategies and novel method is needed for the maintenance of accurate awareness among people.

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SOCIAL SCIENCES

Swami Dayanand Saraswati: His vision for a casteless society

Raj K. Mahajan*

ABSTRACT

Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati was a prominent socio-religious reformer who was critical of caste system and had a clear vision about forming a casteless society. He logically established the fact that since God is the creator of all, therefore, any doctrine which separate man from man must be discarded. He rejected birth based caste system and called it a social evil. This paper presents Swami Dayanand's vision for the casteless society. The present study is based on Dayanand's own writings such as books, pamphlets, letters, speeches, etc. English translation of these studies has been taken into consideration, however, where English translation is not available, the original book is followed. The English translation of Dayanand's magnum opus Satyarth Parkash (The Light of Truth) is widely quoted in the paper. Besides, his other books e.g. Sanskarvidi and Rigved Bhashya Bhumika are also referred. The other sources used are books, papers, articles, monographs and research theses written on Dayanand by researchers.

Key Words: Reformer, Society, Casteless, Caste System, Swami Dayanand

Introduction

Caste system has been a predominant feature of the Hindu society. It is so intricate and convoluted that it is difficult to understand its cobweb. It is rigid, segmental, hierarchical, discriminatory and exploitative. It is an institutionalized hegemony in which top of pyramid caste has immunity and exploits the lower castes. The immunity is provided by the socio-cultural and religious structure of the society. It is said that caste system in present form is originated in the post-Vedic period in which all the productive communities such as peasants, artisans, traders and labourers were systematically excluded (Mani, 2008, p. 54). On top of the caste hierarchy is Brahmins, the custodian of religion and perform the religious rites. The second place is given to Kshatriyas who are warriors and rulers. The Vaishyas are at third position and they are agriculturists, traders and cattle rears. On the bottom of hierarchy are Shudras or labourers.

A number of efforts are made in various periods by different movements to break the prevailing caste system in the society, but it is so deep rooted that its imprints are still continuing in the society. The concerted efforts were made by Buddhism, Jainism, Saints of Bhakti period, and later on in the nineteenth century to uproot this evil, however, a little success was achieved to break this fetter. There are prominent social reformers in nineteenth century such as Raja Rammohun Roy, Ishwar Chander Vidya Sagar, Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekanand, Jyotiroy Phule, and many others who believed that society should accept rational, humanistic and scientific approach to religion so that it should not become instrument of exploitation and discrimination of people. They opposed the discriminatory caste system prevalent in that period in the society.

* Chair Professor, Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati Chair, Central University of Jammu, Bangla Raya, Jammu, India

The broad objectives of this paper are as follows:

- i) To study briefly caste system in India.
- ii) To highlight the Brahmanical ways of making caste system rigid and discriminatory.
- iii) To illustrate the role of socio-religious and political movements against caste system.
- iv) To analyse the arguments of Dayanand to condemn the caste-based discrimination and his vision for establishing casteless society.

In this paper Varna is considered as class and caste is taken as Jaati. The social structure in ancient period was based on Vedic scriptures and considered to be the most efficient system of social division of society. It was based on Varna vayvastha or class system. Varna is division of society based on occupation. It was devised to classify a person on the basis of his virtues or attributes or characteristics. As a result, at that time, whole society was classified into four classes such as Brahmins or the divine class, Kshatriyas or ruling class, Vaishya or trading class and Shudra or the labour class. This system was though hierarchical but flexible. However, with the passage of time the system degenerated. The Varna of a person was decided on the basis of birth rather than qualities. This became his Jaati or caste. It was fixed with the birth of a person. The caste is hereditary, hierarchical and rigid. Swami Dayanand was of the opinion that the present caste system is not similar to the Varna system in Vedic period.

Caste System in India

There have been diverse opinions of the experts about the genesis of the caste system in India. However, no one has explained it efficiently and logically. There are scholars like Max Weber (1882), Ghurye (1961) and many more who are of the view that during Vedic period Varana system was prevailing. The division of the society was on the basis of Varana model, that is, the society was divided into Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, based on the virtues and skills of the people. These four Varans were conceived as a system of division of labour in the society. This division was though hierarchical but not hereditary. However, many other scholars such as Dutt (1931), Apte (1940), Kamble (1979), etc. were of this view that caste system did exist in the time of 'Rig Veda' and this system was not flexible but raised enough barriers.

During Brahmanical Period (1000 BC to 600 BC), "The Brahmin writers on law propounded a model of the caste system which placed them at the top and gave them the privilege of declaring the duties of other castes, including King", (Srinivasan, 2017, p. 5). Ambedkar (2001) also observed:

It is a system in which the different castes are placed in a vertical series one above the other. In the scheme of Manu (the mythical Indian lawgiver), the Brahmin is placed at the first rank; below him is the Kshatriya; below Kshatriya is the Vaishya; below Vaishya is the Sudra; and below Sudra is Ati-Sudra (the Untouchables). This system of rank and gradation is a permanent social relationship among the classes to be observed-to be enforced-at all times in all places and for all purposes. (p. 25)

Brahmins wrote *sutras*, *smiriti* and *purans* in which they formed a social order which people had to follow. These *shastras* prescribed duties of man from birth to death. They developed a code of social behaviour and relationship with the other castes. These developments made the caste system rigid and birth-based. They became successful in their efforts. Thus, they were successful in getting it sanction of the religion.

Abbe Dubois (1857) found that the caste system originated and developed in India because of Brahmins. They imposed severe social restrictions on non-Brahmins, especially on the Shudras, to

preserve their purity. Ghurye (1961) supported 'Brahmanical Theory' of caste. He believed that the role of Brahmins was vital in the origin of caste system in India. "The Brahmin literature classified as 'dwijas' (twice born) and 'ekjati' (Shudras). The restrictions on marriage, acceptance of food etc., contemplated only four classes in the society, came to be the characteristics of each and every well marked group." Finally the author says that, "the Caste in India is a 'Brahmanic' child of the Indo-Aryan Culture".

Brahmins were in minority. It seems that it was their compulsion to divide the society in such a way that they remained a dominant caste over other castes. Therefore, hereditary caste system suited them the most. They also devised ways and means to "enslave other than Brahmins mentally and psychologically by breaking their confidence in themselves by constantly underlining their worthlessness and base birth under the cloak of religion" (Mani, 2008, p. 50). In order to make caste inequality a doctrine, the Brahmins interpreted verses of the Vedas in such a way so that they could justify their act of division. New commentaries were written time to time to authenticate their claim. Though the message of Vedas is sublime, humanistic and secular, yet Brahmins interpreted that in such a manner that a 'pseudo religion was promoted in place to made caste division rigid.' (ibid, p. 52)

Brahmins considered the *Manusmriti* as the most important work after the Vedas. Therefore, it was said that whatever was prescribed in the *Manusmriti* should be accepted as true. They said, "What it (Manusmriti) implied was clear: there was nothing to look and think beyond the Manusmriti as it was to illuminate the entire dharma, the nature of good and bad karma as also the unalterable duties of all the four varans." In Manusmriti caste discrimination is evident. For example, "A Brahmin is a great God whether he is leaned or imbecile" and they should be respected in every way, even if they indulge in crime (IX.317, 19). Shudras are not entitled to education, to amass wealth, or bear arms; and a Brahmin can take away any possession from a shudra. It is generally quoted the following verse of Manusmriti (VIII. 417).

visrabdham brāhmaṇaḥ śūdrāḥ dravyopādānamācaret |
na hi tasyāsti kiṃ cit svaṃ bhartr̥hāryadhano hi saḥ || 417 ||

This verse is translated as: The Brāhmaṇa may confidently have recourse to seizing the goods of the Śūdra; as the latter has no property, and his property is meant to be seized by the master.

Brahmins used knowledge of Sanskrit to eulogise themselves by inventing beautiful titles such as *Acharya*, *Brahmjani*, *Upadhya*, *Pandit* etc. In order to downgrade Shudras, they were given negative titles such as *Malechh*, *Pishacha*, *Chandal*, etc. The Manusmriti (II.31) sternly instructs the Shudras to adopt names which should breed disgust, repulsion, and hatred. Most Brahmanical works, especially Dharamashastra, prescribe the respectful vocative terms which the Shudras must use to address Brahmins; and they also mention the derogatory terms in which the Brahmins was to address the Shudras. Manu says, "Speech is the Brahman, and with it he can slay his enemies." (XI.33) (Quoted from Mani, 2008, p.54). The Manusmriti gives every kind of rights and privileges to the Brahmins, whereas the Shudras and the out-caste (untouchables) have to suffer every kind of discrimination.

The rationalisation of hereditary of caste was given by Brahmins based on the doctrine of karma and theology. It is believed that the reincarnation process was such that after death the soul is reborn in a new body, human or animal. The new life depends upon the level of past karma. The Law of Karma can simply be stated as: As you sow, so shall you reap. Thus, a truly virtuous person from the Shudra caste could be rewarded with rebirth as a Brahmin in his/her next life.

The birth based rigid caste system has many disquiet features. First of all, it is hierarchical in

nature, that is, Brahmin is at the top and Shudras at the bottom of the pyramids. "...in between there are castes every one of which is at once above some castes and below some castes" (Ambedkar, 2001, p. 45). The second feature of the prevailing caste system is that there is inequality of rights and privileges of the different castes. The formula is very simple. The higher castes have more rights and privileges than those of lower castes. The third very disturbing feature is that higher castes are pure and bottom castes are polluted. Therefore, even the sight or touch of the lowest caste will pollute the persons of higher castes. Louis Dumont (1991) in his book *Homo hierarchicus* writes:

This opposition underlines hierarchy, which is the superiority of the pure to the impure: underlines separation because the pure and the impure must be kept separate and underlines the division of labour because pure and impure occupations must like-wise be separate. (p. 81)

Another irrational feature of the caste hierarchy was that there was prohibition of inter-caste marriage and inter-dining which emerged out of the purity and pollution of the members of the castes. Therefore, the institution of marriage was endogamous, that is, the marriage was allowed between the members of the same caste. Quoting Louis Dumont:

Thus at first sight, following most of the literature, the regulation of marriage is an expression of the principle of separation: castes separate themselves from one another by prohibiting marriage outside the group, just as they forbid contact and commensality between persons belonging to different groups. (p. 151)

Similarly there was restriction to the high caste people for sharing food and water with low castes.

Movements against Caste System in India

The prevailing caste system was opposed from time to time by social, religious and cultural movements in India. Most of the movements and persons spoke against the Brahmanical social order of the society. Teachings of Buddha, Kabir, Guru Nanak and many others opposed the caste system prevailing during their times.

During the times of Buddha (600 BC), though the caste system was not as rigid as it was in the later periods, yet he opposed the caste system. He was considered to be the first social reformer. In opposition to Brahmanical social order that a Shudra could not become a Brahmin, Buddha admitted so called low caste people to the rank of Bhikhu. In *Dharmapadda*, a booklet of the teachings of Buddha, he had stated that the purity and impurity cannot be caused by another man. "By oneself is evil left undone: by oneself is one purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself. No one purifies another." (D. P., XII, 9) Buddha's Sangha comprised of people from every caste and tribe. He said, "As the rivers have no names when they enter the ocean so it is of the Bikkus when they enter the Sangha." (Quoted from *Caste and Untouchability*) "Not by matted hair, not by lineage, not by caste does one become Brahmin. He is a Brahmin in whom there is truth and righteousness" (DP, XXVI, 393). Buddha did not believe in caste system and treated all human beings equally.

The saints of Bhakti movement such as Ramananda (1370-1440), a disciple of Ramanuja*, Kabir Dass, Namdev, Guru Nanak Dev etc. challenged caste system and questioned the superiority of Brahmins. Most of the saints of Bhakti Movements belonged to so called low castes. Kabir strongly criticised the deprivation of low caste by higher castes through his songs. Rabindernath Tagore (1915) translated Kabir's one of the poems as follows:

It is needless to ask of a saint the caste to which he belongs;
For the priest, the warrior, the tradesman, and all the thirty-six castes,
Alike are seeking for God.
It is but folly to ask what the caste of a saint may be;
The barber has sought God, the washer woman, and the carpenter-
Even Raidas was a seeker after God.
The Rishi Swapacha was a tanner by caste.
Hindus and Moslems alike have achieved that End,
Where remains no mark of distinction.

He was of the opinion that all human beings have been created by the same root of blood, therefore, the social difference between different persons is meaningless. Kabir attacked on the religious ceremonies determined by Brahmins. He also revolted against caste system and domination of the Brahmins in the society. He preached the doctrine that all men, high and low, were equal before God. He rallied to the cause of oppressed under Brahmanical domination. He said that a Sadhu should be recognised not by caste but by knowledge. (Hazari prasad Dwivedi, Kabir, p. 324). On the whole, Kabir's sociological beliefs and philosophical thoughts have had drastic impact on shaping modern Indian thought towards a harmonies society free of caste discrimination.

Guru Nanak Dev preached the message of non-discrimination and equality among different persons. During his wandering in India and abroad, he spread the message of peace and compassion. He has raised a very clear voice against caste, race and gender discrimination in Sri Guru Garanth Sahib. Gurus denounced the hierarchy of the caste system.

Do not be proud of your (higher) Jaati, you ignorant fool! So much disorder is created
by this pride. ||1|| pause

Everyone says there are four Varan (four social classes or castes - Brahmin, Kshatri,
Vaish, Shudar) but all emanate from God. ||2||

As potter shapes all sorts of vessels, so the entire universe is made of the same clay by
God. ||3||

The five elements join together, to make up the form of the human body. Who can say
which is less, and which has more (elements)? ||4|| (Sri Guru Garanth Sahib, 1127-
1128).

The casteism divided the society and weakened India. This may be one of the causes of subjugation under Turks, Mughals, Britishers, Portuguese and French. This was also one of the reasons of social backwardness of India. The rigid caste division obstructed the upwards mobility of the lower castes. As a result, lower castes had been meant only for menial, unskilled and low paying occupations for centuries. This obstructed the way of a particular caste to develop.

A non-Brahmin caste of relatively low status does not (or did not before the advent of books) imitate an idea of Brahminism nor it has general notions of secular prestige. For it the models of conduct are the castes higher than itself with which it is in the closet proximity. Properly speaking, we may not even speak of one caste intimating another but rather one local section of a caste imitating another local section. (Srinivasan, 2017, p. 14)

Shudras and untouchables were a large part of the total population and were excluded entirely

from the main stream. This had both social and economic impact on the development of the society. The neglect of the lower caste people was responsible for mass scale conversion into Christianity and Islam.

Exploitation of the Oppressed Castes Facilitated Conversion

The religious dictates and prevailing ideologies supported the actions of dominants that perpetuate ignorance, disunity, and lethargy among the suppressed (Mani, 2008: 14). The birth-based rigid caste system promoted oppression, exclusion and hatred to the Shudras and made their life hell. They were dispossessed of all the facilities which the dominant castes enjoyed. They were deprived socially, culturally, economically, educationally, religiously, spiritually and politically. "The shudras were supposed to be treated, on religious ground, as two footed beasts and bonded labours. Entitled only to work and produce, they were debarred from acquiring education, collecting wealth and carrying weapons" (ibid, 54). The boundaries among the castes were so strong that it was not possible to cross them. Though Shudras were not like serf or slave of the western world, but there condition was not better than that.

The exclusion of lower caste was exploited by other religions. They allured or used cohesive measures on the members of low caste people for conversion to other religions such as Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, etc. to get rid of their precarious situation. Aloysius (2000) points out that:

The profession of Christianity that God was the father of all, and that men, despite differences, are but brothers to each other, had obvious pull with the lower caste masses, who were often treated worse than cattle by the dominant castes. The missionary efforts in spreading literacy and their support in times of material crises, added the necessary existential dimension. (pp. 18-19)

The literature shows that the poor socio-economic condition and neglect of the depressed castes were responsible factors for conversion. The census data of Punjab and Delhi support that there was conversion in nineteenth century from Hinduism to other religions.

Table-1: Population of Punjab and Delhi by Religion 1881-1921

Year	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh	Christian
1881	9252295 (40.82)	11662434 (51.46)	1716114 (7.57)	33699 (0.15)
1891	10237700 (40.82)	12915643 (51.50)	1870481 (7.46)	53909 (0.21)
1901	10478721 (39.07)	14141122 (52.72)	2130987 (7.94)	71864 (0.27)
1911	8773621 (36.36)	12275477 (50.87)	2883729 (11.95)	199751 (0.83)
1921	9125202 (35.73)	12955341 (50.73)	3110060 (12.18)	346259 (1.36)

Source: Census, Punjab report 1891. P. 93; Census, Punjab report 1901. P. 169; Census, Punjab report 1911. P. 97; and Census, Punjab report, 1921. Pp. 34-42

The perusal of Table shows that India's religious population (Hindu and Sikhs) had been either stagnant or decreasing, whereas the population of non-Indian religions had increased. The main reason for the same was religious conversion. It forced the religious leaders and social reformers to think about it. They thought that there was a need to take pro-active steps to save the lower castes from the atrocities of upper castes which made them to convert from Hinduism to other religions.

In India, religion and social structure are organically inter-woven. "Caste hierarchy, sex

inequality, untouchability and social taboos flourished because of the sanction of religion" (Desai, 1989, pp. 285-6). Caste issue is mainly socio-religious in character, therefore, most of the reformers in nineteenth century took into consideration the religious and social reforms together. They established socio-religious institutions to reform the society which are still working. The prominent among them are Raja Rammohun Roy's Brahmo Samaj, Maharishi Dayanand's Arya Samaj, Vivekanand's Ramkrishnan Mission, Ranade's Prathana Samaj, Jyotirao Phule's Satyashodhak Samaj, etc. Most of the reformers and their institutions condemned the exploitative caste system.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) was one of the crusaders who fought against social and religious evils in the society. He established Arya Samaj movement as a protest against the superstitions of orthodox Hinduism and social evils such as casteism, sati, child marriage, pathetic condition of women, etc. He encouraged the people to have faith in the glory of the past and in the true Vedic religion. Three incidents in the life of Moolshankar (childhood name of Swami Dayanand) changed the course of his life. These events were, when he was of fourteen years old, on the day of Shivratri, everybody was observing fast and he saw a mouse eating the offering to the idol; the death of his younger sister and his uncle. They posed a number of questions before him regarding life, death, efficacy of rituals, God, etc. He was convinced that this world which is seen with naked eyes is not the reality. Infact the reality is beyond that. In this process of searching for the truth he left the house and went to so many places and met many people. Ultimately he was at the feet of his guru Swami Virjanand, a renowned grammarian and pundit of Vedas living in Mathura. After completing his education, the guru asked him for dakshina to eradicate social evils, preaching and practicing religion according to the Vedas and work for upliftment of the country and its people. Swami Dayanand Saraswati took vow accordingly. Henceforth, he never thought about his personal moksha. He started putting his efforts for liberating his countrymen from ignorance, superstitions, orthodoxy and social evils. He died on 30th October, 1883.

Dayanand's Vision about Casteless Society

Dayanand found that rigid caste hierarchy had been disintegrating and weakening India in general and Hindu society in particular. He urged regeneration of Hinduism through adherence to Vedic faith. His clarion call was to go back to Vedas and suggested to accept them because they cover whole truth (Dayanand, 1981, p. 96). He declared that social and religious reforms were needed to bring renaissance of early Hindu doctrines. In other words, Dayanand supported the social structure of the society based on the Vedic scriptures. He advocated that the society should be divided into four varans or classes i.e. based on occupation of the individuals as it was during the Vedic period. The basic idea was division of labour in the society. People who preached spiritual teachings to the society and lived spiritually were called Brahmins. Kshatriyas were the people ruling or governing class, protected the society against external attacks and maintained internal order. Vaishyas were the people who were agriculturist, businessmen, traders, etc. Shudras were the people engaged in services or serving class and doing the job of a cobbler, blacksmith, goldsmith, porter, etc.

The *Varna* system was fair and ensured that the religious, political, financial and physical powers were all separated into four different social classes. That is why ancient Indian society could not turn itself into a theocratic or autocratic society. *Varna vayvastha* or ancient social structure was different from the prevalent birth-based caste system. Dayanand condemned the birth-based caste system. He also condemned the division of castes into categories of pure and polluted castes. He rejected the religious validity of the caste taboos about food those were prevalent at that time among the Hindus. A Brahmin once told him that he had become polluted when he had taken food from a lower caste person. Dayanand answered, "...in fact I can eat the food of any man however humble he

may be, if it so pleases me" (Ghasiram, 1957, p. 245). He said that food become polluted only when cooked from ill gotten money (which brings unhappiness to the body or to somebody) or mixed with some impure substance. But it is not polluted when it was offered by any low caste person (*Sanskarvidhi*, pp. 108, 150-2). It is in this way Dayanand invalidated the both birth-based determination of caste and food taboos of Hindu castes as shown in shastras.

Many instances are recorded during this period when the Swami deliberately acted against the food taboos by accepting food from persons considered ritually impure; once he even invited a Muslim inside while he was having his meal. Although, as a sannyasi, he was, strictly speaking, above these rules, his radical attitude offended the orthodox. Later in life he would take very great care to avoid giving such offence." (Jorden, 1960, pp. 63-64)

Dayanand reiterated that perfect society can only be possible when the Varna classification is adopted. It is based on qualities and merits of an individual and would replace the caste division of the society based on birth. Sometime is asked how an individual would be allocated a class. He recommended that state was the best institution which would allocate a Varna after adjudging the qualities of a person. The procedure of allocation of Varna would be that state do it after due examination of the graduates from the schools. The Brahmins should be entrusted with ritual and the pursuit of knowledge, the Kshatriyas with government, the Vaishyas with the running of the economy, and the Shudras with service (Dayanand, 1981, pp. 94-5, 193).

Dayanand found that birth based caste system was responsible for succession in the society and inflicted miseries on a major portion of it. He attacked caste privileges and monopoly rights of the Brahmins in the sphere of religion. It was the main reason that the low caste people were forced to leave Hinduism. The caste system continued to survive throughout centuries because of the inertia of the so called upper castes. As a result, Hindu society became miserably unprogressive and notoriously backward. It was subdivided and fragmented by virtue of hereditary castes and sub-castes. Dayanand called this classification as unscientific, unvedic and pernicious (Upadhaya, 1955, p. 476). That is why Swami Dayanand strongly supported for a drastic change in the prevailing caste system; otherwise, it would be a threat to the unity and integrity of Hindus because it was not based on the principles of equality and liberty of individuals.

The religious people and Brahmins used to quote one verse of Purusha sukta's hymn 10.90 of the *Rigveda*, dedicated to Purusha, the "cosmic man" to justify that Brahmins were assigned a superior position than others even in the Vedas. Though the original Purusha suktha manthra occurs in *Rigveda*, it also occurs in *Vajaney Samhitha* of *Shukla Yajur Veda* and also with slight differences in *Sama Veda* as well as *Atharva Veda*. The verse is:

**Brahmanasya Mukham aseed. Bahu rajanya krutha.
Ooru tadasys yad vaisya. Padbhyo sudro aajayatha.**

(Rigveda 10.90.12, Yajurveda.31.11).

Generally, the verse is explained that the Brahmins were born out of the mouth of God, the Kshatriya out of His arms, the Vaishyas out of His thighs and the Shudras out of His feet. Therefore, just as a mouth cannot be an arm, similarly a Brahmins can never be a Kshatriyas. Brahmins took the meaning literally and inferred that caste was a divine creation.

Dayanand replied that the meaning of the verse was not literal. Since God is bodiless, He cannot have limbs such as mouth, arms etc. Therefore, the correct meaning of the verse is that in this world whoever is a man of knowledge and most excellent is similar to the mouth, is a Brahmin;

whoever has bodily power and warrior is a Kshatriyas, like bahu (arm); the part below the loin and above the knee is called uru (thigh); he who, with the help of his thighs goes abroad and trades is called the Vaishyas; and the Shudras, the servant, is similar to feet (Dayanand, 1981, p. 113). In this way he corrected the explanation of the verse and silenced the Brahmins who were wrongly explaining it.

Lala Lajpat Rai, freedom fighter and staunch devotee of Swamiji, considered caste as a political institution which has been used by the rulers to run administration smoothly. Caste division is not a religious or natural distinction, but, it suits to the rulers to divide the society into different professions. Lala Lajpat Rai (1915) was of the view that caste was considered to be:

...a political institution made by the rulers for the common good of society, and not a natural or religious distinction. It is not a natural distinction, for the four castes were not created by God as distinct species of men; but all men are of equal nature, of the same species, and brothers. It is not a religious institution, for the salvation of men and their fate in the other world does not depend on its observance. The castes are simply different professions or guilds (adhikaras), established by the state to guard against confusion and mutual interference, and for the better accomplishment of the different works. Each class was made up into a guild and furnished with its rights and privileges and made hereditary. But, as the whole classification is a creation of the state, any Shudra, who is deserving of the promotion, can be made by the state a Vaishya or Kshatriya or Brahman, if he qualifies himself for the work of the respective class. Likewise any Brahman, who deserves the degradation, can be made by the state a Shudra. In fact, any Brahman who is disqualified for his work becomes at once a Shudra de jure, and a Shudra, who qualifies for it, becomes at once a Brahman de jure; though neither can become so de facto also either by his own will or the will of others, as long as the state does not make him so. (pp. 45-46)

Dayanand was of the opinion that the children of non-Brahmin parents could be Brahmin. A child of non-Brahmin parent can only become Brahmin if he possesses the qualities of a Brahmin. He cited some example of the past in his support. For example, the Chhandogya Upanishad quoted the instance of sage Jabali who belonged to uncertain family and yet became a Brahmin. Similarly, according to the Mahabharata, Vishvamitra, belonging to a Kshatriyas family and sage Matanga, belonging to a very low chandala family, became Brahmins. Even now only that man was fit to be called a Brahmin who was learned and of good habits, and an ignorant man deserved to be called a Shudra. The same thing hold good even in future (Dayanand, 1981, 111). There are many examples existed in the Vedic history for change of varnas. Aitareya Rishi was son of a Dasyus (दस्यु) or criminal but became a Brahmin of highest order and wrote Aitareya Brahman and Aitarey Upanishad. Ailush Rishi was son of a Daasi, gambler and of low character. However, he researched on Rigveda and made several discoveries. Not only was he invited by Rishis but also made an Acharya. Satyakaam Jaabaal was son of a prostitute but became a Brahmin.

Dayanand believes that it is not necessary that children should follow all the attributes of his parents/grandparents. They should follow only good conduct, habits and traditions of parents/grandparents and not the bad. He asked that if a son of the poor man got rich, should he throw riches, because he was proud his parents' poverty? Should the son of a blind man pluck his eyes out, because his parents were blind? Should a son of evil-doer be evil-doer? Therefore, all people should follow the good deeds or virtues of their elders and not vices. Similarly, if a person born as Brahmins abandoned his duties which he had to perform, would you call him a Brahmin. Of course, not, he would

be condemned. Therefore, high born person doing lower level duties should be reckoned in low Varna and vice versa (Dayanand, 2001, pp. 97-98).

In order to deprive Shudras from reading of the Vedas, generally, Manusmriti and other religious books are quoted. Dayanand opposed this idea and established that all human beings without the distinction of class/caste and gender had a right to be educated and read the Vedas. He quoted from the second verse of 26th chapter of Yajurveda which stated that all men had equal right of reading and hearing the Vedas and other sacred books. The verse as well as its meaning is given as follows:

Yathemām vācam kalyānim āvadāni janebhyah;

Brahma-rājanyābhyām sūdrāya cāryāya ca svāya cāranāya.

This verse means that God Himself says that He has given equal right to all persons to read and preach His word (i.e. four Vedas) for the benefit of mankind. These are meant for the benefit of all including Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras and aranaya (lowliest). Dayanand asked: Should we obey God's instruction or of so called Brahmins or of those who wrongly interprets Vedas? Since God has given Vedas for all the classes including lowliest, therefore, all persons can get benefit by increasing their knowledge, quit bad habits and can remain happy. These are the God's instructions and anybody who defies them would be an atheist. Is God so partial that He permits the reading of the Vedas only to the twice born and not to Shudras? Had God designed to prohibit teaching in case of the Shudras? He should not have given them the tongue and ears. Just as God has made the earth, water, fire, air, the moon, the sun, corn and other objects for all, similarly he has revealed the Vedas to all. (Dayanand, 1981, p. 99)

Dayanand preferred education for all because it is a panacea for eradication of all social evils. He said that there was no hope of prosperity of the society and state without education. Education is a pre-condition of renaissance. It is necessary that the lower castes get education and skills so that they can be economically and socially empowered. Education is a universal remedy for eradicating social evils. Dayanand (1981) writes in Satyarth Parkash that it is the special duty of the king that all classes should get education. "If only Brahmins get education and Kshatriyas and others are debarred from it, then knowledge, righteousness, kingdom and prosperity cannot be increased" (p. 71). The education increases the rationality of people. The educated people can challenge the superstitions, orthodoxy and corrupt practices in the religion and society. A progressive society must accept rational, humanistic and scientific approach to religion so that it should not become instrument of exploitation and discrimination by upper castes or any other.

Dayanand observed that some sort of division of a society is required for the social and economic development. However, this division should be based on merit as there was varna vayvastha in Vedic period. It should be never based on rigid birth-based caste system. The basis of the social classification of society was that people at large are not equal in the capacity or aptitude of mind and body. There was a need to apply comparative advantage principle. The person who can do a job better than the other, the job must be assigned to the same. The persons of similar traits can be grouped together for better management. It is action or work or quality of a person which should be given immediate importance. It would help in progressing and developing a country. Therefore, this system must be kept intact by the society and state.

Dayanand was more considerate and kind to the lowest castes. For a crime, he recommended heavy punishment to upper caste people than the Shudra. In Satyarth Parkash in the sixth chapter of duties of state, he writes that in case a Brahmin commits a crime, he should be given very harsh

punishment. If a person is sensible and yet commits theft; his punishment is eight times of the theft if he is Shudra; sixteen times if he is Vaishya; twenty times if he is Kshatriyas; and if a Brahmin, he should be fined sixty four times, a hundred times and even a one hundred and twenty eight times. The punishment should be increased in direct proportion to the status of criminal (Dayanand, 1981, p. 209). This proves Dayanand's intention that Shudras must be given time and opportunity to improve and grow.

The critics point out that Dayanand and other reformers were condescend to speak about Shudras and had selfish motive. Their main motive was Hinduising Shudras and preventing them against converting their religion. This criticism may be a mere stretch of mind. If a higher caste person advocates for the upliftment and betterment of poor or low castes then it should not be taken as a condescend behaviour. Dayanand in his Magnum opus, Satyarth Parkash, not only strongly criticised the Brahmins who were opposing the improvement in the condition of Shudras but also advocated and stood by them for their education, reading the Vedas, equal rights, vertical movement in class hierarchy (after getting necessary virtues), etc.

Graham (1943, p. 386) criticised Dayanand that he did not want to overthrow the caste based society rather he suggested the introduction of a new caste system based on the merit of the person. This charge of Graham can easily be refuted with reference to Satyarth Parkash where he rejected the prevailing birth based caste system. Graham's second criticism was that 'Dayanand wanted to establish a new caste system on merit' has also no basis. Dayanand was actually in favour of re-establishing the Varna system as it was prevailing in the Vedic period which worked well and was time tested. Even Ambedkar writes that birth based caste system and untouchability was later on development in Hinduism. According to him:

...society is always composed of classes. It may be an exaggeration to assert the theory of class conflict, but existence of definite classes in a society is a fact. Their basis may differ. They may be economic or intellectual or social, but an individual in a society is always a member of a class. This is a universal fact and early Hindu society could not have been an exception to this rule, and, as a matter of fact, we know it was not. If we bear this generalization in mind, our study of the genesis of caste would be very much facilitated, for we have only to determine what was the class that first made itself into a caste? A Caste is an enclosed Class. (Quoted in AIR, 1993)

Conclusion

In the Vedic period the society was classified according to guna (qualities of people) or occupation or Varna. It was simply a division of labour among Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. This division was hierarchal, flexible and had occupational mobility. Later, this system was replaced by caste system which was both hierarchal and hereditary in character. Brahmins, being top on the hierarchy, exploited their situation in their own favour and they established their hegemony. They eulogised themselves with beautiful titles, whereas Shudras were given negative titles. Caste system, based on birth, was rigid and hindered the upward mobility of lower castes. As a result, a major portion of population comprises of Shudras and untouchables were excluded from the social system which impacted negatively to their social and economic condition. The exclusion was well exploited by other religions e.g. Buddhism, Islam and Christianity for conversion. They used fear (by empowered people), charity (by missionaries) and punishment (by rulers) to convert them to their fold.

In nineteenth century, the social and religious reformers such as Rammohun Roy, Keshab Chander Sen, Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekanand and many others tried to correct the

caste division in the society. Dayanand and his Arya Samaj opposed the prevailing birth based rigid caste system and advocated for establishing casteless society. Dayanand attacked on discrimination, inequality and exclusion of the lower castes. He challenged caste privileges and monopoly rights of Brahmins in religion. He criticised the misinterpretation of the Vedic verses for exploiting the people. He reinterpreted those verses in their right spirit. He refuted the idea that a Brahmin would always be Brahmin. He asked if a person born as Brahmin abandoned his duties which he had to perform, would you call him Brahmin. Rather he would be condemned. He established that all persons irrespective of class, caste and gender had a right to be educated and could read the Vedas.

After independence, the constitution of India was framed and enacted laws in such a way to take affirmative action to compensate the lower castes to discrimination. However, this solved the problem partially and benefitted limited number of people. There is need to be as radical as Maharishi Dayanand Sarswati for eliminating caste discrimination.

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ਸੰਤਨ ਜਾਤ ਨਾ ਪੂਛੋ ਨਿਰਗੁਨੀਯੋਂ ।
ਸਾਧ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਨ ਸਾਧ ਚੱਤਰੀ, ਸਾਧੈ ਜਾਤੀ ਬਨੀਯੋਂ ।
ਸਾਧਨਮਾਂ ਚੱਤੀਸ ਕੌਮ ਹੈ, ਟੇਢੀ ਤੋਰ ਪੁੱਛਨੀਯੋਂ ।
ਸਾਧੈ ਨਾਝੁ ਸਾਧੈ ਧੋਬੀ, ਸਾਧੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਹੈ ਬਰੀਯੋਂ ।
ਸਾਧਨਮਾਂ ਰੈਦਾਸ ਸੰਤ ਹੈ, ਸੁਪਚ ਭ੍ਰਾਤ੍ਰਿ ਸੋਂ ਭੰਗੀਯਾ ।
ਹਿੰਦੂ-ਤੁਰਕ ਦੁੜ੍ਹੀਂ ਦੀਨ ਬਨੇ ਹੈਂ, ਕਛੂ ਨਾ ਪਹਚਾਨੀਯੋਂ ॥

ਜਾਤਿਕਾ ਗਰਬੁ ਨ ਕਰਮੁਰਖ ਗਵਾਰਾ ॥ ਇਸੁ ਗਰਬੁ ਤੇ ਚਲਹੁ ਬਿਹਤੁ ਵਕਾਰਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥: (sggs 1127-1128).

ਚਹੁ ਵਰਨਾ ਵਚਿ ਜਾਗੈ ਕੇਇ ॥ ਜਮੈ ਕਾਲੈ ਤੇ ਛੂਟੈ ਸੇਇ ॥5॥ ਕਹਤ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਨੁ ਜਾਗੈ ਸੇਇ ॥ ਗਮਿਨ ਅੰਜਨੁ ਜਾ ਕੀ ਨੇਤ੍ਰੀ
ਹੋਇ ॥੬॥੨॥: (sggs 352).

Gandhi's Anathema of Western Democracy: An Alternative Partyless Democratic Paradigm

Arvind Kumar*

ABSTRACT

The paper seeks to analyze Gandhi's anathema of western democracy, his scathing critique of western civilization, his stand on the role of political parties and his alternative model of a decentralized polity. It will also attempt to find out whether Gandhi is just another idealist like Plato or his ideas still wield some relevance in the contemporary times. The paper will compare different strands of democratic theory existing in the western academia while focusing on the centrality of Gandhian principle of Non-Violent decentralized party less democracy. The paper has also attempted to bring together the Gandhian idea of a future Indian state scattered throughout his various writings. Gandhi has attempted to provide an alternative to the Parliamentary democracy, embedded in the indigenous traditions. As the western democracy works in the form of a pyramid where power is concentrated at the top, Gandhi's idea of democracy was based on autonomous village republics where power will flow from the grass roots and will attain the shape of a ripple. Gandhi considered centralization of power as violence so his Idea of decentralized polity is naturally a corollary of his principle of non-violence. Now we can see that the relevance of Gandhi's ideas has been questioned by various academicians and he has been touted as a Utopian thinker but on a deeper understanding of his thoughts one can construe that he basically represents a viable alternative to western democracy better suited to Indian conditions which could be further worked out.

Key Words: Decentralization, Indigenous Alternative, Pyramid, Democratic Theory, Non-Violence

Introduction

Gandhi, one of the most prolific thinkers, has written extensively on topics ranging from religion, morality, state and even on health care. But the most original contribution of Gandhi was the significance he attributed to ethics and morality in political life. Gandhi's ideas about politics were mainly rooted in religion and his principles of truth and non-violence. He also articulated an indigenous alternative model of state rooted in villages but his ideas of a future Indian state are not found to be clearly at one place and are scattered as passing references in his various books, speeches and letters. Due to his lack of any coherent ideology of state and his excessive stress on the moral and spiritual elements, he is regarded as an ideal or utopian thinker even by many of his contemporaries and seems to be lacking in relevance today after 71 years of his demise. But an exhaustive analysis and a deeper understanding of his various works studied in conjecture with the works of various other Gandhian thinkers may chart out his importance, especially in the contemporary times.

* Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, University of Jammu.

India and the West

The Indian national movement was not just a struggle for the political freedom of the country but was also accompanied with the social and economic reformation of the society and there developed various alternative conceptions of freedom during the national movement and about the nature of the future state in free India. So, one of the biggest challenges India faced at the time of her Independence in 1947 was about the choice of a political system for the future government of the country. Although association with the British colonial rule naturally pushed India to favor the western style of liberal democracy, but such a choice of democracy was not the result of any popular pressure from the masses and was the result of "political choice of an intellectual elite" led by the Congress(Khilnani, 2016, p. 34).

But on the contrary, to look towards the western type of parliamentary democracy for Gandhi meant to continue in the same direction India had taken under the British rule due to compulsion. Gandhi further denounces the western democracy as he feels the situation of England itself to be very pitiable and its Parliament which is considered to be the mother of Parliaments, Gandhi harshly calls it as a sterile woman and a prostitute. Gandhi calls it as sterile because it doesn't create something on its own and has to depend on the external pressure to take some progressive steps for the public good and the choice of the word prostitute according to Gandhi is accorded to the fact that, it is controlled by the ministers who keep on changing like some noble Lord but the mistress remains the same and works as per the whims of the current Lord(Gandhi, 1968).

Gandhi ascribes this pathetic condition of the western democracy to the very conception of his idea of the western civilization which Gandhi considers to be faulty as it heavily indulges in the bodily welfare as the ultimate goal of life and is devoid of any morality or religion. He in fact goes to the extent of not recognizing it as a civilization at all and calls it rather a disease which needs to be cured(Gandhi, 1968, pp. 118-120).

So, Gandhi appeals for the cultural hegemony of the west to be thrown away and to frisk the rich heritage of India for developing the indigenous institutions, which better suits her needs. But Gandhi while delving deeply into the Indian tradition carefully avoided the indigenous structures of monarchy or durbar and argued for the resurrection of the autonomous village republics. Gandhi was strictly against the centralization of power as it leads to violence and his idea of decentralized governance based on panchayats was naturally a corollary of his principle of non-violence as the decentralization would bring out voluntary good-will and cooperation among the people.

The village was Gandhi's basic unit of social organization. The panchayats would provide the structure of government in the villages and the economic needs of the village shall be fulfilled by the agriculture and the small-scale cottage industries. He envisaged a stateless and classless society, but his views upon the future government were not much systemized and thus his views about the nature of a future state could better be explored from the suggestions he made for the Congress constitution and his various disciples who advocated them in the Constituent Assembly(Austin, 2017, p. 35).

Though Gandhi was strongly opposed to western civilization, industrialization and reckless urbanization and based his idea of a future India in villages but he also advocated for basic reconstruction of villages. His conception of an ideal village could be traced from his reply to a villager of Bhirbhum who was inquisitive about the nature of village for Gandhi. Gandhi attached a great value to the sanitation and cleanliness in his model village and exhorted his disciples to be voluntary sweepers and contribute towards the cleaner surroundings thus containing the spread of various diseases. Gandhi also suggested some improvements in the cottages in terms of lighting and

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ventilation and the material to be used in their construction should also be from the immediate surroundings thus reducing the dependence on outside resources. There should be courtyards with the cottages for planting vegetables and housing the cattle, thus sustaining the villagers economically. As Gandhi placed a great importance on religion and morality so there should also be places of worship for all. There is also a provision of the common meeting place for discussing the matters of importance to the whole community, common grazing grounds, co-operative dairies, primary and secondary schools and a panchayat for the settlement of disputes. It should be able to produce its own food and clothing spun at home. Everyone should work to earn the bread labor (Guha, 2012, pp. 302-303).

Gandhi's Idea of Future Polity

Gandhi further laid down somewhat defined structure of the political authority for free India in 1946 in an interview in Harijan (weekly newspaper) on 28th July, 1946. Gandhi followed a bottom up approach and saw the masses as the ultimate source of sovereignty, so his independence meant the independence of the masses and not just of the elites to rule over them.

Gandhi envisaged every village to be an autonomous republic in itself with a panchayat having full powers to discuss all the important matters. So, for Gandhi, his ideal village is supposed to be self-sufficient and even able to stand alone against the whole world. The reconstructed and improved village thus will be prepared in such a way that it could defend itself from any misery which has its roots outside the village without any external support, though Gandhi doesn't rule out any voluntary help lend out from others. Gandhi denounces the western type of democracy for its formidable stress on the procedural elements of participation and contestation while ignoring the substantive element. Gandhi charges the western model of democracy with extreme elitism which works in the form of a pyramid where power is concentrated at the top and only a few significant individuals particularly belonging from the ruling party are in actuality wielding the power while the common people on whose name the whole system is sustained represent the mere bottom of that pyramid and are marginalized. The Gandhian model on the contrary represents a better alternative for a more substantive democracy. The power decentralized and devolved to the innumerable village panchayats makes the people the source of all the authority. It is the people actually who are the masters of such a state in true sense. He compares his model with the oceanic circles where the individual is at the center and no circle conflicting with the interest of other circle but rather complementing its role. Such empowerment of people will lead to the further democratization of democracy (Guha, 2012, pp. 304-305).

Though Gandhi was well aware of the practical problems in attaining his model and of the fact that he might be termed as just another Utopian but his stress was on developing some kind of a standard with reference to which the future polity of India could be thought of and a better indigenous viable alternative of the western democracy to be conceived in light of that standard only.

Gandhi even submitted two plans with regard to the Constitution of Congress in 1946 and 1948 respectively. The 1948 plan was more elaborate and was presented on the day of his assassination itself and thus is regarded as his testament. Gandhi in his testament suggested the dissolution of Congress as a political party because he considered the very institution of party as 'a propaganda vehicle and a parliamentary machine'. He rather wanted the Congress to turn itself into a social service organization being rooted into the pan-India network of Panchayats (Rajkumar, 1949, p. 145).

A Workable Constitution

The Gandhian idea of a future state was further worked out by one of his followers namely Shriman Narayan Agarwal and drafted into a coherent and systematic text called 'Gandhian

Constitution for Free India'. Gandhi even implicitly approved his scheme of the future polity by writing a foreword to his constitution. Though Gandhi claimed to have not gone through every single word of the text rigorously and found some ambiguities in his text which the writer altered on Gandhi's suggestions but in its overall spirit Gandhi found it nowhere to be inconsistent with the principles he stood for (Austin, 2017, p. 37).

Agarwal's constitution was structured primarily on Gandhi's stress on decentralization derived from its relation with the moral principle of non-violence. Like Gandhi, he also placed the village panchayat at the place of utmost importance and regarded it as the fundamental political unit. The panchayat thus envisaged by him will be based on elections where all the adults of a village have the right to vote for choosing its members. The panchayat will be having within its control basic administrative setup of the village along with the element of law and order, revenue and other developmental activities. There will be well defined hierarchy above the village panchayats. The Taluka and District panchayats will be placed just above the village panchayats and will be comprised of the Sarpanches of the lower panchayats. These bodies will be having advisory jurisdiction over the village panchayats. The members from all the Taluka and District panchayats will constitute the provincial panchayats and they will be electing a president among themselves to head the provincial government. The presidents of all such provincial panchayats, now also the head of the provincial governments taken together will constitute an All-India panchayat whose president is going to be the head of the state and the government as well which will be ministerial in character and will be having a jurisdiction over the issues having significant national importance, like defense, currency, communication etc. (Agarwal, 1946, p. 38).

Now, attention is drawn to the element of anarchism in Gandhi. Gandhi believed the very concept of state to be unnatural and just like Hobbes or Machiavelli argued for the necessity of state due to the intrinsic selfish and wicked nature of man. Gandhi although differs from these thinkers on account of his strong faith in the moral and compassionate nature of man and claims that what it actually needed to improve was the character reformation of the individual to bring about peace to the whole of the humanity.

Such a zeal for reform according to Gandhi will not flow from the government but from the individual level. Though Gandhians like Agarwal are in consonance with him that such a society might not need any government but still to save his theory from the stint of idealism he chose to write down a constitution for a minimalist state based upon the significance he attributes to the village republics.

Gandhian Discourse on Party

Like the western democracy, Gandhi was highly critical of the party system too. The Prime Ministers in parliamentary type of democracy are more concerned about their power rather than being truly thoughtful for the welfare of the people. Rather than ensuring the right conduct of the parliament what appeals them more are the avenues of success for their party in elections. The members of such a party vote in a concerted manner in favor of party on any fundamental issue even if it goes against their individual conscience. If a member is to make an exception in voting, he might be disqualified also. The party also resorts to the propaganda and shaping the public opinion in their favor by using various means of public communication (Gandhi, 1968, pp. 114-115).

The Gandhian aversion of political parties is further amplified in J. P. Narayan. He calls the party democracy as the leader's democracy rather than the people's democracy. He even goes to the extent of calling it a 'democratic oligarchy'. In a multi-party democracy like India, a party can claim victory even after attaining a minority of votes and is not the representative of all people in the true

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sense. Further, the party in power abuses the state machinery to strengthen its prospects to maintain the status quo. Another great evil of parliamentary democracy is demagoguery where leaders make false claims and promises only to mobilize the electoral support of the masses with no real intention to fulfil them even though it might prove fatal to the polity as a whole (Mohanty, 2007, pp. 400-402).

Relevance

Though Gandhian ideals might seem to be of least relevance today and may lack in charm which they represented around more than half a century ago but that's more attributed to the fact that they have been interpreted out of the context. The hegemony of the western democracy along with the imbibition of Nehruvian model of politics and economy have relegated Gandhi to the background and now his ideas of state find expression only in some intellectual circles and in academics.

But still, there are some good examples of application of his ideals even in the political history of India. Bhoodaan and Graamdaan movements started by Vinobha Bhave, who was highly inspired by Gandhi formidably succeeded in convincing the landlords to surrender the surplus land in favor of the landless farmers and tillers. The movement is significant to mention because it worked purely on Gandhian lines where the whole panchayats discussed the issue of land and convinced the landlords to voluntarily give away their land by invoking their conscience rather than the sanction of any force. This could be seen as the miniature of Gandhian model at work.

J. P. Narayan who was very close to Bhave and to Gandhi was inspired from the above movements and decided to make a Jivandaan in the service of the nation. In 1950s, he conducted a tour of the villages of Bihar to secure the land for the landless. In 1959, he published an article titled 'A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity' discussing the nuances of an alternative political model of democracy in India rooted in Gandhian ideal of panchayat. He presented a comprehensive model of a workable constitution consisting of institutions from Gram Sabha and Panchayat up to the Lok Sabha. Though his proposal was not taken seriously at that time but the 73rd and 74th amendment bills of 1990s which strengthened the panchayats up to a great extent owe their inspiration to this article (Guha, 2012, pp. 407-408).

Though Gandhi died in 1948 at the hands of an assassin but his ideas live. There was a severe debate in the constituent assembly over the complete implementation of a western model of parliamentary democracy and an indigenous model advised by Gandhi. The proponents of the western model dominated and the Gandhian ideals were just provided with a lip service in the form of Directive Principles of State Policy and the crippled institution of Panchayati Raj subjected to the state interference in its functioning and policy making and complete dependence in financial matters, but still the institution of Panchayati Raj flourished greatly since as much as 60,000 village panchayats, 7,500 panchayat samitis and 330 zila parishads had been established in the country by 1960s (Choudhary, Khosla & Mehta, 2017, p.563).

Further the 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts of 1992 strengthened the panchayats and brought some financial and procedural autonomy to the panchayats. These amendments were very helpful in bringing governance closer to the masses and providing them with better degree of self-governance while taking democracy closer to the grass roots. Their enormous success with more empowerment to people and accountability of the bureaucratic apparatus to the common masses highlights the relevance of Gandhian ideas of a decentralized polity in the contemporary times and its suitability to a country like India.

The present condition of Indian democracy where the issues like intolerance and communal hatred have become major concerns, the unbridled corruption in the institutions of party and the

vicious propaganda for the mobilization of votes of a particular community, the problem of unemployment paralyzing the whole body politic further proves the relevance of Gandhi's ideas and demands their reinterpretation and resurrection.

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Gandhi and the Caste Question: A Comparison with Ambedkar and Indian Left

Jai Bhawani Singh*

ABSTRACT

The paper attempts to compare different strands of Indian political spectrum while dealing with the issue of caste. Politically many methods and approaches were adopted by Indian political elite to address the caste issue. Right, Centre and Left, all are having different viewpoints on caste. Within these strands there exist diverse viewpoints. This paper seeks to analyse and compare the views of Gandhi on caste with that of Ambedkar and Indian Marxists. Gandhianism and Indian Marxism have treated the problem of Dalits using two categories - land and value. Not that these categories are exclusive but the emphasis of each school is different. Indian Marxism has always seen the problem of Dalit in terms of land and agrarian relationships. It basically defines the Dalit as a landless labourer. Hence, Communist peasant organizations tend to merge the issue of Dalit with the larger process of restructuring agrarian relationships. Thus, one needs to understand the reluctance of these organizations to launch an exclusive campaign per se against untouchability. Gandhi and Ambedkar look at the Dalit problem from the angle of value structure. This approach of dealing the Dalit question has considered the questions and issues related with caste as something which has to do with the value system of the Hindu society. Both these thinkers argue that the value system of Hindu system has gone terribly wrong which needs to be rectified. Gandhi developed and refined this model seeking to revolutionize the whole of Hindu society. He holds the mutual interdependence of Dalit and caste Hindu societies as crucial, which are organically linked with each other. Ambedkar emphasized the need for and creation of a new society based on the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity powered with a strong sense of dignity for every individual. For Ambedkar, the primary feature of a Dalit's identity is the loss of self-esteem and the humiliation associated with it. All other facets associated with Dalit identity are secondary. Ambedkar considered the existing Hindu Society as antithetical to the modern ideals of an egalitarian society. Thus, he denounced any sort of association or identification with the icon, symbols and values of Hinduism. Gandhi and Ambedkar confronted each other bitterly on the question of Dalits. This paper seeks to evaluate whether Gandhi and Ambedkar were really having different perceptions on the Dalit problem.

Key Words: Dalit, Marxism, Ambedkar, Gandhi, Humiliation and Untouchability.

Introduction

Many academicians have explored Mahatma Gandhi's stand on caste and Dalit emancipation. Most of them have analysed Gandhi's ideas on caste through his writings. This analysis of Gandhi's doctrine through his writings has led to immense criticism of his stand on caste. Gandhi has drawn the

* Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, University of Jammu, Jammu, India.

ire from Dalit and Left scholars on the issue of caste. Most of these scholars haven't delved deep into the spirit of Gandhi's philosophy. One can't understand the writings of Gandhi without taking his conduct and practices into consideration. Gandhi was one of those few theorists whose doctrine cannot be understood only by his writings. He was a man of action. He cannot be understood solely from his work. Gandhi had resorted more to 'action' than to 'words' for changing the lives and conditions of Indians. As Gandhi used to say many a times about himself

“What you do not get from my conduct, you will never get from my words... As a matter of fact, my writings should be cremated with my body...What I have done will endure, not what I have said or written...To understand what I say, one needs to understand my conduct...” (Gandhi R. , 2017)

However, this does not imply Gandhi's writings are not to be examined carefully or that his writings and conduct are contradictory or that Gandhi's writings are irrelevant in understanding his doctrine. It implies that some contradictions and inconsistencies which appear in Gandhi's writings should be resolved in the light of his conduct and practices. Definitely there are many inconsistencies present in the writings of Gandhi on caste. These inconsistencies could be seen in three different ways: as evidence of contradiction in thought, as an evolution over time in his thinking, or 'as constituting part of a strategy' that Gandhi employed 'to fight the caste system'. The critics of Gandhi from the Left and Dalit quarters accuse Gandhi of being 'defender of Brahmanical Order', Hindu conservative and what not. (Roy, 2014) Some critics of Gandhi actually try to demean the personality and stature of Gandhi as a social and political theorist by pointing out the serious inconsistencies present in his writings on the issue of caste. The paper attempts a rebuttal of the criticism drawn by the above-mentioned quarters. Gandhi's views though have evolved over time on caste, there existed a skilful strategy in Gandhi's mind to end caste system. Gandhi implemented a strategy for national freedom which is accepted by most scholars, even if they disagree with Gandhi's strategy. But what about caste? Were his verbal and written positions on caste questions mere ad hoc reactions to events, or part of a steadily pursued and coherent strategy?

Gandhi's Strategy against Caste

The first strategy on Gandhi's part was to create the image of his being an orthodox Hindu and to articulate his struggle against the caste system as being in continuity with the tradition. Gandhi wanted the excrescence to be removed but with the acceptance and support of the upper-caste Hindus. Thus, we find Gandhi asserting his identity as a sanatani Hindu, a genuine, orthodox Hindu, and not a social reformer adamant to alter or revolutionize Hindu society. He seemed to argue that he was a revivalist and a committed traditionalist who was trying to save Hinduism. It is evident from his course of struggle that he propagated every reform as an effort to save Hinduism and to purify varnashram. His second strategy was to gradually remove caste prejudices related to the notion of purity and pollution by educating the masses by practice and personal example. Thus, we find that Gandhi in all the four ashrams he established in South Africa and in India, never allowed the practice of untouchability and caste system. The first such ashram established in South Africa was Phoenix Settlement. It was established in 1904. According to Gandhi's own writings this ashram was meant for putting into practice the idea of simple living. It was also an effort to sustain Gandhi's journal Indian Opinion which was going through losses. This settlement reflected the diverseness and comprised of people belonging to various religions and races. It included people from different Hindu castes, Jews, Christians and Muslims. Work and labour to be done in this ashram was not divided according to the caste status of an individual. Gandhi made it a rule that every settler houses two or three boys belonging to different castes and religions to experience inter-dining. (Gandhi P. , 1957, p. 59) Even

the highly contentious issues of inter-dining and inter-caste marriages were allowed to happen in his ashrams. Gandhi advocated the abolition of these inhuman practices in his ashrams. Second Ashram which Gandhi established in South Africa was Tolstoy Farm. Its objective was to house the families of jailed satyagrahis. In this ashram also, there were Hindus of all castes, Muslims, Parsis and Christians. Food for all these people, coming from different social backgrounds, used to be cooked in the same single kitchen. Not only this, it was also mandatory that all of them should eat together. It was an obligation for every settler to do all types of work which included cooking, washing, cleaning, shaving and scavenging on rotational basis. (Tendulkar, 1960, pp. 117-20) Gandhi's first ashram in India was Satyagrah ashram, established in 1915 at Ahmedabad. Later it was shifted to the banks of river Sabarmati. That's why it is also known as Sabarmati Ashram. This ashram again included Hindus from all the castes (including an untouchable), Muslims, Parsis, Jews and Christians. Untouchability and caste distinctions of any kind was not practised in this ashram. (Thomson, 1993, p. 100) Another ashram named Sevagram ashram was established by Gandhi in late 1930s. This ashram was also not organised along the basic principles of varna or caste. Gandhi also arranged tanning classes where the skinners were taught improved methods and a variety of ways to use the flesh and bones of animals. This irked reactionary Hindus a lot. Gandhi encouraged local untouchables to participate in every activity of the ashram. Gandhi also allowed an untouchable to solemnize the wedding of a Brahmin and an untouchable woman in the ashram. (Thomson, 1993, p. 212) Thus, the conduct, action and practices of Gandhi in his personal life was contrary to the caste system and notion of untouchability. The third strategy adopted by Gandhi in his struggle against caste system was to salvage the dignity of manual labour. Gandhi considered the notions of purity, pollution and degraded status of manual labour in the minds of Hindus as false consciousness. According to Gandhi, these notions of false consciousness created the inhuman caste differences and hierarchies in the Hindu society. Gandhi believed that the division between manual labour and intellectual activities had created a false consciousness about caste hierarchies and differences in Hindu society. He argued that by restoring the dignity of manual labour, this false consciousness can be extinguished. His course of struggle reveals that in order to restore the dignity of manual labour, Gandhi, at the appropriate political opportunity, introduced charkha as a means to achieve real Swaraj. Gandhi believed that caste prejudices exist because upper caste people think that doing any sort of manual work is against the dignity of an upper caste person, as manual labour is for the lower caste people to do. Gandhi invented the use of charkha for attaining Swaraj as a means to demolish this belief. He persuaded the upper caste people to use charkha so that it could hit their caste prejudice against doing manual labour. He also tried to persuade the masses to learn sanitation and scavenging practices; the methods he used for this were the same argument, propaganda and personal example. Unlike other social reformers who advocated Sanskritization of lower castes as an instrument of ending caste system, Gandhi knew that this process of Sanskritization can't end caste system rather it would result in the expansion of Brahmanical hegemony. By adopting the values, customs and practices of the upper castes the lower caste would only imbibe the Brahmanical structures of exploitation. Thus, Gandhi rejected this so-called upward mobility through Sanskritization. He rejected it because it only promised a change in hierarchical position for particular castes or subsection of castes and failed to actually bring about any definitive structural changes within the caste system. On the other hand, Gandhi was asking every Hindu to be like a bhangi- the lowest among the low in the caste system- in thought, word and action. It was a very radical act. Gandhi hit on the very foundation of the Brahmanical hegemony which was created by the upper caste reform movements in the name of reforming Hindu society. He denounced and undermined the justification used to ensure the superiority of Brahmanism by pursuing this approach. It was in this unique and

innovative way that Gandhi attacked the very foundation of Hindu caste system and this was something which no other socio-religious reform movement did (Kolge, 2017, pp. 248-56). There were many limitations in Gandhi's strategy against caste. It failed to question, and eventually address, the highly unequal economic structure and the power equation between the upper caste Hindus and the untouchables created by the caste system. Gandhi failed to understand that caste system is not just a state of mind but also a turbulent political and economic arrangement. Also, Gandhi's evolving strategy for fighting the caste system failed to understand the roles that state and the process of modernization could play. Also, Gandhi's paternalistic sounding strategy demoralized the untouchables. Another important weakness of Gandhi's strategy was that in such a large and diverse country like India where the caste based prejudices are based on centuries old traditions, it is just not possible to eradicate caste system by using step-by-step method of personal example, argument, persuasion and propaganda.

Indian Marxism on Dalit Emancipation: Restructuring Agrarian Relationships

Indian Marxism has always seen the caste question in terms of land and agrarian relationships. For Indian Left, Dalit is basically the landless labourer. Judging from the reality of rural India, this mode of understanding the Dalit problem is really meaningful and vital. Hence, communist peasant organizations tend to merge the issue of Dalit with the larger process of restructuring agrarian relationships. (Nagaraj, 2012, p. 75) Against this background, one should understand the reluctance of these organizations to launch an exclusive campaign per se against untouchability. Such an understanding of caste and Dalit question fails to recognize the concrete local situations and historical change in conception about self(consciousness). Throughout the freedom struggle in India, the Left has considered the question of caste and untouchability as secondary while considering the 'Revolution' and 'Freedom' as the real primary issue of toiling Indian masses. For Left, the question of Dalit emancipation and caste hierarchies would get resolved once the real socialist freedom is achieved in India. Thus, there is no need for a separate movement against caste. During the freedom struggle, because of the reason that Ambedkar prioritized the emancipation of Dalits more than the independence of India, the Indian communists accused Ambedkar of playing into the hands of the Britishers. They used to denounce him as an 'opportunist', 'imperial stooge' and 'British agent'. Once E.M.S Namboodiripad wrote about the conflict between Ambedkar and the Left: "However, this was great blow to the freedom movement. For this led to the diversion of the peoples' attention from the objective of full independence to the mundane cause of the upliftment of Harijans [Untouchables]". (Namboodiripad & Menon, 1986, p. 93) Indian Left during the freedom struggle also criticized Gandhi for diverting the movement by launching day to day struggles against untouchability. To quote Namboodiripad: "

"...subordinated the struggle for Swaraj to the day-to-day activities for the upliftment of the depressed castes. What is more, Gandhi gave a moral(religious) character to this political approach... Thus, the Congress as well as its undisputed leader, Gandhi, which was engaged in a country-wide struggle with the objective of liberating India from the British rule, engrossed itself with the programme of liberating the Depressed Castes and other Hindus from the curse of untouchability from which the entire Hindu religious community had been suffering...A direct result of this was the weakening of the civil disobedience movement." (Namboodiripad & Menon, 1986, p. 94)

Gandhi's Ontological Conception of Society: Comparison with Ambedkar

For Gandhi as well as for Ambedkar the question of caste is the question of 'value'. It doesn't

mean that Ambedkar was unaware of the socio-economic aspect of caste, but when he says that caste system is not division of labour rather it is the division of labourers, by this he means to say that caste exists in the value system and psyche of Indians. They don't judge a person from the angle or approach of his economic status, but from the angle of his caste. This value system resulted in the socio-economic exploitation of lower caste people. Thus, primarily it's the value system of Indian's which is the main culprit according to Ambedkar. Both Gandhi and Ambedkar wanted to change the value structure of Hindu society for the emancipation of Dalits. Both advocated radical changes in the value system of Hindu society. For Gandhi the caste Hindu and Dalit societies are not mutually exclusive ones. Rather, they are based on mutual interdependence. Both caste Hindus and Dalits are organically linked with each other. Gandhi believed in the ontological unity between the 'Self' and the 'Other'. This was not something new which Gandhi was saying. It was foundational truth of the Vedanta philosophy which also got reflected during the Nirguna Bhakti movement. Vedanta and Nirguna Bhakti conception of being believes in Non-dualism. They don't distinguish the multiplicity and differences existing in the universe from the ultimate reality the universe, that is, God. They locate God in the universe and consider universe as immanent in the universe. Thus, there is no 'other' in the philosophy of Vedanta and Nirguna Bhakti. Similarly, Gandhi believed in this organic unity of the society. Thus, for Gandhi there cannot be change in 'myself' without a parallel change in the 'other'. The 'other' has to undergo through a process of transformation. Gandhi used to say that the upper caste Hindus should feel guilty for what they have done with the Dalits by practicing untouchability. And subsequently Gandhi turned this notion of historical guilt into a concrete model of action for the present. For Gandhi untouchability was a matter of new values and a new sensibility. He used to say many a time that untouchability is the greatest sin of caste Hindu society. Hence, he proposed an agonizing process of internal purification wherein lies the only path of salvation for Indian society.

Gandhi and Ambedkar confronted each other bitterly on the question of Dalits. Ambedkar stressed upon the establishment of a new society whose very foundations encompassed the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity where the dignity of every individual is equally respected. He believed that although like everybody else, Dalits also have various dimensions associated with their personality but the primary dimension and facet associated with the personality of Dalit is humiliation. Thus, he used to say that Dalit is a humiliated man. (Nagaraj, 2012, p. 78) Ambedkar viewed Hindu society as stagnant and parochial which needs to undergo a radical transformation to meet the ideals of a modern egalitarian society. That's why he denounced any association with the icons, symbols and values of Hinduism. Ambedkar represents somewhat western mode for Dalit emancipation. He sounds closer to militant socialist methods of western variety. (Nagaraj, 2012, p. 78) What is crucial is the internal strength of a caste or class, and that caste or class stratification should organize 'for itself'. The greater the militancy, the greater the possibility of realizing its goal. So, unlike Gandhi, Ambedkar didn't recognise the strength of the way of interaction with the 'other'. In fact, he denounced this Gandhian path by saying that it will lead to further impoverishment of Dalits. This path of an inevitable clinging to the 'other' was not favoured by Ambedkar. He propagated the militancy of Dalit society and movement and used to believe that this militancy could force the caste Hindus to come to senses. The inbuilt militancy of this path has naturally attracted the angry youth among the Dalits. (Kolge, 2017, p. 79) So, today it is Ambedkar who has become the rallying point for the lower castes, while Gandhi is seen as a pious, politically useless sadhu or holy man.

Differences of Approach on the Issue of Caste between Gandhi and Ambedkar

For Gandhi, the caste system had created a false consciousness of caste differences and hierarchies and this has not only led to the brutalization of the untouchables but has also dehumanized

the upper-caste Hindus. For him the upper caste Hindus were as much victims of the caste system as the untouchables: and in order to get rid of the caste system, it was equally necessary for every individual, irrespective of the caste, to overcome caste prejudices. According to Gandhi, in order to overcome this false consciousness, it was necessary and important to find out how it was created and justified. (Kolge, 2017, pp. 234-37) According to him, this false consciousness of caste prejudices was created and justified with the help of the notion of purity and pollution and by the degradation of manual labour. Ambedkar on the other hand did acknowledge the fact that in order to become a better human being it was important for the caste Hindus to abandon the caste prejudices, but he differed from Gandhi's view of considering caste Hindus as much victims of caste system as were untouchables. Also, Ambedkar didn't accept that just by removing the notion of purity and pollution, the centuries old caste system could be abolished. For Ambedkar, Gandhi's analysis of caste system was shallow in the sense that caste differences and hierarchies are not just one's state of mind or false consciousness that can be abolished by removing caste prejudices from the minds of Hindus. For Ambedkar, the caste differences and hierarchies were real; in Hindu society, wealth, political power, knowledge, and other real as well as symbolic sources of higher status were apportioned according to caste hierarchies and differences. Even if it were accepted that caste hierarchies were based on the false notions of pollution and purity, they couldn't be abolished by removing these notions. According to Ambedkar these caste hierarchies and differences seem rational and consistent to those who live in this system of pollution and purity. They derive its legitimacy and justification from the religious authorities and texts, that is, Hindu Shastras. Thus, to quote Ambedkar, "The Hindus doesn't observe caste because they are human or wrongheaded. They observe caste because they are deeply religious". (Ambedkar, 2010, p. 216) According to Ambedkar the real remedy of the caste system is to destroy the sanctity of the Hindu Shastras. Therefore, for Ambedkar the real remedy of caste system was to abolish the society based on Hindu Scriptures and recreation of a new society based on the French principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. Gandhi though a sceptic on the issue of sanctity of Shastras didn't advocate the destruction of Hindu Shastras. He was of the opinion that religion is the fountainhead of morality and masses observe moral conduct because of the religious sanctions. Thus, to enforce moral values among the people it is necessary that religion should occupy a proper space in the social life. He considered the destruction of Hindu Shastras as a way forward towards amoral society, which could be dangerous for the humanity. Also, there was a pragmatic decision of Gandhi not to attack the Hindu Shastras, which could have resulted in the interpretation of his movement against untouchability as an attack on Hindus and Hindu religion. This could have marginalized his movement against caste hierarchies, and could have rendered it unpopular. This, in turn, would make difficult the removal of false consciousness of caste from the minds of Hindus.

Another point of disagreement between Gandhi and Ambedkar on the issue of caste was that Gandhi emphasized the responsibility of the society and the community for the abolition of untouchability and caste system, whereas for Ambedkar it was the state sponsored constitutional protections and safeguards for the socially and educationally backward, economically subservient, and culturally oppressed Dalits, which could facilitate the upward mobility of the Dalits. In Ambedkar's scheme of thought, the state has to play a major role in abolishing caste differences and hierarchies by safeguarding the interests of the untouchables. Gandhi on the other hand considered state to be as dangerous as the caste system in destroying the autonomy of the individual. He believed that the 'state does the greatest harm to the mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the roots of all progress'. (Gandhi M. , Interview to Nirmal Kumar Bose, 1965, p. 319) He was of the opinion that the best way was one which tried to appeal to the conscience of the individual as well as that of the

community, rather than one which was dependent on some external agency like state. To him, state was nothing more than concentrated and organized violence. It was with a lot of hesitation that he was ready to accept it as an instrument for maintaining law and order. But he could not accept it as an agency to bring about revolutionary changes in the lives of human beings and society.

Since for Gandhi, the individual or the community concerned was the real agency to bring about social reform in any society, he believed that the most appropriate method of reform was the one that laid stress on the unity of human beings, minimized differences, and sought consensus among different parties concerned. This was also why he held that any method which tried to create a separate cultural, religious, or political identity for the untouchables would ultimately fail to abolish caste differences and hierarchies. This was the reason why Gandhi opposed separate electorates for the Dalits and Ambedkar's call of changing the religion to the Dalits. Gandhi didn't believe that it was necessary to create a new and separate identity of the Dalits. He was of the opinion that by creating a sense of fellowship among the different caste groups one can abolish caste-based differences and hierarchies. For Ambedkar his primary objective during the second phase of his anti-caste movement was 'liberation from Hinduism and not reform of Hinduism'. (Pantham, 2009, p. 189) Ambedkar believed that Gandhi's method would help the upper caste Hindus to justify their claim to majority; this would lead to their enjoying a larger share in political power after the withdrawal of the British from the country. Ambedkar feared that this political power in the hands of the upper castes would only increase the hardships of the untouchables. Ambedkar, therefore, believed that in the prevailing political scenario, the untouchables would benefit better if they projected themselves as a separate minority community to claim more advantages from the state. Ambedkar believed that the process of new identity creation for the untouchables must work in two directions: first, in the direction of creating a separate socio-religious identity by conversion of religion; and second, in the direction of creating a separate political identity by projecting the untouchables as an exploited, marginalized minority community. He believed religious conversion would help them overcome the social stigma attached with their caste identity, hence ensuring social equality. On the other hand, a separate political identity would help them safeguard their political and economic interests, which was essential for their overall development. Gandhi was against this sort of religious conversion and the creation of a separate political community. About conversion Gandhi wrote: 'I am against conversion whether it is known as shuddhi by the Hindus, tabligh by the Muslims or proselytizing by the Christians. Conversion is a heart-process known only to and by God. It must be left to itself'. (Gandhi M. , Shradhanand Memorial, 6 January 1927, 1965) Ambedkar was a votary of modernization in India. He believed it could modernize the Hindu mind by eradicating the centuries old caste based prejudices which exists in the Hindu mind. Gandhi rejected this idea because he could not agree with the idea that modernization ultimately brings hope for human emancipation by transforming traditional social structures. He argued that modernity carries with it its own forms of inequality, domination and exploitation. Gandhi didn't believe that the imposition of science and technology by any authority would necessarily bring about fundamental changes in the conscience of any individual or society, or even notional changes in their lives.

Gandhi's Continuing Relevance on the Question of Caste

Gandhi's evolving strategy against caste was that though it was very slow, it didn't bring upper-caste Hindus and the untouchable into direct confrontation with each other. On the other hand, it was designed in such a way that it minimized the differences between them. Thus, Gandhi's strategy is very relevant because it tries to maintain the unity of Indian society. Given the prevailing enmity among different sections of the society about the policies of reservation and compensatory discrimination,

Gandhi is very relevant today. Another important merit of Gandhi's strategy was that it helped undermine the prejudices of caste differences and hierarchies present in the Hindu society, something that the other contemporary methods failed to do. Though Ambedkar's anti-caste movement had many merits, it also failed to undermine the caste prejudices present in the Hindu society. Ambedkar's methods that focussed on creating a separate identity for the untouchables as a suppressed minority widened the differences and gap between the upper-caste Hindus and the untouchables. Gandhian strategy on the other hand gradually educated the upper caste Hindus to abandon their beliefs and practices that were based on the notion of purity and pollution. Thus, Gandhi's stand on caste which attacks the prejudices at their very root, remains very much relevant today.

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BUSINESS STUDIES

Empirical Assessment of Job Stress, Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention among Call Centre Employees- A Study of NCR Region

Vivek Sharma* and Ajay Kumar Chalotra**

ABSTRACT

Call centers being one of the fastest-growing areas of employment across the globe have emerged as a valuable form of service provider both in domestic and transnational contexts. Thus, their relative importance in organizational effectiveness has generated the need for investigation of processes related to the human component in this work environment. The present research aims to examine the impact of job stress on job satisfaction among Call Center employees and further evaluation of the impact of satisfaction on turnover intention. Quantitative research tools were applied using the questionnaire method coupled with the available literature on job stress, job satisfaction and turnover intention among Call Centers employees. The research indicated that higher levels of stress, odd working conditions, family conflict and organizational work environment negatively correlated with employee satisfaction and turnover intention among the Call Center employees. Further, various other issues such as lack of confidence, sleep disturbance and poor concentration prevailed among them. The findings of this research contribute towards the formulation of the policy framework for employees and managers to transform the Call Centers into customer contact centers by taking good care of Call Center employees thus ensuring a higher level of job satisfaction and low turnover intention among them.

Key Words: Call Centers, Job Stress, Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention.

Introduction

Call Centers being one of the fastest-growing areas of employment across the globe have emerged as a valuable form of service provider both in domestic and transnational contexts and thus serve as a primary customer-facing channel for many firms in different types of industries but it is frequently asserted that they are invariably a modern form of sweatshop or dark satanic mill, with low pay, poor working conditions and highly flexible working time. However, with enhanced telecommunication and information technology, the operational challenges faced by Call Center managers have become more complicated (Gans, Koole & Mandelbaum, 2003) as a result Call Center employees frequently feel stress when they cannot meet up the environmental aspect and feel misfit within themselves coupled with an increasing rate of psychosomatic and mental disorders, annoyance and irritation with life, which in general, reflect their high-stress level. Further, ever-demanding nature of the job, ever-increasing needs and ambitions, extensive change in their way of life and physical and socio-cultural environment of the society coupled with pressures of meeting deadlines, uncertain future and weakened social support system create negative state of mind with which employees are unable to cope that create stress among the them. Further, increased job stress leads to job dissatisfaction and also lower the motivation level among the employees as a result this issue requires thorough investigation to assess the root cause which hinders satisfaction. To address

* Assistant Professor, Department of Lifelong Learning, University of Jammu, Jammu, India

* Lecturer, SPMR College of Commerce, Cluster University of Jammu, India

this issue, the present study aims to suggest the possible framework for enhancing job satisfaction and minimize turnover intention among the Call Center employees.

Review of Literature

Job Stress

Stress has become an important issue in recent times and is unavoidable in the present competitive environment (Chauhan & Chauhan, 2005) whereas job stress is an individual's reaction to the characteristics of the work environment that seem emotionally and physically threatening (Jamal, 2005). Employees who experience a high level of job stress are more likely to be unhealthy, poorly motivated, less productive and less safe at work; as a result, their organizations also are less likely to succeed in a competitive environment. Work stress can come from a variety of sources and affect people in different ways as it is the mind-set up of a person that decides to what amount a person can face stress and how effectively he copes with it. Job stress is an important issue that is exclusively considered by organizational behaviour experts and should be managed on priority as its poor management can negatively impact the employees, individuals and organization. Job stress is a common problem that threatens the persons by affecting their physical as well as mental health and damaging their wellbeing which in turn negatively influences business performance (Akintayo, 2012). It is negatively related to health, employee's performance and employee productivity, but can also increase an employee's optimal performance. When the stress level is excessively high, the worker will experience pain, excessive fatigue and suffer exhaustion resulting in lesser performance than optimal level and when the stress is at a medium level, the employee will be more excited, focused as well as motivated to complete the task which shows an optimal level of performance as Job stress is positively related with numerous psychological factors such as anxiety, exhaustion, depression, poor concentration and physical factors such as increased heartbeat rate, blood pressure, musculoskeletal pains and cardiovascular diseases.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which the job fulfills one's dominant needs and values, and is the effective orientation of individuals towards work roles that they are currently occupying. Job satisfaction is a mixture of enjoyable and positive emotional situations resulting from the opinion of one's job experiences (Locke, 1976; Luthans, 2005) Job satisfaction is widely acknowledged as one of the finest cause of intentions to quit (Kudo et al., 2006). It is also considered as a significant indicator of individuals as well as organizational functioning which is influenced by various factors that cause a feeling of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction also represents a mixture of both positive and negative feelings that workers have towards their work. It represents the amount to which expectations match with the actual awards. Job satisfaction is directly linked to the person's behavior at the workplace (Saari & Judge, 2004). It includes autonomy, transformational leadership, collaboration, job stress, group cohesion and self-efficacy (Coomber & Barriball, 2007).

Turnover intention

Turnover intention (TI) is an employee's likelihood of leaving the organization to which he or she belongs. Tett and Meyer (1993) defined it as a conscious willfulness to low performance and the intention to leave the job (Applebaum et al., 2010). Research indicates that, the greater the amount of stress, the higher the turnover intention of employees (Chen et al., 2010; Applebaum et al., 2010). Turnover intention is the plan of the employees to leave their jobs. The employees leave the organization to search new opportunities as either willingly or unwillingly which becomes a reason for

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the addition of cost either direct or indirect. Direct cost comprises recruitment, selection and replacement and to deal with the provisional staff as well as time management issues. While, indirect cost is more important cost than the direct cost since it affects the morale of the staff and puts forth pressure on them which ultimately affects the quality related to product and services (Mahdi et al., 2012). Turnover is always seen with a cause but it has been usually seen where there was discrimination, discouragement, de-motivation, or a lesser amount of salary factor. In other cases employee's complaints get neglected and little or no flexibilities are allowed for a work which makes the workers uncomfortable making them feel to quit the job (Beecroft et al., 2008). However, there are cases where the workers are substituted with the other workers with an explanation that new workers can be a better performer than the previous one, but at the end of the particular year when the worker turnover is calculated, organizations have to face a loss of recruitment costs, costs operations and some other losses which becomes the center of attention for the business organization itself. Therefore, turnover intention has been a critical issue for management from many years (Chen, et al., 2010) and is a major problem for organizations.

Objectives

- 1) To study the level of job satisfaction among employees working in Call Centers.
- 2) To find out the major problems faced by call center employees.
- 3) To assess the impact of job satisfaction on turnover intention.

Scope

Call Centers being one of the fastest-growing areas of employment across the globe provide good job opportunities in India to the most of young people due to flourishing IT and ITES industries through IT strength accepted all-over the business world. Further, India has leading English speaking residents after the USA as a result of India's huge people base of English-speaking, tech-savvy staff and cost-effective manpower which accounts for 50-60% of the total cost in Call Center operations. However, while working in Call Center industries, employees face certain limitations which result in lower job satisfaction, poor mental health, emotional dissonance and role stress. Thus, the present research was undertaken to identify the basic problems of the Call Center employees. As a result this study will assist to give different suggestive measures to lessen the risks identified and to review the status of the workers.

Hypothesis

Job Stress and Job Satisfaction

Job stress is an emotional reaction towards the work-related environment and it occurs when the conditions, as well as facilities, are not compatible with the capabilities and resources of an employed individual. An employee with a high stress level for a long time is likely to be a lower satisfaction level at workplace (Chandraiah et al., 2003). Job satisfaction has frequently been related to lower levels of role stress (Micheals et al., 1987). Job stress and job satisfaction are the two hot focused areas in human resource management. Job satisfaction is significantly related to job stress (Stamps & Piedmonte, 1986). Further, Vinokur-Kaplan (1996) acknowledged that organization factors i.e. workload, as well as working condition, negatively impacted job satisfaction. Venkataraman and Ganapathi (2013) recognized that the lack of job satisfaction can be a major source of stress, whereas a high level of job satisfaction can lessen the effects of job stress. A high level of job stress is directly linked with the low level of job satisfaction (Terry et al., 1993). Moreover, Cummins (1990) stated that job stressors are antecedents of dissatisfaction and make greater chances to leave the present

organization. Therefore, we hypothesize that,

H1: Job stress is significantly related to job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction and turnover intension

Job satisfaction is the degree to which a worker feels active, self-motivated, and satisfied by his/her job. It occurs when a worker feels he/she is having job stability, career opportunities and easy work-life balance and it is a person's assessment of the job and work environment (Saari & Judge, 2004). Job satisfaction has a significant impact on the turnover intention of employees (Saeed et al., 2014) and job satisfaction and turnover intention of employees are negatively associated with each other (Randhawa, 2007). Further, employees are frequently believed to leave their present job and they regularly make comparison with other job and evaluate the possible alternatives which they can obtain by leaving their current job. Moreover, job satisfaction is negatively related to a turnover intention on regular basis (Susskind et al., 2000). Hence, we hypothesize that,

H2: Job satisfaction is negatively associated with turnover intention

Conceptual Framework



Methodology

Data Collection and Generation of Scale Items

The scale items were decided after reviewing the accessible literature and comprehensive discussion with the academicians and subject experts. Further, five-point Likert scale has been used for uniformity ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The present study is composed of 36 items extracted from various scales to meet the purpose of the study. Job Stress Scale (JS) has been measured using 20 items (Conley & You, 2013), Job Satisfaction Scale (JS) 8 items (Cook et al., 1981) and Turnover Intention Scale (TI) 8 items (Saeed et al., 2014). Out of the overall sample, 51 percent of respondents are females and 72 percent of respondents belong to the age group of 25- 40 years. Approximately 52 percent of respondents are graduates and about 60 percent are experienced respondents having an experience of 1-5 years. Further, the respondents belonged to two-income groups, that is, below Rs. 25,000 and above Rs 25,000. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) has been performed which is appropriately confirmed with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

Data Collection Methods

Primary Data

The primary data is based on the first-hand information collected personally from the employees. The front line employees having experience of more than 8 months were approached using purposive sampling technique. Around 350 Call Center employees were contacted and only 286 responded, representing a response rate of 82 %.

Results

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) has been performed to find out the factors of various scales used in the present research. Appropriateness of factor analysis has been confirmed by Kaiser-

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Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, where a value above 0.50 is suitable (Hair et al., 2010), which shows its relevance for further analysis. Those statements whose factor loading is less than 0.50 were deleted (Hair et al., 2010). Firstly, the job stress construct consisted of 20 items. 15 items were retained after application of EFA that converged under two factors (role stress and time stress). Besides this, job satisfaction and turnover intention scales were reduced to 6 and 7 items respectively. The KMO values of job stress, job satisfaction and turnover intention were above 0.70 and total variance explained by all the constructs was above sixty percent (Hair et al., 2010).

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Before data analysis, the score for opposite items is reversed and twenty-five outliers were removed with the help of a box-plot as a result effective size remains to be 325 respondents. The outcome of normal Q-Q plots illustrates that all observed values are nearer to the straight diagonal line, which shows a normal distribution of data. Further, the skewness (+1, -1) along with kurtosis (+3, -3) tests suggest that values are in the threshold range (Hair et al., 2010) which further confirms normal distribution of data. Further, the reliability and validity of data has been proved by using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Structural Equation Model (SEM) was applied for hypotheses testing to find out the relationship between the latent variable and observed variables. After application of the Structural Equation Model (SEM), the impact of job stress on job satisfaction and job satisfaction impact on turnover intention was examined. To evaluate the model fitness, validity, as well as reliability of scales, has been used and items with fewer regression weights are deleted i.e. (< 0.50) (Hair et al., 2010). Further, fit indices have been assessed by using various indices, that is, AGFI, CFI, GFI, NFI, RMSEA and RMR. All the values of Goodness-of-fit and Badness-of-fit were in the accepted range (Table 2). Moreover, constructs reliability has been proved with the help of cronbach alpha and composite reliability. The values of Cronbach's alpha for job stress (0.717), job satisfaction (0.781) and turnover intention (0.750) were within the threshold limit i.e. 0.70, which confirmed that data is reliable (Hair et al. 2010). Composite reliability value of the constructs 0.843 (job stress), 0.897 (job satisfaction) and 0.816 (turnover intention) depict the sufficient reliability for the constructs which establishes discriminant and convergent validity. However average variance extracted of the scale with above 0.5 proves its convergent validity (Hair et al., 2010). The research result recommends that convergent validity existence as the average variance extracted (AVE) values for job stress (0.698), job satisfaction (0.700) and turnover intention (0.703). AVE for each construct is higher than the squared correlation therefore discriminant validity has been confirmed (Table 3). All the fit indices are within the acceptance limit therefore,

Hypotheses: 1 "Job stress negatively related with job satisfaction" stands accepted

Hypotheses: 2 "Job satisfaction is negatively associated with turnover intention" stands accepted.

Table 1-Exploratory Factor analysis

Constructs	KMO	Variance Explained (%)
Job Stress	0.718	56.953
Job Satisfaction	0.683	67.017
Turnover Intention	0.564	50.111

Table 2- Confirmatory Factor analysis

Constructs	χ^2/df	GFI	AGFI	RMR	RMSEA	NFI	CFI
Job Stress	4.059	0.971	0.946	0.032	0.064	0.989	0.928
Job Satisfaction	1.019	0.997	0.993	0.004	0.007	0.997	0.999
Turnover Intention	4.855	0.986	0.953	0.056	0.072	0.894	0.911

Table 3-Discriminant Validity and Correlation Analysis of Latent Constructs

Constructs	Job Stress	Job Satisfaction	Turnover Intention
Job Stress	0.698		
Job Satisfaction	(0.053) 0.231	0.700	
Turnover Intention	(0.036) - 0.191	(0.002) 0.047	0.703
Note: Values on the diagonal axis represent Average Variance Extracted and values in parenthesis represent the squared correlation between the constructs. The values with an asterisk represent correlations values.			

Conclusion

The present study indicated that Call Centers are like any other organization with employment roles that span limits which confirms the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction; job satisfaction and turnover intention among Call Center workers of four Call Centers operating in NCR region (New Delhi) India. This research reveals that both job stress and job satisfaction are interrelated and job satisfaction is the outcome of job stress and also turnover intention and job performance are the consequence of job satisfaction. The Call Center environment is a vibrant one in which the service representative should handle more and more transactions on a routine basis that increases complexity with more consumer expectations. Leadership directly affects job satisfaction that affects organization performance and intent to leave. So in general employee turnover is measured to be an expensive phenomenon such as training cost, recruitment cost, and the cost to other workers productivity. Call Centers may be at a higher level of risk for hidden poor performers whose commitment is low. However they will not leave the present organization as their performance is poor. Customer service representatives who have the autonomy to execute their jobs have lower stress levels which increases higher job satisfaction and performance, thus, ultimately lower intention to leave the organization. Job satisfaction path is clear in case of Call Centers such as autonomy and competence are independent and influence various aspects of employee functioning, feeling and performance. The results of the present study reveal that the job stress among the Call Center

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workers is at a peak level as the complete mean value of the job stress construct is high. The present study has found that all respondents experienced work stress and a very high portion of the workers practice job stress that arises almost every day which leads to job dissatisfaction and ultimately turnover intention of Call Center employees. Job stress significantly and negatively affects job satisfaction which is similar to the earlier studies (Chandraiah et al., 2003, Micheals et al., 1987, Stamps & Piedmonte, 1986, Vinokur-Kaplan 1996, Terry et al. 1993, Cummins, 1990). This study further checks the impact of job satisfaction on turnover intention which was found to be positive which is also similar to previous studies (Saari, & Judge, 2004, Saeed et al., 2014, Randhawa, 2007). So, the present research indicates that the management should be proactive and inspect the reasons for job stress as practiced by the employees before it rises since prevention is better than cure.

Implications

The various implication of job stress both for human beings and businesses have been confirmed by many studies as it influences the employees mentally, physically as well as psychologically at the individual level, which influence directly as well as indirectly the organization's productivity. This research indicates that Call Center employees observe their job as extremely stressful which is represented by an overall score of 3.70 on a 5 point scale. So, the fundamental reasons for workers' stress need to be acknowledged and reasonable possible strategies must be developed to deal with them. Further, female workers account for higher stress as compared to their male workers and the difference is found to be statistically significant which has been checked by using student t-test. So, proper policies must be prepared for female employees to reduce stress levels among them. If they feel dissatisfied it will directly influences the production and performance of the organization and ultimately turnover intention. The findings of the present research indicated that employees experience high job stress and low level of job satisfaction which ultimately leads to employee turnover. Job satisfaction is an important factor of both job performance and turnover intentions. Therefore, Call Center management must undertake possible steps to enhance job satisfaction among employees. Job stress is an important reason behind turnover intention among Call Center employees. So, in stressful environments, emphasis should be laid on job rotation, where employees learn various duties and responsibilities as well as reinforcement of employees' faith which increases their own skills as well as job satisfaction. The research reveals the average score of turnover intention among Call Center employees is also high, that is, 3.65 on a 5 point scale, so employee recognition by the top management and strengthening workers confidence through training programs must be undertaken as an initiative towards stress management and minimizing turnover intention among Call Center employees.

Limitations and Future Research

- ▶ This research is cross-sectional; in the future longitudinal studies shall be undertaken.
- ▶ This research method was quantitative and in the future qualitative methods shall be applied.
- ▶ This study is restricted to a single relationship; future studies shall include the moderator or mediator variables to generalize the findings.

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ARTS AND HUMANITIES

ਸਮਾਜਿਕ-ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਸੰਕਟਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤ: 'ਚਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ'

ਡਾ. ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਸਿੰਘ

ਸਾਰ

ਨਾਵਲ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਅਹਿਮ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਰਿੰਦਰ ਨੀਰ ਜੰਮੂ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨਾਵਲ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੀ ਬਹੁ-ਚਰਚਿਤ ਹਸਤਾਖਰ। ਨੀਰ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਸਫ਼ਰ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਲਿਖਣ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਨ 2002 ਵਿਚ ਉਸਦਾ ਪਲੇਠਾ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਿ 'ਦਸਤਕ ਦੀ ਉਡੀਕ' ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਤ ਹੋਇਆ, ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਸੱਤ ਸਾਲ ਬਾਅਦ 2009 ਵਿਚ ਉਸਦਾ ਦੂਸਰਾ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਿ 'ਖੁਲ ਜਾ ਸਿਮ ਸਿਮ' ਛਪਿਆ। ਪਰ ਨੀਰ ਦੇ ਸਿਰਜਣਾਤਮਕ ਸਫ਼ਰ ਦੇ ਅਹਿਮ ਪੜਾਉ ਦਾ ਗਵਾਹ ਸਾਲ 2010 ਬਣਿਆ ਜਦੋਂ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਪਲੇਠਾ ਨਾਵਲ 'ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰਗਾਹ' ਲਿਖਿਆ ਜਿਸਨੇ ਨਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਜੰਮੂ-ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਬਲਕਿ ਦੇਸ਼-ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਆਲੋਚਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਆਪਣੇ ਵੱਲ ਆਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਤ ਕੀਤਾ। ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰਗਾਹ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ 2013 ਵਿਚ ਉਸਨੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਆਕਾਰੀ ਨਾਵਲ 'ਮਾਇਆ' ਲਿਖਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਲਗਭਗ ਛੇ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਅੰਤਰਾਲ ਬਾਅਦ ਹੱਥਲੇ ਨਾਵਲ ਚਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮੁੜ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਚਿਹਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਜ਼ਿਰ ਹੈ। ਨਾਵਲ ਚਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਸੁਰ ਤਣਾਉ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਦਗ੍ਰਸਤ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਹੈ ਜੋ 'ਪੁੰਜੀਵਾਦੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਮੂਹਕ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਗਠਨ' ਅਤੇ ਵਿਗਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਅਖੀਰਲੇ ਦਹਾਕਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਈ ਹਥਿਆਰਬੰਦ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਉਜਾੜੇ ਦੇ ਤਣਾਉ ਦਾ ਸੰਤਾਪ ਹੰਡਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

ਕੁੰਜੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ: ਸਮਾਜਿਕ, ਪਦਾਰਥਕ, ਸੰਸਥਾਗਤ, ਚੇਤਨਾਗਤ, ਆਚਲਿਕ

ਜੀਵਨ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੀਉਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਿਆ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਪਰਿਵਰਤਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਅਟਲ ਨਿਯਮ ਤੇ ਸਚਾਈ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਬਦਲਦਾ ਤੇ ਵਿਕਸਿਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਲ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ, ਪੇਚਿਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਇਕੋ ਵੇਲੇ ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੋਧਾਂ, ਅੰਤਰ-ਵਿਰੋਧਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੰਡਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਇਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲਤਾ, ਪੇਚਿਦਗੀ, ਵਿਰੋਧ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਤਰ-ਵਿਰੋਧ ਜਿਥੇ ਮਾਨਵੀ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਅਹਿਮ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਉਥੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਲਈ ਕਈ ਤਣਾਉਪੂਰਨ ਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਵੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਤਣਾਉਸ਼ੀਲ ਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਜਾਂ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਾਹਿਤਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਦੌਰਾਂ 'ਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਸਿਰਜਣਾਤਮਕ ਯੋਗਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕਲਾਤਮਕ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਵਲ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਹੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਕੈਨਵਸ ਵਾਲੀ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਵਿਧਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿਚ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਪਦਾਰਥਕ, ਸੰਸਥਾਗਤ ਤੇ ਚੇਤਨਾਗਤ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਤੇ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਮਝ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ ਦੇ ਸਮਰੱਥ ਹੈ। ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਨਾਵਲ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਵੀ ਅਤਿ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰ, ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰਦਾ ਇਕ ਸਾਧਾਰਣ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਵਲੋਂ ਇਕੋ ਵੇਲੇ ਹੰਡਾਈਆਂ ਜਾ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਤਣਾਉਗ੍ਰਸਤ ਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਰੂਪ ਨਾਵਲ ਯਥਾਰਥ ਦੀ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਵਸਤੂ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਡਾ. ਟੀ.ਆਰ. ਬਿਨੋਦ ਨਾਵਲ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੀ ਯਥਾਰਥ ਧਰਮੀ ਵਿਧਾ ਮੰਨਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬਿਨੋਦ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਕਥਨ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨਾਵਲ ਉਪਰ ਵੀ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਨਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨਾਵਲਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਣਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ ਬਲਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਗਦੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਵਲਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਿਘਰ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਹੀ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਜੰਮੂ-ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਦੀ ਵਸਨੀਕ ਸੁਰਿੰਦਰ ਨੀਰ ਇਕ ਚਰਚਿਤ ਨਾਂ ਹੈ।

ਸੁਰਿੰਦਰ ਨੀਰ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਸਫ਼ਰ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਲਿਖਣ ਨਾਲ ਆਰੰਭ ਕੀਤਾ, ਪਰ 2010 ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਨਾਵਲ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰਗਾਹ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹ ਨਾਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਰਿਆਸਤੀ ਬਲਕਿ ਮੁੱਖ ਧਾਰਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਸਫ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰੌੜ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਵੱਧ ਨਾਵਲਕਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਉੱਭਰੀ। ਰਿਆਸਤੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਲੇਖਿਕਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਰਿੰਦਰ ਨੀਰ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਤੇ ਇਕਲੋਤਾ ਨਾਂ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਅੱਤਵਾਦ ਦਾ ਸੰਤਾਪ ਭੋਗਦੀ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਪੀੜ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਵਲੀ ਕਲੇਵਰ ਵਿਚ ਸਮੇਟਿਆ ਹੈ। 'ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰਗਾਹ' ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਅਤਿਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਮਾਹੌਲ ਵਿਚ ਘੱਟ ਗਿਣਤੀਆਂ (ਸਿੱਖਾਂ/ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ) ਦੀ ਤ੍ਰਾਸਦ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ-ਸਾਂਸਕ੍ਰਿਤਿਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਦੇ ਸੰਕਟ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਥਾਨਕ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨਾਵਲ ਦਾ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਵੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਨਾਵਲ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਲੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਅਤ ਦੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੰਕਲਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਧਾਰਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਪੁਨਰ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਕੇਵਲ ਭੁਗੋਲ ਅਤੇ

* Assistant Professor, Department of Punjabi, University of Jammu, Jammu, india

ਸਾਂਸਕ੍ਰਿਤਿਕ ਹੱਦਾਂ ਮਾਤਰ ਹਨ। ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਮੀਖਿਅਕ ਅਮਰਜੀਤ ਗਰੇਵਾਲ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸੁਰਿੰਦਰ ਨੀਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਇਸ ਨਾਵਲ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਭੂਗੋਲਿਕ ਹੱਦਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਰ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਜੰਮੂ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵੱਲ ਅਹੁਲਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਨਾਵਲ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨਾਵਲ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸਥਾਨ ਰਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਹ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਚਰਚਾ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਹੈ। ਨੀਰ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਦੂਸਰਾ ਨਾਵਲ 'ਮਾਇਆ' 2013 ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ। ਇਸ ਵੱਡੇ ਅਕਾਰੀ ਨਾਵਲ ਦੀ ਚਰਚਾ ਤਾਂ ਹੋਈ ਪਰ ਇਹ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰਗਾਹ ਜਿੰਨਾ ਮਕਬੂਲ ਨਾ ਹੋ ਸਕਿਆ। ਹੁਣ ਲੱਗਭੱਗ ਛੇ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਅੰਤਰਾਲ ਬਾਅਦ ਨੀਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਵਲ 'ਚਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ' ਨਾਲ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਫਿਰ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਆਲੋਚਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਚਹਿਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ। ਹਥਲਾ ਆਲੇਖ ਨੀਰ ਦੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਨਾਵਲ ਚਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਸਮੁੱਧਿਤ ਹੈ।

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ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਦੇ ਖੂਬਸੂਰਤ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਨਜ਼ਾਰਿਆਂ, ਅੰਚਲਿਕ, ਸਾਂਸਕ੍ਰਿਤਿਕ, ਲੋਕਧਾਰਾਈ ਵੇਰਵਿਆਂ, ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਦੀ ਕਾਨੀਕਲਾ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਹਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਈ ਪ੍ਰਵੀਨਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਯੋਜਿਤ ਚਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ ਨਾਵਲ ਦੀ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਫਾਰਮੇਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਰਚਨਾ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਇਕ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਮੈਟਾਫਾਰਿਕ ਪੱਖ ਕਾਰਜਸ਼ੀਲ ਹੈ। ਇਸਦੀ ਇਕ ਸੰਗਠਿਤ ਕਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਸੂਖਮ ਪਰਤਾਂ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਇਸ ਨਾਵਲ ਦੀ ਕਥਾ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਵਸਤੂ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਤਾਰਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਸਦੇ ਗਲਪੀ ਕੈਨਵਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਨੀਗਾਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਭੂਗੋਲਿਕ ਹੱਦਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਾਰ ਲੈ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਹ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਅੰਚਲ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਵੀ ਜੈਨਰਲਾਇਜ਼ਡ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਹੀ ਇਸ ਨਾਵਲ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਹੋ ਨਿਬੜਦੀ ਹੈ। ਨਾਵਲ ਦੀ ਮੈਟਾਫਾਰਿਕ ਫਾਰਮੇਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਡਿਕੋਡ ਕਰਨ 'ਤੇ ਕੁੱਝ ਅਹਿਮ ਨੁਕਤੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਨਾਵਲ ਦੇ ਆਰੰਭ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਤਿੰਨ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਗਲਪੀ ਮੋਟੀਫ਼ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਗੋਚਰ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪਹਿਲਾ ਅਧੂਰਾ ਕਾਨੀ ਸ਼ਾਲ, ਦੂਸਰਾ ਅਧੂਰਾ ਸ਼ਾਲ 'ਚ ਬਣੀ ਹੋਈ ਲਹੂ ਰੰਗੀ ਚਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ ਭਾਵ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ ਦੀ ਉਹ ਸੁਰਖ ਅੱਖ ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਕੋਢੇ 'ਚ ਉਭਰਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਇਕ ਸਥਿਰ ਜਾਂ ਜੰਮਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਅੱਥਰੂ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਤੀਸਰਾ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਦੀ ਸਾਰੰਗੀ। ਇਥੇ ਅਧੂਰੀ ਕਾਨੀਸ਼ਾਲ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਅੰਚਲ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ-ਸਾਂਸਕ੍ਰਿਤਿਕ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ (ਧਾਰਮਿਕ, ਆਰਥਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ) ਅਤੇ ਕਦਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਤਿੜਕਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਈ ਸ਼ਿਥਲਤਾ ਦੀ ਸੂਚਕ ਹੈ। ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਤੰਦਾ ਦੀ ਬੁਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਘੁਰਾ ਗਲਤ ਪੈ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਸਦਾ ਖਾਲਸ ਵਜੂਦ ਖਤਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ। ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਈ ਰੰਗਾਂ ਵਾਲੀ ਚਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ ਦੀ ਲਹੂ ਰੰਗੀ ਅੱਖ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਸੰਸਥਾਗਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਤ੍ਰਾਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਉਪਜੇ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਅਵਚੇਤਨ ਦੇ ਤਣਾਉ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਆਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਵਿਚ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਲਈ ਚਲੀ ਹਥਿਆਰਬੰਦ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੀ ਭੇਂਟ ਚੜ੍ਹੀ ਜਵਾਨੀ ਦੇ ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਮੁਕੱਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਦੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਬਣਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਦਕਿ ਤੀਸਰੀ ਸਾਰੰਗੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਜਿੰਦਗੀ ਦੀ ਰਵਾਂਦਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਵਜੋਂ ਉਭਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸਾਰੰਗੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਸੰਗੀਤਕ ਧੁਨੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਉਹ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕਤਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਵੈਰ-ਵਿਰੋਧ, ਉਚ-ਨੀਚ ਤੋਂ ਉਪਰ ਉਠ ਸਾਂਝੀਵਾਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਚਲਦੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਹਾਮੀ ਭਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਨਾਵਲ ਦੀ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗਲਪੀ ਮੋਟੀਫ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਨਾਵਲ ਦਾ ਸਮੁੱਚਾ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤ ਮੁੱਖ ਪਾਤਰ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਵੇਰਵਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹੈ। ਨੀਰ ਨੇ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਨੀਕਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਹਾਸ਼ੀਅਤ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਸਮੱਸਿਆਵਾਂ/ਬੁਝਾਂ, ਸੁਪਨਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਂਖਿਆਵਾਂ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਤਣਾਓ ਨੂੰ ਨਾਵਲ ਦੇ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤਕ ਪਟਲ 'ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਤੁਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਨਾਵਲ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਦੀ ਸੰਕਟ ਗ੍ਰਸਤ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਨਿਮਨ ਵਰਗ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿਧਤਾ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਆਪਣੀ ਜਿੰਦਗੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਹਤਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਹਰ ਹੀਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਰਸਾਤਲ ਵਿਚ ਧਸਦੇ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਕੁਲ ਮਿਲਾ ਕਿ ਨਾਵਲ ਚਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਸੁਰ ਤਣਾਉ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਦਗ੍ਰਸਤ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਹੈ ਜੋ 'ਪੁੰਜੀਵਾਦੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਮੂਹਕ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਗਠਨ' ਅਤੇ ਵਿਹਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਅਖੀਰਲੇ ਦਹਾਕਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਈ ਹਥਿਆਰਬੰਦ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਉਜਾੜੇ ਦੇ ਤਣਾਉ ਦਾ ਸੰਤਾਪ ਹੰਡਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸੁਰ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਜਿਹੜੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਗਲਪੀ ਆਕਾਰ ਲੈਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਵਰਗੀਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਆਰਥਿਕ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਪੁਨਰਗਠਿਤ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਤਣਾਉ, ਸਥਾਨਕ ਲੋਕ ਕਲਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੋਝੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਘੇਰੇ ਤੇ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਦੇ ਮੌਕਲੇ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਤਣਾਉ, ਦਰਿਸ਼ਤਗਰਦੀ ਦੇ ਮਾਹੌਲ ਵਿਚ ਨਵੀਂ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ ਦੀ ਪੁਨਰ ਸਿਰਜਿਤ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੋਚ ਦਾ ਤਣਾਓ। ਕੁਲ ਮਿਲਾ ਕੇ ਇਹ ਤਣਾਓ ਹੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਇਸ ਨਾਵਲ ਦੇ ਆਦਿ ਤੋਂ ਅੰਤ ਤਕ ਪਸਰਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ ਨੀਰ ਇਸ ਤਣਾਓ ਦੀ ਪੇਸ਼ਕਾਰੀ ਸਮੇਂ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਅੰਦਰ ਪੁੰਜੀਵਾਦੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਤ ਨੂੰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਬੇਸ਼ਕ ਸਫਲ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਇਸ ਨਾਵਲ ਦੀ ਦੂਸਰੀ ਅਹਿਮ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤਕ ਡਾਇਮੈਂਸ਼ਨ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਸੰਕਟ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਉਸਦਾ ਨਜ਼ਰੀਆ ਨਾ ਤਾਂ ਨਿਰਪੱਖ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਸੁਹਿਰਦ।

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ਨਵੀਂ ਸਾਂਸਕ੍ਰਿਤਿਕ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਮੂਹਕ ਸੰਸਕਾਰਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਤੋੜ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਵਾਦੀ ਰੁਚੀਆਂ

ਦਾ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਸਵੈ ਕੇਂਦਰਿਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਵੱਧ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਮੁਨਾਫ਼ੇਖੋਰੀ ਦੀ ਲਾਲਸਾ ਵਧੀ ਹੈ। ਪੂੰਜੀਵਾਦੀ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਮਾਨਵੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਨਾਰਮਲੀ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਵਲ ਅਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਸਗੋਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੱਡੇ ਪੈਮਾਨੇ ਵਿਚ ਉਥਲ-ਪੁਥਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਮੋਹ ਦੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇ, ਸਵਾਰਥੀ ਤੇ ਵਪਾਰਿਕ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਤਿਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਮੋਹ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਪਦਾਰਥਕ ਲੋਭ ਲੈ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਪਦਾਰਥਕ ਲੋਭ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਵਾਦੀ ਰੁਚੀਆਂ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੀ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਪਰਸਪਰ ਤਣਾਓ ਦੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਨਾਵਲ ਦੇ ਆਰੰਭ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਹਸਨੇ ਦੇ ਸੰਵਾਦਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਨਾਵਲਕਾਰਾ ਨੇ 'ਸਮੂਹਕ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਗਠਨ' ਅਤੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਵਾਦੀ ਰੁਚੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਫੈਲਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਿਆ ਦੇ ਸੰਕਟ ਨੂੰ ਹਸਨੇ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਪੁਛਤਾਨੀ ਧੰਦੇ (ਕਾਨੀ ਕਲਾ) ਨੂੰ ਅਸਵਿਕਾਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਤੋਂ ਵੱਖ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਬਿਆਨਿਆ ਹੈ। ਕਾਨੀ ਕਲਾ ਨਾਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਦੀ ਬਲਕਿ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਦੀਆਂ ਬੇਹਤਰੀਨ ਹਸਤ ਕਲਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇਕ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਕਲਾ ਜਿੰਨੀ ਖੂਬਸੂਰਤ ਹੈ, ਉਨ੍ਹੀ ਹੀ ਜਟਿਲ, ਵੱਧ ਸਮੇਂ, ਧਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਵੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਾਨੀਸ਼ਾਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਟੋਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਭਰ ਵਿਚ ਮੁੱਢ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਭਾਰੀ ਮੰਗ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਦੇ ਕਾਨੀ ਸ਼ਾਲ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਰਈਸੀ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਬਣੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਨਾਵਲੀ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਬਹੁਤੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਛੋਟੇ ਜਿਹੇ ਗਲਪਨਿਕ ਪਿੰਡ ਕਾਨੀਗਾਮ ਨਾਲ ਹੈ। ਨਾਵਲੀ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਸ ਪਿੰਡ ਦਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਇਕ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਹੈ। ਨਾਵਲ ਦੇ ਮੁਖ ਪਾਤਰ ਮੁਸਤਫਾ ਦੇ ਦਾਦੇ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਦੇ ਕਹਿਣ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਸ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੀ ਜਗੀਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਡੇਰੇ ਸਲਾਮਤ ਅਲੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਅਕਬਰ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੱਥੀਂ ਬਣਾਕੇ ਭੇਂਟ ਕੀਤੇ ਕਾਨੀਸ਼ਾਲ ਦੇ ਬਦਲੇ ਇਨਾਮ ਵਜੋਂ ਮਿਲੀ ਸੀ। ਸਲਾਮਤ ਅਲੀ ਤੋਂ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਕਾਨੀ ਕਲਾ ਅਗਲੀਆਂ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੋਈ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਤਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕਾਨੀ ਕਲਾ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਈ ਮਹਿਜ਼ ਰੋਜ਼ੀ-ਰੋਟੀ ਦਾ ਵਸੀਲਾ ਮਾਤਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਬਲਕਿ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਮੁੱਕਦਸ ਅਤੇ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਕਾਰਜ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦੇ ਅਸਲ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਸੱਚ ਨੂੰ ਮਹਿਸੂਸਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਣਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਈ ਕਾਨੀਸ਼ਾਲ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦਾ ਸਾਰ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਾਲ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਹੀ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਸੁਚੱਜੀ ਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦਾ ਫਲਸਫਾ ਵੀ ਸਮਝਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ:

“ਇਸ ਪਸ਼ਮੀਨੇ ਦਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਸਰੀਰ ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ, ਓੜਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਦੀ ਰੂਹ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਤੇ ਉਹ ਸਰੀਰ ਜੋ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਓੜਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸਦੀ ਰੂਹ ਇਸ ਪਸ਼ਮੀਨੇ ਦੀ ਛੋਹ ਨਾਲ ਉਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਰਸ਼ਾਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਦਰਗਾਹ ਉਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਪੀਰ ਮੋਰਖੰਭਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਅਸ਼ੀਰਵਾਦ ਦੇਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਰੂਹ ਜੋ ਰੰਗਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੁਹੱਪਣ ਨੂੰ ਪਛਾਣਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ....ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਛੋਹ ਦੀ ਨਰਮੀ ਦਾ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਹੋਵੇ ਤੇ ਜੋ ਪਸ਼ਮ ਦੇ ਨਰਮੇ-ਨਾਜ਼ੁਕ ਰੇਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਛੋਹ ਤੋਂ ਉਤਪੰਨ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਸਿਹਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਇਹ ਪਸ਼ਮੀਨਾ, ਕਾਨੀ, ਜਾਮਾਵਾਰ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਹਤੂਤ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਹੀ ਸੁਲੱਖਣੀਆਂ ਰੂਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿੰਗਾਰ ਬਣਨ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਆਵਰਣ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਧਾਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।”¹

ਕਾਨੀਸ਼ਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ 'ਸੁਲੱਖਣੀਆਂ ਰੂਹਾਂ' ਮਾਨਵੀ ਸੰਵੇਦਨਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਵੱਛ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਏ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਲਈ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਇਕ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਹੈ। ਨਾਵਲੀ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਬਿਰਤੀ ਵਾਲਾ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਪੁੱਤਰਾਂ ਆਹਦ ਮੱਤੋ ਅਤੇ ਹਸਨੇ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਨੀਸ਼ਾਲ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਨੀ ਕਲਾ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਮੁੱਕਦਸ ਕਾਰਜ ਵਜੋਂ ਬੜੇ ਹੀ ਫਲਸਫਾਨਾਂ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਵਿਚ ਸਵਿਕਾਰਨ ਦੀ ਤਜਵੀਜ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

“ਇੱਕ ਔਖਾ ਪੈਂਡਾ ਤੁਰ ਲੈਣ ਬਾਅਦ ਜਾਂ ਤਿਖੀ ਪਹਾੜੀ ਸਰ ਕਰ ਲੈਣ ਬਾਅਦ ਕਿਸੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਿਰ ਨੂੰ ਜੋ ਤਸੱਲੀ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ ਉਹੀ ਸਕੂਨ ਤੇ ਤਸੱਲੀ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ ਇਕ ਕਾਰੀਗਰ ਨੂੰ ਜਦੋਂ ਉਸਦੀ ਮਹੀਨਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਕਦੀ-ਕਦੀ ਸਾਲ ਭਰ ਦੀ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਬਾਅਦ ਇਕ ਸ਼ਾਨਮੱਤਾ ਸ਼ਾਲ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਾਨੀਸ਼ਾਲ ਬੁਣਨਾ ਇਕ ਕਸਬ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਇਹ ਕੰਮ ਤੋਂ ਤੱਪ ਦੀ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸਦੇ ਇੱਕ ਇੱਕ ਘੁਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਬੁਣਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਇਲਾਹੀ ਨਾਦ ਵਾਂਗ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਦਾ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਗੂੰਜਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸਦੀ ਆਤਮਾ ਅੰਦਰ। ਉਹ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਜੋ ਇਕ ਸੱਚੇ ਫਨਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਫੱਨ ਨਾਲ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।”²

ਪਰ ਵਿਡੰਬਨਾ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸਦੇ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਉਸਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਹਿਮਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੇ। ਆਹਦ ਮੱਤਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਫਕੀਰੀ ਸੁਬਾਓ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਹਸਨਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੀ ਕਿੱਤੋ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਘੱਟ ਆਮਦਨੀ ਦੇ ਤਰਕ ਨਾਲ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਦੀ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਤਜਵੀਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਖਾਰਿਜ਼ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ:

“ਬਾਬਾ ਜਾਨ.... ਮੈਂ ਐਸੇ ਖਾਨਦਾਨੀ ਪੇਸ਼ੇ ਪਿਛੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਖਾਨਦਾਨ ਗਰੀਬੀ ਦੀ ਭੱਠੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਝੋਂਕ ਸਕਦਾ, ਜਿਸ ਪੇਸ਼ੇ 'ਚੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੱਜ ਦੀ ਰੋਟੀ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਨਸੀਬ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ।”³

ਹਸਨੇ ਦਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਉੱਤਰ ਕਾਨੀ ਕਲਾ ਦੇ ਪੇਸ਼ੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਕਾਨੀਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਮੰਦਹਾਲੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਰੋਧ ਵਿਚ ਬੇਸ਼ਕ ਗੈਰਵਾਜਿਬ ਕਦਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਪਰ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਦੋ ਕਦਮ ਅਗੇ ਵੱਧ ਕੇ ਹਸਨੇ ਵਲੋਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਸਮੇਤ ਬੁੱਢੇ ਮਾਂ-ਬਾਪ ਨੂੰ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਅਲਗ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਨਾਵਲ ਦੇ ਡ੍ਰਾਸਟਿਕ ਘਟਨਾਕ੍ਰਮ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤ ਵੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਪੂੰਜੀਵਾਦੀ ਅਰਥ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਮਾਰੂ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਹੇਠ ਲਹੂ ਦੇ ਮੋਹ ਦੀਆਂ ਤੰਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੱਝੇ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਨਿੱਜੀ ਸੰਪਤੀ ਦੀ ਮਲਕੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਲੋਭ, ਲਹੂ ਦੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਰੀਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਬਦਲ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਵਲ ਵਿਚ ਕਈ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਹਨ। ਹਸਨਾ ਘੱਟ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਤੇ ਵੱਧ ਮੁਨਾਫ਼ੇ ਦੇ ਮਕਸਦ ਨਾਲ ਕਾਨੀਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਪੁਸ਼ਤੈਨੀ ਕੰਮ ਛੱਡ ਕਾਲੀਨ ਬਾਫੀ ਦਾ ਵੱਖਰਾ ਕੰਮ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਕੇਵਲ ਕੰਮ ਹੀ ਵੱਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਬਲਕਿ ਘਰੋਂ ਹੀ ਵੱਖ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹਾ ਉਹ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਦਾ ਉਸਦੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਕੋਈ ਦੂਸਰਾ ਭਾਈਵਾਲ ਨਾ ਬਣੇ। ਹਸਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਦਾ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਰੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇ ਸਮਾਪਤ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਬੁੱਢੇ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਉਮੀਦਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਫਿਰ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਆਹਦ ਮੱਤਾ ਇਕ ਬਾਰ ਘਰੋਂ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਨਿਕਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੁੜ ਪਰਤਦਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਆਹਦ ਮੱਤਾ ਆਪ ਤਾਂ ਚਲਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਪਰ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਛੱਡ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਦੋ ਮਾਂ ਬਾਹਰੇ ਬੱਚੇ, ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਲਾਲਾ। ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਪਤਨੀ ਜੰਨਤੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਦੇਖ-ਰੇਖ ਅਤੇ ਪਰਵਰਿਸ਼ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਹਸਨਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਉਸਦਾ ਪੁਰਾ ਟੱਬਰ ਹੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਵਾਦੀ/ਨਿੱਜਵਾਦੀ ਰੁਚੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ ਲਈ ਕੁੱਝ ਵੀ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰਿਵਾਰਕ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਬਦਲਦੇ ਪਰਿਵੇਸ਼ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਆਹਦ ਮੱਤਾ ਦੇ ਬਚਿਆਂ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਲਾਲਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਵੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਫਿਕਰਮੰਦ ਹੈ ਜਿੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਕੁਝ ਵੀ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ:

“ਅਲਾਹ ਤੋਂ ਦੁਆ ਮੰਗਿਆ ਕਰ ਜੰਨਤੀਏ ਕਿ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਏਨੀ ਕੁ ਉਮਰ ਅਤਾ ਫਰਮਾ ਦੇਵੇ ਕਿ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਬਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਲਾਇਕ ਬਣਾ ਸਕੀਏ ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਡਾਢੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜੀਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇਵੇਗੀ। ਆਪਣੇ ਹੀ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਬਣ ਜਾਣਗੇ।”⁴

ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਦੀ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਲਾਲਾ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਜ਼ਾਹਿਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਫਿਕਰ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਵੱਲ ਇਸ਼ਾਰਾ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਭਰਾ ਕਦੀ ਭਰਾਵਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਾਹਵਾਂ ਮੰਨੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ ਉਹੀ ਭਰਾ ਅੱਜ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਦੌਰ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੀ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਨਜ਼ਦੀਕੀ ਅਤੇ ਵੱਡਾ ਖਤਰਾ ਬਣੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਪੂੰਜੀਵਾਦੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਆਮਦ ਕਰਕੇ ਪਰਸਪਰ ਸਾਂਝ ਦੇ ਤਿੜਕਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਹਸਨਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਗੰਨਤ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਜੋਂ ਬਿਆਨਦੀ ਹੋਈ ਨੀਰ ਨਾਵਲ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਗਲੇਰੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਕਾਰੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਵਿਗਠਨ ਦੀ ਗੰਭੀਰਤਾ, ਗਤੀਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਡ੍ਰਾਸਟਿਕ ਨਤੀਜਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਸੱਨਮੁੱਖ ਖੋਲ੍ਹਦੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਅਗਲਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਅਤੇ ਪੋਸ਼ਮਾਲ ਦਾ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਾ ਬਣਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਾਦੇ ਦੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਅਗੁਆਈ ਵਿਚ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਖਾਣਦਾਨੀ ਕਲਾ ਦੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਕ ਪਾਤਰ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਦੇ ਫੱਕੜ ਸੁਭਾਉ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਚਾਚੇ ਹਸਨੇ ਵਲੋਂ ਕਾਨੀ ਕਲਾ ਦੇ ਪੁਸ਼ਤੈਨੀ ਧੰਦੇ ਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਅਪਣਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਸੂਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਨੀ ਕਲਾ ਨੂੰ ਅਗੇ ਲੈ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਦੀ ਆਖਰੀ ਉਮੀਦ ਵਜੋਂ ਖਰਾ ਉਤਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਤਲਖ ਹਕੀਕਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਰੂਬਰੂ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਤਾਲੀਮੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਵੀ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਦੀ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਅਗੁਆਈ ਹੇਠ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸਕੂਲੀ ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਉੱਚ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਹਾਸਿਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਾਦੇ ਦੇ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਈ ਕਿੱਤੇ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਸਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਅਗੇ ਚਲਕੇ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਉਪਜੀਵਕਾ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ ਵੀ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਬਚਪਨ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭੂਆ ਸ਼ਾਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਧੀ ਪੋਸ਼ਮਾਲ ਵੱਲ ਆਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦੋਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਦੀ ਤਾਂਘ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਪਰ ਬਚਪਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਰੂਹਾਂ ਟੱਪ ਜਵਾਨੀ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਵੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਤਾਂਘ ਭਾਵੁਕ ਰੂਪ ਅਖਤਿਆਰ ਕਰ ਪਾਕ-ਸਾਫ਼ ਮੁਹੱਬਤੀ ਜਜ਼ਬਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਬਦਲ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਦੋਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਸਿੱਕ ਅਤੇ ਖਿੱਚ ਨੂੰ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਪਤਨੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਲਾਹ ਕਰਕੇ ਸ਼ਾਦਾਂ ਅਗੇ ਪੋਸ਼ਮਾਲ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਨਿਕਾਹ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਸਤਾਵ ਰਖਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਾਦਾਂ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਸਤਾਵ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਰਿਉਂ ਖਾਰਿਜ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਹੈ। ਪੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਨੇਕ ਸਖਸ਼ੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਮਾਲਕ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਦਾਂ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਹਸਨੇ ਦੇ ਕਾਦਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਪੋਸ਼ਮਾਲ ਲਈ ਬਿਹਤਰ ਵਿਕਲਪ ਸਮਝਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕਾਦਰੇ ਦੀ ਦੌਲਤ ਨਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਕਾਦਰੇ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਐਬਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਪਰਦਾ ਪਾ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਬਲਕਿ ਸ਼ਾਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਸੰਵੇਦਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਮਾਰ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਆਪ ਆਪਣੀ ਧੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੱਧਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਗੱਲ ਘੁਟ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਾਦਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਵਿਵਹਾਰ ਦਾ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਨੂੰ ਗਹਿਰਾ ਸਦਮਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਦਾ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਆਪਣੀ ਧੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਵਹਾਰ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਉਸ ਵਾਂਗ ਹੀ ਵਿਵਹਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਮੁਹੱਬਤ ਦੀ ਬਾਤ ਪਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਆਪਸੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੈਸੇ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਮੁਹੱਬਤ ਨੂੰ ਅਹਿਮ ਦਸਦਾ ਹੈ। ਨੀਰ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਜੰਨਤੀ ਦੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੰਵਾਦਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮਾਨਵੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਹੱਬਤ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਦੇ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਨੂੰ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ ਕਰਵਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

“ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਪਿਆਰ ਮੁਹੱਬਤ ਨੂੰ ਬੇਫਜ਼ੂਲ, ਬੇਮਾਅਨੀ ਤੇ ਮਾਮੂਲੀ ਜਿਹੀ ਗਲ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਮਨਫ਼ੀ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਜਿਉਂਦੇ ਜਾਗਦੇ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਵੀ ਮਰੀਆਂ ਰੂਹਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਭਟਕਦੇ ਫਿਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਕੋਈ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਪਿਆਰ ਮੁਹੱਬਤ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਹੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਇਨਸਾਨੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਰੀੜ੍ਹ ਦੀ ਹੱਡੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਚੀਜ਼ ਜੋੜਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਪਿਆਰ ਮੁਹੱਬਤ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਪਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੋਚਦਾ ਕਿ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹੀ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਤਾਂ ਬਲਕਿ ਸੋਚਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਹੋਣੀ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ।”⁵

ਇਸ ਨਿਕਾਹ ਨਾਲ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਤੋਂ ਉਪਰਾਮ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਥੇ ਪੋਸ਼ਮਾਲ ਵਿਆਹ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਭਾਵਾਤਮਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਕਾਦਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਸਵਿਕਾਰਦੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਿਸਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਵਜੋਂ ਉਹ ਅਕਸਰ ਕਾਦਰੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਤੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਬਣਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਉਮਰ ਭਰ ਇਸਦਾ ਦੁਖ ਹੰਢਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਤਲਖ ਹਕੀਕਤਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਘੁਲਦਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਾਦੇ ਦੀ ਰਹਿਨੁਮਾਈ 'ਚ ਨਵੇਂ ਮਿਆਰ ਅਤੇ ਦਿਸ਼ਾਵੇ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਕਾਨੀ ਕਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਹਿਬਰ ਬਣ, ਆਪਣਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਕਾਨੀਕਲਾ, ਕਾਨੀਕਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਨੀਗਾਮ ਦੀ ਬਿਹਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਮੁੱਧਿਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੀ ਭੈਣ ਗੁਲਾਮਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਆਹ ਇਕ ਸਰਦੇ ਪੁੱਜਦੇ ਘਰ ਵਿਚ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਲਾਮਾ ਦਾ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਾ ਵੀ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਦੀ ਦਾਨਸ਼ਵਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਨੇਕ ਸੁਭਾਉ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡੇ ਘਰ ਵਿਚ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਆਪਣੀ ਉਮਰ ਬਿਤਾ ਜਾਣ ਬਾਅਦ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਰਹਿਬਰ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਸਦਾ ਲਈ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਅਲਵਿਦਾ ਕਹਿ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਆਪਣੀ ਦਾਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਦਾਦੇ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਇੱਕਲਾਪਾ ਹੰਢਾਉਂਦੇ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਸਹਾਰਾ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਲੀ ਦੇ ਨਜ਼ਦੀਕੀ ਪਸ਼ਮ ਰੰਗਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਾਰੀਗਰ 'ਗੁਲਾਮਾ' ਦੀ ਧੀ 'ਪਾਸ਼ਾ' ਬਣਦੀ ਹੈ। 'ਪਾਸ਼ਾ' ਆਪਣੀ ਜ਼ਹੀਨ ਸਖਸ਼ੀਅਤ, ਦਿਆਨਤਦਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਹੱਬਤ ਨਾਲ ਲਵਰੇਜ਼ ਜਜ਼ਬਿਆਂ ਸਦਕਾ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਟੁਟੇ-ਤਿੜਕੇ ਵਜੂਦ ਨੂੰ ਨਵੇਂ ਸਿਰਿਉਂ ਸਾਂਭਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਰਜਦੀ ਹੈ। ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦਾਨਿਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ ਦਾ ਬਾਪ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸੁਖੀ ਵਸਦਾ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਕਿੱਤੇ ਪਖੋਂ ਕਈ ਚੁਣੌਤੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਸਾਹਮਣਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਪਾਸ਼ਾ ਉਸਦੇ ਮੋਢੇ ਨਾਲ ਮੋਢਾ ਜੋੜ ਖੜਦੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਮਿਲਕੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਔਕੜ ਨੂੰ ਸਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਪੂੰਜੀਵਾਦੀ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਅਹਿਮ ਪੱਖ ਮੁਨਾਫ਼ੇਖੋਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਮੁਨਾਫ਼ੇਖੋਰੀ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸਪਰਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਅਹਿਮੀਅਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਕਾਦਰਾ ਰਸ਼ੀਦ ਅਤੇ ਜਮਾਲ ਜੱਲਾ ਮੰਡੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸ਼ਾਤਿਰ ਖਿਡਾਰੀ ਬਣਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਖੁਦਗਰਜ਼ੀ ਦੀ ਸਿਖਰ ਤੱਕ ਅੱਪੜਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਲੋਕ, ਭੋਲੇ-ਭਾਲੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਕੀਮਤੀ ਕਾਨੀਸ਼ਾਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਮੂਲੀ ਜਿਹੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਲੈਕੇ ਅਗੇ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਕਈ ਗੁਣਾ ਮਹਿੰਗੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਵਿਚ ਵੇਚ ਕੇ ਮੁਨਾਫ਼ੇਖੋਰੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹ ਦਿਨੋਂ ਦਿਨ ਅਮੀਰ ਤੇ ਕਾਨੀਕਾਰ ਦਿਨੋਂ ਦਿਨ ਗਰੀਬ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਲਈ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਇਕ ਰਹਿਬਰ ਹੋ ਨਿਬੜਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਕਾਨੀਗਾਮ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਨੀਸ਼ਾਲਾਂ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਲਗਾਏ ਸੰਯੁਕਤ ਕਾਰਖਾਨੇ ਵਿਚ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਕਾਨੀਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦੀ ਬਿਹਤਰੀ ਲਈ ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਣਦਾ ਹੱਕ ਮਿਲ ਸਕੇ। ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਕਾਰਖਾਨੇ ਦਾ ਉਦਮ ਕਾਦਰੇ ਦੀ ਜੁੰਡਲੀ ਲਈ ਨਵੀਆਂ ਚੁਣੌਤੀਆਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਆਪਣੀ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਸਦਕਾ ਉਹ ਕਾਮਯਾਬੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਨਵੀਆਂ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲਾਂ ਤੈਅ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਦੌਰ ਵਿਚ ਭਲਾ ਉਸਦੀ ਇਹ ਕਾਮਯਾਬੀ ਕੋਈ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਬਰਦਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ। ਹਸਨੇ ਦੇ ਪੁਤਰ ਕਾਦਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਰਸ਼ੀਦ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਪੂੰਜੀਵਾਦੀ ਖਵਾਹੀਸ਼ਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਹਰ ਹੀਲੇ ਹਰਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਲਾਲਚ ਦੇਕੇ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਕੁੱਝ ਕਾਰੀਗਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੱਥ ਵਿਚ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਨਕਲੀ ਕਾਨੀਸ਼ਾਲਾਂ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਵੇਚਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਫੇਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਇਹ ਨਿਕਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਸਤੀ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਨਕਲੀ ਕਾਨੀਸ਼ਾਲ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਤੇਜ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਪੰਜਦ ਬਣਦੀ ਹੈ। ਰਸ਼ੀਦ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਦੀ ਜੁੰਡਲੀ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਫੈਕਟਰੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੱਥ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਮਸ਼ੀਨ ਨਾਲ ਨਕਲੀ ਸ਼ਾਲਾਂ ਬਣਾ ਉਤੇ ਮੇਡ ਇੰਨ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਦਾ ਠੱਪਾ ਲਗਾ ਮਹਿੰਗੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਵੇਚੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਵਰਗੇ ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰ ਤੇ ਮਿਹਨਤਕਸ਼ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਲਈ ਦੋ ਵਕਤ ਦੀ ਰੋਟੀ ਕਮਾਉਣੀ ਵੀ ਔਖੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨਾਵਲ ਦੀ ਇਹ ਵਸਤੂ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਲੱਗਭੱਗ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਹਸਤ ਕਲਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਲਾਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਜੈਨਰਲਾਇਜ਼ਡ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਪਭੋਗਤਾਵਾਦ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਦੌਰ ਵਿਚ ਹਸਤ ਕਲਾ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਹੋਵੇ, ਉਹ ਕਾਰੀਗਰਾਂ ਲਈ ਘਾਟੇ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਸੌਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਦਕਿ ਅਮੀਰ ਖਰੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਲਈ ਸਟੇਟਸ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਮੁਨਾਫ਼ੇ ਅਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲੀ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ।

ਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੋਰ ਤਣਾਉਪੂਰਨ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਰਸ਼ੀਦ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਚ ਹੀ ਸੰਨ ਲਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਖਾਨੇ ਲਈ ਪਸ਼ਮ ਰੰਗਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਸਹੁਰੇ ਗੁਲਾਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਗੁਲਾਮਾ ਪੂੰਜੀਵਾਦੀ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹੋ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਕਰੀਬੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੂੰਹ ਮੋੜ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਦੌੜ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸਤਫ਼ਾ ਲੱਗਭੱਗ ਹਾਰ ਹੀ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਇਥੇ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਸਵਾਲ ਵੀ ਖੜਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੀ ਇਸ ਦੌੜ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਜੇਤੂ ਵੀ ਹੈ? ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਨੀਰ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ

ਜੇ ਉਸਨੇ ਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਅਗੇ ਮੁਸਤਫੇ ਨੂੰ ਟੁੱਟਦਾ ਦਿਖਾਕੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਕਰੂਰਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਯਥਾਰਥਕ ਸੁਰ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਸਾਰੇ ਘਟਨਾਕ੍ਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਹਸਨੇ, ਕਾਦਰੇ ਰਸ਼ੀਦ ਅਤੇ ਜਮਾਲ ਜੱਲੋ ਵਰਗੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਸੰਤੁਸ਼ਟ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਖੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿਖਾਇਆ। ਪੂੰਜੀਵਾਦੀ ਕਦਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਇਆ ਹਸਨਾ ਜਿਸ ਪੈਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਇਕਲਿਆਂ ਛੱਡ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸੇ ਪੈਸਿਆਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਸਦੇ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਕਾਦਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਰਸ਼ੀਦ ਹਸਨੇ ਨੂੰ ਛੱਡ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਰਸ਼ੀਦ, ਕਾਦਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਸੋਚੀ ਸਮਝੀ ਚਾਲ ਅਧੀਨ ਪੁਨੇ ਰਾਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਾਹਗੀਰ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਘਰ ਦੀ ਸਾਰੀ ਦੌਲਤ 'ਤੇ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ। ਜਮਾਲ ਜੱਲਾ ਵੀ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਦੀ ਆਤ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਦਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਗਫ਼ਲਤ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਜੀਉਣ ਲਈ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਉਸਦੀ ਦੀ ਅਯਾਸ਼ੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਵੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ। ਆਪਣੀ ਹਵਸ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲਈ ਕਸਬੀ ਔਰਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੋਠਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਖੁਆਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਕਾਦਰਾ ਆਖਿਰ ਸ਼ਾਹਬਾਨੋ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਕਾਹ ਕਰਵਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਪੌਸ਼ਮਾਲ ਨੂੰ ਤਲਾਕ ਦੇ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪੌਸ਼ਮਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੋਹਰੇ ਹਸਨੇ ਦੀ ਦੇਖਭਾਲ ਤੇ ਉਸਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਦੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਆਪਣੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦੀਨ ਦੁਖੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਦੇ ਲੇਖੇ ਲਾ ਲੰਮਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਹਸਪਤਾਲ ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਓਲਡ ਹਾਊਸ ਵਿਚ ਨੌਕਰੀ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਾਹਬਾਨੋ ਦੀ ਕੁਖੋਂ ਜੰਮਿਆ ਅਯਾਸ਼ ਕਾਦਰੇ ਦਾ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਰਮਜ਼ਾਨ ਵੀ ਅਯਾਸ਼ ਹੀ ਨਿਕਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਹੀ ਚਚੇਰੀ ਭੈਣ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ ਦੇ ਜਬਰ ਜਿਨਾਹ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਰੋਧ ਵਿਚ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ ਹੱਥੋਂ ਹੀ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕੁਲ ਮਿਲਾ ਕੇ ਇਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਹੀ ਮਿਲ ਜੁਲ ਕੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਕਤਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਨੇ ਤੇ ਅਸੰਤੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਦੀ ਅੱਗ ਹੀ ਫਕਦੇ ਨੇ। ਇਥੇ ਇਕ ਗੱਲ ਧਿਆਨ ਦੇਣ ਯੋਗ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਨਾਵਲੀ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤ ਦੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰਦੇ ਮੁਸਤਫਾ ਦੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਅਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੁਸਤਫੇ ਦਾ ਕਿਰਦਾਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਇਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਕ ਸੂਤਰ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਗੋਂ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਕ ਸੂਝ ਤੋਂ ਉਠਾ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਪੜਾਵਾਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਪੜਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਬੂਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਪੂਰੇ ਨਾਵਲ ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਪਾਤਰ ਵਾਂਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਉਭਰਦਾ ਸਗੋਂ ਬੇਬਸ ਪਾਤਰ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਪੇਸ਼ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਦਕਿ ਪੋਸ਼ਮਾਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਸ਼ਾ ਮੁਸਤਫੇ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਹਾਲਾਤਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਬਹਿਤਰ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਨਜਿੱਠਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

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ਨਾਵਲ ਚਸ਼ਮਿ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ ਦੇ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤਕ ਕੈਨਵਸ ਉੱਤੇ ਸਿਰਜਿਆ ਦੂਸਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਚਿਤਰ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਦੀ ਸੰਕਟ ਗ੍ਰਸਤ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹੈ। ਨਾਵਲਕਾਰਾ ਨੇ ਨਾਵਲ ਦਾ ਆਰੰਭ ਹੀ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਦੌਰ ਦੀ ਹਥਿਆਰਬੰਦ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੀ ਭੇਂਟ ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ਮੁਸਤਫਾ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਦਾਨਿਸ਼ ਦੇ ਦੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਅਬਾਬੀਲ ਦੇ ਉਸ ਸੰਕਟ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮੂਰਤੀਮਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਬੇਟੇ ਜਿਉਂ ਹੀ ਉਡਣਯੋਗ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਉਹ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਛੱਡ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਉਡਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਮੁੜ ਪਰਤਦੇ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੇ ਪਿਛੇ ਮਾਂ ਲਈ ਛੱਡ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਇਕ ਗਹਿਰੀ ਉਦਾਸੀ। ਨਾਵਲ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਇਸ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸਦਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਦਾ ਦੁੱਖ ਹੰਡਾ ਰਹੇ ਮੁਸਤਫਾ ਦੀ ਮਾਤਮੀ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਨਾਲ ਹੈ। ਨੀਰ ਅਬਾਬੀਲ ਦੀ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮੁਸਤਫਾ ਵਰਗੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਦਾਸ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਆਨਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਜਵਾਨ ਬੱਚੇ ਦਹਿਸ਼ਤ ਦੇ ਰਾਹ ਗੁਆਚ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੁੜਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਆਸ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ ਅਬਾਬੀਲ ਦੇ ਬੇਟੇ ਦੇ ਉੱਡ ਜਾਣ ਅਤੇ ਦਾਨਿਸ਼ ਦੇ ਮਰ ਜਾਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਦੀਆਂ ਉਦਾਸ ਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਇਕ ਸਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀਆਂ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਬੇਟੇ ਦਾ ਉੱਡਣਾ ਸਹਿਜ ਵੀ ਹੈ, ਸੁਭਾਵਕ ਵੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਨੀਵਾਰਤਾ ਵੀ। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਦਾਨਿਸ਼ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਦੇ ਦੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਅਬਾਬੀਲ ਦੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮੂਰਤੀਮਾਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਅਤਾਰਕਿਕ, ਗੈਰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਗੈਰ ਯਥਾਰਥਕ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ। ਖੈਰ, ਕਾਇਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਮਸਲਾ ਇਸ ਨਾਵਲ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸਰੋਕਾਰ ਹੀ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਹੈਰਾਨੀ ਇਸ ਗਲ ਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੁੱਢਲੇ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਇਹ ਮਸਲਾ ਲਗਭਗ ਅਖੀਰ ਤੱਕ ਨਾਵਲੀ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣਦਾ। ਮਸੂੱਚੇ ਨਾਵਲ ਵਿਚ ਨੀਰ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਅੰਦਰ ਪੂੰਜੀਵਾਦੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਚੜਤ ਨੂੰ ਉਭਾਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਥੇ ਨੀਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਨਿਰਾਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਗਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਉਸਨੇ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਸੰਕਟ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਵਾਸਤਵਿਕ ਕਾਰਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਖੋਂ ਪਰੋਖੇ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਹਥਿਆਰਬੰਦ ਲਹਿਰ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਵਲ ਰਿਆਸਤੀ ਲੀਡਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੱਤਾ ਭੁੱਖ, ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਮੋਲਾਣਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਜਨੂੰਨ, ਮੌਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਸਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੂੰਜੀਵਾਦੀ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਦਰੇ, ਜਮਾਲ ਜੱਲੋ ਅਤੇ ਰਸ਼ੀਦ ਵਰਗੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਗੈਰ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਖਰੀਦੋ-ਫ਼ਰੋਸ਼ਤ ਚੋਂ ਮੁਨਾਫ਼ੇ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਹੀ ਨਾਵਲੀ ਚਿਤਰਪੱਟ 'ਤੇ ਉਲੀਕਿਆ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ:

“ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਤੇ ਮਜ਼ਹਬੀ ਦੋ ਧਾਰਾਵਾਂ ਕਿਤੇ ਰਲ ਕੇ ਤੇ ਕਿਤੇ ਮੁਖਾਲਿਫ਼ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਇੱਕ ਨਵਾਂ ਤੂਫ਼ਾਨ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਸਰਗਰਮ ਹੋ ਉੱਠੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਕੁੱਝ ਉਹ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੀਨ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਇਸ ਧਰਤੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਇਕ ਨਵਾਂ ਝੰਡਾ ਗੱਡਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇੱਕ ਉਹ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਧਰਾਤਲ ਉੱਤੇ ਇਸ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਜੰਗ ਬਾਅਦ ਨਵਾਂ ਨਕਸ਼ਾ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ ਤੇ ਕੁੱਝ ਉਹ ਵੀ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਇਸ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਤਬਾਹੀ ਚੋਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੁਨਾਫ਼ਾ ਕਮਾਉਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਨਿੱਤ ਨਵੀਆਂ ਯੋਜਨਾਵਾਂ ਸੋਚ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ।”

ਆਪਣੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤਕ ਕਥਨ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਵਲਕਾਰਾ ਬੜੇ ਹੀ ਸਹਿਜ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਦੇ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਸੰਕਟ ਲਈ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਸਿਆਸਤਦਾਨਾਂ, ਇਸਲਾਮਿਕ ਜੱਥੇਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਕੁੱਝ ਕੁ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਪੂੰਜੀਪਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਠਹਿਰਾ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਨਾਵਲ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਮਸਲੇ

ਦੀ ਗੰਭੀਰਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਰਾਟਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਨਾਵਲਕਾਰਾ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਪਾਸੜ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਇਸ ਅਤਿ ਜਟਿਲ ਤੇ ਸੰਵੇਦਨਸ਼ੀਲ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਮਸਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਉਸਦੀ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਸਮਝ, ਅਨੁਭਵ ਅਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਸੰਦੇਹ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਦਾਨਿਸ਼ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਦੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਦੇ ਮਾਤਮੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਨਾਵਲ ਆਰੰਭ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਦਾਨਿਸ਼ ਦੇ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਚੁਕਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਯਥਾਰਥਕ ਪੱਧਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤਕ ਕਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੋਈ ਉਹ ਇਹ ਸਾਬਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਆਹਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦਾਨਿਸ਼ ਵਰਗੇ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਕੁੱਝ ਕੁ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ-ਮੋਲਾਣਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਰਗਲਾਏ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਚੁੱਕ ਇਕ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਰਹਿਤ ਲੜਾਈ ਲੜ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਮਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਦਾਨਿਸ਼ ਦਾ ਲਹਿਰ ਤੋਂ ਮੋਹ ਭੰਗ ਹੋ ਵਾਪਸ ਪਰਤ ਆਉਣਾ, ਮੁੜ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਵਾਂਗ ਜਿਉਣ ਦੀ ਲਾਲਸਾ ਵਿਅਕਤ ਕਰਨਾ, ਦਾਨਿਸ਼ ਦੇ ਕਤਲ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਕਾਦਰੇ ਦੀ ਜੁੱਡਲੀ ਦੀ ਸਾਜਿਸ਼ ਦਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਆਦਿ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵੇਰਵੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਨੀਰ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਪੱਧਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਆਪਣਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਆਪਣਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਲੜਾਈ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਹੋਈ ਇਸ ਮਸਲੇ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਦੂਸਰੀ ਧਿਰ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਟੇਟ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਹੀ ਪਾਸਾ ਵੱਟ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਨੀਰ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਧਰੇ ਵੀ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਅਤੇ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀਅਤ ਦੇ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਮਸਲਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਵਾਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਬੋਧਨ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਚੁਕਣ 'ਤੇ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਅੱਜ ਲੱਗਭੱਗ ਤੀਹ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਹਥਿਆਰਬੰਦ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਬਾਦਸਤੂਰ ਜਾਰੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਡੰਬਨਾ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤਕ ਖਲਾਅ ਅਤੇ ਉਣਤਾਈ ਨੀਰ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਨਾਵਲ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰਗਾਹ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਸੀ। ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਆਲੋਚਕ ਡਾ. ਸੁਰਜੀਤ ਦੀ ਟਿਪਣੀ ਚਸ਼ਮਿ ਬੁਲਬੁਲ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਢੁਕਵੀਂ ਹੈ ਕਿ:

“ਨਾਵਲ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਟੇਟ ਦੇ ਸਰੂਪ, ਇਸ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਬਹੁਗਿਣਤੀਵਾਦ, ਸ਼ੋਸ਼ਣਕਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ

ਤਸ਼ੱਦਦੀ ਸਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ।”

ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਟੇਟ ਦੀ ਕਰੂਰਤਾ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਨਾਵਲ ਵਿਚ ਪੂਰਨ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਮੌਣ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਮਸਲੇ ਦੀ ਅਹਿਮ ਧਿਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਟੇਟ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਹੀ ਮਨਫੀ ਕਰ ਦੇਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਨਾਵਲਕਾਰਾ ਦਾ ਸੰਕੀਰਣ ਨਜ਼ਰੀਆ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸੰਵੇਦਨਸ਼ੀਲ ਤੇ ਵਿਵਾਦਾਸਪੱਦ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਕਿ ਅੰਤਰਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਮੰਚਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਵੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਧੀਨ ਹੈ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਟੇਟ ਨੂੰ ਕਲੀਨ ਚਿੱਟ ਦੇ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਨਾਵਲ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਸੰਕਟ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਪੇਸ਼ਕਾਰੀ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਵਾਂਝਾ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮੇਰਾ ਮੰਨਣਾ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਨੀਰ ਇਸ ਨਾਵਲ ਵਿਚ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਸੰਕਟ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰੀ ਸੁਹਿਰਦਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਵੇਦਨਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਨੀਰ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤਕ ਸੰਗਠਨ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਵਲ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਧਰਾਤਲ ਉੱਤੇ ਵਾਪਰਦੀਆਂ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ-ਆਰਿਥਕ ਤਬਦੀਲੀਆਂ ਕਾਰਨ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਸਕ੍ਰਿਤਿਕ ਸਾਂਝ ਦੇ ਤਿੜਕਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਤੱਕ ਮਹਿਦੂਦ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਕਿਧਰੇ ਵੱਧ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਮੰਨੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ। ਭਾਸ਼ਾਈ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਬੇਹਦ ਮਜਬੂਤ ਇਸ ਨਾਵਲ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਉਣਤਾਈਆਂ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਅੱਖੋਂ ਪਰੋਖੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀਆਂ। ਕਈ ਵੇਰਵੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਨਾਵਲੀ ਸੰਗਠਨ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਫਿਟ ਬੈਠਦੇ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਬੈਠਦੇ ਤੇ ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਬਹੁਤ ਉਪਰੇ ਲੱਗਦੇ ਹਨ। ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਪਾਤਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਗਤ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰੀ ਲੋਕਗੀਤ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਗਾਉਣਾ, ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਵਰਗੇ ਕਾਟੜ ਇਸਲਾਮਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਾਂਤ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਤਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਖੁਲੇ ਆਮ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਪੀਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਪੀਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਚਿਅਰ ਕਰਨਾ, ਅਬਾਵੀਲ ਦਾ ਘਰ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਨਾਜ ਚੁਗਣਾ (ਇਹ ਇਕ ਜੰਗਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਸਾਹਾਰੀ ਪੰਛੀ ਹੈ), ਪਾਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਦੇ ਵੇਰਵਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਸਹੀ ਅਨੁਪਾਤ ਜਾਂ ਇਕਸਾਰ ਨਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਆਦਿ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਨਾਵਲ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਰਜਣਾਤਮਕ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਉਸ ਮੁਕਾਮ ਤੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਇਹ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ।

ਹਵਾਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਟਿਪਣੀਆਂ

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GUIDELINES

In the present scenario it has become pertinent for institutions of higher learning to provide a platform where all the disciplines are articulated in a manner where they have their own clearly demarcated space and yet have room for dialogue, collaboration, contestation, confirmation or negation across disciplines and this necessitates the multidisciplinary approach of the journal *Researcher*.

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Researcher is a bi-annual, multidisciplinary and refereed (peer-reviewed) Journal of University of Jammu that seeks to provide a specialized academic platform and reference for the dissemination of research in the broad areas of academic disciplines including Science and Technology, Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences and Business Studies. This includes both qualitative and quantitative empirical work, besides theoretical and conceptual contributions. The ambit of the Journal is international and submissions are subject to blind peer review process. The editorial policy of the Journal is to invite the research articles from academicians, researchers, policy makers and practitioners. The publication is intended for readers including litterateurs, academicians, educationists, professionals, policy makers, research scholars and students.

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 - b) Relevance;
 - c) Quality of research;
 - d) Research contribution and applied significance.
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This Journal operates a double blind review process. All contributions are initially assessed by the Editorial Board for suitability for the Journal. Research article deemed suitable is sent to a minimum of two independent expert reviewers to assess the quality of the paper. The Editorial Board is responsible for the final decision regarding acceptance or rejection of research article based on the reviewers' comments. The Editorial Board's decision shall be final.

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- ◆ The research article should not contain footnotes. References should be placed at the end of the research articles after the figures and tables. The references should mention

only those sources, which are cited in the text of the research article.

- ◆ The first paragraph of any section, including the introduction, should not be indented. Major headings should be left justified and bold with one line above and one line below the heading to separate it from the text.
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 - ii. MLA Style for Arts and Humanities.
 - iii. ACS/APS/IEEE for Science and Technology.
 - iv. Standard International/Indian Style approved by the University of Jammu for any other subject not covered above.

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✓ **Rankings:** Please use the symbol (✓) to indicate your assessment

(5= Excellent, 4= Good, 3= Average, 2= Poor, 1= Very Poor, NA= Not applicable)

Sl.No.	Key Evaluation Parameters	1	2	3	4	5	N.A
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2.	Contemporaneity of the subject						
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LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Swapnesh S. Rangnekar	Department of Environmental Studies, S.I.W.S. N.R. Swamy College, Mumbai e-mail: swapnesh.10@gmail.com
Manisha Nitin Kulkarni	Department of Zoology, Institute of Science, Madam Cama Road, Fort, Mumbai -32, e-mail: harmonium.mnk@gmail.com
Parmil Kumar,	Department of Statistics University of Jammu, Jammu 180006, India e-mail: parmil@yahoo.com
Ankita Sharma	Department of Statistics University of Jammu, Jammu 180006, India e-mail: ankitareasi@gmail.com
Shamshad Rasool	Department of Statistics University of Jammu, Jammu 180006, India e-mail: srasool92@gmail.com
Shikha Bharti	Department of Environmental Science, University of Jammu, Jammu, 180006. J&K, India e-mail: shikha.02012@gmail.com
Assadullah Sheikh	Department of Environmental Sciences, University of Jammu, Jammu, 180006. J&K, India e-mail: asad.rehm@gmail.com
Anil Pawar	Department of Zoology, Dav University Jalandhar, 144012. Punjab, India
Jai Bhawani Singh	Department of Political Science University of Jammu Jammu -180006 India, e-mail: jaibhawani94@gmail.com
Arvind kumar	Department of Political Science University of Jammu Jammu -180006 India e-mail: ariyanarvind94@gmail.com
Dr Vivek Sharma	Department of Lifelong Learning/ M.A Rural Development University of Jammu, Jammu- e-mail: sharmavivek19@gmail.com
Dr. Ajay kumar Chalotra	Department of Commerce University of Jammu, 180006, (J&K) India e-mail: akajay002@gmail.com
Pritam Singh	Department of Punjabi University of Jammu Jammu -180006 India e-mail: pssonu2003@gmail.com

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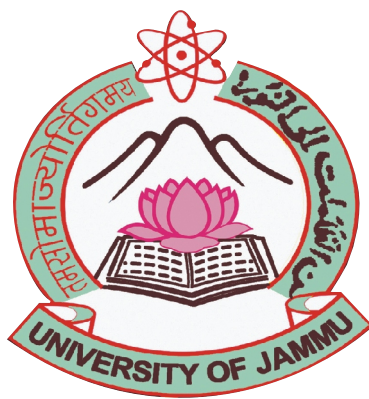
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