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- 03 ਨਸ਼ਾਖੋਰੀਯ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਇਕਬਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਡਾ. ਜੋਤੀ ਸ਼ਰਮਾ
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PRABODH

An International Journal of Languages and Social Sciences



PRABODH

International Journal of Languages and Social Sciences

(A Peer-Reviewed Yearly Journal)
ISSN: 2349-0179
Volume 5, 2020



An official Publication of
Faculty of Social Sciences & Languages
Desh Bhagat University
Amloh Road, Mandi Gobindgarh Fatehgarh Sahib-147301
Punjab, INDIA

Year of Publication:2020
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SOCIAL SNOBBERY AND PRUDERY IN MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCES IN EMMA OF JANE AUSTEN

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Abstract

In the Victorian society, wealth and property played vital role in the matrimonial relationships. Money decided the settlement of marriage as women were crazy to marry a rich man. In the Victorian Age, England had become industrial and money culture infected all the people, rich and the poor. Wealth was considered an important factor for social status and social mobility. All marriage proposals were decided by money and the trend towards dowry had increased. It was very difficult for the girls to marry young boys without money. No wonder being the true critic and interpreter of society, Jane Austen took up the themes of love, sex money and wealth in her novels. Wealth plays dominant role in deciding the fate of women in the world of Jane Austen. Women characters of Jane Austen are intoxicated with money and are snobbish and hypocrite. In the marriages of Elizabeth, Jane, Harriet, Anne and Fanny money plays a vital role. Austen's heroines don't marry for money but they are always crazy to find a rich husband. Emma has a good fortune, is always respectable" (69).

Keywords: Money, Matrimonial, Interpreter, Love, Sex, Marriages, Snobbery, Dowry, Wealth

Jane Austen wrote Emma focusing on the themes of love, marriage and money, presenting Emma as the main heroine of the novel. The critics are of the view that Jane Austen had high opinion of her heroine as she stated that Emma is the main protagonist "whom no one but myself will much like" (126). The reviewers are of the view that Jane Austen considered Emma as her own daughter. Austen's niece was born when she completed her classic novel Emma. Austen was anxious to see the baby as she expressed: "As I wish very much to see your Jemima, I am sure you will like to see my Emma" (207). Emma is certainly a different and unique character as she is involved in the match making business and the plot unfolds many complexities in the matrimonial relationships. Emma belongs to the elite class and has an annual income of 20000 pounds and her economic security gives her freedom to indulge in match fixing games. Barbara Z. Thaden describes the world of Emma thus:

Readers of Austen's three previously published novels would automatically be alerted that they are now in a different world or rather the same world viewed from an entirely different perspective. Emma is at the pinnacle of her society, with no inducement to marry or to change her position, unlike Elinor Dashwood, Elizabeth Bennet, and Fanny Price. (48)

Emma enjoys great status in the society of Highbury because of the power of wealth of her parents. She is the sole mistress of the huge

estate of her father. Yet, "by giving her heroine such perfection through the possession of every material thing and every social prerogative that ever a polite person could want," According to Nancy Armstrong: "Austen creates deficiency on another level" (152-53). The power of wealth adversely affects the behavior of Emma who begins intervening in the life others. She has plenty free time and she uses her free time in imagining her own world and dreaming to shape the life of others. Terry Eagleton finds a connection between the wealth of Emma and her imagination:

There is, thus, an indirect route from being extremely well-heeled to bring morally irresponsible, which is the opposite of the paternalistic ethic; there is doctrine that wealth and high rank bring with them responsibilities to others. Emma is at the summit of her society, but exactly because of this she is a kind of transgressor. (Eagleton 112)

Emma becomes a snob with her power of money and wealth and she becomes responsible in ruining the life of many characters in the novel. Mr. Knightley, the future husband of Emma is also trapped in the vicious cycle of Emma's deviant behaviour. Emma is mad in thinking of strict class structure and believing in class superiority. Duckworth argues that "It is Emma's snobbery and instance on a strict social hierarchy that readers dislike most about her" (Duckworth 150). Jane Austen hated snobbery and it is evidenced in her novel she has exposed

and ridiculed her heroine Emma whose journey is a tale of gradual diminution and deflation of self. Most of the women characters in the novel are snobbish, mean and hypocrite. They display their social arrogance as they manipulate many things to torture others. Emma uses snobbery as a social weapon to form relations with others. Emma is blind to her flaws and she thinks that she is always right. The plot of the novel is narrated by Emma and all events are unfolded through her eyes: “readers “travel with Emma rather than stand against her” (Booth 97).

Interestingly, Emma is examined as “the most flawed of all Austen's heroines” (Koppel 25). Many critics have called her anti-heroine of Jane Austen because all her actions ruin the characters in the novel. She doesn't make any positive contribution to the society. She got education from a governess whose “mildness of her temper had hardly allowed her to impose any restraint” (Austen 5). She is a typical wealthy woman and her education is also typical of wealthy women of high class:

The real evils indeed of Emma's situation were the power of having rather too much her own way, and disposition to think a little too well of herself . . . The danger, however, was at present so unperceived that they did not by any means rank as misfortunes with her. (5)

Emma is manipulative in her approach to her friend Harriet. She misguides Harriet who wants to know whether she should accept the proposal of Robert Martin or not. Emma sees everything through her green eyes and despises Martin because of his low caste. She thinks that he is below the standard and Harriet can get a better match than Robert Martin. Emma misguides Harriet to reject Robert Martin. Her manipulation ruins the life of Harriet. Emma acts like an anti-heroine and look like the social enemy in the novel. Her wealth becomes a source of psychological tortures to other people living in Highbury. Emma's wealth results in “doing just what she liked” (Austen 5). “Austen's other novels reserve such freedom and selfishness for unsympathetic characters . . . characters hopelessly incapable of regeneration, such as Mrs. Ferrars, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, and Sir Walter Eliot” (Thaden 48 and 49).. Austen “has undertaken the much more difficult task of incorporating and correcting snobbery within the character of the heroine

herself” (Shannon 644).

The sins of Emma are social and moral and Jane Austen gives an interesting story of her growth and loss of self. She doesn't understand her moral responsibilities in accepting the lower class people. She is often aggressive and doesn't like anyone to go against her actions. Her dogmatic behaviour is the main flaw of her personality. Austen has depicted her journey from a snobbish girl to a mature woman of society. Many critics have called her an unfeeling snob. Emma presents herself as the chief caretaker of her father as she takes all decisions independently and her father agrees what she says. She looks after her father and keeps him happy and delighted. Jane Austen observes thus:

Although Emma, dearly loves her father, they don't have interests of the resources in common, the playfulness of wit and the bite of argument: her father is somewhere else. He is obsessed to the point of looniness with his wealth; he lies in terror of the weather. (16)

Emma often cancels her appointments in order to keep her father happy and to give him the company. She gives the same devotion to her brother-in laws, sister and nephew's and is very popular in the family being sociable and sensible. Mrs. Weston has high praise for Emma: “Where shall we see a better daughter, or kinder sister, or a truer friend?” (Austen 32). She has tender relations with her father. In Highbury, she enjoys respect and status as everybody loves her and regards her as the chief advisor, guide and caretaker.

Whenever there is any problem, people come to her for help, support and advice. She sends food to Mrs. And Miss Bates who is the widow of a vicar and her unmarried daughter. All women of Highbury has special consideration for Emma. The clergy belongs to the upper class. He got education from Oxford which gave him a good job. Emma gives full support to the Bates and after the death of the Vicar, they are in poverty. Emma seriously thinks of the future of Bats and carries out the acts of charity in Highbury. She often emerges as the Queen of her village. She knows that she belongs to the upper class and her actions are in the nature of feudalism. She represents the powers of feudalism and it is expected from her to look after the interests of the poor and the downtrodden. In the days of

feudalism, the landlords spent time and money to look after the poor and the unfortunate. Thus she performs her feudal responsibilities and exercises her class privileges: : “the ability to exercise patronage, to offer charity, and generally to aid others—in brief, to encompass them as dependents—is a key mark of social superiority” (Segal 700).

Emma is free from vanity about her appearance and Emma writes that Emma is “handsome” (5). She is a pleasing character and Mr. Knightly has also special respect for her. He remarks:, “Considering how very handsome she is, she appears to be little occupied with it; her vanity lies another way” (32). Emma is rightly assessed by Knightly as the narrator informs:, “Mr. Knightley, in fact, was one of the few people who could see faults in Emma Woodhouse, and the only one who ever told her of them” (9-10). Mr. Knightley observes that the character of Emma is the mirror in the novel who gives her own analysis of other people. In spite of the true analysis of Emma, she is full of contradictions and flaws and Mr. Knightley “offers the best reflection of her character. I have a very sincere interest in Emma.... There is an anxiety, a curiosity in what one feels for Emma. I wonder what will become of her” (35). Knightley knows that she suffers from many deficiencies; he has no courage to point out the defects of Emma directly. She is presented thus: “She was not much deceived as to her own skill either as an artist or a musician, but she was not unwilling to have others deceived, or sorry to know her reputation for accomplishment often higher than it deserved” (35-36). Emma is proud that she is a talented lady; the best woman in the Highbury. She does not accept her shortcomings and feels comfortable in dominating others and intervening in the personal life of the people of Highbury.

The main focus of Jane Austen is to depict the journey of a woman who goes downhill because of her stupid illusions and dreams and fruitless experiments. The main focus of the novelist is to depict the development of a woman from immaturity to self-knowledge. While “All of Austen's works are concerned with the relationship of love and virtue,” Anne Ruderman observes thus: “this connection is especially important in Emma, as the heroine's education is a central theme” (271). Elaine

Hoffman Baruch observes that Emma is a Bildungsroman referring to “education of the hero who is brought to a high level of consciousness through a series of experiences that lead to his development, yet many of the great novels that deal with women treat similar themes” (35). Every experience of Emma lands her to untold miseries and clearly contributes to her education and personal growth.

E.N. Hayes observes that Emma is a “vain, stupid, selfish little fool” (17). He further argues that Emma is not serious about learning and to change her snobbish behavior, “the modern reader to evaluate our society, or how to be and move in our world” (20). Hayes says that “The damning flaw of Jane Austen's novels is that the author never participates in the lives of her characters, never feels for them, only watches them and smiles a vapid, [Mona Lisa] smile” (19). The modern critics do not like Emma for her vain and snobbish behavior. Jane Austen narrates the premise of Emma and how the heroine should “be and move in our world.” Jane Austen is seriously concerned with the education of her heroine. Hayes' point of view: “Far from having nothing worthwhile to say to modern men and women, through the discrepancy between appearance and reality she reminds us of human fallibility and the need for modesty, unselfishness, and compassion” (650). Jane Austen wrote this novel in the Victorian age and she was aware of the morality of the Victorians. Emma is a case study of snobbery and she needs practical experience. She has been living in the world of fancy and fantasy. Jane Austen has given an authentic view of her character, morals and motives.

The first important stroke of her debacle is dramatized through her association and her match fixing venture with her friend Harriet Smith. Her associations with Miss Bates and her adventures with Mr. Elton and Jane Fairfax reveal her poor understanding of human nature. In each of these relationships, Emma is a failure; she uses her snobbish manipulations and display her snobbish tendencies. Her shallow standards put her in embarrassing situation. The novel begins with the wedding of Miss Taylor and the loneliness of Emma. She has married a rich widower and has moved to Rendalls for good. Her husband has purchased “little estate” near Highbury (13). The guests

leave Woodhouse and Emma and her father are alone in “gentle sorrow”. The happiness of Mrs. Weston is a loss for Emma as she sits in “mournful thought” brooding “what she had lost” (4). Emma is free from all restraints and boundaries. Miss Harriet fills her void and she finds in her a true and dependable friend. She tries to forget Miss Taylor and begins enjoying the company of Harriet. Emma is proud of her skills as she is proud of her competence to manage Harriet's future. She becomes the main director of the drama of wedding of Miss. Harriet. Emma is sure that her friendship with Harriet will be fruitful for both of them. Emma chooses Harriet Smith who is a sweet, docile and naïve girl. She has no practical experience of life as she fully depends on Emma who becomes her friend and the real mentor.

Emma sees Harriet as “a girl who wanted only a little more knowledge and elegance to be quite perfect. She would notice her; she would improve her; she would detach her from bad acquaintance, and introduce her into good society; she would form her opinions and her manners” (Austen 19). The critics observe that Emma is not finding a friend in Harriet but she is chosen a doll to play to pass her time and to break her alienation. She is used as tool for her amusement and she loses no time to teach her social respectability. She intends to make her a lady under the pretense of teaching mannerism to Harriet and to bring refinement in her. For Emma this was “certainly a very kind undertaking; highly becoming her own situation in life, her leisure, and powers” (19). Emma misuses her power, wealth and social status to elevate Harriet unnecessarily. Her actions are the pastime pleasures of a feudal lady. She plans to upgrade the class status of Harriet in vain because Harriet is unable to maintain her elite class status. Emma justifies her choice as Jane Austen writes: “Harriet certainly was not clever, but she had a sweet docile, grateful disposition; was totally free from conceit; and only desiring to be guided by anyone she looked up to” (21). Mr. Knightley comments thus:

He did not make “due allowance for the influence of a strong passions at war with all interested motives. Mr. Knightley saw no such passions, and of course thought nothing of its effects; but she saw too much of it feel a doubt of it overcoming any hesitations that a reasonable

prudence might originally suggest. (59)

Harriet spent a happy summer with Martin before she met Emma. She met with the farming family of Martin Smith. She also was happy to meet two daughters and a son and the natural environment. Harriet is greatly impressed by the amiable personality of Martin and the supportive nature of his family. She shares all her experiences with Emma. But Emma is not convinced and wants Harriet to think and dream big. She has poor opinion about the farming community and wants Harriet to have a good and prosperous husband belonging to an upper class. She informs Harriet that, “I might hope to be useful to their families in some way or other. But a farmer can need none of my help, and is therefore in one sense as much above my notice as in every other he is below it”(24).

Mr. Knightley believes that Martin is good boy and there is nothing wrong with the match of Harriet and Martin because he is “open, straight forward, and very well judging” (47), Emma thinks that Mr. Martin is only a farming boy and a working class person, he will not be able to give real happiness to Harriet Certainly he is below her social consideration. Emma is selfish because she thinks that if Harriet married Martin, she would not be able to continue friendship with a low class woman. She wants to determine Harriet's romantic future. She wants to take the risk and plays with the emotions and sentiments of Harriet. The snobbish feelings of Emma motivate her to break the romantic association of Harriet with Martin.

Mr. Martin sends the marriage proposal to Harriet and this upsets Emma who uses all her power and position to put water on the wedding prospects of Harriet. Emma motivates Harriet to reject the marriage proposal and impresses upon her to follow her advice. Harriet begs for Emma's advice but Emma states, “I shall not give you any advice, Harriet. I will have nothing to do with it. This is a point which you must settle with your own feelings”(42). She cleverly asks Harriet if Mr. Martin is the “most agreeable man she has ever been in company with” in a tone of sarcasm. She feels bad but soon she comes under the spell of Emma and forgets everything about the proposal of Martin. Emma expresses her snobbery thus, “You would have thrown yourself out of all good society! I must have given you up....I would not

have visited Mrs. Robert Martin, of Abbey Mill Farm. Now I am secure of you forever”(43).

Harriet has no say in the matter as she is trapped in the social class consciousness of Emma. She puts faith in Emma and rejects the marriage proposal of Martin. She belongs to the lower class and she has no courage to go against the wishes of her rich friend. Emma is highly imaginative and takes Harriet's social position thus: “There can be no doubt of [Harriet] being a gentleman's daughter'” (25). Mr. Knightley is shocked to know about the rejection of proposal and feels very bad because a good match is lost. Being snobbish and impractical, Emma justifies her wrong decision and argues with Mr. Knightley claiming to be right. Mr. Knightley tells her that she is wrong as she has poor knowledge of matrimonial alliances. Harriet is a poor girl, she cannot afford to give huge dowry. In the Victorian age, two options were available to women; either give huge dowry and marry a good boy or join nunnery. Money and wealth decided the matrimonial alliances. Mr. Knightley tells her that she has ruined the happiness of Harriet by misleading her. The climax comes when Harriet declares that she loves Mr. Knightley at the end of the novel giving a true shock to Emma. This is a moment of intense revelation and deep regret for Emma. She had never imagined that Harriet would emerge as her rival.

Oh! Had she never brought Harriet forward!....Had she not...prevented her marrying the unexceptional young man who would have made her happy and respectable in the life to which she ought to belong-all would have been safe; none of this dreadful sequel would have been (325).

Emma for the first time realizes her stupendous folly by socially elevating Harriet. It was her foolishness to look down Martin as a social inferior and giving Harriet a feeling of respectability and the elite culture. Harriet's happiness is ruined and Emma feels guilty for the first time, she experiences the psychological pain in hurting the emotions of Harriet. Her penitence toward Harriet is double: She lets the friendship fade and she releases the attitude of social superiority for the first time after this horrible experience. Emma realizes that Marin is a suitable match for Harriet as they belong to the same class. Mr. Martin pursues Harriet

again and she accepts his hand for marriage. Emma is cut to size as all her wisdom proves a treat to the happiness of Harriet. Her adventure turns misadventure as all her calculations about Harriet and Martin prove wrong.

Emma's experience with Miss Bates is again very enlightening for her. Miss Bates is a complex character and it is not very difficult to understand her inner intentions. She is a chattering box and a source of laughter; she spends most of her time in gossip and past time pleasures. She is not a talented woman and Emma dislikes her. Financial condition of Miss Bates is very bad as she has been living on charity after the death of her father. Miss Bates is very popular in Highbury and even Emma is willing to visit her to ward off her guilt. Jane Austen comments thus:

She had many a hint from Mr. Knightley and some from her own heart, as to her deficiency but none were equal to counteract the persuasion of it being very disagreeable; waste of time, tiresome women and all the horror of being in danger of falling in with the second rate and third rate of Highbury, who were calling on them forever, and was therefore she seldom went off near them. (121)

Emma dislikes Miss Bates considering her low rank. It is observed that she is the daughter of a gentleman. The only difference is the money and wealth. Miss Bates's poverty is the main problem and she has become “ridiculous to society and especially to Emma” (69). Jane Austen has dramatized the social snobbery of Emma. She openly “makes fun of Miss Bates, even going as far as presenting a diverting imitation of her” (177).

Mrs. Weston doesn't like the attitude of Emma as she disparages her for her irresponsible remarks directed at Miss Bates. The Box Hill episode of the novel is brilliantly presented by Jane Austen. Emma's false morality and snobbery is punctured in this episode. Mr. Knightley is also critical of Emma as he says: “How could you be so unfeeling to Miss Bates? How could you be so insolent in your wit to a woman of her character, age, and situation?—Emma, I had not thought it possible” (294). Emma tries to “laugh it off” (294). Mr. Knightley has to chastise Emma for her social snobbery and wrong judgment of character. Emma thinks that all other classes

below her rank are inferiors and she has right to take a dig at them. Emma's lack of "cultivation" is exposed in the famous Box-Hill episode.

"Austen manages to make the reader feel that Emma has committed the gravest possible of sins by her offhand joke at a picnic" (Ruderman 274), and this brings a turning point in the life of Emma. She sees for the first time the significance of good manners and Mr. Knightley chastises her correctly condemning her false morality and snobbery. She feels devastated and is made to confront the reality: "Never had she felt so agitated, mortified, grieved, at any circumstance in her life . . . As she reflected more, she seemed to feel it more. She never had been so depressed" (Austen 296). In her return journey, Emma is seen crying and tears roll down her cheeks. In this simple domestic act, Emma's weak character is exposed. She sits beside her father to seek relief as Austen remarks: "As a daughter, she hoped she was not without heart. She hoped no one could have to say to her, 'How could you be so unfeeling to your father?'" (296).

For the first time Emma realizes "at last recognizes that her intelligence, wealth, and social pre-eminence require kindness, rather than contempt, toward Miss Bates. She awakens to the obligations of her position" (Shannon 641). Emma exhibits a change in her behaviour in her relationships to others in Highbury. She realizes that money and wealth cannot win her people. Her money and wealth and social status is nothing if people don't love her. Emma gives up her selfish outlook of life and behaves like a mature woman. No wonder, Mr. Knightley plays a positive role in bringing improvement and transformation in the personality of Emma.

As the novel progresses, Jane Austen introduces another woman, Jane Fairfax in the novel to teach a real lesson to Emma. Indeed, "it is Jane Fairfax as much as Knightley who sets in motion Emma's recognition of her short comings" (Perry 193). Emma's reason is clouded by her prejudices and snobbish feelings when she comes in contact with Jane. But by the end of the journey, Jane becomes a fast friend of Emma and she play very important role in the development of the plot. Miss Bates has high opinion of Jane and Emma is confused in the beginning: "One is sick of the very name of Jane Fairfax. Every

letter from her is read forty times over. . . I wish Jane Fairfax very well; but she tires me to death." (Austen 70). Everyone in Highbury praises Jane Fairfax: She is "sweet and amiable Jane is; how she is so very accomplished and superior, and how she would be such a delightful companion for Emma. After all, Jane is exactly Emma's age" (83). For Emma, Jane is a rival and she cannot tolerate people singing of her good nature. She wants to explore the mystery about of Jane Fairfax. Emma visits Jane's aunt and finally comes to the conclusion that her achievements are not exaggerated. Emma "senses a rivalry immediately for, it is embarrassingly clear to Emma that Jane is not just the only girl around who is not her inferior—she is superior" (Morgan "Charms" 42). Emma is confused and she makes up her mind not to dislike Jane when she visits Highbury. Emma "determines that she would dislike her no longer" (131). But after some time she expresses her dislike for Jane thus: "She was . . . so cold, so cautious! There was no getting at her real opinion . . . She was disgustingly, was suspiciously reserved" (132). Emma expresses her irritation because Jane is silent and unresponsive. She doesn't disclose her heart to anyone.

Frank confuses Emma by giving letters to Jane and creating suspense in the novel. Mr. Knightley is watching all these events keenly. He observes that Jane is feeling stressed and sick. Emma's reacts thus: "She could not endure to give him the true explanation; for though her suspicions were by no means removed, she was really ashamed of having ever imparted them" (275). Emma's lack of understanding is highlighted by Jane Austen. Emma's harsh opinions of Jane vanishes as she "most heartily [grieves] over the idleness of her childhood—and sat down and practiced [the piano-forte] vigorously an hour and a half" (181). She decides to be normal and gives up the jealousy over Jane's affair. She realizes that Jane is a talented girl and she must admire her good talents. Emma feels compassion for Jane and develops intimacy with her. She comes to know that Jane is going to become a governess so she seeks out her company and stops avoiding her company. Jane's rejection of Emma becomes a source of psychological anguish to Emma. She expresses her negative feelings for

Emma and this troubles her. The climax comes at the end of the novel when she comes to know that she is engaged with Frank with whom she had been flirting and dancing. Emma is really shocked but she is responsible for her own actions and bad understanding of human nature. Frank had played with the sentiments of Emma and impressed her. She started loving him and enjoyed her good company. She has been secretly engaged with Frank Churchill for months. "No doubt it had been from jealousy.—In Jane's eyes, she had been a rival" (317). Sadly, Emma's journey brings social and moral degradation and awareness about her lack of judgment. Every relation of Emma teaches her a lesson and develops her personality. Her journey is full of shocking situations but she learns at the end of the novel and is shocked to know that even Miss Harriet is in love with Mr. Knightley. She marries Mr. Knightley but at this time she has given up all her snobbery and has become a good woman free from jealousies and snobberies.

In her company with Mr Knightley, she learns sobriety; human kindness and compassion for all. Mr. Knightley's love and attention teaches her a lot and moulds her into a good personality. She throws away her snobbery and selfishness and emerges as a loving and kind woman; the real Queen of Highbury.

To conclude, Austen's novel Emma is a classic dealing with the themes of love, marriage and wealth. Emma plays a vital role in match-fixing and she shows her social snobbery. At the outset of the novel, Emma emerges as an anti-heroine who is proud and snobbish; jealous and mean. Her weaknesses are painfully evident in most of the scenes of the novel. It is only at the end of the novel that Emma is totally transformed and she feels humiliated when she flirts with Frank and wrongly believes that Jane is in love with Mr. Dixon. In the major part of the novel, the flaws of Emma are dramatized when she comes in contact with so many people. Jane Fairfax is a minor character but in comparison with Emma, she looks serious, silent and deep. Her relationship with Emma brings about the real realization and transformation in the heroine of Jane Austen. She comments thus: "She was already so far gone on the road leading away from strict rectitude and propriety, she was finding so much

joy in the abandonment of those principles which might have enabled her to resist him, that he obtained her all her promises but one" (263)

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THE REPRESENTATION OF DYSFUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN MANJU KAPUR'S CUSTODY

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Abstract

It is well said that a family can be a nemesis in one's life and it can also be significant in framing someone's identity. Manju Kapur is one of esteemed contemporary Indian woman writer in English. She illustrates several emerging controversial matters in the social scenario like infertility and dysfunctional relationships as she says, "All issues are grist to the writer's mill. Depends on what inspires, what pushes the narrative forward....I look at the consequences of these actions, which I find more interesting." (Penguin India 29 March, 2011).. This paper focuses upon the fresh concept of Manju Kapur in her fifth novel "Custody" published in 2011. This exposes the greed of Kapur's protagonist for luxurious lifestyle and peace which causes dysfunctional relationship between husband and wife. This is also a family saga where children, Arjun and Roohi suffer both mentally and physically due to their parents' venomous legal fight for custody.

Key Words: Family, Greed, Dysfunctional Relationships, Custody.

Manju Kapur amazes readers with her impressive grip of Indian customs and feelings. She comes under feminist influence unconsciously as she explains, "I am aware of feminist thinking....it is impossible to live in the world today as a thinking person and not be one, and this applies to both men and women. I don't set out with a conscious feminist agenda, but in describing the relationships between men and women, a feminist perspective is often inevitable." (Jain 21 June, 2014). For some couples, marriage seems to be flawless but for others, it only brings heated discussions, disrespect and frustrations. She lays out complexities of society, family and relationships in her novels like "A Married Woman", "Difficult Daughters", "The Immigrant" and "Custody". Kapur pens a realistic portraiture of an ugly divorce and an obsessive dogfight of parents for their children's in custody. She paints the canvas of her plots with all kinds of characters who gradually modify with the changing trend of society. This novel mainly hints at transformation or collision of patriarchal ideology of Indian society.

Manju Kapur delineates family relationships and influence of modern Indian society on human relations. She not only pores on human relationships but also concentrates upon their feelings and mental turmoil. Manju Kapur explores the shallow mindset of modernized upper middle class family of Delhi. She details series of family disputes which lead to traumatic effects on the psychology and hearts of children.

Kapur's Custody captures the thirst of protagonist for wealth, freedom and peace. The fiction is about a woman who succeeds in liberating herself after struggling between her aspirations and family. Her morality and dedication for her loved ones transform into an archetype. She feels hard-boiled to fulfill her family duties and asks her husband for divorce. This draws a curtain between Raman and Shagun.

The novel Custody mainly covers the twin problems of termination of marriage and custody of children. The family disputes, incompatibility between Raman and Shagun and urge for materialistic pursuits become the root cause of their divorce. The opening lines of fiction indicate sarcasm used within the story as Kapur writes, "The couple lay among stained sheets and ruffled quilts, eyes closed, legs twisted together like the knotted branches of low growing trees. Slowly their breathing became less noisy. Her head grew heavier on his shoulder; his hand across her stomach became heavy and their eyelids lay uneasy thoughts. They had things to do, place to do, lie to tell, the woman particularly". (1) On the front side, this appeals to be a love-making moment of husband and wife. However, this exposes hidden love-affair of a wife with her husband's boss, Ashok Khanna. The fuel of her extra-marital affair incinerates the sacredness of marriage. Kapur applies this sexual autonomy to scotch conventional customs and rituals.

The stereotypical and conventional attitude of

Raman swallows the self-identity of Shagun which further widens the gulfed breach between both of them. Raman is an industrious man, so he fails in his personal life. He works hard for the betterment of his family but forgets to spend some valuable time with his wife and children. His family also assumes that a woman's selfhood and recognition lies in her role as a dutiful wife and caring mother. Her status is confined within the four walls of home. This makes Shagun disgruntled and she finds nothing hopeful in her wedding. The cycle of rage between the couple destroys the purity of their relationship. On the other side, there is Ishita, living in Delhi whose marriage disintegrates because she cannot bear her own biological children. She begins to feel relaxed and gratified in social activities but later on, she gives up this when she meets Raman, a divorcee. Her closeness towards Raman makes her think that she will be happier as a stepmother.

In Custody, the love-affair of a woman with an outsider and the harsh behaviour of in-laws towards a woman, incapable to conceive a child become the chief reasons of dysfunctional relationships. This only leaves behind broken hearts of every relation in family. Ashok Khanna, the boss of Raman, falls in love with his green-eyed wife. He only gets obsessed with her and desires to pursue her at every cost. He is not concerned about her marriage whether it survives or not. He handles this matter as a powerful marketer and never thinks of emotional upheavals undergoing in Raman's mind. He offers everything which is nearly impossible to resist for any ordinary woman. And Shagun also becomes more persistent and bold in her love-affair. She chooses charismatic, handsome Ashok over her faithful and hardworking husband. She claims to be a devoted wife but this is never observed in her actions and decisions. She exceeds to such an extent in her selfishness that she even provokes her children against her husband to make her path smooth and clear for divorce.

Raman discovers the love affair of his wife with his boss, Ashok with the help of a detective. He finds out the disloyalty of Shagun to him. The two close and near persons deceive him. This vanquishes him more than anything in his lifetime. Raman cannot bear all these things affably and he gets a severe heart attack.

However, Shagun remains cruel and rigid on her decision and refused to return to Raman. She declined all traditional feminist ideologies which her mother tries to coax her to act as a dutiful wife and caring mother but she remains deaf to these queries and jeopardizes her mother that she will not confide her mother any longer if she continues to speak on Raman's behalf. A sense of bewilderment and anguish kicks off the wretched legal fight between Raman and Shagun over the custody of their children. It is firstly initiated by Shagun herself when she challenges him to meet him in the court for the custody. The kids are shuttled between their parents due to their ego battles who once promised to give them a caring, loving and happy upbringing. In the second part, the disastrous effects upon children become evident when they are disrupted between two mothers.

Along with this, Kapur skirts out the parallel story of Ishita who lives near to Raman's house and is the daughter of his mother's friend. The problem of infertility approaches her as the attitude of her well-wishers like her sister-in-law and mother-in-law changes all of a sudden when they understand that she is incapable to bear a child. This clears the dirt which is obscure in middle class Indian families which further results in Ishita's divorce. Her infertility is discussed in detail with the doctor by her mother-in-law who later on, refuses to accept and give her space in her home. In spite of consoling and standing with her as her daughter, she rejects her even as her daughter-in-law. A loving and promising husband leaves her in isolation and barrenness overnight. She finds self-identity and recognition in the company of unprivileged children. She indulges more and more in social activities which provides her peace of mind and satisfaction. Yet she discontinues these works as she is elevated socially after marrying Raman. She feels empowered and supports her husband in winning back his children against his ex-wife. In court, husband and wife manipulate incidents to get the custody of Roohi and Arjun. It is unmistakable that the unscrupulous action of a guardian and father flocks the early childhood of children. The difficult situations of divorce and an ugly legal fight for custody mature their innocent minds eventually.

Gradually, Ishita influences the small girl,

Roohi but fails to impress elder son of Raman and Shagun, Arjun who can acknowledge the whole situation thoroughly. Her thirst for the status of a loving mother enforces her to suspend democratic ethics. As she is under the social ostracism, she never tries to understand Shagun and her urge for liberty. Ishita can only establish herself in the patriarchal social - scenario as a caring mother and dedicated wife with the custody of Roohi. Arjun and Roohi pick their divided paths to deal with confused and disturbed situations into which their parents thrust them. Raman gradually realizes that his children will have to pay the price of their parents' separation. The woman, whom he loved undoubtedly once, now has proven to be a biggest mistake of his life.

The novel limelights the true saga of two lovers who promised to be true companions in their sacred marriage but this is all replaced with their differentiated ambitions to earn more money and to live liberated lives. This heart- rending story depicts the dysfunctional relationships of a happy family which later on converts into

disintegrated family. Apart from this, Manju Kapur discloses woman's queries for freedom, self-reliance and survival in the male-dominated society. This highlights the aspirations of young and educated ones in the modern society who can go beyond any extent to reach their targets and explores their dysfunctional relationship. The dogfight of parents for custody also reveals the critical judicial system of the nation.

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ਨਸ਼ਾਖੇਰੀਯ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ

*ਇਕਬਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ **ਡਾ. ਜੋਤੀ ਸ਼ਰਮਾ
*ਅਸਿਸਟੈਂਟ ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਰਣਵੀਰ ਕਾਲਜ ਸੰਗਰੂਰ
**ਅਸਿਸਟੈਂਟ ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ, ਦੇਸ਼ ਭਗਤ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਮੰਡੀ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਗੜ੍ਹ

ਲੜਵਗੁਫਵ

ਸਾਰੰਸ਼: ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਸ਼ਾਖੇਰੀ ਇੱਕ ਭਿਆਨਕ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਲੈ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਵਰਗ ਦੇ ਲੋਕ ਭਾਵ ਬੱਚੇ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਬੁੱਢੇ ਤੱਕ ਇਥੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਕਿ ਔਰਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਛੋਟੀ ਉਮਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੁੜੀਆਂ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਚਪੇਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਆ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਹਨ। ਨਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੁਖ-ਬੁੱਧ ਗੁਆ ਲਈ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਜੇਕਰ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਛੁਟਕਾਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾਵੇਗਾ ਤਾਂ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦਾ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।

ਰੋਂਦੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਮਾਂਵਾਂ,
ਲਾਸ਼ਾਂ ਬੁਕਲ ਚ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ

ਲਾਡਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਪਾਲੇ ਪੁੱਤ,
ਨਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਡੱਸ 'ਤੇ।

ਨਸ਼ਾ ਅੱਜ ਕਲ੍ਹ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਉਹ ਬੁਰਾਈ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਅੱਜ ਕਲ੍ਹ ਦੀ ਯੁਵਾ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ ਨੂੰ ਇੰਨੇ ਬੁਰੇ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੀ ਚਪੇਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ ਤੇ ਖ਼ਤਰਾ ਮੰਡਰਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਨਸ਼ੇ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਗਰਚਪਤ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਦੋ ਮਤਲਬ ਹਨ। ਇਕ ਤਾਂ ਜਦੋਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਤ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਦੀ ਸਲਾਹ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਬਿਮਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਇਲਾਜ ਕਰਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਨਸ਼ੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਅਫੀਮ, ਡੋਡੇ, ਗਾਂਜਾ, ਚਰਸ ਆਦਿ ਨਸ਼ੇ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਗੈਰ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਵੇਚੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ ਲਗਾਈ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਪਕੜੇ ਜਾਣ ਤੇ ਸਖ਼ਤ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੈਰ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਨਸ਼ੇ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਅਸਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਸਾਇਣਿਕ ਤੱਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਰੀਰ 'ਤੇ ਸਰੀਰਕ, ਜੈਵਿਕ

” ਨਿਗਰਾਨ ਦੇਸ਼ ਭਗਤ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ

ਅਤੇ ਮਨੋਵਿਗਿਆਨਿਕ ਅਸਰ ਪਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਥਕਾਵਟ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਸਮਾਂ ਪੈਣ ਤੇ ਇਕ ਫੈਸ਼ਨ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ ਤੇ ਇਸੇ ਫੈਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਚੱਕਰ 'ਚ ਇਹ ਇਕ ਲੱਤ ਬਣ ਗਈ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਕ ਭਿਆਨਕ ਰੂਪ ਲੈ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਹੈ।

ਸੰਯੁਕਤ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ ਸੰਘ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ: ਸੰਯੁਕਤ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ ਸੰਘ ਦੇ ਭੋਜਨ ਅਤੇ ਦਵਾਈ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਤੱਤ ਜੋ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਫਾਰਮਿਸਟਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਡਾਕਟਰਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਕਿਸੀ ਬਿਮਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਜਾਂਚ-ਪਰਖ, ਰੋਗ-ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਿਆ, ਬਿਮਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਗੰਭੀਰਤਾ, ਇਲਾਜ ਅਤੇ ਰੋਕਥਾਮ ਆਦਿ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਮਰੀਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕੋਈ ਤੱਤ (ਭੋਜਨ ਨੂੰ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ) ਸਾਡੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਤੰਤਰ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਤੰਤਰ ਦੀ ਬਣਾਵਟ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਨਸ਼ਾਖੇਰੀ: ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਦਵਾਈ ਦੀ ਗਲਤ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੀ ਨਸ਼ਾਖੇਰੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇਕਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਨਸ਼ਾ ਖੋਰੀ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਾਬਦਿਕ ਅਰਥ ਦੇਖੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ, ਗੈਰ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਬੰਧਿਤ ਦਵਾਈਆਂ ਦੀ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ

ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਨਾ। ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਸਿਹਤ ਸੰਗਠਨ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹੀ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ, ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ਼ ਦਵਾਈਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਦਿਮਾਗੀ ਰੂਪ ਨਾਲ ਚਾਲੂ ਤੱਤ ਦਾ ਹਾਨੀਕਾਰਕ ਜਾਂ ਜੋਖਮ ਭਰੇ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸਿਗਰੇਟ ਪੀਣਾ, ਗਾਂਜੇ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਨਾ, ਲਸੀਸ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਨਾ, ਹੀਰੋਈਨ ਅਤੇ ਕੋਕੀਨ ਜਾਂ :।ਛ।ਣ ਨਗਰਮਅ ਛਚਪਗ, ਮੋਰਫੀਨ ਦੇ ਇੰਜੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਖੁਦ ਨੂੰ ਲਗਾਉਣਾ, ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਨਾ ਆਦਿ।

ਇਸ ਪੇਪਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਸ਼ਾਖੇਰੀ ਦੇ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਤੇ ਮਨੋਰੋਗੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਦੀ ਗਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਜੇਕਰ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਦੀ ਗਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਤੱਤ ਸਰੀਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਤੇ ਅਸਿੱਧੇ ਰੂਪ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਰੀਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਈ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਛੋਟੇ ਕੱਦ ਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਕੋਈ ਜਿਆਦਾ ਹੀ ਲੰਬੇ ਕੱਦ ਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਕੋਈ ਮੋਟਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਪਤਲਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਕੋਈ ਸੋਹਣਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਕੋਈ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਸੋਹਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਆਦਿ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹ ਹਰ ਜਗ੍ਹਾ ਮਜ਼ਾਕ ਦਾ ਪਾਤਰ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤਨਾਅ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਲੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਤਨਾਅ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਣ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਨਸ਼ੇ ਦਾ ਸਹਾਰਾ ਲੈ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਹ ਨਸ਼ੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੁੱਖ ਮਾਣਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੌਲੀ-ਹੌਲੀ ਇਹ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਦਤ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਤੱਥਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਅੰਗਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਵਿਕਸਿਤ ਹੋਣ ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਾ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਕਾਰਨ ਬਣਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕਹਿਣ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਦੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਰੋਗੀ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਭੱਜਣ ਲਈ ਨਸ਼ਿਆ ਦਾ ਸਹਾਰਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਹੌਲੀ-ਹੌਲੀ ਇਹ ਨਸ਼ੇ ਉਸਦੀ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰੀ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਚਾਹ ਕੇ ਵੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਜੁਰਮ ਦਾ ਸਹਾਰਾ ਲੈ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬੇਸ਼ਕ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਉਹਨਾਂ

ਨੂੰ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਬਰਬਾਦ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਜਦੋਂ ਪਾਣੀ ਪੁਲਾਂ ਹੇਠੋਂ ਲੰਘ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਹਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਪਾਉਂਦਾ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਅੱਜ ਕਲ੍ਹ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਤਮ ਹੱਤਿਆ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਣ ਬਣ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੀਂਦਾਰ ਵਰਗ ਜਦੋਂ ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰ ਵਰਗ ਤੋਂ ਖੇਤਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਭੁੱਕੀ, ਅਫ਼ੀਮ ਵਰਗੇ ਨਸ਼ੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਮ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਦੀ ਬੋਤਲ ਦੇ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਪਹਿਲ ਤਾਂ ਸਹੀ ਸੀ ਪਰੰਤੂ ਹੌਲੀ ਹੌਲੀ ਇਹ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਡਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਰੱਚ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾ ਪਾਉਂਦੇ।

ਨਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਸਰੀਰ ਤੇ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਨਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਪਾਇਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਜਾਂ ਇਨਸਾਨੀ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਣਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਰਸਾਇਣਕ ਪਦਾਰਥ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਦੀ ਸੋਚਸ਼ਕਤੀ, ਮੂਡ ਜਾਂ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਨੂੰ ਬਦਲਣ ਲਈ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਨੂੰ ਨਸ਼ਾ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਹੜੇ ਤੱਥ ਮਨੋਦਸ਼ਾ ਜਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਜਾਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਦਿਮਾਗੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਨਾਲ ਜਾਂ ਉਸਦੇ ਮਨੋਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਨੋਵਿਗਿਆਨਿਕ ਤੱਥ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਮਨੋਵਿਗਿਆਨਿਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਅਸਰ ਵੱਧ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਕਲ੍ਹ ਦੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਰੋਲ ਮਾਡਲ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਰਗਾ ਬਣਨ ਲਈ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਨਕਲ ਕਰਨਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹ ਨਸ਼ੇ ਕਰਨਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਭਿੰਨਭਿੰਨ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਮਾਪਿਆਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਘੱਟ ਦੇਖ ਭਾਲ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਗਰਾਨੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦੀ ਘਾਟ, ਅਥਾਰਿਟੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਨਫਰਤ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਦਬਾਉ ਆਦਿ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹਨ। ਜੋ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਆਸਰਾ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਉਕਸਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਨਸ਼ਾ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਤਣਾਓ ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਸਮਾਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਥੋੜ੍ਹਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਪਿਆਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਸਫਲਤਾ, ਟੁੱਟਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ, ਪੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਸਫਲਤਾ, ਬੇਰੁਜ਼ਗਾਰੀ, ਭਾਵਨਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਹੋਣਾ ਇਕ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਤੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਡੂੰਘਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਪਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜਦੋਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਸ਼ੇੜੀ ਨਾਲ ਗਲ ਕਰੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਪਤਾ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੁਝ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਦੇ ਨਕਸ਼ੇ ਕਦਮ ਤੇ ਚੱਲਣ ਲਗ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਬੱਚਾ ਅੱਗੇ ਚਲ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਕਸਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਮਜ਼ਾਕ ਉਡਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਸ਼ਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਪੈ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੋ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਲ ਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰੀ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਤਕਰੀਬਨ ਹਰ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਨਸ਼ੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ੋਸ਼ਲ ਮੀਡਿਆ ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਹੱਦ ਤਕ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ੋਸ਼ਲ ਮੀਡਿਆ ਤੇ ਅੱਜ ਕੁਝ ਨਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਯੁਵਾ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਵਜੋਂ ਤੰਬਾਕੂ ਦੀ ਮਸ਼ਹੂਰੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਫ਼ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਕਿਹਾ

ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਗਲੇ ਦਾ ਕੈਂਸਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੋਕ ਰਹੀ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਕਰੀ ਲਈ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੀਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਹੀਰੋਈਨ ਨੂੰ ਐਕਟਿੰਗ ਲਈ ਲੈ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਤੱਥ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਅੰਤਰਗਤ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਨਸ਼ਾਖੋਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਵਧਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ।

ਅੰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਨਸ਼ਾ ਖੋਰੀ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਦਲਦਲ ਵਰਗੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਦੇਖਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਝੀਲ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਸ ਵੱਲ ਅੱਜ ਕੱਲ ਦੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਵਰਗ ਬਹੁਤ ਆਕਰਸ਼ਤ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਤਾ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਖਤਰਨਾਕ ਦਲਦਲ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਚੁੰਗਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਹ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਇਸ ਕਦਰ ਫਸ ਚੁੱਕਿਆ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਣਾ ਔਖਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਨਿਕਲ ਸਕਣਾ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੈ। ਸਰਕਾਰ ਬੇਸ਼ਕ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਤ ਯਤਨ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਪਰੰਤੂ ਉਹ ਉਦੋਂ ਤਕ ਕਾਮਯਾਬ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਤਕ ਨਸ਼ੇ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਸ਼ਾ ਛੱਡਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਆਉਂਦਾ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਤੇ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਨਾਲ ਬਹੁਤ ਹਦ ਤਕ ਜੁੜੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਰੋਗੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੁੱਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਛੁਟਕਾਰਾ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਨਸ਼ੇ ਦਾ ਸਹਾਰਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਹੌਲੀ-ਹੌਲੀ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਉਸਦੇ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਪੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਆਨੰਦ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਭਿਆਨਕ ਬੀਮਾਰੀ ਤੋਂ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਕਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ, ਸਕੂਲ, ਮੀਡੀਆ, ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਅਤੇ ਨਸ਼ਾ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਕੇਂਦਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨਾ ਪੈਣਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਇਹ **ਸਮੱਸਿਆ** ਖਤਮ ਹੋ ਪਾਵੇਗੀ।

ਨਸ਼ਾ ਮੁਕਤ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਖਿੜਿਆ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਫੁੱਲ ਗੁਲਾਬ

ਹੋਵੇ।

ਬਰਕਤਾਂ ਹੋਣ ਹਰ ਘਰ ਵਿੱਚ
ਧੀਆਂ ਖੁਸ਼ ਤੇ ਪੁੱਤ ਨਵਾਬ ਹੋਣ।

ਸਹਾਇਕ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਸੂਚੀ

- ਅਮਿੱਤ ਮਿੱਤਰ, ਨਸ਼ੇ ਛੱਡਣ ਦੇ ਢੰਗ, ਤਰਕ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ, ਬਰਨਾਲਾ.
- ਆਰ.ਐਸ.ਸੈਣੀ (ਡਾ.) ਬੀਮਾਰ ਕੌਣ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ, ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ.
- ਗੁਰਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੂਰ, ਜੀਵੇ-ਜਵਾਨੀ, ਚੇਤਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ, ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ.
- ਜਸਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ(ਡਾ.) ਨਸ਼ੀਲੀਆਂ ਦਵਾਈਆਂ(ਸੂਝ ਲੇਖਕ ਅਨਿਲ ਅਗਰਵਾਲ), ਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਬੁੱਕ
- ਟਰਸਟ ਇੰਡੀਆ, ਦਿੱਲੀ.
- ਮੋਹਨ ਸ਼ਰਮਾ, ਨਸ਼ਾਖੋਰੀ-ਚਿੰਤਾ,ਚਿੰਤਨ ਅਤੇ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ, ਮਹਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟਰਜ, ਸੰਗਰੂਰ.
- ਰਣਜੀਤ ਝੁਨੀਰ, ਨਸ਼ੇ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਛੱਡੀਏ, ਤਰਕ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ, ਬਰਨਾਲਾ.
- ਰਾਜੀਵ ਸ਼ਰਮਾ (ਡਾ.) ਨਸ਼ੇ, ਸਮੱਸਿਆ,ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਅਤੇ ਰੋਕਥਾਮ, ਆਰ.ਡੀ ਪਬਲੀਕੇਸ਼ਨ ਜਲੰਧਰ।

ਡਾ. ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਸ਼ਟ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਾਲ-ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਕਲਾ ਪੱਖ

*ਕਮਲਜੀਤ ਕੌਰ *

ਡਾ. ਪਰਮਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ **

*ਅਸਿਸਟੈਂਟ ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ, ਐਸ.ਡੀ. ਕੰਨਿਆ ਮਹਾਂ ਵਿਦਿਆਲਯ, ਮਾਨਸਾ

**ਨਿਗਰਾਨ, ਦੇਸ਼ ਭਗਤ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ

ਡਾ. ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਸ਼ਟ ਨੇ ਬਾਲ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਬਹੁਤ ਵੱਡਾ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਅੱਜ ਤੱਕ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਜਾਰੀ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਹਰ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਲਪਨ ਦੇ ਪੱਧਰ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਢਾਲ ਕੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਕੋਮਲ ਮਨ ਦਾ ਹਾਣੀ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਹੈ। ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਬਾਲ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਅੰਦਰ ਨਿੱਕੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਣ ਕਾਫੀ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਭੱਜ ਦੌੜ ਵਾਲੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਅੰਦਰ ਭਾਰੇ ਤੇ ਲੰਮੇਰੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਰੂਪ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਣਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਗਣ ਦਾ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਸਫਲ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ।

ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਦੇ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਉਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਜਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਤੀ ਬਹੁਭਾਂਤੀ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ, ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ, ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਵਹਾਰਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਵਜੋਂ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਦੇ ਬਾਲ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੇ ਦੈਵੀ ਪਾਤਰਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਚਮਤਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਸਗੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਕਦਰਾਂ ਕੀਮਤਾਂ, ਚੰਗੀਆਂ ਆਦਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਸੋਚ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਦੇ ਬਾਲ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਜੀਵ ਜੰਤੂਆਂ, ਭੌਤਿਕ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ, ਪੁਲਾੜ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ, ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਸੰਸਾਰ, ਉਦਯੋਗਿਕ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਤਕਨਾਲੋਜੀ ਆਦਿ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਵਸਤੂ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਅੱਜ ਦਾ ਬਾਲ ਪਾਠਕ ਮਹਿਜ਼ ਕਾਲਪਨਿਕ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਗੁਆਚ ਕੇ ਨਾ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਵੇ ਸਗੋਂ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦੇ ਸੱਚ ਨੂੰ ਨੇੜੇ ਤੋਂ ਸਮਝ ਸਕੇ।

ਇਸ ਲਈ ਬੱਚਿਓ ਘਮੰਡ ਕਰਨਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਭੈੜੀ ਚੀਜ਼ ਹੈ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਘਮੰਡ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ। 1 ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਅੰਦਰ ਕਥਾਨਕ ਰੀੜ ਦੀ ਹੱਡੀ ਵਜੋਂ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਕਥਾਨਕ ਉਹ ਨੀਂਹ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਤੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਮਹਿਲ ਉਸਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਥਾਨਕ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਵਿਵਹਾਰਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਠੋਰ ਸੱਚਾਈਆਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕਥਾਨਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਰੰਭ, ਵਿਕਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਤ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਗੌਣ ਤੱਤਾਂ ਵਜੋਂ ਵਿਚਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਪੱਧਰ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੱਖ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਲਿਖੀਆਂ ਜਾਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਜੀਵਜੰਤੂਆਂ, ਮਾਨਵੀ ਸਮਾਜ, ਬਨਸਪਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੁੰਦਰਾਂ, ਪਹਾੜਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਸਮੱਗਰੀ ਹੀ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਬਣਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਕਥਾਨਕ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਜਿੰਦ ਜਾਨ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕਹਾਣੀ ਅੰਦਰ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਕਥਾਨਕ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਕਥਾਨਕ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਵੱਖਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਜਬੂਤ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕਥਾਨਕ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਉਹ ਤੱਤ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਕਾਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਭਾਵ ਬਾਲ ਮਨਾ ਅੱਗੇ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਥਾਨਕ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦਾ ਪੇਟ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਚੰਗੇਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਜਬੂਤ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ।

ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਸ਼ਟ ਦੇ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਬਾਗਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਪਿੰਡ, ਉੱਡ ਗਈ ਤਿਤਲੀ, ਸ਼ਾਬਾਸ਼ ਧੀਏ ਅਤੇ ਘੁੱਗੀ ਮੁੜ ਆਈ ਆਦਿ ਕਥਾਨਕ ਦੇ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਕਾਰ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਵਾਹੀ ਭਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਿਆਂ ਵਿਚਲੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਮੁਲਕੋ, ਤਬਦੀਲੀ, ਕੱਚੀ ਡੋਰ ਅਤੇ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਆਦਿ ਕਥਾਨਕ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਉਤਮ ਦਰਜੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਸ਼ੁਮਾਰ ਹਨ। ਲੇਖਕ ਨੇ ਬਾਲ ਮਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਦਿਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਕਥਾਨਕ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਹਰ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਕਥਾਨਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਸਬਕ, ਉਤਸੁਕਤਾ ਤੇ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਹਨ।

ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਥਾਨਕ ਨੂੰ ਆਦਿ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਅੰਤ ਤੱਕ

ਮੌਜੂਦ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਤੱਤ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਭਾਵ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਪਰਗਟ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਸਫਲਤਾ ਕਥਾਨਕ ਉੱਪਰ ਹੀ ਨਿਰਭਰ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕਥਾਨਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੋਈ ਨਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਉਦੇਸ਼, ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਜਾਂ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਛੁਪਿਆ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਲੇਖਕ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਤਾਣਾਬਾਣਾ ਬੜੀ ਸੂਝ ਬੂਝ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਬਾਲ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਤਸੁਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਰੁਚੀ ਬਣੀ ਰਹੇ। ਪਾਤਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਾਨਵੀਕਰਨ ਸੰਗਠਿਤ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਲਪਨਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਗੁਣ ਕਥਾਨਕ ਨੂੰ ਨਵੀਨਤਾ ਤੇ ਸੰਜੀਵਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ:

ਇਕ ਦਿਨ ਹਿਰਨ ਰੋਜ਼ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਕੱਲਾ ਜੰਗਲ ਦੀ ਹਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਰਮ ਨਰਮ ਘਾਹ ਚਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਅਚਾਨਕ ਹੀ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਕਿ ਇੱਕ ਬਘਿਆੜ ਉਸ ਵੱਲ ਤੇਜ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਭੱਜਿਆ ਆ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਹਿਰਨ ਨੇ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਉਸਦਾ ਦੋਸਤ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਆ ਕੇ ਬੁਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਟੁੱਟ ਪਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਹਿਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਪੈਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੈ ਗਈ। ਬੜੀ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲ ਨਾਲ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਬਘਿਆੜ ਤੋਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪ ਛੁਡਾਇਆ ਤੇ ਜਾਨ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਪੂਰੀ ਵਾਹ ਲਾਉਣ ਲੱਗਾ ਬਘਿਆੜ ਵੀ ਉਸਦੇ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਤੇਜ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਦੌੜਿਆ।²

ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਪਾਤਰ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਹੈ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਇੱਕ ਪਾਸੇ ਜਿਉਂਦੇ ਜਾਗਦੇ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਵਿਚਰਦੇ ਜੀਵਜੰਤੂ, ਪੇੜ ਪੌਦੇ, ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਪਹਾੜ ਆਦਿ ਪਾਤਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਵਿਚਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਉੱਥੇ ਪਰਾਸਰੀਕ ਪਾਤਰ ਵੀ ਕਾਲਪਨਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਤੱਤ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਵਰਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇੱਕ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਕਾਰ ਲਈ ਪਾਤਰ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਜ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਔਖਾ ਹੈ ਉੱਥੇ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਸਾਵਧਾਨੀ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਵੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਸ਼ਟ ਦੀ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਸਬਕੋ ਦੇ ਪਾਤਰ ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰ ਆਮ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਲਏ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਇਹ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਪੇਂਡੂ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਪਸੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਤਰਜ਼ਮਾਨੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕਹਾਣੀਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਪਾਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ

ਜਿਉਂਦੇ ਜਾਗਦੇ ਤੇ ਸੁਭਾਵਿਕ ਪਾਤਰ ਹਨ। ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰ ਵਰਗ ਦੀ ਅਨਪੜ੍ਹਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਦਗੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਹਾਣੀਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਪਾਤਰ ਦੇ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਵਜੋਂ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ:

“ਜੀ, ਮੈਨੂੰ ਮਨਜ਼ੂਰ ਐ ਜੀ ਨਵੇਂ ਆਦਮੀ ਨੇ ਭੋਲਾ ਜਿਹਾ ਬਣਕੇ ਜਵਾਬ ਦਿੱਤਾ।”³

ਕਹਾਣੀਕਾਰ ਪਾਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਪਾਤਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਚਿਤਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਦੀ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਹਾਸਿਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਪਾਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਨੂੰ ਬਰਕਰਾਰ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਬੁੱਧੀਮਾਨੋ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਾਤਰ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਬੁੱਧੀਮਾਨ ਅਖਵਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਦੇ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਨੂੰ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਸ਼ਟ ਨੇ ਚਤੁਰ ਚਲਾਕ ਤੇ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਜਵਾਬ ਪਾਤਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਉਭਾਰਿਆ ਹੈ:

“ਉਏ ਕਮਾਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਤੂੰ ਵੀਂ ਜਿਉਂ ਜਿਉਂ ਇਹ ਵੱਡਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਜਾਊ, ਤਿਉਂ ਤਿਉਂ ਇਹਦੇ ਸੁੰਡ ਵੀ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਜਾਊ ਬੁੱਧੀਮਾਨ ਨੇ ਉੱਤਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।”⁴

ਕਹਾਣੀਕਾਰ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਸ਼ਟ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਪੱਧਰ ਅਤੇ ਭੋਲੇਪਨ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੱਖ ਰੱਖਦਿਆਂ ਜਨੌਰ ਤੇ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਪਾਤਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕਲਾ ਦਾ ਨਮੂਨਾ ਉਹ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਜੀਵਜੰਤੂਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਨਵੀਕਰਨ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮਾਨਵੀਕਰਨ ਇੱਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਜੁਗਤ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਲੇਖਕ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਿਰਜੀਵ ਜਾਂ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਪਾਤਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਮ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਵਾਂਗ ਬੋਲਦਾ ਤੇ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦਾ ਵਿਖਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਕਹਾਣੀ ਵਰ ਕਿ ਸਰਾਪ’ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਹਾਣੀਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਾਤਰ ਉਲੀਕੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਪਾਤਰ ਆਮ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚਰਦੇ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਮੋਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੂੰਹੋਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਗੱਲ ਅਖਵਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ:

ਗੱਲ ਤਾਂ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਠੀਕ ਹੈ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਸੋਨੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਲਗੀਆਂ ਲਾਹੁਣ ਲਈ ਸਾਡੀ ਕੁੱਲ ਦਾ ਨਾਸ਼ ਕਰ ਦੇਣਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿੰਨੀ ਛੇਤੀ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ ਉਸੇ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਕੋਲ ਚੱਲੀਏ ਕਈ ਮੋਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ।⁵

ਕਹਾਣੀ ਆਲਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਕਹਾਣੀਕਾਰ ਮਾਨਵੀਕਰਨ ਵਿਧੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਮੁਰਗੇ, ਮੁਰਗੀ ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਚੂਚਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਮਨੋਦਸ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਲ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਅੱਗੇ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ:

“ਭਰਾ ਕਾਲੂ” ਤੂੰ ਠੀਕ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਆਲਸ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਾੜੀ ਚੀਜ਼ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਐ। ਅੱਜ ਮੈਂ ਆਲਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਇੱਥੇ ਮਰ ਜਾਣਾ ਸੀ। ਹੁਣ ਮੈਂ ਸਮਝ ਗਿਆ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਾੜੀ ਚੀਜ਼ ਐ। ਮੈਂ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਵਾਅਦਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਵੀ ਦਾਣਾ ਚੁਗਣ ਜਾਇਆ ਕਰਾਂਗਾ ਨੀਲੂ ਦੀਆਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੰਝੂ ਆ ਗਏ।⁶

ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ ਕਾਹਣੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਵਾਰਤਲਾਪ ਜਾਂ ਸੰਵਾਦ ਸਿਰਜਦਿਆਂ ਲੇਖਕ ਨੂੰ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਚੁਕੰਨਾ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਪਾਠਕ ਕੋਮਲ ਮਨ, ਭੋਲੇ ਤੇ ਸੱਚੀ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਬਾਲਕ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਪੱਧਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਕਸਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿੰਨਾ ਕਿ ਇੱਕ ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ ਪਾਠਕ ਦਾ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਵਾਰਤਲਾਪ ਸਿਰਜਦਿਆਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਪੱਧਰ ਤੇ ਸਰਲ,

ਸੰਖੇਪ ਅਤੇ ਸਵਾਦਲੇ ਵਾਰਤਲਾਪ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ:

ਚੌਕੀਦਾਰ ਨੇ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ, “ਸਮਝ ਗਿਆ ਬੱਚੂ ਘਰੋਂ ਦੌੜ ਕੇ ਆਇਐ ਨਾ?”

ਗੋਪਾਲ ਨੌ ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿਰ ਹਿਲਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

“ਕਿਉਂ” ਚੌਕੀਦਾਰ ਨੇ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ।

ਗੋਪਾਲ ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗਾ, “ਮੈਨੂੰ ਭਾਪਾ ਮਾਰਦੈ। ਮੈਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤੰਗ ਪ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਘਰੋਂ ਦੌੜ ਕੇ ਆਇਆਂ “ਚੌਕੀਦਾਰ ਨੇ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ,” ਕੋਈ ਗਲਤੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੋਏਂਗਾ”।⁷

“ਪੰਨਵਾਦ ਨਾਨੀ ਜੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਵਧੀਆ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਸੀ।

ਸਾਰੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਇੱਕੋ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੋਲੇ।

ਸੋਨਾ ਨੇ ਝਟਪਟ ਕਿਹਾ, ਉਏ ਇੱਕ ਗੱਲ ਤਾਂ ਰਹਿ ਹੀ ਗਈ”

“ਉਹ ਕਿਹੜੀ” ਪਿੰਕੀ ਨੇ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ।

“ਮੈਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਨਾ ਅੰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਸੋਚ ਕੇ ਦੱਸਾਂਗੀ” ਸੋਨਾ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ।

“ਤਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਦੱਸੋ” ਪਿੰਕੀ ਨੇ ਫਿਰ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ।

“ਇਸ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਬੁੱਕਲ ਦਾ ਸੱਪੋ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦੈ” ਸੋਨਾ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ।

“ਵਾਹ ਵਾਹ” ਇੱਕ ਦਮ ਠੀਕ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਬੁੱਕਲ ਦਾ ਸੱਪ ਹੀ ਤਾਂ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਨੂੰ ਅਕ੍ਰਿਤਘਣ ਨਾਲ ਡੰਗਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ” ਰਾਜੂ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ।⁸

“ਦੇਖੋ ਬਈ, ਹੁਣ ਡੱਡੂ ਵੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਲਈ ਸਕੂਲ ਆਇਆ ਕਰਨਗੇ। ਇਹ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਸਟੂਡੈਂਟ ਹੈ ਮਤਲਬ ਸਾਡਾ ਜਮਾਤੀ। ਉਏ ਦੇਖੋ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਟਪੂਸੀਆਂ ਮਾਰਦਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹੇ ਲਗਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਹੀ ਆਪਣਾ ਬੈਗ ਘਰ ਭੁੱਲ ਆਇਆ। ਬੈਗ ਲੈਣ ਜਾ ਰਿਹੈ”।⁹

ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਕਮਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸਰਮਾਇਆ ਹੈ। ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਜਿਹੇ ਸਾਧਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੰਚਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਵੀਨਤਾ ਲੈ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਹੈ। ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਸਾਧਨ ਬਣਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਲੇਖਕ ਆਪਣੇ ਭਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਾਕ ਪਹਿਨਾ ਕੇ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਨਮੁੱਖ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਸੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਰਚਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਰਮਨ ਪਿਆਰਤਾ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਪੱਧਰ ਤੇ ਵੀ ਨਿਰਭਰ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਤੇ ਆਮ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੰਤਰ ਅਕਸਰ ਵੇਖਣ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਲੇਖਕ ਸਰਲ, ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਮੁਹਾਵਰੇਦਾਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇੱਕ ਚੰਗਾ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਵੀਨ ਲੇਖਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਚੋਣ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿੰਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਾਠਕ ਵਰਗ ਨਾਲ ਨਿੱਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਵਾਹ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਸ਼ਟ ਦੀ ਇਹ ਖੂਬੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਬਾਲ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਅੰਦਰ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ, ਭਾਸ਼ਾ, ਸ਼ਬਦਾਵਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ੈਲੀ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਬਾਲ ਉਮਰ ਤੇ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਸਤਕ ਦੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਬਿੰਦੂ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਸ ਜਨ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਤੇ ਕਾਰਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਬਾਲ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਤੇ ਕੋਮਲ ਭਾਵ ਛੱਡਦੀ ਹੋਈ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਧੁਰ ਅੰਦਰ ਤੱਕ ਅੱਪੜਦੀ ਹੈ। ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਦਾ ਮਸਲਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਅਹਿਮ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇਕਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ ਜਨ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਪੱਧਰ ਦੀ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ

ਸਹਿਜੇ ਹੀ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ ਰਚਨਾ ਹਰਮਨ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਵੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ।
ਡਾ. ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਸ਼ਟ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਬਿਹਤਰ ਸੰਚਾਰ ਲਈ ਰਲਵੀਂ ਮਿਲਵੀਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਪਾਠਕ ਭੋਲੇ-ਭਾਲੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਨਾਨਾਨਾਨੀ, ਦਾਦਾਦਾਦੀ, ਭੈਣਭਰਾ, ਮੋਟੇਪਤਲੇ, ਚੁਸਤਸੁਸਤ, ਮਿਹਨਤੀ, ਆਲਸੀ, ਚੰਨ, ਸੂਰਜ, ਤਾਰੇ, ਬੱਦਲ, ਤਿਤਲੀ, ਖਰਗੋਸ਼, ਡੱਡੂ, ਸੱਪ ਆਦਿ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਬਾਲ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਲੇ ਦੁਆਲੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਜੋੜਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਤੇ ਕਿਤੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਵਲੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਕਥਾਨਕ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਇਹ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਵਲੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਜਟਿਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਉਸ ਪੱਧਰ ਦੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਣ ਸਿਖਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ ਬਣ ਸਕੇ ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਐਕਸਪ੍ਰੈਸ ਟ੍ਰੇਨ, ਚੈਕਅਪ, ਸਟੂਡੈਂਟ, ਬੈਗ, ਪਲੀਜ਼ ਆਦਿ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਉਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਰਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਪੱਖ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਮੁਹਾਵਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਅਖਾਣਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਹਾਰਾ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਬਾਲ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਸਤਕ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ:
“ਮੈਂ ਹੁਣੇ ਆਇਆ, ਤੂੰ ਬੈਠੀਂ ਜ਼ਰਾ...” ਇਹ ਕਹਿ ਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਝੱਟ ਬੱਚੇ ਦੇ ਹੱਥੋਂ ਰੋਟੀ ਦਾ ਟੁਕੜਾ ਖੋਹ ਕੇ ਫਿਰ ਕੋਇਲ ਕੋਲ ਆ ਗਿਆ।
“ਦੇਖੀ ਨਾ ਮੇਰੀ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ...” ਕਿਵੇਂ ਮੈਂ ਬੰਦੇ ਦੇ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਤੇ ਵੀ ਸਰ੍ਹੋਂ ਜਮ੍ਹਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ...” ਔਹ ਵੇਖ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਰੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਐ ਹੁਣ ਉਹ ਬੱਚਾ... “ਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਖੋਹ ਕੇ ਰੋਟੀ ਦਾ ਟੁਕੜਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਪੰਜਿਆਂ ਚ ਦਬਾਉਂਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ। 10
ਉਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਾਸਤਵਿਕ ਰੰਗਤ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਦਿਲਚਸਪ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਬਾਲ ਪਾਠਕ ਆਨੰਦਤ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਨਵੀਨਤਾ, ਰੋਚਕਤਾ, ਮੌਲਿਕਤਾ, ਨਾਟਕੀਪਣ ਅਤੇ ਕਲਾਤਮਿਕਤਾ ਵਰਗੇ

ਗੁਣਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਹਨ। ਬ੍ਰਹਮਚਾਰੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਅਖੌਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਾਰਤਾਲਾਪ ਤੇ ਪਾਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਬਾਲ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਪੱਧਰ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੱਖ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਸਿਰਜੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਬਾਲ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਤਸੁਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਰੁਚੀ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਬਣੀ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਸਰਲ ਅਤੇ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਬਾਲ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਨ ਦੀ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਰੱਖਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਿਸਮ ਦਾ ਬੇਲੋੜਾ ਅਤੇ ਫਾਲਤੂ ਵਰਣਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ।

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हिन्दी साहित्येतिहास में कबीर

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कबीर की जन्मतिथि आज भी विवादास्पद है। अलग - अलग विद्वानों ने उनकी जन्मतिथि का आधार अलग - अलग तथ्यों को माना है। कबीर के जन्म के संबंध में कबीर - पंथियों में एक दोहा प्रचलित है -

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चौदह सौ पचपन साल गए, चन्द्रवार एक ठाठ ठए।
जेठ सुदी बरसात को पूरनमासी तिथि प्रगत भए।।
घन गरजे दामिनि दमके बूँद बरषे झर लाग गए।
लहर तालाब में कमल खिले तहँ कबीर भानु प्रगत भए।

यह दोहा कबीरदास जी के प्रधान धर्मदासजी का लिखा हुआ कहा जाता है। इसके अनुसार कबीर साहब का जन्म (संवत्) 1455 के ज्येष्ठ सुदी पूर्णिमा सोमवार को हुआ था। बाबू श्याम सुंदरदास ने 'साल गए' के आधार पर संवत् 1456 माना है। कबीर के जीवन काल का निर्धारण करने के लिए अधिकांश विद्वानों ने सामान्यतः उनके मरण को आधार बनाया है। कबीर के जन्म को लेकर अनेक प्रमाणों को एकत्रित कर निष्कर्ष निकालने के प्रयत्न किए जा रहे हैं। विद्वानों में इन पर मतैक्य नहीं है। कबीर का उल्लेख अकबर के समकालीन कवि अबुल फजल ने अपने ग्रंथ 'आइने अकबरी' में किया है। यह ग्रंथ अकबर के 48 वें राज्यकाल में सन् 1598 में लिखा गया था। अबुल फजल ने ग्रंथ में कबीर का दो बार उल्लेख किया है। प्रथम उल्लेख में कबीर को मुजाहिद (एकेश्वरवादी) कहा है तथा दूसरी बार एकेश्वरवादी कबीर द्वारा 'पुरी' में विश्राम लेने (मृत्यु) का उल्लेख किया गया है। अबुल फजल ने लिखा है, "एकेश्वरवादी" कबीर जिसने 'ईश्वर एकता' का प्रतिपादन किया, यहाँ दफन किया गया है। उसके लिए स्वर्ग का द्वार खुला और वह अपने समय के स्वीत धार्मिक सिद्धान्तों का विरोध करता रहा।"2 संत कबीर के निधन के सम्बन्ध में भी कुछ पंक्तियों का उल्लेख मिलता है -

"संवत् पन्द्रह सौ पिच्छतरा, किया मगहर को गमन।
माघ सुदी एकादशी, रेलो पवन में पवन।।"
"पन्द्रह सौ उनचास में, मगहर कीन्हों गौन।
अगहन सुदी एकादशी, मिल्यो पौन में पौन।।"

इन सभी तथ्यों को ध्यान में रखकर कबीर का निधन संवत् 1575 स्वीकार करते हैं। कबीर की आयु के संबंध में एक विद्वान ने कहा कि, 'फक्कड़, मस्ती तथा माया - मोह से दूर रहकर कोई भी व्यक्ति

इस आयु को प्राप्त कर सकता है।"3

कबीर के जन्म - स्थल, माता - पिता तथा जीवनवृत्त के विषय में विद्वान एक मत नहीं हैं। कबीर का जन्म - स्थल काशी माना गया है। कबीर ने मगहर में अपने प्राण त्यागे।

"जो काशी तन तजे कबीरा तो रामहि कहा निहोरा रे।
कबीर के संबंध में उल्लेख है कि "उनकी मृत्यु के पश्चात् उनके मृत शरीर के स्थान पर फूल मिले जिसे हिन्दू - मुस्लिम धर्म के लोगों ने बाँट लिए तथा अपनी - अपनी विधि से निर्वाह किया।"4

कबीर नाम की व्याख्या -

"बोधानन्द की संस्त टीका"5 में कबीर के नाम की व्याख्या की गई है -

'कु = आधार, इरा - वाणी, = (कबीर)

क = वेद और कैवल्योपनिषद्, बो = विज्ञान, र = वह, नि = बीज = कबीर

विभिन्न व्याख्याकारों ने कबीर नाम के पर्यायवाची बताये हैं, 'ब्रह्म, श्रुति, जीवन्मुक्त, शास्त्र, मुमुक्षु, ज्ञानी आदि।

कबीर की जाति -

कबीर का लालन - पालन एवं पोषण जुलाहा परिवार तथा परिवश में हुआ था। आचार्य हजारीप्रसाद जी द्विवेदी ने अपने ग्रंथ 'कबीर' की प्रस्तावना में 'जुलाहा' शब्द तथा जाति की उत्पत्ति का विशद विवेचन किया है। कबीर ने स्वयं को कई बार 'जुलाहा' कहा है। यथा -

"जाति जुलाहा मति कौ धीर।

हरषि - हरषि गुन रमै कबीर।।"

विभिन्न शोधों से यह पाया गया कि कबीर कोरी जुलाहा जाति के थे। यह एक ही जाति थी। बाद में बहुसंख्या में कोरी - जुलाहा कबीर पन्थी बन गये थे।

कबीर जुलाहा जाति के थे अतः रामानन्द ने इन्हें शिष्य बनाना अस्वीकार कर दिया। कबीर ने राम नाम मंत्र अंगीकार कर रामानंद को अपना गुरु बना लिया व स्वयं को रामानन्द का शिष्य घोषित कर दिया। विद्वानों का एक दल - यथा - डॉ. आर. पी. त्रिपाठी तथा डॉ. मोहन सिंह, बैस्कट आदि रामानन्द को कबीर का गुरु स्वीकार नहीं करते हैं। डॉ. मोहन सिंह का मत है कि, "कोई लौकिक व्यक्ति कबीर का गुरु नहीं हो सकता।"7

कबीर ने अपनी वाणी में गुरु महत्व बताया है -

"ना गुरु मिल्या न शिष भया, लालच खेला डव।

दून्यू बूड़े धार में, चढ़ि पाथर की नाव।।"

कबीर वाणी तथा कबीर का राम नाम के प्रति मोह व जनश्रुति भी स्वामी रामानंद को उनका गुरु स्थापित करते हैं-

”हम तिसका बहु जानिआ भउ।
जब हुएँ पाल, मिले गुरु देउ।।
कहु कबीर हम ऐसे लखन।
धनु गुरुदेव अतिरूप विचखन।।“

कबीर की रचनाएँ –

कबीर वाणी पर प्राचीनतम ग्रंथ ‘बीजक’ है। इसका प्रकाशन सन् 1868 में हुआ। कबीर की रचनाओं को साखी, शबद व रमैनी में उल्लिखित किया जाता है। कबीर की रचनाओं में विशेषतः उनकी भाषा के संबंध में विभिन्न विद्वानों ने निष्कर्ष दिए हैं। “कबीर साहित्य के प्रसंग में लेखक द्वारा स्वामी बोधानन्द त विज्ञान – बीजक में संकलित साखी तथा वसन्त, चाचरी, हिंडोला, विरहुली रूप लघुतियों का संग्रह संस्त व्याख्या का समुद्धरण हिन्दी व्याख्या सहित किया गया है। इनका प्रकाशन तीन ग्रंथों में किया गया है। “8 अयोध्या सिंह उपाध्याय हरिऔध ने कबीर भाषा पर लिखा है – “कबीर साहब के ग्रंथों का आदर कविता दृष्टि से नहीं, विचार दृष्टि से है। कहीं – कहीं उनकी भाषा में कुछ गंवारूपन आ जाता है। “9 कबीर के साहित्य की भाषा के संबंध में सर्वथा सशक्त मत डॉ. हजारी प्रसाद द्विवेदी का है, “भाषा पर कबीर का जबर्दस्त अधिकार था। वे वाणी के डिक्टेटर थे। जिस बात को उन्होंने जिस रूप में प्रकट करना चाहा है उसी रूप में भाषा से कहलवा लिया है, बन गया है तो सीधे – सादे नहीं तो दरेरा देकर। भाषा कुछ कबीर के सामने लाचार – सी नजर आती है। उनमें मानों ऐसी हिम्मत ही नहीं कि इस लापरवाह फक्कड़ की किसी फरमाइश को नहीं कर सके। “10

कबीर की भाषा में अलग – अलग भाषाओं के शब्द मिलते हैं। वे एक घुमन्तू संत थे। उनकी भाषा खिचड़ी है। आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल ने कहा है कि, “कबीर साहित्य में साखियाँ खड़ी बोली तथा पद रमैनी में अवधी तथा ब्रजभाषा का प्रयोग हुआ है। “11

“संत साहित्य” में कबीर का स्थान

संत साहित्य में कबीर का महत्वपूर्ण स्थान है। कबीर की सोच पूर्णतः स्वतंत्र व निरपेक्षी थी। कबीर ने सभी धर्मों तथा समुदायों की धारणाओं से अवगत होकर वही कहा जो उनकी विचारधारा की कसौटी पर खरा उतरा था। कबीर ने पूर्ववर्तियों की विचारधारा और काल परम्परा से स्वयं को आबद्ध न कर सर्वथा नवीन व मौलिक विचार दिए। कबीर अनपढ़ थे परन्तु कबीर के काव्य में रहस्यात्मक शैली दिखाई पड़ती है।

कबीर ने संत ज्ञानेश्वर के रहस्यवादी ज्ञान के अनुसार ही बोलने तथा नहीं बोलने की मध्य स्थिति से उन्मय अवस्था प्राप्त कर रहस्यवाद का अनुगमन किया था। कबीर कहते हैं कि यदि न बोलने वाले को बोलने के लिए विवश किया जाए तो कबीर की वाणी में यही गूंगे की भाषा कही गई है –

”अब मैं पाइबो रे, पाइबो रे ब्रह्म गियान।

अविकल अकल अनूपम देख्या, कहवां कहुया न जाई।

सैन करै मन ही मन रहसै, गूंगे जानि मिठाई। “12

कबीर के रहस्यवाद का विस्तृत विवेचन डॉ. रामकुमार वर्मा ने

‘कबीर का रहस्यवाद’¹³ में किया है।

संत साहित्य में कबीर दर्शन स्वतंत्र एवं अनूठा स्थान रखता है। अंधानुकरण से अछूते रहकर उन्होंने अपने दार्शनिक मत सिद्धान्तों का प्रतिपादन किया था। कबीर ने कहा,

”कथता बकता सुरता सोई।

आप बिचारै सोग्यानी होई।।

कबीर कहते हैं कि व्यक्ति अपने कर्म स्वयं करता है तथा स्वयं ही भोगता है।

कबीर एक सन्त ही नहीं वरन् कवि एवं समाज – सुधारक के साथ युगदृष्टा भी थे। कबीर ने जो ज्ञान प्राप्त किया वह उनके संघर्ष एवं परिश्रम का ही सुफल है, कबीर भी संत रविदास की भांति सभी के समक्ष स्वयं को जुलाहा बताने में नहीं हिचकते थे।

संत कबीर भक्ति परम्परा के प्रमुखतम कवियों में गिने जाते हैं। भक्ति के साथ – साथ उनकी रचनाओं का अपना अप्रतिम साहित्यिक महत्व है। विशेष रूप से कबीर की उलटबाँसियाँ और सूफी परम्परा का काव्य भारतीय सन्त एवं हिन्दी साहित्य में अपना विशिष्ट स्थान रखती हैं। कबीर की साधना में प्रेम और राग की प्रधानता है जबकि योगियों में इसका अभाव है। आचार्य हजारीप्रसाद द्विवेदी ने कबीर के विषय में कहा, “सहजयानी सिद्धों और नाथपंथियों का अक्खड़पन कबीर में भरा है और उसके साथ उनका स्वाभाविक फक्कड़पन मिल गया है। इस परंपरागत अक्खड़पन और व्यक्तिगत फक्कड़पन ने मिलकर कबीरदास को अत्यधिक प्रभावशाली और आकर्षक बना दिया है। “14

कबीर के काल में दादू, सुन्दर दास, रैदास, मलूक दास, गुरुनानक, सहजो बाई, दयाबाई आदि प्रसिद्ध संत निम्न वर्ग से ही थे। सभी संतो ने बाह्याडम्बरों का विरोध किया तथा एकेश्वरवाद की स्थापना की। डॉ. श्याम सुन्दर घोष लिखते हैं – भारत के भक्तों, संतो और वैरागियों की एक लम्बी परम्परा रही है। इनमें से अधिकतर ऐसे रहे हैं जो ज्ञान, भक्ति और साधना की सीढ़ियों पर चढ़ते – चढ़ते लोक विमुख या लोक निरपेक्ष हो गए। उनकी निजी मुक्ति ही उनका प्रमुख सरोकार रही है। लेकिन कबीर ऐसे भक्त और संत नहीं थे। वे अन्त तक सामाजिक बने रहते हैं। “15 इस दृष्टि से ‘संत साहित्य’ के कवियों में कबीर अपना महत्वपूर्ण स्थान रखते हैं।

कबीर जनता के हितैषी थे। वे निम्न वर्ग की कठिन व दारुण अवस्था को देखकर दुःखी होते थे तथा उनको ईश्वरीय मार्ग का अनुसरण करने की प्रेरणा देते थे। कबीर स्वयं की मुक्ति की चिन्ता नहीं करते थे अपितु जनसाधारण के दुःख से दुःखी हो जाते थे –

”सुखिया सब संसार, खावे और सोवे।

दुःखिया दास कबीर, जागे और रोवे।।16

कबीर ने अन्य संतो की तरह ग्रहस्थ जीवन को नहीं छोड़ा। ना ही समाज से छिन्न – भिन्न ही रहे। कबीर मानते थे कि जनता को ईश्वर की अराधना का मार्ग बताकर उनके कष्टों को दूर किया जा सकता है, उन्हें कुछ हद तक सुखी व संतुष्ट किया जा सकता है। कबीर ने कहा कि गरीब व्यक्ति को आनन्द से रहकर, खुशी – खुशी ईश्वर की भक्ति करते हुए जीवन – यापन करना चाहिए। कबीर की वाणी में शाश्वत सत्य मिलता है, जिसके फलस्वरूप सुख व शान्ति का अनुभव किया जा सकता है –

”गोधन, गज धन, बाजि धन और रतन धन खान।

जब आये संतोष धन, सब धन धूरि समान ।17

कबीर दास ने स्वयं के जीवन का लक्ष्य जनता को पूर्ण सुख, शांति और ईश्वर के मार्ग पर चलना, ही रखा। पहली बार एक संत ने लोगों को गरीबी में भी खुश रहने का संदेश दिया। कबीर ने लोगों को नवीन जीवन मूल्यों को अपनाकर स्वयं का तथा समाज के विकास की प्रेरणा दी। तत्कालीन समय में भक्ति, साधना तथा मुक्ति का अर्थ तमाम निरपेक्षता था। समाज में यही मान्यता थी कि परिवार व समाज से पृथक होकर ही भक्ति के मार्ग पर बढ़ा जा सकता है। कबीर ने इसका पूर्णतया खण्डन किया :-

”प्रेम न बाड़ी उपजे, प्रेम न हाट बिकाय।

राजा परजा जेहि रूचे, सीस देई ले जाय ।18

कबीर बताते हैं कि ईश्वर की भक्ति व प्रेम के लिए स्वयं को शुद्ध व निर्मल रखना चाहिए। ईश्वर प्रेम को गरीब, अमीर, राजा, प्रजा कोई भी व्यक्ति अंगीकार कर सकता है। भक्ति में अहंकार का नाश तथा दुर्गुणों का बहिष्कार किया जाता है। कबीर की भक्ति में आध्यात्मिकता तथा भौतिकता का समन्वय देखने को मिलता है। इसी दृष्टि से संत - साहित्य में कबीर का स्थान अति उत्तम और सर्वथा भिन्न है। कबीर कहते हैं -

”जो सुख पाया राम भजन में,

सो सुख नाहिं अमीरी में।“

कबीर ने अपनी भक्ति भावना में संसार को त्यागने की बात नहीं कही है इसीलिए उनकी भक्ति अन्य संतो से भिन्न है -

”घर में जोग, भोग घर ही में,

घर तज वन नहीं जावे।

घर में जुगत, मुक्त घर ही में,

जे गुरु अलख जखावै ।“19

कबीर ने सदाचार पूर्ण जीवन - यापन पर बल दिया है। तीर्थ, व्रत, मंदिर, मस्जिद आदि का बहिष्कार कर अपने अन्तर्मन के भगवान को जानने की इच्छा कबीर करते हैं। कबीर जन साधारण को निर्गुण ब्रह्म का संदेश देते हैं। वे कहते हैं कि जितना जीवन तुम्हें मिला है उसका उपयोग करो। डॉ. एल. वी. राम लिखते हैं, ”कबीर की सार्वसंगिक चेतना आधुनिक युग की सार्वसंगिक चेतना है।“20 कबीर ने तत्कालीन परिस्थितियों को ध्यान में रखकर साधारण जनता को भक्ति का मार्ग सुझाया। वे मुख्यतया गृहस्थों को भक्ति का मार्ग बताते थे क्योंकि तत्कालीन राजनीति हिन्दू व मुसलमान गृहस्थों को आपस में लड़ा रही थी। यही कारण था कबीर जन - साधारण को राम - खुदा के चक्कर में न पड़ने की सलाह देते थे। उस समय समाज में धार्मिक अन्ध - विश्वास व रूढ़िवादी परम्पराएँ जोरों पर थी। विषम परिस्थिति में कबीर बौद्ध धर्म के पतन तथा मुसलमानी अत्याचार से पीड़ित निम्न वर्ग की सर्वसाधारण जनता को भक्ति का मार्ग सुझाते हैं। डॉ. केदारनाथ ने अपनी पुस्तक में लिखा है, ”कबीर ने बौद्धों की करुणा और प्रेम, शंकर के अद्वैत दर्शन और नाथों के योग मार्ग से पर्याप्त रस लेकर एक ऐसे समाज की संरचना की ओर ध्यान दिया, जहाँ मानव मात्र मानव होने के कारण प्रतिष्ठित होगा, जाति, धर्म या वर्ण के कारण नहीं।“21

कबीर ने तत्कालीन परिस्थितियों का सामना उग्रता व कठोरता के साथ किया, तभी वे विषम परिस्थितियों के खिलाफ खड़े हो सके। कबीर ने पहली बार भारतीय जनता को बताया कि मथुरा और

काशी में जीने या मरने से स्वर्ग की प्राप्ति नहीं होती। स्वर्ग तो व्यक्ति अपने सद्कर्मों से प्राप्त करता है। प्रायः सभी संतो ने संसार की क्षणभंगुरता, असारता की व्याख्या करके जीवन का लक्ष्य मौक्ष बतलाया। कबीर भी भक्त कवि थे लेकिन भौतिक जगत में रहते हुए ईश्वर भक्ति का मार्ग बताया। भक्ति कोई भी व्यक्ति कर सकता है, इसमें जाति, वर्ण का भेद आड़े नहीं आता है। कबीर की यह बहुत बड़ी देन है। कबीर ने मुक्ति के मार्ग को सरल बताया तथा इसकी प्राप्ति के लिए लोगों को प्रोत्साहित किया। हजारी प्रसाद द्विवेदी लिखते हैं-

”अवधू भूले को घर लावे

जो जन हमको भावे।

घर में जोग, भोग घर ही में,

घर तज वन नहीं जावे।

घर में जुगत, मुक्त घर ही में,

जो गुरु अलख जगावे ।“22

संत साहित्य के अन्य कवियों से कबीर का स्थान कई दृष्टियों से भिन्न है। कबीर ने समाज को अनेक प्रकार से शिक्षा दी। कबीर की दृष्टि, चिन्तन और व्यक्तित्व में विरोधाभास नहीं था। उन्होंने मंदिर, मस्जिद, कर्मकाण्ड से जनता को दूर रहने को कहा तथा भक्ति द्वारा आत्म शुद्धि की ओर अग्रसर किया। उन्होंने पाखण्डी पंडितों तथा धर्मगुरुओं से दूर रहने को कहा :-

”कहा हमार गाँठ दिठ बाँधों, निसिवार रहियो हुसियार।

ये कलिगुरु बड़े परपंची डारि ठगोरी सब जग मार ।“23

इस प्रकार संत साहित्य में कबीर का विशिष्ट स्थान एवं महत्व है। कबीर ने भक्ति व नीति का प्रचार किया। उन्होंने संघर्ष से पलायन का उपदेश कभी नहीं दिया। उन्होंने संत साहित्य का पथ प्रदर्शन किया। हिन्दू - मुस्लिम एकता स्थापित कर भारतीय समाज को नई दिशा की ओर अग्रसर किया।

शुक्ल ने जायसी के माध्यम से कबीर को कवियों की श्रेणी से बाहर कर दिया। शुक्ल ने जायसी को 'हिन्दी साहित्य का इतिहास' में स्थान इसलिए दिया कि जायसी ने ग्रंथ के आरम्भ में पंडितों को नमन किया, द्विजों का, वेद, पुराणों का सम्मान किया। किन्तु कबीर ने ऐसा कोई कार्य नहीं किया। शुक्ल की कसौटी साहित्यिक मूल्यों की न रहकर वैदिक और धार्मिक मूल्यों की है। जब कबीर के दलित समाज का भला हिन्दू व मुसलमान दोनों पंथों से नहीं हो रहा था तो कबीर ने नया पंथ चलाकर कोई गलती नहीं की। हिन्दू धर्म ग्रंथों ने धर्म को साधारण धर्म और विशेष धर्म में बाँट रखा था। हिन्दू धर्म के वर्ण रक्षक चाहते थे कि कबीर साधारण धर्म का पालन करें व ब्राह्मणों के कार्यों में हस्तक्षेप न करें। कबीर को वेद विद्या, पठन का भी अधिकार नहीं दिया जाये। ऐसे समय में कबीर ने वेद - विद्या व ब्राह्मणों के खिलाफ आवाज उठाई। जिस समाज व्यवस्था ने कबीर को आजीवन अछूत बने रहने का शाप दिया था कबीर ने उसके विरुद्ध परिवर्तन का बिगुल बजाया।

शुक्ल ने कबीर को विदशी प्रभाव से प्रभावित बताया। किन्तु कबीर की शिक्षा सत्य पर आधारित थी तथा हिन्दुस्तान के गरीब लोग जानते थे कि कबीर उनके थे। कबीर ने दश की 85 प्रतिशत जनता का प्रतिनिधित्व किया जबकि 15 प्रतिशत द्विजों का प्रतिनिधित्व तुलसी ने किया। कबीर ने जनता के दर्द को पहचाना था। उन्होंने

समाज की सबसे सही लड़ाई लड़ी थी। सबसे बड़ी बात यह कि जायसी के 'पद्मावत' किताब लिखने का दलित समाज को क्या लाभ हुआ। समाज से अस्पृश्यता मिटाने में इसका कोई योगदान नहीं है। दलित वर्ग तथा अन्त्यजों की दृष्टि में ऐसे हजार काव्यों का निर्माण होता रहे तो उसका लाभ दलितों को कुछ न मिलेगा। दलित समाज को जायसी के प्रबन्ध महाकाव्य 'पद्मावत' के बजाय कबीर की साखियों और पदों की एक - एक पंक्ति से जीवन जीने की हिम्मत मिलती है। इस प्रकार कबीर गरीब जनमानस के पटल पर विद्यमान थे।

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SOCIAL VICES AMONG WOMEN IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY PUNJAB

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Abstract

The Present paper deals with the social vices prevalent among the women in early 19th Century Punjab. During that period, Punjabi women became victims of many social rituals, vices and customs like female infanticide, sati, dowry, purdha, polygamy, prostitution etc. Due to these social evils and vices, the conditions of women became miserable in the society. However during that period Maharaja Ranjit Singh had regard for women. He had issued strict orders to his soldiers not to insult dishonour any woman of any caste creed and defaulters were punished heavily.

Key Words: Women, Punjab, Vice.

No study of a society can be completed if we do not analyse the position of women as it reflects the standard of its civilization, culture and refinement. The position of women is regarded distinctly subordinate and inferior to men from centuries. She is treated as the dregs at the society. It had become a common saying in the medieval period that man is a fool who takes the advice of women. Thus ideologically a Hindu woman was considered to be an inferior to the male and socially she was kept away in a state of subjection, denied her rights and was suppressed and oppressed. Women did not have freedom in any walk of their life. As a daughter, she lived under strict supervision of her parents and after marriage under her husband, while as a widow under the care of her eldest son. Thus a woman could never be independent. In the early nineteenth century, Punjabi women became victims of many social customs and vices like female infanticide, sati, dowry, purdha, polygamy, prostitution etc.

The birth of daughter was considered inauspicious, while that of son was an occasion for rejoicing. Theoretically she was considered Lakshmi (the Goddess of Prosperity) but her birth was not welcomed. She had no share in her father's and brother's property. If there were many daughters, they became a galling responsibility. The super aim of Hindu life was the procreation of male who alone was spiritually qualified to minister to his father's cares in the next world and saved him from hell. The practice of female infanticide was extremely sinful act. It is defined as the killing of newborn children as a social institution in some states with assent of its parents. It was accomplished mostly in North India. It also

existed in Punjab. The upper classes of both the Hindu and the Muslims practised female infanticide. The affluent families amongst the Sikhs were also no exception to it. Infanticide had created hell on the earth for the female sex. The girls were therefore, neglected, ignored and allowed to riot and many of them died prematurely. In the Hindus, it had prevailed among the Rajputs of the hills, and the Khatri of Gujranawala, Multan, Jhang, Shapur, Jhelum and Lahore. The Bedis, almost in the whole of the Punjab, practised it once at a large scale. They were generally known as Kurimars. This practised was much more prevalent among the Bedis in Punjab and Chauhans in Rajasthan. Rajputs were of great antiquity and arose from combined motives of pride.

The Muslims also committed female infanticide. Throughout Multan division female infanticide was practised by certain classes of Muslim. Some of the Muslim Jat tribes and Sayyids also committed the heinous crime of female infanticide. The common causes of this despicable practice were because of the custom of Sati, child marriage and Purdha system. Among the Hindus the idea prevailed that the marriage of a female in another family produces a sense of inferiority among the parents of female. The general belief among the Hindus was that their son could marry their equals or inferior but the custom prescribed that their daughter should marry on their superiors. The religious minded Hindus believed that if their daughter grew up to puberty in their house without getting married, many of his generations would be damned. However, the major cause was that the girl's father gave dowry in large amounts on the marriage of his

girl. Regarding expenses on marriage of girls Melville observed in his report, "It was astonishing what large sums are spent on such occasions. People live to save money to marry their daughters; others impoverish themselves for life to outbid their neighbours. This custom was prevailed all over India, but was carried to greater extent in Punjab than elsewhere."

The other main cause was that the prosperous families, who pride and honour themselves like Bedis, Rajputs and Sayyids thought that if their daughter was married to inferior, it was the matter of disgrace. Thus an early and suitable choice for a daughter presented difficulties for the parents. The only easy solution to be out of the gripping problems found by the worried parents was the killing of the poor-new born girl.

Though the female infanticide was practised secretly, it was not considered illegal or criminal either by the state or society. During 1846-47, there were about two thousand Bedi families in Jullundhur Doab and fifteen hundred in Derah Baba Nanak, but not a single girl was alive in those families.

Different methods were adopted to kill an infant girl. The girl was buried alive or starved to death, or sometimes the starvation was followed by a gulp of milk, which caused severe colic problems resulting in death. Sometimes the child was exposed to weather, hot or cold in such a way that the child died after brief illness. Many a times the child was put into a pitcher, the mouth of which was covered with a thick paste of mud and buried underground. In some other cases, when the female child was born, opium was administered to her, or a pill made out of bhang was placed on the upper jaw of the infant's mouth where it became softened with the saliva and went into the body of the child causing her death. In some cases the naval string of a new born girl was placed in its mouth which caused suffocation and the child got expired. Among the Rajputs it was a common practice that a mother's breast was smeared with a preparation of the juice of the dhatura plant or the poppy. The infant sucked the milk alongwith the poison. In Jullunder district, a big hole was dug in the ground and it was filled with milk, then the child was placed in it causing death by drowning. Sometimes the child was buried with little gur (Molasses) in her mouth

and a twisted cotton was placed in her hand. While burying her the family members recited:
"Gur Khaeen, puni kateen,

Aap na aeen, bhaiya ghaleen"

(Eat sugar, spin your cotton,
do not come send brother instead)

The evil of child marriage was also present in Punjab in the early nineteenth century. The marriage of children was considered a very important duty of the parents. Though there was no fixed limit for the age of marriage in Hindu, Sikhs and Muslims, all favoured an early age for the same. Among the Hindus the girls were married even before the age of puberty, generally at the age of six or seven, and under all circumstances must not go beyond the age of eleven. If after seven the girl remained unmarried, it was considered inauspicious. If a son was not married at the proper age, that was also considered bad, and the neighbours taunted the boy's family for their inability to contract the marriage of their son, and it was also attributed to some social handicap of that family.

The practise of Purdah (Veil) was also prevailed among the Hindu and Muslim women. The meaning of Purdah (Veil) is to cover or hide 'face or body from outside'. In ancient times the women observed a certain veil (ghoonghat) but the present elaborated and institutionalised form of purdah dates back from the time of Muslim rule. The Hindu women belonging to the upper strata and well to do classes followed purdah system. Women of the well to do families did not move about freely in villages, but the lower or poor class women including Rajput and Brahmins went out unveiled.

Purdah was strictly observed among the Muslims. Muslim women observed purdah with greater rigidity than Hindus. Among the Mohammedan, it was a great dishonour for family when a wife was compelled to uncover her face. The Muslim women of well to do families used a long burqa, which hide herself from head to foot. She was thus able to see others through the thin layer of net, but could not be seen by them. Ladies used the burqa when they went outside their houses.

It was partially observed by the Sikh women. They had been prohibited to cover their faces by the Sikh Gurus. Sikh ladies of high social position even led troops into field and received

visitors. Sikh women covered their faces from elder people of their family.

Generally women were required to remain within their houses as all the outside duties were performed by their husbands. While staying at home women had always the preference over others. It was said,

'Andar baithi lakh di, bahar gayi kakh di'

(She who stays at home is worth a lakh and she wanders out it is worth a straw).

Again,

Tre kam kharab, mard nun chakki, sandhe nu gah, ran nun rah

(Three things are bad, grinding for a man, threshing for a buffalo, and travelling for women).

The wives of the Maharaja Ranjit Singh, particularly Rajput wives followed this practice.

Polygamy was common in Punjab among the rich and poor alike. The polygamy was prevalent in Punjab during the medieval times. This custom was prevalent among Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, especially among the aristocratic families in Punjab and rich people. During this period Maharaja Ranjit Singh had a number of women in his harem. Hindus and the Sikhs were monogamous, but a second wife was some times kept when the first was barren or gave birth only to the female children. Though not held as an absolute necessity, it was generally thought proper to obtain the consent of the first wife to go in for a second marriage. Hindus married with one wife and never divorced her till death, except for the adultery.

This practice remained common among the lower castes like Chammar, Chuhars, Nai, and several other menial and artisan classes. It was also common among the agricultural tribes of the hills like the Gujar and Jats. Among the Jat Sikhs in all, polygamy was the result of widow remarriage, marrying by Chaddar-Paunna to keep one's brother's widow. Polygamy was practiced by Muslims of the north-west frontier. According to the Muslim tradition Sunnis and Shias could have four wives. The wealthy and influential Muslims kept several wives, many slave girls and concubines.

The practice of Sati had been widely prevalent in India from earlier times. The term of Sati means burning of a woman alongwith the dead body of her husband. This social evil was

brought into India by the earlier invaders. It was also present in medieval period.

The act of burning or Sati was performed both with the dead body and without it. To burn alongwith the dead body of the husband was one type of Sati called Sahmarna or Sahgamn. The second type of Sati was known as *annumarna* or *anugaman*, according to which the reception of information about the death of husband in district land, the wife would burn herself alongwith some symbol of her husband. The condition of widow was very unfortunate in the society and was very hard to bear. Generally a widow had to chose between the two alternatives, to remain a widow all her life or to burn herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. She usually chose the latter alternative. When a widow made up her mind to become Sati, she shed no tears and made no lamentation. She laid aside her veil and no longer concealed her face from the public. The belief of entering heaven with her beloved husband gave her incredible energy to dedicate herself to martyrdom. The practice of Sati in Punjab in early nineteen century was not so common. There were numerous instances which indicate that it was generally confined to the royal widow and those belonging to the highest Statra of the society.

The Sikh Gurus had intensely criticised the practice of sati. The word sati has been used in the Adi Granth in different connotations. It implies truth, mortal, disciplined, virtuous generous, pure etc. It also refers to the custom of Sati considered virtuous according to the fourth chapter of Parashar- Simriti.

According to Guru Amar Das, Sati was a cruel ritual, unacceptable by any ethic. There could not be a more cruel art than to compel or lead widow to immolate herself. The following hymns refer to it.

Satiya ehe na akahiya jo madiya lag jalan,

Nanak matiya jayea j biraha chot maran

(Not these are true suttees that perish on their husband's funeral pyres, Baba Nanak. Those are true suttees who suffer agony of separation, such too are known as suttees as pass life in noble conduct and content, secure their land, and rising each day, remember him).

Guru Arjan Dev also criticised the Sati. According to Prinsep, Sikh women did not burn themselves with the corpse of their husbands.

Under the Brahmanical influence, sometimes

the Sikh ladies of higher families offered themselves along with their deceased husbands. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's four principal wives - Rani Kundan called Gudan Rani Hardevi, Rani Raj Kanwar and Rani Banali along with seven, slave girls (eleven all) had resolved to burn them on the funeral pyre of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Dr Martin Honigberger and Lieut. Colonel Steinbach both attended the royal funeral and cremation. Honigberger says, "The four Ranies came out of the Zenanna on foot and unveiled for the first time of their lives. They distributed their ornaments and jewels while accompanying the funeral train in open palanquins while their seven slave-girls followed them on foot. The royal body was respectfully placed in the Middle of the pyre. After that the Ranies ascended the fatal ladder one by one, and according to their ranks the slaves followed. The Ranies placed themselves at the head of the royal body and the slaves close to its feet. There they crowded, remained in silent expectation for the fatal moment. Then a thick mat of reeds was brought with which the whole pyre was covered. Oil was then poured over the mat, and the pyre was lighted at each corner in a few moments, the deplorable victims of an abominable and fantastic ceremony had ceased to exist."

After Kharak Singh's death, out of his four widows only one Ishwar Kaur was persuaded to burn herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. Two of the widows of Raja Hira Singh along with 22 widows and slave girls of his supporters, killed by the soldiery, performed the ceremony of Sati. Four of the wives of Minister Jawahar Singh, the brother of Rani Jindan, became Sati. Thus the practice of Sati amongst the widows of the nobles and Sardars was not infrequent, but amongst the Hindus and Sikhs it was rare.

Prostitution was also considered to be a necessary social evil. It was though discouraged by some of the rulers, yet it became a social entertainment. About prostitution Jaquemont tells us that in Amritsar the prostitutes had their separate quarters. They were never exposed to insults.

The dancers were under the surveillance of the ruler and were little better than the slaves. They always move in covered vehicles drawn by oxen's, escorted by a party of armed police whom they pay for fear of being robbed of

costly, jewels with they were commonly adorned.

Trafficking in women was also existed in Punjab. Slavery was also practised among the women of Punjab. Most of the girls were bought from the hill areas in their early years by men who made a regular business from it. The sale of female children in the hills was considered a good source of income by their parents. The female child who looked pretty was sold at around the age of eight at high price.

Many of the nobles, the chiefs at the court, affluent landlords and big merchants kept concubines and female servants. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's seraglio had a large number of female slaves known as golis and bandis. The European officers at their maintained harems had bought slave girls to attend upon their wives. In the common masses, the purchasers of women were mainly Jats (both Sikh and Hindu), Aroras and in a less degree, Kambons and Khattris.

To conclude it can be said that in the early nineteenth century, women were suffering from many social vices and evil traditions in the society of Punjab. The heinous crime of female infanticide was prevalent which was followed by higher strata of Hindu, Muslims and Sikhs communities. Child marriage, dowry, Parda system, polygamy, Sati Pradha, prostitution and trafficking etc. were prevalent in our society. In spite of above mentioned social practices, norms and customs, quite a number of talented women made mark in political sphere in the early nineteenth century. Sikh ladies like Rani Sada Kaur, Rani Raj Kaur, Rani Jind Kaur, played an effective role in politics, administration and in the battlefield.

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ABDICATION OF MAHARAJA RIPUDAMAN SINGH

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Abstract

Ripudaman Singh was an educated young Prince. He was nominated as a member of the Imperial Legislative Council by the British. This was the policy of Britain Government to appoint loyal Native Chiefs or their sons as members of Legislative Council. Due to this policy Ripudaman Singh was nominated, as he was the son of one of the eminent and most trusted Chiefs of the Punjab. It was expected that he would support the policies and measures of the British in the Council. But Ripudaman Singh came into confrontation with the British from the time of his succession after the death of Raja Hira Singh. Maharaja Ripudaman Singh contended that his succession was a matter of right and there should be no question of British sanction. Moreover, he wanted that the installation ceremony should be on traditional lines and should not differ from that performed at the time of his father's investiture. He was exiled for opposing the British.

Key Words: Abdication, British, Maharaja

The deposition of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh in 1923 in the form of forced abdication¹ was the most noteworthy event in the history of the Nabha State, especially in that of its relations with the British. It may be said to have marked the culmination of the process of British Paramountcy in operation in this State of the Punjab region. The so-called abdication of the Maharaja was not a sudden development. Rather it was the outcome of a long process, and its genesis may be found in the ever-increasing intervention of the British authorities in the affairs of the Nabha State, which was not liked by the Maharaja of independent outlook.

Before the accession of Ripudaman Singh the British authorities had been interfering with the internal affairs of the State. But the previous Chiefs of Nabha State had been submitting passively to all these encroachments on their sovereign rights by the Paramount Power, and as such the relation of British Government and Nabha State were generally cordial. During the period of Raja Hira Singh (1871-1911) also the State's relations with the British were quite friendly. The British were generally appreciative of the loyal conduct of the Nabha Chief and had conferred upon him many titles and honours. But Ripudaman Singh was made of a different stuff from that of the previous Chiefs. Ripudaman Singh was born on March, 4, 1883 and was brought up on traditional lines. From the very beginning he was spared to be under British environment. He started his education in Gurmukhi under the charge of Bhai Kahn Singh.

Bishan Singh was engaged to teach him English. Thus under the influence of Indian teachers he developed independent and nationalistic outlook². In those days it was the practice that the Princes and Chiefs of the Punjab region used to join Chief's College at Lahore and there they used to learn British ways, habits, manners and traditions and were generally kept in dark about the traditions of their own country. Ripudaman Singh's father was advised many a time to depute him to Chief's College, but he was of the view that the proper place for a Prince's education was his home³.

As Ripudaman Singh grew into an educated young Prince, he was nominated by the British in December 1906 as a member of the Imperial Legislative Council⁴. It was the policy of the Britain to appoint loyal Native Chiefs or their sons as members of Legislative Council. In pursuance of this policy Ripudaman Singh was nominated, as he was the son of one of the eminent and most trusted Chiefs of the Punjab. It was expected that he would support the policies and measures of the British in the Council.

But during this period of two years of Ripudaman Singh's membership in the Council, the expectations of the British were belied. For Ripudaman Singh deliberately and determinedly began to oppose the British, and side with the nationalists on important issues. For instance, he joined the nationalists like Gokhale and Rash Behari Ghose in strongly opposing Prevention of Seditious Meetings Bill when it was placed before the Council in November, 1907.

Earlier, like a truly patriotic Prince, he delivered an eloquent speech in the Council hall on 27 March 1907 in which he touched upon important issues such as the insulting behaviour of the British officers towards Indians, backwardness of the people, the introduction of Legislative Council in Punjab and Indianization of the services etc. In order to give legal sanction to a marriage ceremony common among the Sikhs called 'Anand', he introduced the Anand Marriage Bill in the Council⁷. But the Bill could not be passed into law during his term of office. As a matter of fact, the British were thinking that the Maharaja would gain political influence among the Sikhs if the Bill initiated by him was passed. Ripudaman Singh, however, continued his efforts in league with Sunder Singh Majithia. The Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab reported that since the Maharaja was supported by a great body of Sikh community, it would probably cause serious popular discontent if no action was taken in this matter. So on his recommendation, the Supreme Government took up the matter and got the Bill passed into law in October 1908.

By this time Ripudaman Singh had become so prominent a figure that he was elected as the President of the All India Social Conference held at Lahore on 31 December, 1909. In his Presidential address, he dilated upon the social evils prevailing in the Indian society⁹ and also spoke eloquently on the pitiable condition of Indians in foreign countries. The frankness with which he spoke earned the displeasure of the British officers.

After the expiry of his term as a member in the Council, the British authorities decided to send him to England in 1909, for it was thought that a visit to England would broaden his outlook and make him favourable towards the British. In England he attended several meetings of the House of Commons and gained good knowledge of the working of parliamentary system. On his return, he tried to follow that pattern of Government in his own State. There is no doubt that he gained a great knowledge and developed liberal outlook in the course of his stay in England. But he did not change his attitude towards the British authorities and continued to have patriotic leanings.

Ripudaman Singh came into confrontation with the British from the time of his succession after

the death of Raja Hira Singh on 25 December 1911. Maharaja Ripudaman Singh contended that his succession was a matter of right and there should be no question of British sanction. Moreover, he wanted that the installation ceremony should be on traditional lines and should not differ from that performed at the time of his father's investiture¹⁰. He delivered an eloquent speech at his installation, which was strongly objected by the British Government. The British authorities probably never forgave him for this show of independence. Thus from the time of his very succession the British authorities were unhappy with the conduct of Ripudaman Singh.

The Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Louis Dane, before retiring wanted to visit the Nabha State. The Maharaja declined to receive a visit from His Honour, as the proposed date came in conflict with the dates of his own tour in the State which he did not want to cancel. The conduct of the Maharaja was characterised by the Government of India as "without excuse and calling for severe reproof."¹¹

On the arrival of the new Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Michael O' Dwyer, in May 1913, Maharaja Ripudaman Singh was invited by him through the State Motamid to a friendly meeting at Simla. But the Maharaja gave no reply. At last on the invitation of the Government of India, the Maharaja reached Simla on 13 October, 1913 and made promise to higher authorities to remove some of the difficulties in the way of co-operation, but practically little was done towards the fulfillment of the Maharaja's promises. Again on April 28, 1914 the Lieutenant-Governor warned the Maharaja to correct his behaviour of unfriendliness¹².

On the outbreak of the European war in 1914, the Maharaja made his offer of Imperial Service Infantry direct to the Viceroy¹³. During the war the Government used harsh measures for recruiting the people of the States¹⁴. But Ripudaman Singh gave freedom to his subjects and announced that every person would be recruited by his own will and no one would be forced for this. Such an attitude of the Maharaja also incurred the wrath of the British authorities.

Maharaja Ripudaman Singh vigorously supported the reform movements in the country. When Nankana Tragedy¹⁵ took place

on 21 February 1921 and the Akalis gave a call for observing 5 April 1921 as 'Nankana Sahib Day', he showed full sympathy for them. As a mark of respect for the martyrs he did not take food for the day, wore a black turban and slept on the ground¹⁶. In March-April 1922 when Akali workers were arrested all over the Punjab and the other Sikh Chiefs of this region supported the British authorities, Ripudama Singh was the only notable Chief who did not help the British Government in suppressing the Akalis¹⁷. All these facts show that he was of independent outlook who was not willing to act as a sycophant of the British Government.

The association of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh with nationalist and anti-Government movements was not liked by the British authorities who apprehended that he might assume the role of a nationalist leader of the Sikhs. It was observed by the Government authorities that the Maharaja had been trying since long to win for himself the position of the leader and acknowledged head of the Sikhs¹⁸.

Apart from all this, Maharaja Ripudaman Singh was opposed to undue intervention of the British authorities in the affairs of the State. A capable and enlightened ruler, he did not like to be dictated by the British Political Agent in the internal matters of the State. There had been complaints from some of the Indian ruling Princes that rights secured to them by treaties, Sanads and engagements had not been fully observed by the Government of India in practice. It was, therefore, suggested by the Viceroy that concrete instances of disregard of treaty rights needed to be brought to the notice of the Government before the next meeting. It was in response to this suggestion that Maharaja Ripudama Singh collected as many as twenty-one instances of violation of treaty-rights of Nabha¹⁹. Some of these instances pertained to undue interference in cases of certain individuals. Of the remaining, some notable instances complained of referred to interference in Imperial Service Troops, assumption of jurisdiction over railway lands and enforcement of Arms Act over these lands, statistics relating to the State, interference with excise administration, uncalled for recognition of succession by the Paramount Power, entertaining complaints from the subjects, muafidars etc. of the State, encouraging

deserters from the State, establishment of the office of Political Agent, unauthorised possession of State's lands by Canal Department of the British etc.

Another charge which is often levelled against the Maharaja to justify his deposition is that the administration of the State under him was far from satisfactory and that the State subjects suffered due to his mal-administration. But this charge was unfounded. Ripudaman Singh took keen interest in the administration of his State and his administration appears to have been better than that of many other Native States. Being an enlightened Chief, Ripudaman Singh was perhaps the first Chief in the region who introduced the Legislative Council in his State in 1918. Thus the personal qualities of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh as ruler and all available evidences contradict the charge of mal-administration of Nabha. Even if it be accepted for the sake of argument that there was bad administration in the State and the people were not happy, wherein lay the justification of deposing him on the basis of this charge? The subjects of Patiala State in the neighbourhood under Ripudaman Singh's contemporary Maharaja Bhupinder Singh were highly discontented with his misrule and had represented to the British authorities on this account²⁰, but no action was taken against that Chief.

According to the official version, the dispute between Maharaja of Nabha and the Maharaja of Patiala was the real cause leading to the abdication of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh. The dispute pertained mainly to extraterritorial and jurisdictional matters. The territories of the two States were not only contiguous but also literally dove-tailed into each other²¹ and often provided the cause of friction between the two. Moreover, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala always sided with the British but this was against the patriotic spirit of the independent Ripudaman Singh²² which created serious differences between the two Chiefs. Another cause of dispute was that the Maharaja of Patiala complained about the irregular arrest, trial and conviction of Patiala police officers by the Nabha Courts and about the abduction of Patiala girls for the zenana or harem of the Maharaja of Nabha²³. But even the Patiala Maharaja cannot be spared from such accusations. According to

Jermani Das, it were the officials of Maharaja of Patiala who had first been guilty on account of abduction of Nabha girls which caused estrangement in their relations²⁴.

Efforts for reconciliation between the two chiefs were made time and again. In August 1917, with the efforts of Arjan Singh of Bagrian all the outstanding disputes and misunderstandings had been removed²⁵. Again in December 1921, Maharaja Ripudaman Singh having thought that he might not lose in his dual fight (one against the Political Department of the Government of India and other against the Patiala Darbar) sent a deputation to Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala asking for reconciliation²⁶. In reply the Maharaja of Patiala said that he was ready to resume his former friendship with Ripudaman Singh on some conditions which were however, unacceptable to Ripudaman Singh. So the Maharaja of Patiala proceeded to break all connections with Nabha.

In May 1922 the Government of India decided to appoint an English Officer, named Mr. Stuart, to enquire into the dispute between the Patiala and Nabha States. Maharaja Ripudaman Singh submitted that instead of a single judicial officer, a court of arbitration should be appointed but the Supreme Government declined to accept the request²⁷. The Stuart enquiry commenced from 3 January 1922 and continued till 3 May 1923 at Ambala²⁸. The Patiala Darbar was represented by Rai Bahadur S.M. Bapna, Additional Foreign Secretary and Member of the Council of Patiala and Mr. Niranjana Prasad, Legal Remembrancer, Patiala. The Nabha State was represented by Sardar Bahadur Bhagwan Singh, Ali Imam, Mr. Hasan Imam and Mr. Durga Prasad²⁹.

In the meanwhile an intrigue was hatched by Diwan Nar Singh Rao of Nabha in collaboration with Minchin, Agent to the Governor-General, to deprive Ripudaman Singh of the administrative powers, for the Diwan wanted to assume the administrative power in his own hands³⁰. But Ripudaman Singh became aware of the intrigue. According to official version Maharaja Ripudaman Singh became worried and went to Kasauli on 5 June to discuss with Minchin regarding settlement of his dispute³¹. Minchin argued that he should abdicate voluntarily which would avoid harsher treatment if he was found guilty after enquiry. But according to other version³², Minchin called the

Maharaja for an interview at Kasauli and gave a threatening discourse. Minchin with the help of Nar Singh Rao and Mr. Sen³³ forced the Maharaja tentatively to agree, and Ripudaman Singh gave in writing that he would abdicate on these conditions:³⁴

- Maharaja would retain his titles and hand over the administration of the State to Government of India.
- He would live outside his State and visit the State with Government's permission.
- He would abdicate in favour of his son when he came of age.
- The education of his son, Partap Singh, would be the entire responsibility of the Government.
- He would pay Rs.50 lakhs to Maharaja of Patiala as an indemnity.
- He would refrain from any kind of interference in the Patiala State.

Ripudaman Singh soon regretted his position before Teja Singh and Didar Singh³⁵, members of the Central Sikh League, telling them that owing to pressure put on him by Col. Minchin he had given in writing that he was prepared to abdicate as he was told that there would be a public trial if he did not agree. The two Sikhs promised their support to Ripudaman Singh in case he refused to abdicate³⁶.

Ripudaman Singh was kept under strict watch and his post was also censored³⁷. Some very high officials of the Nabha State were submitting secret reports to the British authorities³⁸ and they came to know that Ripudaman Singh had begun to remove everything of value to Dehradun³⁹. Minchin then found Ripudaman Singh in excitable and vacillating condition, and he reported to the higher authorities that if there was any delay in carrying out the orders of the Government of India, it might induce the Maharaja to resign from the position he had taken up. The British Government warned Maharaja Ripudaman Singh. Some of the innocent men of the Patiala officials had been convicted by the Nabha courts on evidence which was entirely inadequate and the officers of the Nabha judiciary were guilty of complicity in the matter. The Government of India came to the conclusion that the campaign was sustained with the general approval and connivance of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh⁴⁰. According to official version, measures which it would have

been the duty of the Government of India to take, were under their consideration when Maharaja Ripudaman Singh upon his own initiative visited the Agent to the Governor-General and voluntarily expressed his willingness to sever his connection with the administration of the State⁴¹.

To avoid the influence of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala, Ripudaman Singh recommended the appointment of a British Officer to carry on the administration of the State in place of a Council of Regency⁴². Accepting his recommendations, the Supreme Government appointed Mr. Wilson Johnston, I.C.S. as Administrator of Nabha. As Johnston was on home-leave at that time, so C.M.G. Ogilvie, another I.C.S. was appointed to officiate as Administrator. Without apprising the Maharaja, Ogilvie accompanied by Minchin went to Nabha and entered the Hira Mahal at 5:30 A.M. on 9 July, 1929. With the help of a battalion of armed British Infantry and detachment of mounted bodyguards they took Ripudaman Singh to Dehradun.

The forced abdication of Ripudaman Singh was not justifiable on the part of the British Government as the Maharaja was neither tried nor deposed but was given the option of abdicating. If the Government thought the abdication was voluntary, then why did they not ask the Maharaja to voluntarily leave the State? The Government was accused by many contemporary Native Newspapers⁴³ of having taken advantage of the Nabha-Patiala dispute in order to wrest the administration of the State from Ripudaman Singh, instead of trying to bring about reconciliation between the two Chiefs.

A great majority of the Sikhs and Akalis believed that the severance of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh from the administration of the State was not voluntary but was brought about by intimidation and intrigue in order to deal a side blow to the Gurudwara Reform Movement. They made requests to Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee to struggle for the restoration of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh⁴⁴. In sympathy with the Maharaja Ripudaman Singh for his restoration, July 29, 1923 was fixed as a day of prayer and pledge⁴⁵. On 2 August, 1923, the S.G.P.C. gave challenge to the Viceroy that the Government

should satisfy the Sikh community by appointing a Commission of enquiry to vindicate its position about the abdication of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha. But the Government gave no reply. Meanwhile, the deposed Maharaja of Nabha was threatened by the authorities as being responsible for the Sikh agitation and the Maharaja Ripudaman Singh had to dissociate himself from the Akalis⁴⁶.

The S.G.P.C. authorised the Executive Committee to take all the necessary steps by peaceful means for the restoration of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh, and said that it was up to the Government to convince the Sikh community that his severance was voluntary, or they must right the wrong done.

A Dewan of the Sikhs was held at Jaito, a village near Nabha on 25 August, 1923, for three days. On the third day the police intervened and made arrests. Due to this highhandedness of the British authorities the Dewan which was initially started for three days was declared to be for an indefinite period. It was decided that September 9 will be observed as a 'Nabha Day' when there would be barefoot protest marches throughout Punjab towns and cities. Eventually the Akalis discovered Jaito⁴⁷ as a convenient base for their operation against the State and it was given out that the incessant reading of the Granth Sahib called 'Akhand Path' had been interfered with⁴⁸. The British officials tried to explain that the reading was continued upto the finish.

The interruption in the 'Akhand Path' was a grave desecration according to Sikh religion and this led to the well-known Jaito Morcha⁴⁹. A ceaseless campaign of Akali bands was led for continuous reading of Holy Granth in Gangsar Gurudwara, Jaito. The Akali ferment was not confined to Jaito itself nor even to Nabha State, but like a wild fire it soon engulfed the neighbouring Sikh States of Patiala, Jind and Faridkot, and hundreds of Sikhs were arrested from these places⁵⁰. The prohibition against freely visiting the Gurudwara began to be enforced⁵¹ strictly by the Administrator of Nabha.

Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Mr. A.T. Gidwani and K. Santanum, who went to Nabha to watch the situation, were arrested under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code⁵². Pt. Moti Lal, who went to Nabha to meet his son, was not allowed

to do so, as he wanted to meet him unconditionally⁵³. Thus by imprisoning Nehru the British did not allow the Congress to enter the arena of battle-field for the restoration of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh. Nehru and his associates had to leave Nabha without making any sort of contact with the Akalis.

Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai and Maulana Muhammad Ali arrived at the decision after holding a conference that they should act promptly, and appealed to the Akali leaders to stop sending more Jathas to Jaito⁵⁴. They suggested that the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee should make a declaration in clearest terms that the object of the Jatha was purely to assert the aforeside right (of performing 'Akhand Path' in place of the one which was interrupted) and that it had no desire to carry on under the cover of 'Akhand Path' ceremony any prohibited propaganda in the State of Nabha. The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee replied that its resolution to the effect that they would leave no stone unturned for the restoration of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh, stood in full force. They disregarded the advice and despatched several other Jathas to Jaito which were arrested but not fired upon⁵⁵. The British Government soon became tired of the activities of the Akalis and entered into negotiations for settlement with them through the Commander-in-Chief, General Sir William Birdwood⁵⁶.

But the negotiations failed as the Government was unwilling to make any confidential agreement. They also backed out of their promise to release all the prisoners and showed readiness to review the cases of only certain classes of prisoners. Moreover, the British authorities now wanted to abandon, and not merely suspend, all the Akali propaganda against the Government⁵⁷.

The question of Jaito struggle was settled when the Provincial Sikh Sudhar Committee performed the incessant reading of the scripture ('Akhand Path') 101 times on 6 August, 1925 without interfering in any way with the administration of the State⁵⁸. The main question of Nabha Maharaja's restoration was almost given up by the Akalis.

Maharaja Ripudaman Singh was not happy with the settlement. He accused the Akalis of having betrayed his cause. He said that it was under the

similar helplessness that he had signed the abdication letter under which the Akalis had given up his cause⁵⁹. He exhorted the Akali leadership not to give up the issue of his restoration.

The Maharaja was for once to prove partly right⁶⁰, for soon after the passage of the Gurudwara Act and the dropping of the Nabha question by the Akali leadership, he was suddenly removed from Dehradun to far off Kodaikanal in the South (under Regulation II of 1818) on the charges of his participation in meetings and demonstrations, his press campaign, his attempt to create difficulties in Nabha, his encouragement to Akali Movement and his constant attack on Government and Maharaja of Patiala⁶¹. He spent the remaining part of his life in virtual exile till his death on 14 December 1942.

Neither Ripudaman Singh's own representation to the Viceroy nor the Akali agitation could win back the throne for him; rather it worsened his position. Yet the Maharaja did not give up hope. Even from Kodaikanal the Maharaja kept the question of restoration alive and made several representations through the political leaders like Moti Lal Nehru and Ali Brothers to the Government of India⁶². The Akalis too did not altogether leave the question but adopted a lukewarm attitude neither to drop it nor to make it a life and death question.

Though the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee and Shiromani Akali Dal had forgotten the Nabha issue but the general public did not leave this issue from their minds⁶³. On 9 July, 1939 under the auspices of the Sikh Naujawan Sewak Society, 'Nabha Day' was again celebrated in 'Pari Mahal' Lahore⁶⁴. In 1940 the Sikhs in order to show their feelings, celebrated Nabha Day thrice.

Thus Maharaja Ripudaman Singh till his end tried his best to get back his lost throne but he remained unsuccessful. The British were prepared to give him back his State if he tendered an unqualified apology. But he did not do that⁶⁵.

Conclusion

The abdication of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh was not voluntary but was brought about by the mechanisation of British Government. The Maharaja was not willing at all to leave the

Gaddi of Nabha. He was hesitant, nay reluctant, to sign the letter of abdication. Corruption, conspiracy and intimidation of the Political Department were the cause of his misfortunes. If the Maharaja Ripudaman Singh had willingly left the throne, why were the leaders of different political parties bent upon making the Maharaja re-occupy the Gaddi? Maharaja Ripudaman Singh had been deserted and defied by his own officials. Asa Singh, A.D.C. of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh, took away the confidential papers of the Maharaja and handed them over to the Maharaja of Patiala. After all the Maharaja had not raised a standard of revolt or committed any political sin, had not joined hands with any other power to draw arms against the British, then why was he dethroned? The reason was that he was a man of independent outlook who did not want to play a second fiddle to the British authorities. He was truly a 'Patriotic Prince' who was having some connection with Nationalist leaders of the Congress and Akali parties.

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An Official Publication



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