

IMPACT

THE FUTURE MAKERS



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**Central Research Committee
Shri Shikshayatan College
Kolkata**

IMPACT

The Future Makers

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Shri Shikshayatan College, Kolkata

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

IMPACT is the journal of the Central Research Committee of Shri Shikshayatan College. It aims primarily to encourage research among our students, both at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. It intends to initiate their interest in academic enquiry and provide a platform to showcase their efforts. The articles, ranging across the many disciplines taught at our institution, constitute an inter-disciplinary scholarly dialogue that celebrates the rich tradition of diversity cherished and nurtured by Shri Shikshayatan College. As the pandemic protocols are extended and our academic future remains uncertain, we continue with our attempts to encourage and support research. This new issue of IMPACT is a testimony to our resolve and commitment.

Editorial Board

July 2021

:: CONTENTS ::

1. Bengali : দোজখ্‌নামা উপন্যাসে রবিশঙ্করের বলের মান্টো পাঠ	1
2. Chemistry : Heavy Metal Contamination in Crops of West Bengal	9
3. English : Tintin in Tibet : Reflection of Hergé's Crisis	16
4. English : The Portrayal of Women in Bessie Head's A Question of Power	19
5. English : The Burden of The Bell Jar	23
6. English : The Timelessness of Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights	27
7. Geography : The Contradicting Reality of Anthropocene	31
8. Geography : Air Quality Index in Pre-Lockdown and Lockdown Period in Kolkata — A Case Study	35
9. Geography : Idol Immersion and its Impact on The Water Bodies in India	40
10. History : Resistance : Viewing Through The Jewish Case-study (Holocaust)	46
11. History : Contextualising Historical Narratives of Indian Migration to Myanmar	50
12. History : Book Review : "Conquest and Community – The Afterlife of Warrior Saint Ghazi Miyan" – Shahid Amin	56
13. History : Introduction of Public Health in India; A Comparative Analysis of Colonial and Post-colonial Period	59
14. History : Dalit Feminism	66
15. Political Science : India and Pharmaceuticals Politics	70

দোজখনামা উপন্যাসে রবিশংকরের বলের মান্টো পাঠ

দিশারী মুখার্জী, অতিথি অধ্যাপক, বাংলা বিভাগ, শ্রী শিক্ষায়তন কলেজ

সংবাদ প্রতিদিনের রোববার পত্রিকায় ২০০৯ সাল থেকে পরবর্তী এক বছর ধরে প্রকাশিত হয়েছিল দোজখনামা উপন্যাস। ২০১১-তে এই উপন্যাসের অন্য বঙ্কিম পুরস্কারে সম্মানিত হন রবিশংকর বল।

দোজখনামা আসলে দুটি উপন্যাস। যার কখন বিশ্বের ভিতরে একটি উর্দুতে লেখা, যেটি উর্দু সাহিত্যিক সাদাত হাসান মান্টোর রচিত বলে কল্পিত, উপন্যাসিক রবিশংকর বল এই কল্পনার অবতারণা করাতে চেয়েছেন পাঠককে। আর অন্যটি বাংলায় লেখা যেখানে রবিশংকর বল নিজেকে মান্টো রচিত এই উপন্যাসটির অনুবাদক রূপে পরিচয় করিয়েছেন।

বাংলা ভাষায় লেখা এই আখ্যানের কথক উপন্যাসটির সূচনায় জানান তিনি তবায়ফদের সম্পর্কে লেখার প্রয়োজনে লখনৌতে পৌঁছান, পেশায় খবরের কাগজে কলম পেশা কথক তবায়ফদের গল্প শুনতে পৌঁছে গিয়েছিলেন ধুলোয় ঢাকা ওয়াজির গঞ্জে ফরিদ মিঞার কাছে। এই ফরিদ মিঞাও একজন গল্প লেখক। তিনি লেখককে তার আব্বাজানের থেকে পাওয়া সাদাত হাসান মান্টোর অপ্রকাশিত একটি দাস্তানের পাণ্ডুলিপি দিয়েছিলেন। ফরিদ মিঞা বলেছেন — ‘এই দাস্তান ঠিক নভেল নয়, দাস্তানের গল্প শেষ হতে চায়না।’ (-১) আবার মান্টো সম্পর্কে ফরিদ মিয়া বলেছেন — ‘কিসসারা খুঁজে বেড়ান তাকে।’ (-২) ফরিদ মিঞার এই উক্তির মধ্য দিয়ে লেখক আসলে আলোচ্য উপন্যাসের ভিতরে ভারতীয় আখ্যান রীতির অন্যতম দুই ধারা ‘কিসসা’ এবং ‘দাস্তান’-এর পরিচয় করাতে চাইলেন পাঠকের সাথে।

উপন্যাসিক ফরিদ মিঞার থেকে খুঁজে পাওয়া এই পাণ্ডুলিপির উর্দু থেকে বাংলা অনুবাদ করেন, আর এই অনুবাদের অবয়বের ভিতর দিয়েই তিনি সমগ্র উপন্যাসটা লিখেছেন।

দোজখনামা উপন্যাসে দেখা যায় সাদাত হাসান মান্টো এবং মির্জা গালিব পারস্পরিক সংলাপ বিনিময়ের মধ্য দিয়ে একটি আখ্যান গড়ে তুলেছেন। ভারত আর পাকিস্তানের কবরে শুয়ে পরস্পর তাদের স্মৃতি থেকে তুলে আনেন অতীত জীবন যার সাথে নিহিত আছে ভারতীয় ঐতিহ্য। ১৯৪৭-এর দেশভাগ আর ১৮৫৭-এর সিপাহী বিদ্রোহ এই বিস্তৃত সময়ের দুই শতাব্দীর দুজন মানুষ নিজেদের ব্যক্তি জীবনের প্রাপ্তি, অপ্রাপ্তি, অসহায়তা ও পরাজয় নিয়ে দাঁড়িয়ে আছেন। এই উপন্যাসে ঐতিহাসিক চরিত্র হিসাবে পরিচিত দুজন মানুষের ব্যক্তিগত অন্ধকার উক্ত দীর্ঘ সময়ের ইতিহাস দিয়ে ঘেরা।

এই উপন্যাসের অনুবাদকের ভূমিকায় অবতীর্ণ হওয়া লেখক উর্দু না জানার কারণে এই উপন্যাসে তবসুম মির্জা নামক আরো এক অনুবাদক চরিত্রকে নিয়ে আসেন, যিনি মান্টোর অপ্রকাশিত পাণ্ডুলিপি উর্দু থেকে সরাসরি বাংলায় অনুবাদ করেছেন। উর্দুতে রচিত মির্জা গালিব আর সাদাত হাসান মান্টো এর সংলাপের যে পাণ্ডুলিপি অনুবাদের থেকে আলোচ্য উপন্যাসের সূত্রপাত, তার ভূমিকাতে উল্লিখিত ১৯৫৫ সালের ১৮ই জানুয়ারী তারিখটি

ঐতিহাসিক ভাবে জানান দেয় সেটি আসলে মান্টোর মৃত্যুদিন। তাই পাঠকের বাস্তববোধে ধরা পরে এই অনুবাদের প্রসঙ্গটি আসলে ঔপন্যাসিকের উপন্যাস লিখনের একটা আঙ্গিক মাত্র। অনুবাদের প্রসঙ্গটি একটি কাল্পনিক বিষয়।

মান্টোর চোখ দিয়ে ঔপন্যাসিক দেখেছেন গালিবকে। গালিবের গজল, তার চিঠিপত্র ইত্যাদি এবং মান্টোর ছোটগল্প, প্রবন্ধ, চিঠিপত্র ইত্যাদি দিয়ে কল্প-ইতিহাসের দুই চরিত্র হিসেবে তাদের নির্মাণ করেছেন। আর এই নির্মাণের প্রেক্ষিতে পাঠক রবিশংকর বল এর মান্টো পাঠ বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখযোগ্য। “নহ, গুল — এনগমহু, নহ পরদহ এ সাজ মৈ হু আপনী শিকস্ত কী আবাজ” (রাগিনীর আলাপ নই, সেতারের তার নই, আমি কেবল একটি আওয়াজ, পরাজয় ভেঙে পড়ার আওয়াজ)(-৩) গালিবের এই আওয়াজ শুনে ছিলেন পাঠক মান্টো, আর পাঠক মান্টোর এই শোনাকে আত্মজ করেছেন রবিশংকর বল। আলোচ্য উপন্যাসে গালিবের এই লিখন শৈলী প্রসঙ্গে মান্টোর উক্তি — “একজন দণ্ডিত পরাজিত মানুষকে সেই প্রথম দেখতে পেলাম। মির্জা সাব আপনি কখনও জানবেন না, আমার কত গল্পে তারা এসেছে, যারা নিজেদের পরাজয় ভেঙেপড়া আওয়াজ, কথা বলতে বলতে তাদের কিছু কিসসাও আমি শোনাবো আপনাকে। তাদের বাদ দিয়ে মান্টো কে?”(-৪) উপন্যাস থেকে উদ্ধৃত এই বাক্যগুলো অবশ্যই রবিশংকরের লেখা কিন্তু এই বাক্যের সাথে মান্টোর পাঠক সমাজও পরিচিত। সমকালের লেখক প্রসঙ্গে মান্টো বলেছিলেন — “আজকের লেখক তৃপ্তিহীন মানুষ।”(-৫) তিনি সমকালের অস্থিরতাকে লেখার ভিতরে নিয়ে আসছেন। ভাঙাচোরা মানুষরা সেই লেখার কেন্দ্রবিন্দু, অর্থাৎ রবিশঙ্কর তাঁর উপন্যাসে মান্টোর যে সংলাপ রচনা করেছেন তা আসলে পাঠক রবিশঙ্কর বলের মান্টো পাঠের একটা পরিগ্রহণ।

ঔপন্যাসিক স্বয়ং তার এই উপন্যাসকে বলেছেন ঐতিহাসিক, কিন্তু তিনি তথ্য নিষ্ঠার প্রতি আগ্রহ দেখাননি, ঐতিহাসিক এখানে শুধুই দর্শক মাত্র। ভিন্ন সময়ের ভাবদর্শের উচ্চারণ একটি সময়ের পরিসরে মূর্ত করে তুলতে চেয়েছেন। প্রাবন্ধিক অশীন দাসগুপ্তর ভাষায় বলা যায় — “ইতিহাসের উপাদান ঐতিহাসিক এর উদ্দেশ্য অনুযায়ী পাল্টে যায়।”(-৬) বাংলা ভাষায় গল্প বলার যে বয়ানকে তিনি উপস্থাপন করেছেন তার সাথে মিশে আছে বৃহত্তর প্রাচ্যের আখ্যান রীতির বোধ। মির্জা গালিবের বয়ানে তিনি মান্টোকে বলেছেন — “আমাদের সময়টাই ছিল কিসসা এর সুতোয় বনা একটা চাদর। কোনটা যে জীবন আর কোনটা যে কিসসা এর সুতো বোঝাই যেত না। আপনি তো জানেন গোৱারা কিসসা চায়না, ওরা চায় ইতিহাস। ইতিহাস সবাই লিখতে পারে... কিন্তু কিসসা লেখার জন্য চাই খোয়াব ক্ষমতা। ইতিহাস একদিন ধুলো হতে যায়, কিসসা বেঁচে থাকে।”(-৭) দোজখনামার লেখক এই কিসসা বাঁচিয়ে রাখতে চেয়েছেন, এই প্রয়াস আসলে প্রিয় সাহিত্যিকের গল্পের ভিতর দিয়ে তাকে বাঁচিয়ে রাখতে চাওয়া। ঔপনিবেশিকতার প্রেক্ষিতে প্রাচ্যের চেনা ছবি নানাভাবে বদলে গেছে, আখ্যানের বদলে যাওয়াও সেরকমই একটা ঘটনা। হারিয়ে যাওয়া সেই প্রাচ্যের অনুসন্ধান করেছেন রবিশংকর বল গালিব এবং মান্টোর কাল্পনিক সংলাপকে সামনে রেখে।

এই প্রসঙ্গে উঠে আসে মীনাক্ষী মুখোপাধ্যায় রচিত “উপন্যাসে অতীত ইতিহাস ও কল্প ইতিহাস” গ্রন্থে উল্লেখিত ভারতীয় গল্পের নিজস্ব অভিরুচি প্রসঙ্গ — “কোথায় গেল সেই বিজয় বসন্ত সেই গোলেবাকাওলি, বাংলা সাহিত্যের যুগসন্ধিতে বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের ভূমিকা সম্বন্ধে লিখতে বসে পূর্ববর্তী ধারার যে দুটি চলিত কাহিনী উল্লেখ করেছিলেন তার মধ্যে একটি এসেছিল আরবি-ফারসি সূত্রে অন্যটি স্থানীয় লোক কোথা থেকে। অনেক গুছিয়ে দিয়ে বাঁধা বিনুনির মত প্রাকনভেল কথাশিল্পী বহু ধারা একসঙ্গে গ্রথিত হয়েছিল।... যে ‘গোলেবকাওলির’ সঙ্গে বালক রবীন্দ্রনাথের বাংলার পরিচয় ছিল সেই গল্প ভারতের অন্যপ্রান্তে মারাঠি ভাষাতেও পাওয়া যেত নবলকরের গুজরাটি

থেকে অনুদিত সংস্করণে, এবং তার আগে গল্পটি ফারসি ভাষা থেকে উর্দুতে রূপান্তরিত হয়েছে। এই ধরনের গল্প ভারতের বিভিন্ন ভাষায় খুব লোকপ্রিয় ছিল।” (-৮)

দোজখনামার পাঠক হিসেবে আমরা অনুসন্ধান করব আলোচ্য উপন্যাসে সাহিত্যিক সাদাত হাসান মান্টো কিভাবে পরিগৃহীত হয়েছেন, এবং তার লেখা গল্প, প্রবন্ধ, চিঠিপত্র, রচনা বিষয়, উপস্থাপন আঙ্গিক কিভাবে এই উপন্যাসের নিজস্ব বয়ান হয়ে উঠেছে।

আর অনুসন্ধানের প্রেক্ষিতে রিসেপশন থিওরি বা পরিগ্রহণ তত্ত্ব, ইন্টার-টেক্সটুয়ালিটি বা অন্তর্বয়ান পাঠ, ইত্যাদি পদ্ধতি অনুসারে বিশ্লেষণ এবং তুলনামূলকভাবে আলোচনা করার চেষ্টা করব।

“সাদাত হাসান মান্টো” রচনা সংগ্রহের সম্পাদনা করেছেন রবিশংকর বল। এই সংগ্রহের ভূমিকা অংশে রবিশংকরের মান্টো পাঠের একটি বিবৃতি পাওয়া যায়, যেখানে তিনি লিখেছেন — ‘মান্টো একটি ক্ষত’। (-৯) এই প্রসঙ্গে একই উচ্চারণ শোনা যায় স্বয়ং মান্টোর থেকেও। ‘কেন গল্প লেখেন?’ — এই প্রশ্নের উত্তরে মান্টো বলেছিলেন — “লেখকের অনুভূতি যখন আহত হয় তখনই সে কলম তুলে নেয়। ক্ষত থেকেই গল্পের জন্ম।” (-১০) গল্প লেখক মান্টো যে ক্ষত থেকে তার একের পর এক গল্পের অবতারণা করেছিলেন পাঠক রবিশংকর তাকে বুঝতে চেয়েছেন, এবং বলা যায় প্রায় একই ভাবে আলোচ্য উপন্যাসে উপস্থিত চরিত্র কথক মান্টোর সংলাপে সেই ক্ষতকে জুড়েই বিভিন্ন কাহিনীর উপস্থাপনা করেছেন।

মান্টোর গল্পের বাংলা অনুবাদের এই সংগ্রহতে সম্পাদক রবিশংকর বল, মান্টোর পাঠকদের অনুভব করাতে চেয়েছেন মান্টোর অস্তিত্বের অনির্ণেয় অবস্থা থেকে জন্ম নেওয়া উদ্বেগকে। মান্টোর জন্ম শতবর্ষের রবিশংকর দায়িত্ব নিয়ে তাকে সব রকম প্রচলিত সাহিত্যিক ছাণ্ডা থেকে মুক্ত করতে চেয়েছেন, কোনরকম নির্দিষ্ট খাপে নয়, উন্মুক্ত একজন লেখক হিসাবে পাঠকের দরবারে উপস্থিত করেছেন। উন্মুক্ত অর্থাৎ যেখানে লেখক কোনরকম আবরন রাখেননি, যেমনটা দেখেছেন উপলব্ধি করেছেন, ঠিক সেই ভাবেই পাঠককে দেখাতে চেয়েছেন।

রবিশংকর-এর ভাষায় মান্টো উর্দু সাহিত্যে — ‘একজন নোমড একজন অভিবাসী, একজন জিপসি’। (-১১) যিনি গল্প লেখক হিসেবে একমাত্র আল্লাহকে নিজের প্রতিদ্বন্দী ভেবেছেন। নিজের কবরে উৎকীর্ণ করার জন্য একটি সমাধি লিপিতে তিনি লিখেছিলেন — ‘এখানে শুয়ে আছে সাদাত হাসান মান্টো। তার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে গল্প লেখার শিল্প ও রহস্য কবরস্থ হয়েছে... টন টন মাটির নীচে শুয়ে সে ভাবছে কে বড় গল্প লেখক খোদা না সে।’ (-১২) মান্টোর মৃত্যুর সাথে সাথে মাটির তলায় হারিয়ে যাওয়া তার লেখার রহস্যকে যেন খুঁজে আনতে চেয়েছেন আলোচ্য উপন্যাসের লেখক। তাই তার প্রিয় সাহিত্যিক, ও ভালোবাসার মানুষকে নিয়ে স্বপ্নের কথক চরিত্রে অবতীর্ণ হয়েছেন। শুধুমাত্র অতীতের তথ্য নয়, শোনাতে চেয়েছেন ব্যক্তির কণ্ঠস্বর।

কাল পরিবর্তনের সাথে সাথে নির্দিষ্ট সাহিত্য পাঠও পরিবর্তিত হয়। এই রূপান্তরের সূত্র অন্তর্নিহিত থাকে সামাজিক ইতিহাসের গতিতে। কোন সাহিত্য পাঠকে ঘিরে পাঠকের সংবেদনশীলতনার পূর্ব এবং পরবর্তী রূপ ও বিশ্লেষণ দক্ষতাকে ‘প্রত্যাশার দিগন্ত’ (-১৩) রূপে চিহ্নিত করা হয় সাহিত্য পাঠের পরিগ্রহণ তত্ত্বে। পাঠকের গ্রহণ ক্ষমতা এবং পারিপার্শ্বিকতার কারণে এই দিগন্ত কখনো প্রসারিত কখনো সংকুচিত হয়ে যায়। এই একই সাথে পরিগৃহীত সাহিত্যের প্রাকরণিক চরিত্রও অনেকাংশে নিয়ন্ত্রিত হয় প্রত্যাশার দিগন্ত দ্বারা। পরিগ্রহণ তত্ত্বের তাত্ত্বিক বিশ্লেষণ দিয়েই রবিশংকর বল-এর আলোচ্য উপন্যাসে কিভাবে তার মান্টো পাঠ গৃহীত হয়েছে তা বোঝার চেষ্টা করব। এক্ষেত্রে দুটি স্বতন্ত্র ধারার সাহিত্য প্রয়োজন হয় যেখানে একটি এমিটার এবং অপরটি রিসিভার রূপে চিহ্নিত

হয়। এই আলোচনায় এমিটার হিসেবে মান্টোর সাহিত্যকর্ম, এবং রিসিভার হিসেবে দোজখনামা উপন্যাসকে বিবেচনা করা যেতে পারে। আলোচ্য উপন্যাসে আমরা সচেতনভাবে ঔপন্যাসিকের উপস্থাপিত একজন গল্পকথক মান্টোকে দেখতে পাই, আবার সেই কথকের দ্বারা যে কাহিনীর পর কাহিনীর যাতায়াত ঘটতে থাকে সেখানে উর্দু সাহিত্যিক মান্টোর মৌলিক রচনার উপস্থিতি চোখে পড়ে।

যেমন, গল্প লেখক উর্দু সাহিত্যিক মান্টো প্রশ্ন তুলেছিলেন সাহিত্যের বিষয় কি? প্রত্যুত্তরে, মানুষের জীবনের আদি ও অকৃত্রিম খিদের সাথে জুড়ে দিয়েছিলেন সাহিত্যকে। তার ভাষায় — ‘যেসব সামাজিক-সাংস্কৃতিক রাজনৈতিক ও যুদ্ধ সম্পর্কিত সমস্যা আজ আমাদের ঘিরে আছে তাদের সকলের গভীরে রয়েছে এই দুই খিদে — পেট ও খাদ্যের সম্পর্ক, মানুষ ও মানুষের সম্পর্ক।’ (-১৪) দেখ-কাল ও ইতিহাসের সাথে জুড়ে থাকা এই আদিম প্রবৃত্তি যেভাবে মান্টো স্বীকার করেছিলেন তার গল্পে সেই উচ্চারণেরই অনুসরণ দেখা যায় আলোচ্য উপন্যাসে। এক্ষেত্রে আখ্যান নির্মাণের যে প্রভাব তত্ত্ব কাজ করেছে সেখানে প্রভাবকারীর সাথে প্রভাবজাতের উপাদানগত মিল লক্ষ্য করা যায়। বিষয়গত উপাদান গ্রহণ করে অনেক সময় ঔপন্যাসিক তার রূপান্তর তথা আত্মীকরণ ঘটিয়েছেন। এবং এখান থেকেই আলোচ্য উপন্যাসে অন্তর্নিহিত রয়েছে সাংস্কৃতিক বহুস্বর। বাংলা সাহিত্যের উপন্যাসে এসেছে উর্দু সাহিত্যের পরিভাষা। মির্জা গালিব-কে নিয়ে উপন্যাস লেখার খোঁয়াব রেখেছিলেন মান্টো, কিন্তু তা অসম্পূর্ণ থেকে গেছে। বোম্বেতে থাকাকালীন স্ক্রিপ্ট লিখেছিলেন মির্জাকে নিয়ে। মির্জার গজল ও তার জীবনকে ভুলতে পারেননি। প্রিয় লেখকের এই খোঁয়াবকে যেন সম্পূর্ণ করেছেন রবিশঙ্কর।

২০০৫ সাল থেকেই রবিশঙ্কর উর্দু সাহিত্যের প্রতি আকৃষ্ট হন ‘আবু সয়ীদ আইয়ুবের’ অনুবাদে মির্জা গালিবের সঙ্গে পরিচিত হন, একই শাতে ‘সাদাত হাসান মান্টো’, ‘ইসমত চুঘতাই’ প্রমুখ লেখকদের গল্পের অনুবাদ পড়েছেন। অতীত-বর্তমান-ভবিষ্যৎ এর এই একসঙ্গে বয়ে চলা তার উপন্যাসের আঙ্গিক নির্ণয়ে সহায়তা করেছে। উর্দু পড়তে অথবা বলতে না পারার হীনমন্যতায় রবিশঙ্কর ‘নাইয়ার মাসুদের’ সাথে আলাপ করা থেকে পিছিয়ে এসেছেন। এই স্বীকারোক্তি আলোচ্য উপন্যাসের শুরুতেই রয়েছে। কথোপকথনের রহস্য বোঝাতে চেয়ে লেখক ও পাঠকের ভিতরে বিজাতীয় ভাষার উপস্থিতি রাখতে চাননি। তারপরই অবশ্য বলেছেন — ‘লেখক আর তার লেখা তো মেলেনা’। আনছেন অনুবাদের প্রসঙ্গ। বিভিন্ন ভাষায় রচিত ভারতীয় সাহিত্যের নির্মাণ প্রসঙ্গে অনুবাদ একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা গ্রহণ করেছে গ্রহণ করে। অনুবাদ একটি মাধ্যম যার সাহায্যে ভারতের এক ভাষার সাহিত্যের সাথে অন্য ভাষার সাহিত্যের সংযোগ ঘটানো যায়। উর্দু ভাষা থেকে বাংলা ভাষায় অনুবাদের যে প্রয়াস রবিশঙ্কর এখানে দেখিয়েছেন তাকে অখন্ড ভারতীয় সাহিত্যের বোধ নির্মাণের একটা চেষ্টাও বলা যেতে পারে।

লেখার ভিতর থেকেই লেখককে খুঁজতে যাওয়ার প্রবণতা থাকে পাঠকের। নিজের উপন্যাসের ভিতর সেই প্রবণতাকে দূরে রাখতে চেয়েছেন ঔপন্যাসিক। উপন্যাসের স্বার্থেই গড়ে তোলা চরিত্র তবসুম মির্জার সাহায্যে অনুবাদ করার প্রসঙ্গে তিনি বলেছেন ‘জীবন একটা অনুবাদ’ (-১৫)।

রবিশঙ্কর মান্টো পাঠ তো তার গল্পের অনুবাদের ভিতর থেকেই। অনুবাদ সাহিত্য তত্ত্ব নির্ভর করে পাঠকের পরিগ্রহণ সত্তার উপর। অনুবাদিত মূল পাঠের অনুসরণ, রূপান্তর, এবং আত্মীকরণের মধ্যে থেকেই সাদাত হাসান মান্টো রচিত ছোট গল্প — ‘গন্ধ’, ‘বাবু গোপীনাথ’, ‘ঠাঙা গোস্ব’, ‘পেরিন’, ‘কালো সালায়ার’, ‘শারিফন’, ‘আল্লার দোহাই’, ‘একটি মোমবাতির আলোয় উজ্জ্বল একটি বাস্ব’ প্রভৃতি ছোট গল্প দোজখনামার বিষয় হয়ে উঠেছে। উর্দু সাহিত্যিক মান্টো, এবং মান্টো পাঠক বাংলা ঔপন্যাসিক রবিশঙ্কর বল এই দুজনের উচ্চারণ একসাথে যেন দোজখনামার আখ্যানকে নির্মাণ করেছেন। উপন্যাসের এক জায়গায় রবিশঙ্কর প্রশ্ন করেছেন ‘উপন্যাস কেন লেখা

হয় তবসুম?’ (-১৬) উত্তরে উঠে আসে অন্ধকার থেকে অজানা চরিত্রের কণ্ঠস্বর শোনার আকাঙ্ক্ষা। যেখানে তিনি বলেছেন ঔপন্যাসিক তার নির্মাণকে চেনেন না এবং সবশেষে ছায়া পড়ে থাকে। এই অন্ধকারের কণ্ঠস্বর শোনার অভিপ্রায় থেকে আলোচ্য উপন্যাস নির্মাণের যে আঙ্গিক পাঠক দেখতে পায় তাতে মান্টোর প্রভাব আবশ্যিকভাবে এসে যায়। দেশভাগ প্রসূত হিংসা ও বর্বরতা যে মানুষের গভীর অন্ধকার থেকে উঠে এসেছিল তা যেন জানতেন মান্টো, আর তাই তার গল্প বারবার চেষ্টা করে গেছে সেই সব স্বর অনুসন্ধানের। যেভাবে সাম্প্রদায়িকতার ভয়াবহতার ছবিতে উঠে আসে ‘শরিফন’ (-১৭) গল্পের কাসেম, যে তার নিহত কন্যাকে দেখে বিমলাকে হত্যা করেছিল। সেই হত্যার ছবিকে সাম্প্রদায়িক উন্মাদনার কিসসা হিসেবেই মান্টোর সংলাপের মধ্য দিয়ে রবিশংকর তাঁর উপন্যাসে উপস্থাপন করেছেন। ‘ঠান্ডা গোস্তু’ (-১৮) এই শিরোনামে মান্টোর লেখা ঈশ্বর সিং, এবং কুলবন্ত কাউরের যে গল্প দেশভাগের বর্বরতাকে সামলে আনে, মানুষের প্রবৃত্তির বিভীষিকাকে মেলে ধরে সেই কাহিনীই রবিশংকর অনুসরণ করেছেন তার উপন্যাসে, মান্টোর সংলাপের ভিতর দিয়ে।

দাঙ্গা সম্পর্কিত মান্টোর মনোভাবকে বোঝাতে চেয়েই মান্টোর গল্পকেই তিনি তুলে এনেছেন। মান্টোর সংলাপে রবিশংকর লিখছেন “যে প্রাচীণ গাছটিতে আমি জন্মেছিলাম, বড় হয়েছিলাম, তাকে বাঁচানোর মত কেই ছিলনা, মির্জাসব। দেশভাগের বিষাক্ত তীর তাকে জ্বালিয়ে-পুড়িয়ে খারাগ করে দিয়েছিল।” (-১৯) এই অনুষ্ণেই আবার মান্টোর গল্পকে করেছেন ঔপন্যাসিক।

ভেঙেপড়া, হারিয়ে যাওয়া ঐতিহ্যের বৃহত্তর প্রাচ্যের সন্ধান, লেখকের কলম বারবার আশ্রয় করেছে ইতিহাসকে। ১৮৫৭ এর সিপাহী বিদ্রোহের সময় ব্রিটিশ সাম্রাজ্যভুক্ত দিল্লির বর্ণনায় গালিবের সংলাপের ভিতর দিয়ে তিনি দেখিয়েছেন মৃত শহরের ভাঙাচোরা মানুষদের ক্ষতবিক্ষত ছায়াদের, আবার এই একই ক্ষয়িষ্ণু চেহারার ছায়াকে ১৯৪৭-এর দেশভাগের ধ্বংসস্তূপের ভেতর থেকেও তুলে এনেছেন। যেকোনো ধ্বংসপ্রাপ্ত সময় যেন একইভাবে ফুরিয়ে দেয় সভ্যতার আলোকে। এভাবেই হারিয়ে গেছে প্রাচীন পেশাদার গল্পকথক দস্তানগুলো।

এই প্রসঙ্গে মান্টোর সংলাপ — ‘মির্জাসাবের যে কিসসাটা আপনাদের বলছি তা তো শুধুই ওনার কিসসা নয়, খোদা তো ধুলো থেকেই আমাদের তৈরি করেছেন, তা হলে ভাবুন, কত পুরানো কতদূর দেশের ধুলো আর তাদের স্মৃতি রয়ে গেছে আমাদের ভিতরে।’ (-২০)

অর্থাৎ অনন্তকালের ভিতর থেকে মানুষের গল্পকে খুঁজে আনতে চাওয়া, যে কাজটা একসময় দিল্লির অলিতে গলিতে দস্তানগোরা করতেন। আর রবিশংকর, মান্টোর লেখা গল্পের বয়ান থেকে সেই অনন্তকালের চরিত্রদের নতুন করে নির্মাণ করেছেন। এই অনুষ্ণে মির্জা গালিবের সাথে কথোপকথনে মান্টো তার প্রিয় লেখক-এর শের উচ্চারণ করেছেন।

“বা রে দুনিয়ামে রহো গমজদহ যা শাদ রহো,
অ্যায়াশা কুছ করকে চলো যা কেহ বহুত ইয়াদ রহো।
(মানুষের মধ্যেই থাকো, দুঃখ পাবে আবার সুখ পাবে
এমন কিছু করে যাও যাতে মানুষ তোমাকে ভুলতে না পারে।” (-২১)

মান্টোর সংলাপে ব্যবহৃত উল্লিখিত যে শব্দবন্ধ ঔপন্যাসিক ব্যবহার করেছেন, তা শুধুমাত্র মান্টোর লেখক সত্তার অভিপ্রায় নয়, এই উপন্যাসের ঔপন্যাসিকের ও অভিপ্রায়।

মান্টো রচিত — ‘আমার পাঠকের প্রতি’ প্রবন্ধে মান্টো লিখেছেন যে তিনি কোনরকম ভূমিকা অথবা প্রচলিত রীতি নীতির বাইরে থেকে সারাসরি কথা বলতে চেয়েছেন তার পাঠকের সাথে। এখানে তিনি স্বীকার করেছেন তিনি আসলে পাঠকের কাছে কল্পকাহিনী বলতে চেয়েছেন — ‘যদিও আমার গল্পে নাটকে বা আধা কাহিনীমূলক নিবন্ধে আমি অনেক বিষয়কেই এনেছি যা খুব ব্যক্তিগত সেগুলো কিন্তু আপনাদের কাছে কল্পকাহিনী মাত্র কেননা সেটাই আমার পছন্দের মাধ্যম।’ (-২২)

মান্টোর এই পছন্দের মাধ্যমকেই নির্বাচন করেছেন রবিশংকর তার উপন্যাস রচনার শৈলী হিসেবে। যে উপন্যাসকে অবশ্য মান্টো রচিত অপ্রকাশিত উপন্যাসের পাণ্ডুলিপি বলছেন।

মান্টো রচিত ছোটগল্পকে সারাসরি মান্টোর মুখ থেকেই পাঠকদের শোনানোর জন্য আলোচ্য উপন্যাসের অন্তর্গত কাহিনী হিসেবে যোগ করেছেন। যেমন — ‘একশ মোমবাতির অলোয় উজ্জ্বল একটা বাস্ব’ এই গল্পের ভেতর একজন উত্তম পুরুষ এর উপস্থিতিতে সমগ্র গল্পটাকে অতিবাহিত করেছিলেন মান্টো, সেখানে কাহিনীর পার্কের বিবর্ণতা দেখতে দেখতে এই উত্তম পুরুষে স্মৃতি থেকে উঠে আসে এক দালাল আর তার সঙ্গী গণিকার গল্প।

একটা গল্প আবার দোজখনামা উপন্যাসে কিসসা শোনানোর কৌশলে মান্টো বলছেন, অর্থাৎ রবিশংকরের পাঠক সত্তা অনুসরণ করছে গল্পকার মান্টোকে। তবে এই অনুসরণকে কিসা বলার বয়ানে রূপান্তর ঘটিয়েছেন ঔপন্যাসিক। গল্পের উত্তর পুরুষ এখানে হয়ে যায় সাজ্জাদ। — ‘আচ্ছা লোকটার নাম সাজ্জাদ’। (-২৩)

এই সাজ্জাদ বন্ধুর জন্য অপেক্ষা করতে করতে মুখোমুখি হয় এক দালালের। তার সাথে সাজ্জাদ পৌঁছালো প্লাস্টার খসে পরা ইটের খাঁচা বেরেনো এক ভগ্ন ব বাড়িতে। সেই মুহূর্তে সাজ্জাদের নারী সঙ্গীর প্রয়োজনীয়তা না থাকলেও সে জড়িয়ে যায়। দালালের অধিকৃত এই মেয়েটি বারবার অনুনয় জানিয়েছিল তাকে ঘুমোতে দেওয়ার জন্য, ছুটি চেয়েছিল রোজকার শরীর বিক্রির পেশা থেকে। কিন্তু পেশাগত দায়বদ্ধতা থেকে সাজ্জাদের সাথে তাকে বেরোতেই হয়, হোটеле পৌঁছে খানিক কথোপকথনের পর তাকে বাড়ি ফিরিয়ে দিয়ে আসে সাজ্জাদ। মূল গল্পটিতে এরপর গল্পকারের নিজস্ব কোন বয়ান ছিল না। কিন্তু ঔপন্যাসিক আলোচ্য উপন্যাসে মান্টোর বয়ানে লিখলেন কিসসা এখানই শেষ নয়। উপন্যাস পাঠককে জানাতে চাইলেন কিসসা এতিম নয়, তারও নিজস্ব একটা দাবী আছে। তাকে যেখানে-সেখানে ফেলে দিয়ে আসা যায় না। কিসসার গঠন সংক্রান্ত এই বয়ান লেখক রবিশংকর-এর নিজস্ব সংযোজন। অবশ্যই এই গল্পের শেষ মূল পাঠ অনুগত থেকেই হয়েছে। শুধু মাঝের এই সংযোজন গল্প লেখার সহজাত ধারণাকে ভাঙতে চেষ্টা করেছেন। অর্থাৎ শুধু অনুসরণ থাকেনি আত্মীকরণ-এর মাধ্যমে রূপান্তরিত হয়েছে নতুন সম্ভাবনায়।

মান্টো তাঁর গল্পের বিষয় ও চরিত্র তুলে এনেছেন যে পরিধি থেকে সাধারণ সাহিত্য দূরে থাকে সেই অন্ধকারের আসক্তি থেকে, এবং মান্টো বারবার সমালোচিত হয়েছেন এই চরিত্রদের রূপায়ণের জন্য। মান্টোর সব গল্পের চরিত্র পরিত্যক্ত মানুষ-মানুষী। যারা কেউ এই সমাজের মূল স্রোতে থাকেনা। তারা কেউ দেশচ্যুত, উদ্বাস্তু, কেউ বেশ্যা, কেউ তার দালাল। প্রায় আড়াইশ গল্পের প্রধান চরিত্র এরাই। যে পেশাকে সমাজ স্বীকার করেছে অথচ তার অস্তিত্বকে অঙ্গীল বলছে, সেই ঘেরাটোপকে মান্টো ভাঙতে চেয়েছিল। উপমহাদেশের গৃহ হারানো মানুষদের সংলাপেই তার গল্প মুখরিত হয়। এই সবটাই দোজখনামাতে ফিরে এসেছে। বলা যেতে পারে উর্দু সাহিত্য থেকে বাংলা সাহিত্যে চরিত্র বুনন হয়েছে। এভাবেই লেখক মান্টোর পরিচয় পায় এই উপন্যাসের পাঠক।

মির্জা সাবকে নিজের পরিচয় জানাতে গিয়ে আলোচ্য উপন্যাসের কথক চরিত্রের মান্টো তার ব্যক্তি আমির

জন্ম, কন্ম, ভাবনা, যাপন ইত্যাদি তথ্যকে উল্লেখ করেন। অবশ্যই এই উল্লেখ ইতিহাসের তথ্যের ভিত্তিতে সত্য, এবং এই সকল তথ্যকে ভিত্তি করেই কাল্পনিক চরিত্র মাল্টোকে নির্মাণ করেছে রবিশংকর। এই নির্মাণ প্রসঙ্গেই আসে তুলনামূলক সাহিত্য আলোচনার আন্তর-পাঠ তত্ত্ব অথবা intertextuality theory।

আন্তর পাঠ তৈরি হয় একটি বয়ান যার মধ্যে অন্য এক বা একাধিক পাঠের বয়ান নিহিত থাকে, প্রতিধ্বনিত হয় বহুস্বর। Paratextuality / সহপাঠ, metatextuality / ভাষ্য পাঠ, archetype textuality / সংরূপ পাঠ, hypertextuality / পরিগ্রহণ পাঠ ইত্যাদি আন্তর পাঠের পদ্ধতির মধ্য দিয়ে দোজখনামা উপন্যাসের সাথে মাল্টোর সাহিত্যকর্মের তুলনামূলক আলোচনা করার চেষ্টা করব।

সহবয়ম বা উপবয়ন অর্থে মূল বয়ানের আনুষঙ্গিক উপাদানগুলির সঙ্গে বয়ানগত সম্পর্কের সমষ্টিকে বোঝানো হয়, যেমন মুখবন্ধ উপসর্গ শিরোনাম ঋণস্বীকার ইত্যাদি গ্রন্থ পরিচিতি উপাদান অনেক ক্ষেত্রেই নান্দনিকভাবে মূল বয়ানের সাথে আন্তঃসম্পর্কের বিভিন্ন ধারণা স্পষ্ট করে। মাল্টোর গল্প পাঠ এবং রবিশংকরের উপন্যাস পাঠ এই দুই পাঠের ক্ষেত্রে মূল বয়ান অবশ্যই মাল্টোর লেখনশৈলী যার সাথে দোজখনামা উপন্যাসের আন্তঃসম্পর্কের ধারণাকে স্পষ্ট করা যায় আলোচ্য দুই পাঠের মুখবন্ধের তুলনামূলক আলোচনা থেকে। যেমন মাল্টোর গল্পের শিরোনাম আর দোজখনামা ব্যবহৃত সেই গল্পের শিরোনাম সম্পর্কিত আভাস উভয়ের আন্তর পাঠের মধ্যে ধারণাকে তুলে ধরে।

ভাষা বয়নের ক্ষেত্রে একটি বয়ান যখন পূর্ববর্তী কোন বয়ানের ভাষ্য বা মন্তব্য হিসাবে পূর্ণ বা আংশিকভাবে গড়ে উঠেছে সেখানে আন্তর সম্পর্কটা বিবেচিত হয় ভাষ্য বয়ান হিসেবে। এক্ষেত্রে আলোচনা-সমালোচনা যেমন স্পষ্ট এবং সুনির্দিষ্ট হতে পারে, তেমনি অপর বয়ানকে উহ্য রেখে কেবল ইঙ্গিতবাহিতার মধ্য দিয়েই বিষয়টি প্রকাশ পায়। উদাহরণ স্বরূপ আলোচনা করা যায় এক্ষেত্রে অপর বয়ানকে উহ্য রেখেই ইঙ্গিতবাহিতার কতা বলা হয়েছে মাল্টোর দেশভাগ সম্পর্কিত গল্পের উল্লেখের মাধ্যমে। অথবা হীরামান্ডি অঞ্চলের গনিকা চরিত্র নির্মাণের জন্য মাল্টো প্রতিক্রিয়াশীল প্রগতিশীল সব লেখক সংঘ থেকেই বারবার সমালোচিত হওয়ার যে ইতিহাস পাঠক রবিশংকর জেনেছিলেন আলোচ্য উপন্যাসে সেই অতীতকে মাল্টোর সংলাপের মাধ্যমে তুলে ধরেছেন। আলোচ্য উপন্যাসের গালিব যখন জামা মসজিদের দস্তানগোর কাছে সোনা পিঙ্গলার প্রসঙ্গ তুলেছেন, প্রত্যুত্তরে মাল্টোর সংলাপে উঠে এসেছে হীরামান্ডির সেই মেয়েটা জেহেজানের কথা, যার জমিদার প্রেমিক ফোতুর হয়ে গিয়েও, আশিক থেকে দালাল হয়ে গিয়েও তার প্রেমিকা জেহেরজানের সাথেই থেকে যায়।

পরিগ্রহণ বয়নের ক্ষেত্রে উৎস বয়ান এবং গ্রাহক বয়ান অনেক সময়েই আলাদা লেখকের হয়না। এর উদাহরণ স্বরূপ মাল্টো রচিত ‘পেরিন’ গল্পের সাথে আলোচ্য উপন্যাসে উল্লেখিত মাল্টোর সংলাপের মধ্য থেকে পেরিন সংক্ৰান্ত যে গল্প উঠে আসে উভয়ের তুলনামূলক আলোচনা করা যায়। এক্ষেত্রে মাল্টোর গল্পের পেরিন উৎস বয়ান, এবং গ্রাহকগণ আলোচ্য উপন্যাসের মাল্টোর বয়ানে নির্মিত পেরিন চরিত্র। উভয় ক্ষেত্রেই মূল কাহিনীর লেখক একজন, স্বয়ং সাদাত হাসান মাল্টো।

বর্গ বয়ন অথবা সংরূপ-বয়ন বলতে বোঝায় যে, নির্দিষ্ট সাহিত্য বর্গ বা সাহিত্য প্রকরণের সম্পর্কে তৈরি হওয়া একটি তাত্ত্বিক ধারণা যার মধ্যে একটি নির্দিষ্ট বয়ানের অবস্থানটা ঠিক কোথায় অথবা একাধিক বয়ান আত্মস্থ করার চেষ্টা সেখানে আছে কিনা অথবা এই জাতীয় চেনা ছকগুলির বাইরে নতুন কোনো সম্ভাবনা জন্ম নিচ্ছে কিনা ইত্যাদি বিবেচনা করা। এবং উদাহরণ স্বরূপ আলোচনা করা যায় মাল্টোর লেখা গল্পের নির্দিষ্ট বয়ানদের দোজখনামা

উপন্যাসের একাধিক বয়ানের ভিতর আত্মস্থ হতে দেখা যাওয়াকে। এবং এই বিশ্লেষণ থেকে বলা যায় রবিশংকরের প্রাচ্য ঐতিহ্য অনুসন্ধানের এবং সেই অতীত নির্মাণের প্রয়াস নতুন বয়ান রচনার সম্ভাবনা তৈরি করে। হারিয়ে যাওয়া মানুষদের খুঁজতে খুঁজতে প্রাচীন প্রাচ্যের আখ্যান রীতির একটা সূত্রও সেখান থেকে উঠে আসে।

এভাবেই তুলনামূলক আলোচনার মধ্য দিয়ে পাঠক রবিশংকরের মান্টো পাঠ উঠে আসে। মান্টো রচিত ছোটগল্পে তার যে সমকাল ধরা আছে, সেই অতীতকেই রবিশংকর তার উপন্যাসে প্রাচ্যের ছবি হিসেবে তুলে ধরেছেন।

প্রসঙ্গ সূত্র :

- (-১) রবিশংকর বল, দোজখনামা, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৮ (পঞ্চম সংস্করণ), পৃষ্ঠা-১৩
- (-২) রবিশংকর বল, দোজখনামা, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৮ (পঞ্চম সংস্করণ), পৃষ্ঠা-১২
- (-৩) রবিশংকর বল, দোজখনামা, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৮ (পঞ্চম সংস্করণ), পৃষ্ঠা-২৩
- (-৪) রবিশংকর বল, দোজখনামা, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৮ (পঞ্চম সংস্করণ), পৃষ্ঠা-২৪
- (-৫) রবিশংকর বল, সদত হসন মান্টো রচনা সংগ্রহ, সম্পাদিত, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৯, পৃষ্ঠা-১০
- (-৬) উমা দাশগুপ্ত, অশীল দাশগুপ্ত প্রবন্ধ সমগ্র, আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স, কলকাতা, ২০১৬ (পঞ্চম মুদ্রণ), পৃষ্ঠা-৩৫
- (-৭) রবিশংকর বল, দোজখনামা, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৮ (পঞ্চম সংস্করণ), পৃষ্ঠা-১০
- (-৮) মীনাক্ষী মুখোপাধ্যায়, উপন্যাসে অতীত ইতিহাস ও কল্পইতিহাস, থিমা প্রকাশনা, কলকাতা, ২০০৩, পৃষ্ঠা-৬
- (-৯) রবিশংকর বল, সদত হসন মান্টো রচনা সংগ্রহ, সম্পাদিত, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৯, পৃষ্ঠা-৭
- (-১০) রবিশংকর বল, সদত হসন মান্টো রচনা সংগ্রহ, সম্পাদিত, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৯, পৃষ্ঠা-১০
- (-১১) রবিশংকর বল, সদত হসন মান্টো রচনা সংগ্রহ, সম্পাদিত, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৯, পৃষ্ঠা-৮
- (-১২) রবিশংকর বল, সদত হসন মান্টো রচনা সংগ্রহ, সম্পাদিত, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৯, পৃষ্ঠা-৭
- (-১৩) নবেন্দু সেন, পাশ্চাত্য সাহিত্যতত্ত্ব ও সাহিত্য ভাবনা, রত্নাবলী, কলকাতা, পৃষ্ঠা-৪৯১
- (-১৪) রবিশংকর বল, সদত হসন মান্টো রচনা সংগ্রহ, সম্পাদিত, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৯, পৃষ্ঠা-৯
- (-১৫) রবিশংকর বল, দোজখনামা, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৮ (পঞ্চম সংস্করণ), পৃষ্ঠা-১৪
- (-১৬) রবিশংকর বল, দোজখনামা, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৮ (পঞ্চম সংস্করণ), পৃষ্ঠা-৬৮
- (-১৭) রবিশংকর বল, দোজখনামা, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৮ (পঞ্চম সংস্করণ), পৃষ্ঠা-৩৪৮
- (-১৮) রবিশংকর বল, দোজখনামা, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৮ (পঞ্চম সংস্করণ), পৃষ্ঠা-৪৯
- (-১৯) রবিশংকর বল, দোজখনামা, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৮ (পঞ্চম সংস্করণ), পৃষ্ঠা-৩২৯
- (-২০) রবিশংকর বল, দোজখনামা, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৮ (পঞ্চম সংস্করণ), পৃষ্ঠা-
- (-২১) রবিশংকর বল, দোজখনামা, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৮ (পঞ্চম সংস্করণ), পৃষ্ঠা-৮৩
- (-২২) রবিশংকর বল, সদত হসন মান্টো রচনা সংগ্রহ, সম্পাদিত, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৯, পৃষ্ঠা-২৩৮
- (-২৩) রবিশংকর বল, সদত হসন মান্টো রচনা সংগ্রহ, সম্পাদিত, দে'জ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০১৯, পৃষ্ঠা-১৫০

HEAVY METAL CONTAMINATION IN CROPS OF WEST BENGAL

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Semester 4, Chemistry Honours

Abstract

A heavy metal is in general a metallic element with high atomic weight and density. Heavy metals are often required in micro quantities for the proper functioning of various metabolic systems of the human body. However when exposed to at toxic levels they may lead to severe health problems. Industrialization, improper waste disposal techniques, ground water contamination all can lead to heavy metal contamination in food crops. Since heavy metals are non-biodegradable, they can accumulate in biosystems over a prolonged period of time causing adverse effects. It is thus extremely important to understand the processes through which heavy metal contamination happens in food crops so that effective remedial measures can be taken and harmful effects avoided as much as possible.

Introduction

Although there is no specific definition of a heavy metal, literature has defined it as a naturally occurring element having high atomic weight and high density which is five times greater than that of water. Among all the pollutants, heavy metals have received a paramount attention to environment chemist due to their toxic nature.¹ Heavy metals constitute an ill-defined group of inorganic chemical hazards, and those most commonly found at contaminated sites are lead (Pb), chromium (Cr), arsenic (As), zinc (Zn), cadmium (Cd), copper (Cu), mercury (Hg), and nickel (Ni). Soils are the major sink for heavy metals released into the environment by aforementioned anthropogenic activities and unlike organic contaminants which are oxidized to carbon (IV) oxide by microbial action, most metals do not undergo microbial or chemical degradation, and their total concentration in soils persists for a long time after their introduction. Changes in their chemical forms (speciation) and bioavailability are, however, possible. The presence of toxic metals in soil can severely inhibit the biodegradation of organic contaminants. Heavy metal contamination of soil may pose risks and hazards to humans and the ecosystem through : direct ingestion or contact with contaminated soil, the food chain (soil-plant-human or soil-plant-animal-human), drinking of contaminated ground water, reduction in food quality (safety and marketability) via phytotoxicity, reduction in land usability for agricultural production causing food insecurity, and land tenure problems.² Heavy metals become toxic when they are not metabolised by the body and accumulate in the soft tissues. They may enter the human body through food, water, air, or absorption through the skin when they come in contact with humans in agriculture, manufacturing, pharmaceutical, industrial or residential settings. Industrial exposure accounts for a common route of exposure for adults. Ingestion is the most common route of exposure in children. Natural and human activities are contaminating the environment and its resources. The review paper provides a structured yet independent opportunity to have an in depth knowledge regarding heavy

metals and their contamination, types, sources, effects etc. which in turn builds up curiosity and creates a research mindset.

Discussion

Definition of heavy metals : Many specific definitions of “heavy metals” have been published all over the world but generally metals with a relatively high density and atomic numbers are defined as heavy metals. The term heavy metals refer to any metallic chemical element which is toxic or poisonous at low concentrations.³ They are the natural components of the earth's crust. They can neither be degraded nor be destroyed. However, the perfect definition of heavy metals vary from subject to subject based on their distinguishing criteria.⁴

Classification of heavy metals : The heavy metals can be classified into several categories on the basis of their properties and the way they exist in the Earth's crust.

- 1) Some of the common metals like Iron(Fe), Copper(Cu), Tin(Sn) are some of the earliest known heavy metals.
- 2) Precious metals like Gold (Au), Silver(Ag) and Platinum(Pt) also fall under heavy metals.
- 3) From 1809 onwards, metals including Gallium (Ga), Thallium(Tl), Hafnium(Hf) were also considered to fall under the category of heavy metals.
- 4) Most of the common heavy metals that we are familiar with are extremely toxic and are highly poisonous. Arsenic (As), Cadmium (Cd), Mercury(Hg), Lead(Pb) etc do fall under this category. These metals tend to bioaccumulate and once they enter the food chain leads to contamination of drinking water, soil, crops and vegetables.
- 5) However, some heavy metals like Iron (Fe), Cobalt(Co), Zinc(Zn) serve as essential nutrients and are relatively harmless to us.

Sources of heavy metals in contaminated soils : Heavy metals occur naturally in the soil environment from the pedogenetic processes of weathering of parent materials at levels that are regarded as trace and rarely toxic. The heavy metals essentially become contaminants in the soil environments because :

- Their rates of generation via man-made cycles are more rapid relative to natural ones
- They become transferred from mines to random environmental locations where higher potentials of direct exposure occur
- The concentrations of the metals in discarded products are relatively high compared to those in the receiving environment

Some of the most important sources are more widely discussed hereunder :

1. FERTILIZERS

Large quantities of fertilizers are regularly added to soils in intensive farming systems to provide

adequate N, P, and K for crop growth. The compounds used to supply these elements contain trace amounts of heavy metals (e.g. Cd and Pb) as impurities, which after continued fertilizer, application may significantly increase their content in the soil.

2. PESTICIDES

Several common pesticides used fairly extensively in agriculture and horticulture in the past contained substantial concentrations of metals. Examples of such pesticides are copper containing fungicidal sprays such as Bordeaux mixture (copper sulphate) and copper oxychloride. Such contamination has potential to cause problems and there are now many derelict sites where soil concentrations of these elements greatly exceed background concentrations.

3. BIOSOLIDS AND MANURES

The application of numerous biosolids (e.g. livestock manures, composts, and municipal sewage sludge) to land inadvertently leads to the accumulation of heavy metals such as As, Cd, Cr, Cu, Pb, Hg, Ni, Se, Mo, Zn, Ti, Sb, and so forth. Cu and Zn added to diets as growth promoters and As contained in poultry health products may also have the potential to cause metal contamination of the soil.⁵

Effects of heavy metal contamination on the environment : The implication associated with heavy metal contamination is of great concern, particularly in agricultural production systems. These metals can pose a significant health risk to humans, particularly in elevated concentrations above the very low body requirements. Dietary exposure to heavy metals, namely Cadmium (Cd), Lead (Pb), Zinc (Zn), Copper (Cu) has been identified as a risk to human health through the consumption of vegetable crops. Heavy metals have toxic and mutagenic effects even at very low concentration. Several cases of human disease, disorders, malfunction and malformation of organs due to metal toxicity have been reported. Along with the human beings, animals and plants are also affected by toxic levels of heavy metals. Toxicological significance of heavy metals has been recognized several decades ago in developed countries and extensive studies have been reported from Denmark by Hansen and Anderson in and Japan . However, developing countries lag behind in this area of research and scanty effort has come forth. In recent years there are a number of reports on heavy metal contamination in fruits and vegetables by different authors.

Heavy metals are extremely persistent in the environment. They are non-biodegradable and thermostable thus readily accumulate at a toxic level. One way in which these metals make way to our digestive system is through crops irrigated with contaminated waste water. The use of industrial effluents in irrigation is a common practice in India and thereby toxic substances, especially heavy metals enter the ecosystem in large amounts. Heavy metals may accumulate in different parts of plants depending on the plant species, soil condition and type of heavy metal.⁶

Heavy metal pollution has spread broadly over the globe perturbing the environment and posing serious health hazards to humans. Several heavy metals and metalloids (e.g. - As, Pb, Cd and Hg) are classified as non-essential to metabolic and other biological functions. These metals are

deleterious in various aspects. Certain heavy metals like Fe, Cu, Zn and Cr(III) are important components of metabolic processes including cytochromes and enzymes, inextricably linked to the metabolic functioning of biota.

In addition to their human health implications, heavy metals adversely affect soil biota through microbial process and soil-microbe interactions. Beneficial soil insects, invertebrates, small and large mammals are all affected.

Essentiality of heavy metals : Apart from all these harmful effects there are some good effects of some heavy metals too especially in biological processes. An average 70 kg human body contains about 0.01% of heavy metals. Heavy metals found in period 4 are required for some physiological processes. Heavy metals like iron and copper carry out the transportation process of oxygen and electrons in our body. Cobalt helps in cell metabolism and complex synthesis. Zinc helps in hydroxylation. Vanadium and manganese carry out the regulation and functioning of enzymes. Chromium utilizes the glucose present in our body. Nickel helps in cell growth. Even the most harmful heavy metal known to us i.e. arsenic also helps in metabolic growth in some animals and in humans. Period 5 and 6 of the periodic table also contain some heavy metals which are nutritionally essential for us. Molybdenum is required for the catalysis of redox reactions. Cadmium is used by some marine diatoms. Tungsten helps in the metabolic activities of some bacteria. Heavy metals like gallium, indium and most lanthanides also stimulate the metabolism.⁷

Uses of heavy metals : Now-a-days, products of heavy metal constitute a huge part in our modern life. The applications of heavy metals are increasing in some countries despite their well known toxic effects. Iron is one of the most common heavy metal as it comprises of nearly 90% of all the refined metals. The usage of heavy metals depend on their general characteristics like density, strength, durability, electrical conductivity, magnetic effects and reflectivity. Wide usage of these heavy metals are done in sport equipments, mechanical engineering, military ordnance and nuclear science. Lead is used as a ballast in underwater diving. In golf, brass, copper inserts in fairway clubs and iron lower the centre of gravity of the club making it easier to get the ball into the air. In addition, heavy metals have been used for long times by humans for making alloys and pigments for paints, cement, rubber etc.

Case study : Heavy metal contamination in crops in Dhapa areas of West Bengal : Rapid industrialization coupled with unplanned growth in cities of developing countries like India have made heavy metals like Zn, Cu, Co, Ni, Cr, Cd, Pb ubiquitous in contemporary urban environment. The long term accumulation of these non-biodegradable environmental contaminants is a serious threat to plant toxicity, soil microbial processes and the quality of the human food chain. Within permissible limits, heavy metals are important to human beings as essential metallo enzymes, but overexposure can lead to serious health issues pertaining to liver damage, renal failures and cognitive disorders. Heavy metal contamination in vegetables predominantly due to anthropogenic activities has been widely reported. Many of these studies, report the effect of waste water irrigation on agricultural produce (Wang et al., 2012; Harmanescu et al., 2011; Arora et al., 2008; Muchuwetti et al., 2006), while others have studied the fate and behavior of municipal solid waste (MSW)-compost amended soils (Smith, 1992; Zinati et al., 2001; Liu et al., 2006). Receptor and

environmental pathway analysis for heavy metals in order to regulate the use of sewage sludge on land was developed by US EPA (1993). The effect of atmospheric deposition towards significantly elevated levels of heavy metal contamination in vegetables has been reported in other studies (Jassir et al., 2005; Sharma et al., 2008, 2008b). However, very few studies have been done on the effect of long term accumulation of heavy metals in soils on vegetables grown directly in an urban waste disposal site. This has been due to the fact that the system of land filling with MSW without any systematic environmental impact assessment study is practiced in major cities of many developing countries. In the Indian context, published literature in peer reviewed journals regarding the chemical characterization of raw MSW or soil mixed with MSW is hardly available.⁸

Prevention of heavy metal contamination : There are various intercellular chelation processes and antioxidants which are involved in the prevention and detoxification of heavy metal-induced damage. The metal ions in living organisms can bind with other specific ligand molecules in a phenomenon called as chelation. The Chelating agents in plants called Phytochelatins (PCs) combine with metal ions and provide resistance to metal poisoning while Antioxidant molecules interact with free radicals and protect from oxidative damage. Metallic ion-bound PCs are transported into vacuoles and successfully isolated from cellular proteins and reduce heavy metal ion-induced damage. Several individual treatments namely - Physical, Chemical, and Biological methods are being implied to remove heavy metals from the environment. Integrated processes are the combination of two different methods to achieve a synergistic and effective effort to remove heavy metals which are regarded as significant environmental pollutants due to high density and high toxicity even at low concentrations. During recent years the several treatment options include Thermal Treatment, Adsorption, Chlorination, Chemical Extraction, Ion-Exchange, Membrane Separation, Electrokinesis, Bioleaching, etc. As reported, most of the above processes are implied as single methods of remediation only. For eg – The Chemical-Biological Remediation Approach is considered to be a highly economical and eco-friendly alternative to treat heavy metals contained in wastewater. Biological approach (bioremediation) is another eco-friendly method that encourages the establishment/reestablishment of plants on polluted soils. Although it is time consuming, it's equally a cost effective method where microorganisms/plants or both are used. Several microorganisms especially bacteria (*Bacillus subtilis*, *Pseudomonas putida*, and *Enterobacter cloacae*) have been successfully used for the reduction of Cr (VI) to the less toxic Cr (III) while *B. subtilis* has been reported to reduce the selenite to the less toxic elemental Se. Most of the above microbe assisted remediation is carried out ex situ. However, a very important in situ microbe assisted remediation is the microbial reduction of soluble mercuric ions Hg (II) to volatile metallic mercury is carried out by mercury resistant bacteria. It's seen that with increase in pH, there is increase in metal removal, due to the ionization of functional groups and an increase in the negative charge density on the cell surface. The reported maximum removal of nickel is in the pH range of 4.5–5.5. Also low removal of nickel at lower pH range by *Penicillium chrysogenum* has been reported. Thus, the encouraging heavy metal removal and biomass data identified the role of both *Exiguobacterium* sp. and *Bacillus* sp as potential bioremediators, particularly in removal of chromium and nickel in alkaline pH.¹⁰ In recent years, a

number of cellular and biochemical parameters associated with the coelomocytes of earthworm have been considered as markers to estimate the effect of pollutants present in soil.¹¹

Conclusion

Thus we have seen that Heavy metals are among the contaminants in the environment. Beside the natural activities, almost all human activities also have potential contribution to produce heavy metals as side effects. Migration of these contaminants into non contaminated areas as dust or leachates through the soil and spreading of heavy metals containing sewage sludge are a few examples of events contributing towards contamination of the ecosystems.

Heavy metals uptake, by plants using phytoremediation technology, seems to be a prosperous way to remediate heavy-metals-contaminated environment. It has some advantages compared with other commonly used conventional technologies. Several factors must be considered in order to accomplish a high performance of remediation result. The most important factor is a suitable plant species which can be used to uptake the contaminant. Even the phytoremediation technique seems to be one of the best alternatives, it also has some limitations. Prolong research needs to be conducted to minimize this limitation in order to apply this technique effectively.

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TINTIN IN TIBET : REFLECTION OF HERGÉ'S CRISIS

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ABSTRACT

The 20th album of *The Adventures of Tintin* series, *Tintin in Tibet* was written by Hergé during a period of crisis. Thus, making this album different than all the others. The professional, personal and psychological crisis Hergé went through has a clear reflection in this Tintin album. Here we will analyze the aspects that separate *Tintin in Tibet* from other albums and see how it relates to Hergé's then state of mind.

INTRODUCTION

Every artist goes through a period of crisis in their life that affects their work. Each of them has their own way of dealing with the dilemmas they face and different paths of overcoming them. George Prosper Remi, whom we know as Hergé, the creator of *Tintin* came out victorious from his crisis period holding the hand of his own creation. Completing the 20th Tintin album, *Tintin in Tibet* was therapy for him. "*Tintin in Tibet* is probably the most personal of all the *Tintin* books. Just as Hergé was in crisis, so is Tintin. Normally ruled by reason, the Tintin of *Tintin in Tibet* is ruled by emotion." (Tweedle)

PROFESSIONAL CRISIS

The post-World War period was particularly stressful for Hergé. After the occupation of Brussels by the Nazi ended, the Allied authorities shut down *Le Soir*, where Tintin used to be published and Hergé's work had to be suspended. During this time, Hergé was arrested four times on the false allegation of being a Nazi Rexist sympathizer. "Tintin's exile ended on 26 September 1946. The publisher and wartime resistance fighter Raymond Leblanc provided the financial support and anti-Nazi credentials to launch the comics magazine titled *Tintin* with Hergé." (Goddin 365)

After the publication of *The Seven Crystal Balls*, the circulation of the *Tintin magazine* surpassed 100,000 a week. Due to the increased demand of the *Tintin magazine* and the workload, Hergé suffered multiple nervous breakdowns during end of 1940s and beginning of 1950s. To decrease the workload, he set up Hergé Studios on April 6, 1950.

After the publication of *The Red Sea Sharks*, Hergé was unable to come up with any definite new idea for a new *Tintin* album. He had been working on Tintin for nearly thirty years by this time and according to Mark Tweedle, "*Tintin in Tibet* is the beginning of what I like to call the deconstruction of *Tintin*... I think he was starting to tire of the self-imposed restrictions he had about what a Tintin story could and couldn't be. *Tintin in Tibet* is the beginning of Hergé exploring those boundaries, and seeing how he could redefine them." (Tweedle) This explains the major deviations that we see in *Tintin in Tibet* from the previous Tintins.

"The idea of setting the story in Tibet had been influenced by Hergé's friend Jacques Van Melkebeke (1904–1983), who had suggested it back in 1954, possibly being influenced by the fact that he had set the 1940s Tintin play *M. Boullock A Disparu* (*The Disappearance of Mr Boullock*) in that country." (Lofficier 73) There were several title ideas too that were in work. But, Hergé stuck with a simple title to portray the minimalist nature of his 20th album.

PERSONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CRISIS

At the time when Hergé began thinking about idea for Tintin's 20th album and with the nervous breakdowns he was having, he felt drawn towards Fanny Vlamincq, a young artist who started working at Hergé Studios. As a consequence of this, his marriage with Germaine Remi to whom he had been married to since 1932, started to fall apart. He later in an interview with Numa Sadoul said, "It meant turning upside down all my values – what a shock! This was a serious moral crisis: I was married, and I loved someone else; life seemed impossible with my wife, but on the other hand I had this scout-like idea of giving my word for ever. It was a real catastrophe. I was completely torn up." (Thompson 171)

At the same time Hergé started having psychological problems. He started having disturbing dreams. In the same interview with Sadoul, describing his dreams, Hergé said, "I took note of them and remember one where I was in a kind of tower made up of a series of ramps. Dead leaves were falling and covering everything. At a particular moment, in an immaculately white alcove, a white skeleton appeared that tried to catch me. And then instantly everything around me became white." (Farr 161)

To find the way out of this crisis, Hergé went to Swiss psychoanalyst Franz Ricklin who advised him to abandon the work of *Tintin in Tibet* if he wanted to get rid of his demons. Hergé decided otherwise and remembered his motto as a Boy Scout – a scout smiles and sings through all his difficulties. Hergé had hit a turning point in his life, he decided to marry Fanny Vlamincq divorcing Germaine and continued working on *Tintin in Tibet*. Tintinologist Harry Thompson noted, "It was ironic, but not perhaps unpredictable, that faced with the moral dilemma posed by Ricklin, Hergé chose to keep his scout's word of honour to Tintin, but not to Germaine". (Thompson 172)

REFLECTION OF HERGÉ'S CRISIS

Tintin in Tibet reflects Hergé's on going crisis at every step. Staring with the fact that this album is known as 'The White Tintin', stems from the white dreams Hergé saw, what he described as 'beauty and cruelty of the white'. The dangerous beauty of the Himalayas became a setting for *Tintin in Tibet* because of Hergé's need to overcome the fear of his dreams.

Tintin in Tibet deviates from other albums in the aspect that the heroes do not come across any villains as the adventure progresses. There is no one to blame for any of the mishaps they encounter. The reason behind this is that the only obstacle Tintin had to cross was other people's opinion of Chang's demise and follow his own heart. Through Tintin, Hergé was fighting his own inner battle. There are several provisional endings where it seems like Tintin is at a dead end. For example, where Sherpa Tharkey refuse to take them to the crash site, "No! Me not want to risk three lives – your life,

life of the other Sahib and my life – to look for a dead man.” (Hergé 13) Again when, after reaching the crash site they do not find any way of looking for Chang and Tintin says, “Goodbye, Chang! ...Goodbye!” (Hergé 35) And later, Tintin and Haddock's lives fall in peril twice, it gives the readers the feeling that all it lost. Adding to this is the airport manager, Captain Haddock and Sherpa Tharkey warning Tintin not to go looking for Chang because logic dictates, he is dead. This is an allusion to Franz Ricklin's advise to Hergé of abandoning Tintin. The way Hergé never abandons Tintin, Tintin too never abandons Chang.

Another aspect of *Tintin in Tibet* is that much of it is dictated by 'extra-sensory perception'. Tintin relies more on his premonition and gut feeling rather than logic, which is not seen in the previous albums. This reflects the emotional and psychological state of Hergé who neither had any logical explanation for his feeling for Fanny, nor the haunting white dreams.

Tintin in Tibet portrays Hergé's deep desire to reunite with his friend Chang Chong-jen, a young sculptor he met while researching for **The Blue Lotus**, who is the real-life inspiration for Chang's character in the *Tintin* books.

Tintin in Tibet is also known for its minimalist nature with a handful of characters and a focused plot line. This is to emphasize the solo nature of Tintin's undertaking as it also reflects the journey Hergé undertakes to recover from his period of crisis.

CONCLUSION

Hergé's crisis gave birth to what is considered by critics and tintinologists as the best *Tintin*. Mark Tweedle reviewing *Tintin in Tibet* says, "When Tintin and his companions arrive at the crash site, there's a panel which I feel beautifully externalizes Tintin's emotions. I consider it one of the best Hergé ever drew." (Tweedle) Many of the panels of *Tintin in Tibet* may have a white colour scheme, but they are vibrant with emotions. The drawings reflect Hergé's state of mind and are more personal than in any other *Tintin*.

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THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN BESSIE HEAD'S A QUESTION OF POWER

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Abstract

Elizabeth (as well as Head) was born of an illicit amorous rendezvous between a white woman and a black man, thus she was discriminated against and ostracized by both the South African whites and the native blacks. These embittering experiences helped her to give her narrative vigour and vividness. The social and institutional rejection as well as its concomitant trauma are expressed minutely. The torturous apartheid South African milieu is also presented explicitly and exquisitely.

Bessie Head was born "coloured" and abandoned by the white middle-class family of her mother. Head's finely drawn, intense writing – short stories, fictionalized autobiography and fiction have attracted the readers across the globe. *A Question of Power* is one of Bessie Head's most acclaimed novels. In 1981 it was ranked by the journal *Black Scholar* as the eighth of fifteen 'Most Influential Books for the Decade', and it was listed as one of Africa's '100 Best Books in 2002'. Bessie Head has always stood out as a novelist of unusual perception. All three of her novels are set in Botswana, her country of exile. *When Rain Clouds Gather* was published in 1969 and was widely recognised as being the work of an important new writer.

Bessie Head had the double struggle, for identity building and for ridding herself of an inherited, regulated and rejected identity of discrimination and suffering. Her writings brought her world's recognition and prominence as one of the most accomplished writers of the continent. The rise of colonialism disrupted former family and gender relationships in many different parts of the world. According to the point of view of women, Bessie Head stated that there are really two kinds of men in society. The first kind is the oppressive man who creates misery and chaos and the second idyllic type of man, a tailor-made ideal for women, he adapts and adjusts, possesses tender feelings, provides for all the material and emotional needs of the family. There is a fascinating link between postcolonialism, feminism and the liberation of African women in her works. It can be seen that her female characters are willing to leave the oppressions of the past behind, all of them, and go forward into the future without looking back. In spite of its tragic ending, it can be seen that Bessie's women characters are a radical force that subverts the structure of patriarchal phallogocentric discourse, like – Dikelidi in *The Collector of Treasures*. The readers have a woman writer, women characters, a woman's point of view, feminine experiences and longings, and a radical women-oriented transformation of society. Bessie Head's stories are not anti-man they oppose those who obstruct the process of transformation. Gender roles and distinctions are a construction that can be changed. The

roles of women and men are made, not born. Her works reflect African women who are dignified, grounded, successful and powerful. She represents that women have faced and continue to face obstacles to self-fulfilment but many African women have successfully overcome these barriers.

The position of women writer can be comprehended by the pertinent question put forward in an interview-"why there is no recognised female equivalent of Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka or Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o"(James 3). Women are peripheralized and given liminal appearance. Women and above that a black woman is perpetually at the nadir in the social hierarchy. Bessie Head decided to leave her native country and live in the country of her chosen banishment. In her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak" Gayatri C. Spivak stated the category of gendered subaltern and argued if the "subaltern has no history and cannot speak the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow." The women are thus doubly marginalised. Frantz Fanon has stated in *The Wretched of the Earth* that national liberation and national reawakening are always violent events where women and children are massacred.

Alice Walker has given literary, critical and philosophical recognition to black women's intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual wholeness. She wrote "Womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender."(Walker x) Womanism is an empowered form of feminism just as purple is a bold and empowered vision of lavender. Purple as a color could also be regarded as a multifaceted erotic symbol, a sign of indomitable female spirit and encoding of joyous vitality of the female spirit. She even appreciates the works of African writers like Elechi Amadi, Camara Laye and Bessie Head as these writers do not seem afraid of fantasy, myth and mystery as they are like musicians, at one with their cultures and their historical subconscious. Bessie Head has clarified the need to refuse to be judged by the values of another culture.

A Question of Power is Head's oblique autobiographical account of the mental breakdown she suffered due to self-denigration brought about by apartheid. Elizabeth, the protagonist, suffers as a refugee woman in the biased, racist, chauvinistic Botswana society as well as due to state oppression and apartheid. Elizabeth undergoes torture, nightmares and crisis as she gets into a strange shared journey into hell with Sello and Dan. *A Question of Power* chronicles the personal and social disintegration of Elizabeth and explores an insanity that manifests itself in images from the wider social madness of South African racial prejudice and black patriarchal biases.

She possesses clear political idea and rejects the rhetorical and symbolic violence of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). She does not believe in "exclusive brotherhoods for black people only"(A *Question of Power* 132) and rejects the segregating quality of the BCM in favour of a political philosophy available to and inclusive of humanity in general, for any political goal grounded in exclusion remains, according to her, pointless and useless. Head's (thereby Elizabeth's) perspective towards the BCM signifies a gendered response to an ideology that is ultimately exclusive of women as active political agents.

Dan is an aggressive, ambitious, acerbic man with "a wild display of wreckage and destruction" (A *Question of Power* 13). He symbolises the phallocentric world. The representative of Black Nationalism in the text who set himself up before Elizabeth as the epitome of the African male. Dan's

very introduction in the text occurs in phallic terms and his masculine power in the text is confirmed by his position as "the 'big-time' guy from hell" (*A Question of Power* 126) and is further emphasized through the wealth and power he accrues as a cattle millionaire. In addition, Head's representation of Dan as intimately connected with violence and hatred is reinforced by his misplaced belief in himself as king of and deity to an as-yet-undefined African nation : "He raised a plain steel crown of a dull hue to his head." (*A Question of Power* 108)

Elizabeth suffers gendered and racial segregation, she is ostracized by both the black and white communities, her coloured identity leaves her dangling between the extremes. The nurse remarks "You are mad, aren't you ? You hate black people. You hate white people. You hate everyone" (*A Question of Power* 182). Elizabeth is denied an agency of her own by society, her husband, Dan, Sello and even the author, as Bessie Head chooses the third-person narrative instead of the use of 'I' (first-person narrative). The process of 'otherization' continues as both the men try to remould her according to their convenience thus determining the boundaries of her own identity. Dan and Sello represent two competing attempts to construct Elizabeth's identity however, neither is ultimately successful at gaining permanent control of her identity. The contestation of authority over her led to the annihilation of her selfhood and her "analytical mind" was being shattered to pieces by the malevolent male force. She endured unremitting humiliation and denigration at the hands of various people, men and women alike. She in an unbiased and candid manner speaks about the perpetration of patriarchy, racialism and prejudices in society by women themselves. She assertively wrote that it is "women, always women. They are the real poison." (*A Gesture of Belonging* 72)

Elizabeth does not subscribe to the mythologised notion of motherhood. Her consciousness as a woman helps her reach a certain conclusion about what it means to be woman, as opposed to what society or culture defines to be woman (daughter, sister, wife or mother). The sisterly affection and companionship between Elizabeth and other agricultural students become a symbol of strength and preserves her sanity and identity. The bond between Elizabeth and Tom is based on mutual respect, he had a "deep expression of wisdom in his eyes" (*A Question of Power* 112) and provided Elizabeth with an alternative idea of masculinity. His presence gave her hope for a "great leap out of hell" (*A Question of Power* 188). Elizabeth heaps abuse on a community in retaliation for its refusal to allow her to belong to it as an active and integral member however her insanity becomes a hindrance.

The harrowing experiences women underwent is underscored by the dehumanized and fragmented condition of their existence, they do not possess an identity as a whole, either they are unrecognised or are recognised as per the convenience of men. Miss Glamour, Miss Beauty Queen, Miss Legs, Miss Buttocks, Miss Pelican-Beak, Miss Chopper, Miss Pink Sugar Icing, Madame-Make-Love-on-the-Floor, Miss Body Beautiful, The Womb, The Sugar-Plum Fairy, Madame Squelch-Squelch, Madame Loose Bottom, Miss Wiggly Bottom, Miss Sewing Machine represent disparate sexual aspects and domestic skills of women.

Elizabeth re-enacts Bessie Head's retrieval of sanity through contact with an Afrikaner, who appears in the novel as Eugene, the source of happiness for a threatened female protagonist. She explores the intricacies of interpersonal relationships and social as well as sexual justice. The novel

becomes a spiritual odyssey of an exiled woman. Elizabeth's victory is marked by her symbolic act of falling asleep and placing her hand peacefully over her land in a gesture of belonging.

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THE BURDEN OF THE BELL JAR

A study exploring Esther Greenwood's psychological journey and the symbolic bell jar's influence in Sylvia Plath's novel, *The Bell Jar*.

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Abstract

This study explores the turbulent psychological journey of Esther Greenwood, the protagonist of Sylvia Plath's novel, *The Bell Jar*. Set against the background of the 1950s American society, the study analyzes the most important elements that impacted Esther's psyche and made her spiral down to the extent of attempting suicide. These include Esther alienating herself from her society and the people around her, who were constantly trying to curb her growth as a woman and a promising individual. The metaphor of the bell jar plays a crucial role here, as it juxtaposes between a prison and a fortress in Esther's mind. However, the lifting of the 'bell jar' and the renewal of hope and freedom in her mind is also established, with the desire of starting life anew.

Introduction :

Sylvia Plath's semi-autobiographical novel, *The Bell Jar* is a striking manifestation of Esther Greenwood's journey, from her entrapment under the burdens of the bell jar to her final rejuvenation, and her emotional turmoil throughout. The Bell Jar is a prime symbol relating to both the protagonist's suppression and freedom, as an adolescent moving towards adulthood and autonomy. Narrated through exposition and dialogue, the bell jar's iconic symbol lies in its paradox representing both life and death. As a symbol of life, it can be perceived as a "protective shroud" shielding her from the extremities of society, whereas, as a symbol of death, it suffocates and snuffs out the life force, like a candle flame. Ultimately, it is up to the person placed underneath it, to decide how the enclosure is used (Batten, Female Helix, 69).

Sense of Estrangement and Purposelessness

The Bell Jar explores the coming of age of the protagonist, Esther Greenwood. A nineteen-year-old college junior, she initially tries to adapt to the dynamic life of New York city where she interns for a women's fashion magazine called *Ladies' Day*. While the urban life in the metropolis excites her, she still finds herself withdrawn from it, and also from herself. She becomes essentially apathetic to her career as a writer and editor, and her estrangement from her surroundings eventually tends to alienate her from her career and goals as well.

Her estrangement from the city finds a voice loud and clear in the novel :

"The city hung in my window, flat as a poster, glittering and blinking, but it might just as well not have been there at all, for all the good it did me. (16)"

However, when she returns to her hometown that summer, even though welcomed by the “motherly breath of the suburbs” (94), her alienation has grown and taken the shape of depression. It makes the “soothing hands” of the summer calm in the suburbs feel like death. Eventually, her increasing alienation and the settling depression on her psyche takes her spiraling down to the point of suicide. Pat Macpherson, in his work *Reflecting on the Bell Jar*, suggests that Esther's suicide attempt becomes an act of retaliation against suburbia (41), and her ultimate release from the mental hospital, or her “last-passed-test” is simply a reflection of her “social” and “psychic” maturity (6).

Esther had in her the makings of a promising individual. Her many accolades and scholarships bear testimony to her capabilities. However, the gnawing emptiness in her mind gave rise to a sense of meaninglessness and lack of purpose in life. She regarded her many scopes of a successful career and a beckoning future brimming with happiness and fulfilment to a fig tree. But her confusion and inhibitions clouded her judgement, starving her until all the ‘figs’ began to “wrinkle and go black, and one by one, they plopped to the ground at (her) feet” (64). Steven Gould Axelrod interprets Esther's lack of useful guidance and mentorship as a prime factor that makes her feel all the more unloved, lonely and at a loss (*Alienation and Renewal*, 135-136). This sense of purposelessness manifests when Esther wonders :

“I saw the years of my life spaced along a road in the form of telephone poles, threaded together by the wires. I counted one, two, three...nineteen telephone poles, and then the wires dangled into space, and try as I would, I couldn't see a single pole beyond the nineteenth” (102).

The Paradox of the Bell Jar

While Esther uses this bell jar as a shield to the social constraints of her surroundings, it also induces a metaphorical suffocation and mental agony, that soon affects her physically. Mahrugh Baig discusses this paradox and multiplicity of the bell jar on Esther's psyche:

“To deliberately live in a state of alienation and detachment in order to ensure her a sense of security, Esther has formed the bell jar around her. However, simultaneously, she feels being reduced to an object from a human being that makes her all the more isolated and dejected” (*Psychological space*, 11).

Esther doesn't realize that, in her attempt to build the bell jar as her fortress, the same becomes a weight on her psychological space. Throughout the novel, the bell jar juxtaposes its role between a prison and a safe sanctuary. While on one hand, she feels safe because “there were no windows”, the same air inside made her “shiver”. (*Bell Jar*, 106)

Alienation in the Bell Jar : Society vs. Self

Most critics view the bell jar more as the stifling social constraints imposed on Esther. They have viewed her struggles through the lens of social critique. Diane Bonds called Esther's depression as “intolerable psychic conflict produced by trying to meet cultural expectations of women” (57). Such a critical view characterizes Esther as a victim of the 1950's American society

which sought to curb women and their ideas, silenced their voices, and condemned their vocations. Esther is such a woman, caught under the domed glass jar of the conventional expectations of the society (and especially, her mother) with no room for her ideas to expand. The male dominance and male double-standard inherent of this time definitely impacted her psyche to a great extent. As quoted by Mahrukh Baig,

“The female's sense of enclosure in a psychological 'Bell Jar'...female degradation through male dominance and double sexual standards in 1950ss American Society...reflected in the image of the Bell Jar resulting in (Plath's) feminist revolt for the attainment of freedom. (This) social entrapment led to the physical confinement causing a psychological space that resulted in a thirst for liberty.” (abstract, para 1)

Against the airless confinements of societal conventions, lies Esther's desire for physical and mental freedom. It is reflected when she ponders, “I hated the idea of serving men in any way. I wanted to dictate my own thrilling letters” (62). Trapped in a society that expects women to be companions to men in a marriage, satisfy their sexual desires, and breed children, Esther is driven to a state of mental solitude. The pressure to conform to these conventions are intense, and the more she fights them, detaching herself from the limitations and reality of her society and resorting to the bell jar as her safe haven, the more she is alienated from her surroundings. Her detachment from the society resonates with Gwynn Nettler's definition of alienation, which he suggests is a psychological state of a person when he has been “estranged from, made unfriendly toward, his society and the culture it carries” (Measure of Alienation, p. 672).

The Bell Jar Lifted : Journey Towards Recovery

Esther's path towards betterment is marked by some tremendously rough patches, one of the most traumatizing being the first shock treatment she went through under Dr. Gordon. Such an experience makes her all the more miserable, and she wonders what she has done to deserve it. Lawrence Stevens opines that electro-shock treatments cause damage to the brain, resulting memory loss, and reduced intelligence. This incident also resonates with Plath's own experience of shock therapy, that she went through under Dr. Thornton. In a letter to Eddie Cohen in 1953, she describes this session as a “rather brief and traumatic experience of badly-given shock treatment”. She also adds: “pretty soon, the only doubt in my mind was the precise time and method of committing suicide”, which she attempted shortly afterwards.

However, Esther's interaction with Dr. Nolan comes as a welcome change and a hope for renewal. This helped change her perception and improved her attitude towards life. As she moves towards recovery, she can sense the bell jar lifting, giving her access to the refreshing air outside. Her alienated imageries find more harmonious imageries, where self and the other are more reciprocal and amiable. She grows into an adult with autonomy and a sense of freedom: “I am climbing to freedom, freedom from fear, freedom from marrying the wrong person” (186).

There still remained many possibilities of the 'bell jar' descending again. However, for the time being, all her previous predicaments and thoughts of ending her life, Esther buried them with the

grave of her old friend, Joan: "I took a deep breath and listened to the old brag of my heart. I am, I am, I am" (203).

Conclusion

The novel explores the tumultuous psychological journey of Esther Greenwood through her sense of estrangement from the city, lack of purpose in her career, and the overwhelming alienation from the society that she is living in. The novel presents a pinching reality of a woman in 1950s American society, who builds her safe haven in her mind in the form of the 'bell jar', and finds herself stifled in the confines of the same. However, through this tremendous journey comes an emotional maturity of her psyche. In the end, even amidst the uncertainty of the future, lies a faint hope of betterment and renewal, and a new-found emotional freedom.

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THE TIMELESSNESS OF EMILY BRONTË'S WUTHERING HEIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

A lot of time, we read a book and it stays with us long after we have finished reading it. But very rarely does it happen that we read a book and it feels as if that book has changed our world, and it has become an integral part of who we are; the Victorian novel, *Wuthering Heights* is one such book. In this paper, I will try to review the novel by drawing comparisons with other classics, not giving away much of the plot, hopefully. If this paper compels at least one person to pick up the novel, I'll consider my attempt a successful one.

THE TIMELESSNESS OF EMILY BRONTË'S WUTHERING HEIGHTS

When we speak about timeless classics, a lot of works come into our mind. These works undoubtedly have elements which have won them the title of being timeless. However, most of these works in question have aspects which do not sit well with the readers of the 21st century. For example, Homer's *Iliad*, despite being the brilliant text that it is, endorses problematic ideas of glory and honour, and does not bat an eye at the treatment, or rather mistreatment, of women. Most of Shakespeare's plays are applauded for their impeccable observation of humankind, and yet, the idea of morality and virtue promoted by them do not necessarily resonate with the modern readers; nor would they have resonated with the readers of Homer's era. Jane Austen's famous *Pride and Prejudice* is one of the most popular novels of all time and enjoys a multitude of fans even today. Having said that, we must also state that there are several readers, especially the post-Modern young female readers, who cannot help but point out the artificiality of the courtly romance, and the equivalence of "gratitude" and love that *Pride and Prejudice* (Austen 240), and most of Jane Austen's novels, so vehemently propagates. Modern readers would rather not live by these definitions of marriage or love. And it is easy to understand the cause of such disparity between the mentality of the modern readers and the ideas endorsed in these books; it is so because these books are, in a way, social commentaries and are telling of the time they were written in.

Wuthering Heights, however, stands apart due to its truly timeless themes – of love, revenge and loss. The themes and their treatment are such that it might resonate with anyone from any walk of life, at any point of time in human existence. *Wuthering Heights* tells the story of Catherine and Heathcliff, and of their love, almost all of which takes place at Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights. Their story of their devastating love is narrated by Ellen (Nelly) Dean, a housekeeper of sorts at Thrushcross Grange, to Lockwood, a tenant at Thrushcross Grange, who becomes a link between Ellen Dean and the readers. Catherine, an unabashed and brazen girl, is the daughter of

Mr. Earnshaw, the master of Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff is an orphan boy whom Mr. Earnshaw brought to live at Wuthering Heights. So, Catherine and Heathcliff grow up together, very close to each other, and form a bond that is in no way of less gravity than love. But things fall apart very soon for Heathcliff and soon, it becomes a story of revenge, the tragic devastation of which spares no one. Consequently, the note of loss, and subsequent pain, is remarkably felt; and at this point, the reader might have to put the book down for a moment. By the time Nelly is narrating their story to Lockwood, the aforementioned Catherine is already dead, and Lockwood, like us, is curious to know about her life and death.

I must add that it is not that the novel is not a social commentary and telling of the society of its time in any way. Even though Mr. Earnshaw did not mistreat Heathcliff, the way Hindley Earnshaw, Mr. Earnshaw's son, treats Heathcliff, and Edgar Linton's prejudicial behavior towards Heathcliff tells us a lot about how a lot of Victorian elites looked down upon people of inferior social status. However, despite reflecting the norms of the Victorian society, discrimination and prejudice against people who are considered inferior, are things that are very much relevant even in this day and age. So, when readers in the 21st century read about it, they do not feel disconnected because they themselves have witnessed such incidents, and they can very much relate, and understand Heathcliff's fury. Therefore, even while discussing the evils characteristic to that age, it manages to universalize these issues.

But the primary themes of the novel are love, revenge and loss. These emotions have always existed in the human heart and mind from inception, and will never cease to exist until the very end of time and human existence. There is hardly any disparity between the thoughts of the modern readers and the treatment of these sentiments in the novel. We find Heathcliff wanting to wreak havoc and seek revenge on the Earnshaws, the Lintons and even her beloved Catherine. His thirst for revenge arises from the pain he has felt and the pain he feels until the very end. Despite the evident cruelty and a fairly unique context, the theme of revenge is not a rare occurrence in the history of literature. In the great Indian epic *Mahabharata*, Draupadi swears vengeance on the Kauravas for disrespecting her. Her revenge, more or less, drives the action of the epic forward. Shakespeare's early 17th century play, *Hamlet*, which has been adapted innumerable times, is also a tale of revenge – one of the greatest tales of revenge, if I may add. Therefore, vengeance and revenge are not feelings with which people of any era are unfamiliar. The 17th century British audience understood it; the readers of the 21st century understand it as well. Thus, when we see Heathcliff's hunger for revenge, even though we condemn it, we understand where he is coming from.

When Catherine confesses her love for Heathcliff to Nelly by saying that she loves him "not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same;" (Brontë 74) it does not seem artificial or over-the-top. Even the readers, who might not be the biggest fans of romantic novels, do not grimace at these words. This is perhaps because there is a certain truth in these words; something that feels so absurdly personal and yet, so universal. This is something you could say about a person you love – platonically or romantically – and mean it. *Wuthering Heights'* idea of love does not seem forced or insincere as it does in many classic romantic novels.

Brontë treats the theme of loss poignantly. It does not have a holier-than-thou approach to loss, and the subsequent pain. On hearing about Catherine's death, Heathcliff remarks : "And I pray one prayer – I repeat it till my tongue stiffens – Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living; you said I killed you – haunt me, then! The murdered *do* haunt their murderers, I believe. I know that ghosts *have* wandered on earth. Be with me always – take any form – drive me mad! only *do* not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you ! Oh, God ! it is unutterable! I *cannot* live without my life! I *cannot* live without my soul !" (Brontë 149-150) These words make us feel something in our heart. It is so much easier to preach to people who have lost a loved one that one must move on and let go, but rarely does anyone teach us to acknowledge and address our pain. These words of Heathcliff come from a very real place, which makes them all the more heart breaking.

The sentiments of love and loss are not alien emotions to any human being at any point of human existence. From the time of Rabindranath Tagore to the contemporary time, movies, books and songs about love and loss are always popular with the people; because all throughout human existence, people have fallen in love and have lost their dear ones – unfortunately, the latter, especially, has been a very common feeling in this deadly pandemic. In *Metamorphoses*, Ovid narrates when Narcissus died, all the nymphs mourned his death, and Echo, who loved Narcissus dearly, "sang her refrain to their lament" (Ovid 87). In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, we see Snape's unrequited love for Lily Potter, and how he laments her death. Even years after her death, when Dumbledore poses a question, "After all this time?" "Always," answers Snape (Rowling 561). From 7th century BCE to 21st century CE, the all-consuming nature of love, and the pain of losing that love are eternal and universal ideas. The desire to keep the person you love, alive in your heart after they have passed away, by any means is a painful, yet very much real, sentiment. So, when we see Catherine confess her love for Heathcliff to Nelly, it brings a smile on our face; so, when we see Heathcliff cursing himself to be haunted by Catherine's spirit for the rest of his life, it breaks our heart. It would have moved a 7th century reader, it would have moved a 16th century reader, it moves a 21st century reader, and it would move a 30th century reader one day.

Another reason behind *Wuthering Heights* being a timeless piece is that it does not fall into the trope of hero-villain; it does not go into the discourse on goodness versus evil. The characteristics that constitute a hero might change with time. Neither Catherine nor Heathcliff can be termed as a 'hero'. They are definitely not the nicest or the kindest characters. They have flaws aplenty, and yet, despite their villainy, you cannot help but pity them on their tragedy. None of the characters are model human beings; they are real and flawed. We, as an audience, at times despise the seemingly nice Edgar Linton, and at times root for the villainous Heathcliff – therein lies the beauty of this novel.

While most Victorian works expressed a conflict between faith and science, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* expressed a conflict between what we naturally are from within and what is expected of us in the name of culture – a conflict perhaps everyone has had to face at some point in their life. The themes of love, revenge and loss will remain relevant as long as humans have a heart to feel and a mind to think, and therefore, *Wuthering Heights* stays relevant regardless of which era one reads it in. *Wuthering Heights*, more often than not, makes its readers uncomfortable, and reflect upon

life and loss – which is the entire point of any piece of art. Art is supposed to move your heart, stir your mind and change you; and *Wuthering Heights* does exactly that.

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THE CONTRADICTING REALITY OF ANTHROPOCENE

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ABSTRACT

Many researchers and scholars claim that humanity's relationship to the environment is at a critical juncture. But to what extent do we overestimate our power and underestimate that of nature, which is really the entirety of the world and the Homo sapiens are just a part of it. Although humans can now be seen as independent drivers of global environmental changes but clearly humans are not entirely in control of nature's forces. We are living in a geological epoch, which are characterised by far reaching human impacts on nature and these impacts are so deadly that some are concerned, that this might mark the end of nature. But however nature surely does have some tricks up its sleeves and might have a subtle control over us. Therefore the main objective of this study is to find out who establishes more power over the other; is it nature or is it mankind ?

INTRODUCTION

The first approach towards elucidating the man nature dichotomy was put forward through the theory of environmental determinism; Friedrich Ratzel and E.C. Semple being the main propagators of this theory. The determinists are of the belief that man is a product of nature and that he is more of a passive agent on whom physical factors are constantly acting and shaping his conduct. Any changes in human activities could be explained by studying his natural environment. On the contrary, the theory of Possibilism was put forward which opposed the notions of determinism. With socio-economic, cultural and technological developments man moved from a state of necessity to a state of freedom. They created possibilities out of the natural resources to meet their needs. Vidal De La Blache one of the prime propagators of this theory was of the view that man was both an active as well as a passive agent. He believed that culture is a dominant factor in human society and man views environment through his prism of culture and makes changes to the physical landscape as he deem fit. In fact the opportunities to make such changes are provided by the nature itself and man simply makes use of this or rather takes advantage of it and in the due course of time nature gets humanized and starts bearing the imprints of human Endeavour.

Griffith Taylor came forward with his theory of stop and go determinism or neo determinism; this new concept somewhat bridged the gap between the two pre-existing extremes of theories regarding the man nature dichotomy. This theory nullifies the existence of neither absolute determinism nor an absolute possibilism. In a gist this theory opines that man takes control of his physical landscape but is constrained by the limits set by nature.

DISCUSSION

In order to find out that in the daily practical interactions between man and nature who holds the upper hand, it is wise to mention beforehand that man is driven by the concept of possibilism and that he not only tries to create possibilities out of the resources but also tries to control nature out of his sheer ignorance of what might happen if the wrath of nature befalls him. But the main question lies in understanding that; is it nature that holds true power over mankind or is it man who is controlling nature but under its restrictions ? When a physical landscape converts to a cultural landscape due to the influence of mankind it is often considered that man was successful enough to change his surrounding within the boundaries provided by nature; but in the due course of time when that establishment collapses it is often ruled out that it was a manmade fallacy coupled by natural calamity that caused such a big disaster. This however, can be looked at from another angle that man has been taking the nature for granted and continued to establish control over it with an overview that he is abiding by the constraints given by nature but is he really abiding by the restrictions ? In other words since the manmade establishment stood for generations after generations it never evoked the thought of how nature is the only sole entity that bears complete control over mankind and how each time mother nature comes back to claim what was hers. To understand this notion, the Kedarnath Tragedy of the year 2013 can be studied. On 17th June 2013, the bursting of the Chorabari Lake above Kedarnath was considered the main reason behind the mass destruction. As the flood hit the Mandakini valley the lake water mixed with huge amounts of debris, silt and rocks swept away everything that stood its way causing destruction and bringing havoc to the lives of many. This incident can be first linked to the sheer criminal oversight of man while taking the decisions of construction in that delicate ecosystem. To meet the growing needs of pilgrims, uncontrolled and haphazard construction of intricate network of roads, hotels and other public amenities took place. The seismic fault lines of this earthquake prone area was not kept in mind while constructing roads. These tectonic fault lines are active and in many places have been cut in by roads as well as few of the roads were built along these fault lines. As a result tiny seismic movements along these fault lines tend to weaken the rocks under these roads making them vulnerable to cave-ins and slides. Secondly, drainage was neglected; buildings were built over old drains and streams, thereby blocking the natural pathway of rainwater. One of the major reasons behind such a heavy destruction was that houses were built on the west Stream of Mandakini River that had been dry for years. As a result when the river returned to its original course following the deluge, everything that stood its way were washed away with it. Another reason was construction on the river flood ways. In places along Alakananda/Ganga such as Karnaprayag and Rishikesh, constructions took place in the lower terraces which were a part of the flood ways. Sooner or later water would get to these places and cause life threatening destruction. Lastly roads were built on the debris of previous landslides since its expensive to remove the debris properly and construct paths higher up on the hill where the rocks are firmer. Therefore a huge amount of debris accumulated with flood water. All of these reasons clearly indicate how man has been ignoring all the boundaries aka restrictions set by nature and continued to do what would profit him the most. Even after such a tragic incident one would expect us

to learn from it but unfortunately that's not the case when it comes to creating possibilities in nature and profiting from it. The original road that led up to Kedarnath was built on the right bend of the Mandakini River. After the flood the road sustained heavy damages and a new 9km long road was constructed on the left bend of the river which is completely unscientific. There was a reason behind the construction of the previous road on the right bend since the left bend has a lot of loose glacier sediments which means, that it is prone to avalanche and landslides. Well here goes another restriction from nature that was not obeyed. However this is not it, the word 'Kedar' stands for swamp land and digging a 50 feet deep pit here will only invite another tragic incident considering that there are glaciers like Chorabari. This pit has been dug to construct a 'Samadhi sthal' (memorial site) for the 8th century seer Adi Shankaracharya. This pit if left open will fill up with snow every winter. In 2019, there was a 48feet of snow that accumulated here. This will only create unnecessary pressure on the already fragile ecosystem and it only means that we are creating another situation for another disaster similar to 2013.

In the Brazilian Amazon, a rich soil called terra preta do Indio is a product of long term human settlement. Prior to European contact the organic refuse of indigenous people was mixed with biochar from village fires and in-field burning, which led to sustainable environment with sustained fertility. Whether this was intentional or not it however made the environment more suitable for human growth. But in the due course of time this sustained environment had created heavy demand of the farmers. Farmers cultivating these lands were frustrated by the attacks of the pineapple mealy bug, which spread a wilt virus that curled healthy pineapple leaves and turned them bright red. Communities located in the flood plains of this area suffered from heavy losses due to the intense flooding that occurred in the year 2009. They had lost entire orchard of cacao and acai. In the following months they had to rely on government emergency loans and family support to survive. Even the farmers who had access to fertile terra preta soils still suffered from the problem of onslaught of weeds that colonised their fields. Many smallholder farmers find themselves in relentless battles against the attack of pests, fungi, weeds and disease that threaten their cultivation and consecutively their lives. Even though the farmers gain access to the agrochemicals and other modern methods to combat these threats, in reality these reinforcements only help them to win small battles.

Most recently in 2020, the world was hit with a deadly corona virus clamming millions of lives, the impact of which has continued to this current year 2021. For generations mankind can be blamed for chopping down trees for the sake of developments. It is now that we are realising the importance of these oxygen givers when millions of people worldwide are willing to sell their most priced assets for just one cylinder. It has come to the point where once it was us humans who enjoyed watching innocent tortured animals behind bars in zoo and now it is us who are compelled to lock ourselves in, while we watch the birds and other beasts take a sigh of relief and roam freely. The amount of plastic wastes that we generated claimed the lives of innumerable birds, turtles and other sea creatures that confused these plastic wastes as food. It can be rightfully said that we humans have wrapped our beloved planet with tones of plastic and we indeed have thousands of underwater and onshore photographs that proves this. Now when corona virus is clamming our lives our bodies are being

wrapped in plastic and getting disposed off due to fear of spreading this pestilence. Our doctors and nurses and any volunteer who are taking care of the infected are required to wear PPE kit. The PPE is polypropylene which is also a plastic material. It can be seen as how Mother Nature is subtly taking her revenge from mankind. From this vantage point of view, humankind has not come anywhere near to conquering nature.

These incidents only prove that how nature can be more powerful than our mere technology. Changes that took place post calamity show that we are only bracing ourselves to readjust with nature. But this also shows how the concept of neo determinism does not come into play since humans do not find a need to abide by the restrictions set by nature. He is only driven by possibilism but in the due course of time we only end up readjusting our thoughts, actions and development with nature as it decides to change its way.

CONCLUSION

The Anthropocene should remind us that although our technologies have expanded our ability to impact the earth, a broader array of lifeforms and forces are constantly thwarting our attempts to control nature. The Zika virus, a herbicide resistant superweed, a flesh eating microbe and the accumulating CO₂ in the atmosphere are all challenging our quests for planetary domination. It is true that a wide range of species has recently hinged on their ability to adjust to human presence, but still a slow creep of sea level rise and the onset of global climatic changes appear to be a greater battle for mankind that is yet to be fought. Anthropocene is rooted in a growing realization that we are in a state of ecological crisis that defies our control over nature. Therefore, through this study I have tried to establish that the theory of determinism is the only theory that rightfully explains the exact relation of man with nature and who owns a greater power over whom, since leveraging technology to tame nature has never really given us a fruitful outcome and nature always has a way of pushing back. Perhaps Anthropocene's greatest challenge will be forcing humankind to think beyond our selfish human needs and understand the ecological system that we are embedded in. It might just be that our entire survival is depending on it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Firstly, I would like to thank my professors for providing us with this wonderful opportunity. I was genuinely inspired by one of my geography professors who told us during one of her classes that experience and understanding gives rise to ideas as a sequence of thinking and beliefs. And because of such diversity in beliefs, there are diverse philosophical approaches to a topic which in turn broadens our horizon of understanding.

AIR QUALITY INDEX IN PRE-LOCKDOWN AND LOCKDOWN PERIOD IN KOLKATA – A Case Study

Sristi Choudhury, Bhagyashree Chakraborty, Sritama Chaudhury

Department of Geography

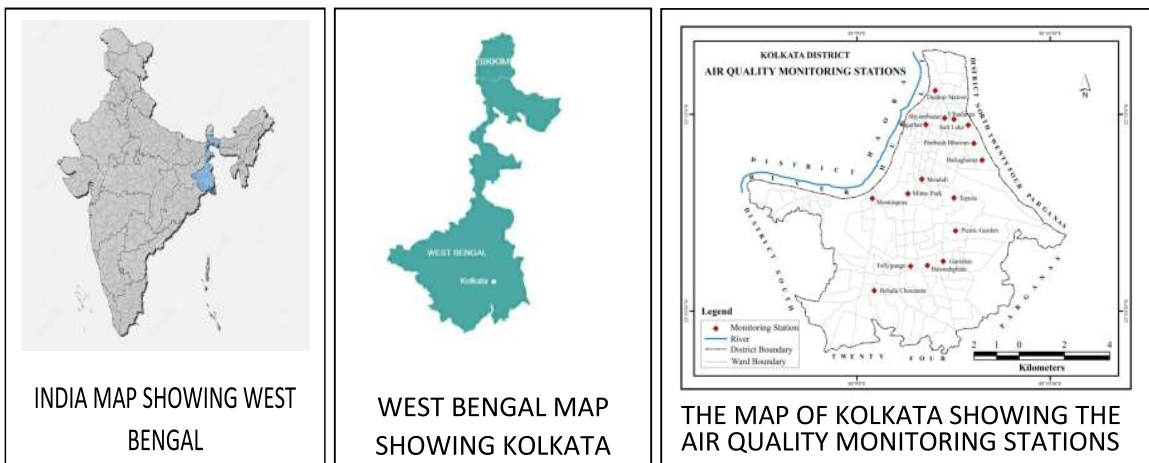
ABSTRACT

The fatal Novel Coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic and related lockdown diminished the pollution extent in prime megacities worldwide and Kolkata is no exception. The air pollution level of a city directly impacts the temperature particularly the land surface temperature. In this paper, the author studied the influence of lockdown on the status of air quality in Kolkata. The air quality index of the pre-lockdown and lockdown period of the city is estimated based on 9 pollutants such as $PM_{2.5}$, PM_{10} , NO_2 , O_3 , SO_2 . Satellite images of pre-lockdown and lockdown have been used to exhibit the alterations in air quality. A Significant impact on human health due to the reduction of emissions has also been elucidated. [1, 5, 8]

KEYWORDS : COVID-19, Lockdown, Air Quality Index, Kolkata, Pollutants

INTRODUCTION

In India, air pollutants have turn out to be a subject of excessive debate at various levels specifically due to the improved anthropogenic activities, e.g. speedy urbanization, populace growth, improved energy consumption, vehicular emission, and industrial emission. Kolkata ($22.5726^{\circ}N$, $88.3639^{\circ}E$) is considered to be the most polluted metropolis in India with the highest pollution levels



LOCATION MAP

among eight tropical Asian countries. The worldwide spread of COVID-19 prompted a state-wide lockdown in India on March 24, 2020, which was prolonged till May 3, 2020, to stop the spread of Coronavirus. In Kolkata, vehicular emissions, industrial centre and home sources generate 50 per cent, 48 per cent, and 2 per cent of overall pollution, respectively; whereas heavy industries contribute 56 per cent and small-scale businesses contribute 44 per cent of total industrial emission (Government of West Bengal 2019). The goal of this research is to assess the changes in air quality in terms of pollutant concentrations as a result of the implementation of the lockdown measures. [5, 10]

METHODOLOGY

Air quality index of Kolkata in five different stations and concentration of pollutants in the air during pre-lockdown and lockdown period were computed using pollutant data from Pollution Control Board. Satellite images have also been used to show a clear picture of the extent of changes in the atmosphere.

IMPACT ON AIR QUALITY :

Kolkata, located approximately 80km away from the border of Bangladesh has a rapidly growing population of 1.49crores as of 2020. In 2019, Kolkata belongs to the 61st most polluted city worldwide and 28th place out of all cities ranked in India. The main causes of pollution are vehicular emissions with highly dense and populated cities, pollutants arising from vehicular industry including black carbon and volatile organic compounds, use of coal for providing power to the numerous factories and industrial plants. The main pollutants are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), carbon dioxide (CO₂), sulphur dioxide (SO₂), particulate matter. [1,2]

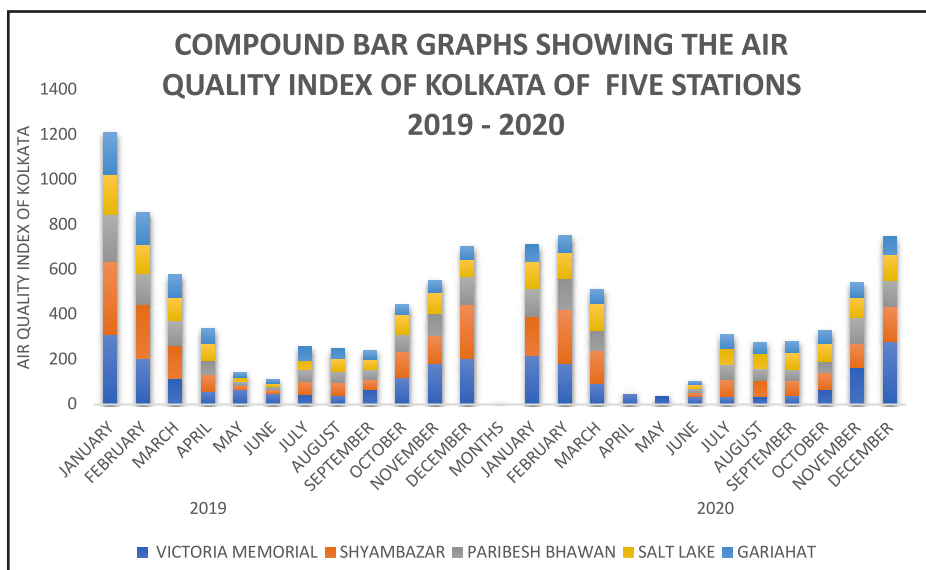
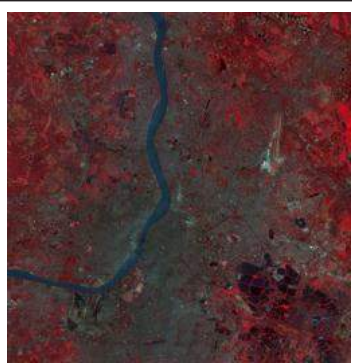


Figure 1- AQI OF SELECTED STATIONS OF KOLKATA



SATELLITE IMAGE OF KOLKATA
OF 4TH FEBRUARY, 2019

Ambient air pollution has become a major environmental cause and source of many diseases and deaths. Kolkata is the most polluted metropolis in India and suffers from the highest pollution levels among eight tropical Asian countries. The data of the ambient air quality of the monitoring stations have been obtained from the West Bengal Pollution Control Board. The assessment has been conducted against the recorded data for the period 2019 – 2020. Compound Bar graphs have also been constructed for analyzing the inter – comparability of the selected five stations. It is demonstrated that the overall air quality in 2020 was much improved after COVID-19 induced lockdown by the reduction in particulate matters. The reduction was looked at across the major traffic zones, industrial belts and coal mines.

Kolkata is mainly characterized by the residential areas, small-scale industries, and Cossipore thermal power station and is surrounded by Hooghly River. The location of Dhapa dumping ground and east Kolkata wetland impacts the ambient air quality in the eastern part as well as the small-scale industries, and high traffic junctions in the central Kolkata pollute the air. It has been noted that PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ are above the satisfactory level in the Pre-lockdown phase and can be considered as the main pollutants. But during the lockdown phase, the concentration has been reduced to a satisfactory level for all the pollutants except O₃. During the lockdown period the air quality has improved to the 'good' category.



SATELLITE IMAGE OF KOLKATA
OF 26TH MAY, 2020

Implementations of lockdown at this temporal and regional scale are not possible, but the situation has proved that the recovery of the environment is very rapid when human interventions are very less. [1]

The satellite images have been collected dated 4th February 2019 from Bhuvan Resourcesat LISSIII and the 2nd image is downloaded from LandViewer Satellite, Sentinel A2. It shows the overview of the city of Kolkata which shows more or less a medium clear sky on 4th February 2019. And on 26th May we can see that the sky is completely clear as emissions of the pollutants and dust were less in number due to the nationwide lockdown during that period of time.

The air quality index of pre lockdown and lockdown period of the city estimated based on 9 pollutants such as PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, NO₂, O₃, SO₂ etc. As we can see from the above diagram compared to the pre-lockdown trend the air pollution level has significantly decreased after the imposition of lockdown compared to the pre lockdown curve which is much steeper. And the decrease in the line graph during lockdown is mainly because most of the economic activities, industrial activities were shut down as a result of traffic congestion, emissions of the toxic gases and pollutants were low. [5, 6, 7]

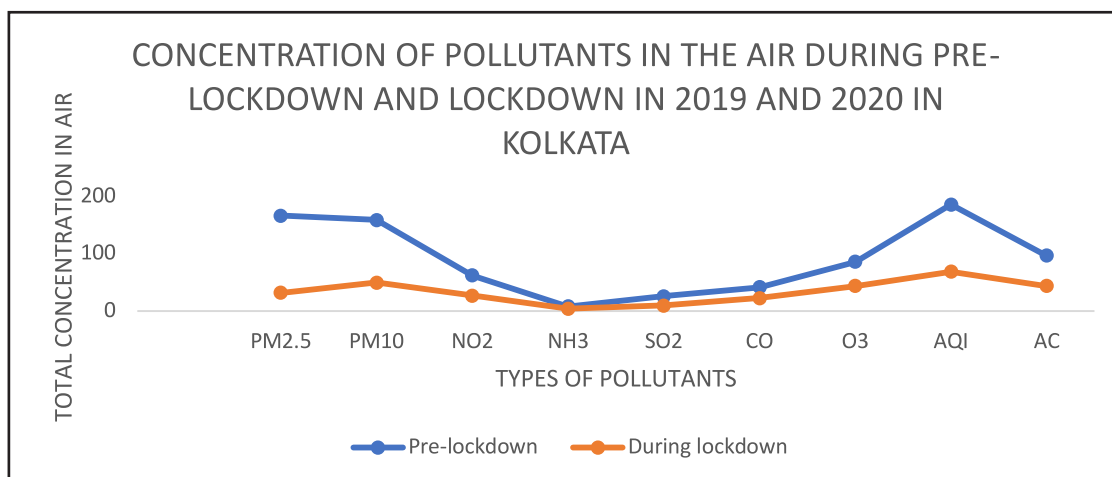


Figure 2 - TOTAL NUMBER OF POLLUTANTS CONCENTRATED IN THE AIR

IMPACT ON HUMAN HEALTH :

Most of the risks and hazards related to air pollution are quantifiable. Lung diseases were the top cause of deaths attributable to air pollution in India. Individually, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) was the cause of 32.5% of the total deaths due to air pollution. Heart diseases (29.2%), followed by stroke (16.2%), were the other two most prominent causes of deaths due to air pollution. During the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown have brought a sense of fear and anxiety around the world. There has been a substantial reduction in emissions from nitrogen oxides, which in return have helped in reducing the mortality burden from various diseases. Overall because of strict lockdown air quality has improved during the lockdown in response to reduced NO_2 and $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ emissions despite the increase in the O_3 levels, and since people commuted less during this period exposures to these toxic emissions and pollutants were less. As a result of which the severity of the overall health conditions improved during the lockdown period as compared to the previous years. [3, 9]

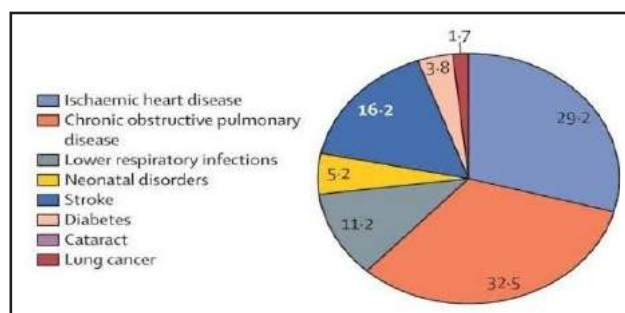


Figure 3 - TYPES OF HEATH ISSUES DUE TO BAD AIR QUALITY INDEX

CONCLUSION :

For all the Air Quality stations a sharp reduction has been noted from pre-lockdown to during lockdown. In the pre-lockdown tenure, the amount was above the level of AQI standards due to intensive industrial belts, high traffic congestions and emissions from thermal power plants. The complete lockdown has reduced the emissions of production units, vehicular emissions to a very minimal level. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the air quality has decreased a lot but it has affected the everyday life of humans and has hindered the worldwide economy.

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IDOL IMMERSION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE WATER BODIES IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

At the time of festivals, people immerse idols prepared by various materials which are hazardous to environment as it directly affects different water bodies. These idols are made up of Plaster of Paris, clay and cloth supported by small iron rods and are painted with different metal-based paints. On immersion of these idols in the water bodies, the water is contaminated with these metal paints and a change in chemical load in the water body is expected. When idols are immersed, these coloured chemicals dissolve slowly leading to significant changes in the water quality.

Idol immersion activities during festive occasions deteriorate water quality in urban lakes, water of River Ganga, mainly in the states of West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh (respectively, in upper course of Ganga and lower course of Ganga), considered as an anthropogenic activity. Water quality assessment is an important exercise to evaluate the nature and extent of negative impact of idol immersion on water quality parameters. The incidence of fish kills in urban lakes due to immersion or due to cloudy weather conditions or eutrophication etc. have been on rise in the recent years.^[3]

The results obtained reveal that river water becomes acidic after idol immersion. Due to these religious activities, adverse effect on the aquatic ecosystem is caused by the humans. No one can stop these religious activities but creating awareness among the people and society can reduce the pollution.

INTRODUCTION

A shocking percentage of India's water is filthy. According to the latest assessment by the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI), a government-run think tank, nearly 70 percent of all of the country's fresh water in the ground or on the surface is contaminated.

Traditionally, the idols were made of mud and painted with natural colours. But now many are made using Plaster of Paris (PoP) and coated with harmful paints containing heavy metals, all of which end up in the rivers on Dussehra day.

According to non-profit Toxics Link, approximately 100,000 idols are immersed in India's water bodies each year. With the rise in pollution levels in the rivers, a few states are now evolving ways to prevent or minimise idol immersion.

India is the country of rich cultural heritage and festivals. Peoples here religiously follow the rituals and enjoy festivity. Water bodies play the significant vital role in performing rituals. These rituals including taking holy dip in sacred rivers and idol immersion. Approximately, close to 10 lakh idols are immersed each year in India's water bodies every year after Durga puja and Ganesh Utsav.^[2]

LITERATURE REVIEW

- On 27th October, 2020, Kalyan Rudra, chairman of the West Bengal Pollution Control Board mentioned that Bengal tried out greener measures for idol immersion post Durga puja to help the water body stay cleaner and less polluted.
- The immersion of idols to mark the end of Durga Puja festival continued to pollute the Ganga this year in Kolkata, the epicentre of the annual event. Covid-19 distancing norms, National Green Tribunal directives are given by the West Bengal government.
- All were flouted. But among the thousands of neighbourhood groups that organise the festival, one stood out by opting for a 'green immersion'.
- To prevent water pollution in the Ganga, the West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBPCB) has decided not to allow idol immersion in Ganga.
- Even last year, the NMCG had directed the WBPCB to check idol immersion in the Ganga. However, the directive was not followed.
- This year, the administration has issued specific guidelines to control pollution in Ganga.
- The plan is to keep the synthetic liner so that the waste does not cause pollution in the water.^[1]



THE RIVER AFTER FESTIVE SEASON ENDS

STUDY AREA

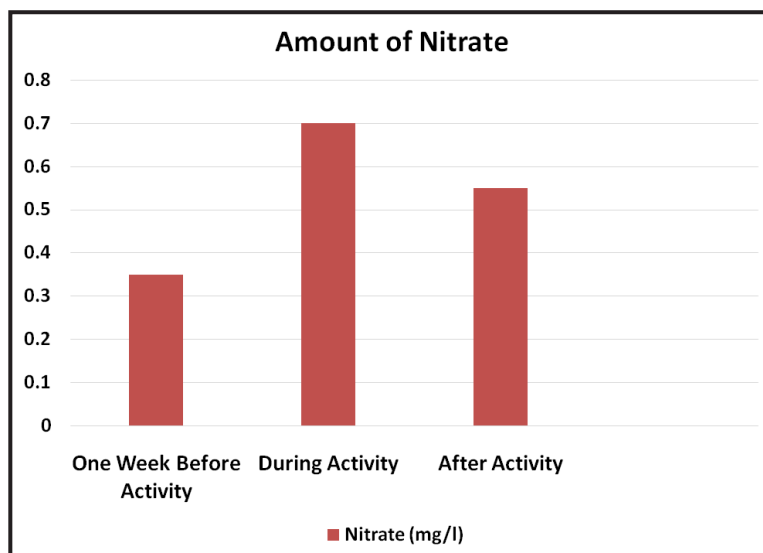
Pollution from industrial wastes is a worldwide problem but during festive seasons, an additional load is added due to the habit of idol immersions in the holy water of River Ganga, mainly in the states of West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh (respectively, in upper course of Ganga and lower course of Ganga). The harmful chemicals released from the idols increased the chances of poisoning the people who were dependant on Ganga as their major source of water. The paints and the plastic materials don't dissolve in the water and is dangerous where the river carries and deposits it throughout its course.

IMPACT ON WATER QUALITY

A 1993-95, a study by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)— said that every year approximately 15000 idols are immersed in the river water, resulting in 16.8 tonnes of varnish, garjan oil and 32 tonnes of colours are also been dumped into the river. These colours contain a huge doze of heavy metalslike manganese, lead, mercury and chromium which effecting both the biotic and abiotic lives of river. It is found that after festive season ends, every year oil and grease in the river increased by 0.99 milligram per litre (mg/l) and the concentration of heavy metals increased by 0.104 mg/l. ^[4]

The following data is from the year 2020 of before and after idol immersion :

PARAMETER	One week before activity	During activity	After activity
NITRATE IN (mg/l)	0.35	0.7	0.55



(Based on 2020 data)

According to the recent reports of the SPCB, the dissolved oxygen (DO) level at Bithoor is 7.6 mg per litre which decreases to 6.3 mg per litre at Jajmau. The acceptable level of DO for a drinking water reservoir is 4 mg per litre. The report also indicated that immersion of a large number of idols during Ganesh Chaturthi had already affected the water quality that increased the amount of pollution.



IMMERSION OF GODDESS DURGA IDOL IN THE LOWER PART OF GANGA RIVER

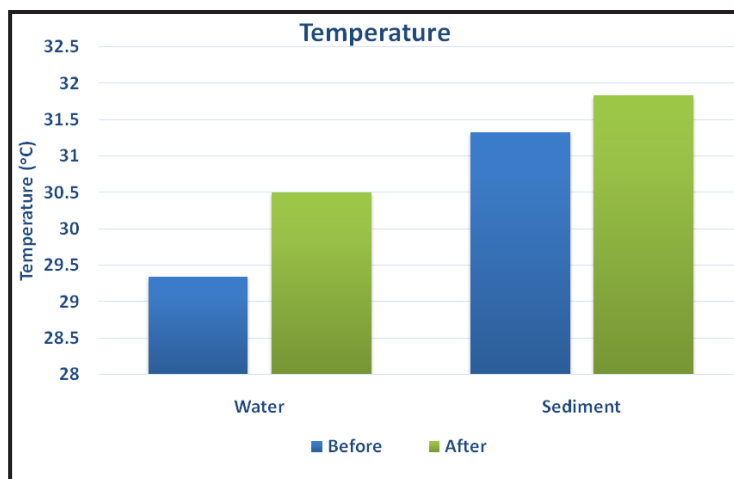


IMMERSION OF GANESH IDOL AFTER GANESH CHATHURTI

The results obtained by Pb analysis of water samples in Babughat immersion point of Ganga River in Kolkata, India, before, during and after idol immersion :

PARAMETER	Pre-immersion Phase	Immersion Phase	Post-immersion Phase
Lead (Pb) in (mg/l)	0.41 ± 0.11	1.14 ± 0.27	0.76 ± 0.16

It is clearly been shown that during the immersion period the Pb level of water is highest round the whole year, along with the temperature of the water also rises.



(Based on 2020 data)

The data reveals that the quality of water in the Ganga River is grossly diminished during the immersion of idols. The concentration of Pb, a potentially hazardous heavy metal is increased manifold in the water due to idol immersion. Such activities add more toxic products to an already polluted water body due to various industrial wastes. This practice, if continued over a long time, may lead to pollution of the reservoir.

PREVENTION AND MEASURES TAKEN

- Environmentalists and river experts have been campaigning against these idol immersions for over a decade now. Judicial interventions in the past, however, have not yielded the desired result. Every year, after Ganesh Chaturthi, Durga Puja and Kali Puja, the biological oxygen demand (BOD) levels in rivers increase dramatically.
- The Allahabad High Court had banned immersion of idols in the Ganga and Yamuna rivers in Uttar Pradesh. The high court bench of Justice Ashok Bhushan and Justice Arun Tandon ordered a blanket ban on immersion of idols in the rivers. It also dismissed the plea of the state government that the idols would be immersed and then taken out immediately. The order was pronounced during the hearing of a petition of environmental activist, Sudhanshu Srivastava, to check the rising pollution levels in the Ganga.^[4]

General Guidelines for idol immersion –

- 1) Idol should be made from natural materials as described in the holy scriptures. Use of traditional clay for idol making rather than baked clay, Plaster of Paris etc. may be encouraged, allowed and promoted.
- 2) Painting of idols should be discouraged. In case idols are to be painted, water soluble and nontoxic natural dyes should be used. Use of toxic and non-biodegradable chemical dyes for painting idols should be strictly prohibited.
- 3) Public should be educated on ill effects of immersion in the holy water bodies through mass awareness programme.

CONCLUSION

Due to historical, geographical, religious, political, and socio-cultural reasons, India has a unique place in the world. Pollution-causing activities have caused severe changes in aquatic environments over the last few decades. So, it is high time to take the measures of the government seriously, and if the co-operation by the citizens continues to go hand in hand, the results will be for everyone to see. Even regions should emulate the policies adopted to revive the rivers. A common concern for the degrading water quality index of the river resulted in some swift actions from the citizens as well as those who became more aware and conscious.

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RESISTANCE : VIEWING THROUGH THE JEWISH CASE-STUDY (HOLOCAUST)

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Abstract

The notion of resistance is multifaceted in myriad of ways. The resistance theories of the recent decades were born in an historical conjuncture that has passed, at least some of the respects in which they were part of a broader concern with power and power relations remain at the center of current academic debates. In this paper, I had attempted to give an example of the notion of cultural resistance through a case study on the Jewish Resistance by drawing upon Foucauldian notions on power and resistance. Misconceptions of resistance prevails often connecting Resistance to anti-social attitudes. Foucault fundamentally changed the view of power, and thus logically, resistance.

Key Words – Resistance, power, authority, culture

Introduction

Resistance has plural concepts and has copious definitions. Resistance studies is explicitly discussed, theorized which does incorporate a form of “disguised resistance” or “critical resistance” to some extent. In this essay, I am attempting to reanalyze the notions of resistance in a historical outline and viewing the same concept by placing it within a case study.

The notion of resistance is multifaceted in myriad of ways. The resistance theories of the recent decades were born in an historical conjuncture that has passed, at least some of the respects in which they were part of a broader concern with power and power relations remain at the Centre of current academic debates. Here, then, the invocation of Michel Foucault has moved away from the fixed dichotomies between “dominant” and “subaltern” classes and the spaces of freedom in which unfettered “resistance” may be practiced towards a more complex account in which “resistance” can be recognized but its effects on power relations more subtly diagnosed.

The first major work on Resistance studies is to be found in James Scott's '*The Weapons of the Weak*'. Scott emphasized on the notion of class resistance. Human thoughts are oblique and multi-angled. Resistance is about redefining norms of power structures or denying certain dichotomies. Scott divides resistance into two forms (public and disguised) which corresponds to three forms of domination (material, status and ideological), resulting in six types of resistance. Resistance exist in the public form as public declared resistance (open revolts, petitions, demonstrations, land invasions, etc.) against material domination; assertion of worth or desecration of status symbols against status domination; or, counter ideologies against ideological domination per say.

Cultural resistance, then, might be described as a satisfying bellow of rage against the darkness while we are looking for the matches. James Scott tied up the modernist ideas of powerful resistant agency with postmodern fragmented individual power into the concept of *infra politics*. Resistance is not only a response to power, power might as well be a response to resistance, a response both to its construction of new social structures which negates power logics and a counter-response to the resistance against power. In a fundamental sense power and resistance need each other to develop and expand. Foucault did a famous genealogy of power in which he traced the historical relatives of contemporary techniques of power. Through it he showed how the contemporary configurations of power, common sense and subjectivity was not natural or given but historical and contingent (thus possible to challenge, undermine and change).

The Jewish Resistance : A Discussion

During the Holocaust, Jewish resistance came in many forms. In some cases, the resistance was organized and obvious, such as the armed struggles carried out in ghettos, camps, and by Partisan units. In other cases, individuals resisted the Nazis' plan to dehumanize the Jews in a multiplicity of minor acts, such as keeping themselves clean in the unsanitary conditions in the concentration camps, or by making sure to pray despite the threat of being shot if discovered. Within the ghettos and camps, non-armed resistance against the Nazis was widespread and part of everyday life. Jews resisted the Nazis' unbearable economic and social restrictions in order to survive through smuggling food, clothing and medicine into the ghettos and camps to preserve their physical strength. They founded Jewish newspapers, schools, theaters, and orchestras to sustain their spiritual and mental strength. The cultural and communal aspects of the ghettos and camps helped the Jews maintain their dignity despite the Nazis' systematic efforts to dehumanize them. These aspects also helped boost their morale in the face of uncertainty and death. The Jews called this attempt to maintain their humanity "Kiddush ha-Hayyim," meaning "Sanctification of Life."

Reproductive choices were also viewed as forms of resistance to the Nazi genocide as well. Expectant mothers were singled out and were forced to follow the path of abortion. The rabbis in the Nazi camps often had to permit the non-termination of pregnancy as a mode of resistance. Resistance meant not merely an act of survival but also involve conscious efforts to sustain the life of the community. The birth of the Jewish child signaled the future of the Jewish population. Childbearing was viewed as acts of defiance. As the Nazis controlled the Jewish right to survive, Jewish women lost control over their fertility and were usually in no position to prevent, accept or terminate pregnancies. Acts of unarmed resistance predominated, as Jewish ghetto activists did not usually take the risk of armed resistance against overpowering military force until the last days and weeks before the destruction of the ghetto. The Right-Wing Betar party (Jewish Revisionists), which included former Polish army officers, also participated in ghetto resistance. Activists gathered the news from BBC or Soviet broadcasts on hidden radios, as possession of receivers was illegal. Jewish resistance was most widespread in German-occupied territories of eastern Poland,

Lithuania, and Belorussia. The largest organizations were based in Kovno, Vilna, Minsk, and Bialystok. The atmosphere of total terror and isolation in the camps as well as the chronic starvation of most prisoners severely inhibited the will of the prisoners and the possibilities of resistance. Barbed and high voltage electrical wires and guard towers left little hope of escape.

The daily routine in the larger camps was brutally regimented. It included an elaborate system of harsh punishments for the slightest infractions, close surveillance, and endless roll calls for counting prisoners. Those who attempted to resist or escape were killed when caught. All reason opposed physical resistance within the camps. Yet, revolts took place in a number of camps, including Treblinka, Sobibor and Auschwitz-Birkenau. Before Auschwitz was fitted with gas chambers for the systematic murder of Jews in late 1941, it served as a concentration camp primarily for Polish prisoners, including army officers who served as leaders of the first resistance groups. Spiritual resistance refers to attempts by individuals to maintain their humanity and personal integrity in the face of Nazi attempts to dehumanize and degrade them. Compared with other countries, resistance activities in Nazi Germany were limited, lacking in broad support, and largely ineffective. A unified resistance movement never existed. Hitler's foreign policy successes in the mid-1930s and the drop in unemployment, trumpeted by an effective propaganda machine, helped forge widespread popular support for the regime. Feelings of patriotism and nationalism also made it difficult for the majority of Germans to oppose Nazi policies.

Conclusion

In order to conclude, I would thereby refer to a genealogy of resistance being similar to a genealogy of power in some sense and in other different. In a similar way a genealogy of resistance needs to demonstrate structural continuity as well as innovation. One important difference is that the archives of power techniques (which were so important for the research of Foucault) are a lot more extensive than the archives of resistance techniques. The rebellions, mutinies or arsons on power structures are documented by the winners, mostly by governments, landlords, priests or other representatives of power if they are documented at all. It becomes quite difficult in the case of subaltern studies where hidden forms of resistance had been adhered to. The framing of resistance discourses is interesting to study but it is also in itself a hindrance in empirical investigations. Postmodernism adds 'disruptions' to the almost comforting possibilities for powerful resistance offered by the modernist paradigm. Postmodernists view power and resistance, not necessarily as oppositional, but rather as a complex of diverse, fragmented and transitory relationships between individuals. Resistance is an integral part of power relationships, of domination, subjugation and as such may be viewed from different ideological viewpoints. It is this idea of the hidden transcript that characterizes much of Cultural Resistance, and it is the transition from the hidden to the public transcript that holds the key to meaningful political impact.

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CONTEXTUALISING HISTORICAL NARRATIVES OF INDIAN MIGRATION TO MYANMAR

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ABSTRACT

Indian trading activities coupled with questions of settlement throughout Asian countries are replete in historical sources since time immemorial. Before and during the Indian freedom struggle, particularly from nineteenth century to early twentieth century, many Indians migrated to Burma (presently Myanmar) for varied reasons. The three successive Anglo-Burmese War ushered in prospective cultural, social and political ties between the two countries. This cross-border migration politics involved questions of identity which is still relevant in the current political and historical context. This paper focuses on the migration of Indians to erstwhile Burma and looking into the interplay of historical narratives and personal accounts of the immigrants collected through field work.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE : OVERVIEW

In order to understand the nature of migration to Burma, one has to look back at the patterns of migration during the British period. This would set a perfect context to construct the identity concerns of the migrants and also validate the findings. There were consequently three successive waves during the British period which facilitated the movement of the people across the border. The first Anglo-Burmese War fought during 1824-25 was the initial phase of development in Burma, during which British government annexed Rakhine and Tanithiya region. This was mostly in order to access the developing opportunities at the colony. The Second Anglo Burmese War fought in 1852 led to the annexation of Lower Burma, followed by rise in Indian immigration. Indians were required to serve for administrative and military purposes.¹ This flow also proved symbolic to initiate settlement with an agro-ecological perspective. The Third Anglo Burmese War consequently led to the annexation of Upper Burma.² Thus, these two war fought in successive periods transformed the deltaic modelling from a sparsely populated land to becoming the core of world's rice production. Moreover, the opening of Suez Canal unfolded the scope for the Western world to get acquire Burmese variety of rice. People in different periods migrated to access the emanating opportunities of distinct sorts at the behest of colonial rule.

MIGRATORY PATTERNS AND SOCIO-CULTURAL MILEU

As discussed in the preceding section, there were few major factors which are essential

¹ See Nalini Ranjan Chakravarti, *The Indian Minority in Burma : Rise and Decline of an Immigrant Community* (London : Oxford University Press, 1971)

² Ibid., 9

implications to understand the nature of the movement of people from one country to another. Studies on migration have analysed the various aspects which are seemingly analogous to migration – most importantly how migration affects geographical spaces and how it brings about transformation of in social structures.³ Migration involves questions of identity transformation of immigrants, more so for the Indian Diaspora which moved across the country.

The Second Anglo Burmese War created prospects for agricultural growth which witnessed a major wave of immigration. Trade also prospered along with systematic expansion of agriculture. Initially it was noticed that the labour needs were mostly met by migrant labours from North Burma, however with the ever expanding demand of rice cultivation, this existing labour proved minuscule.⁴ Meanwhile, the Labour Act was passed in 1870 when Recruiting Agents were appointed in India and subsidies were given to shipping companies to transport Indian immigrants to Burma. This guaranteed the stimulating efforts of the British officials, considering Burma in the context of an experimental economic stigma, they sought for Indian cheap labour to multiply potential returns. In 1885, the British conquered the entirety of Burma which led to exponential growth in Indian immigration to Burma.

A continuous effort on the part of the British government in view to promote cheap labor in Burma could be seen with the inauguration of steamer services which operated weekly/fortnightly from Coromandal coast for smooth transition of the labor force.⁵ This validates for the migration of Tamils particularly the *Chettiars* who had been to Burma. Likewise the shipping companies also reduced the fares to regulate the increased traffic. Rangoon shows the highest proportion of Indian migrants.⁶ The colonial rule in Burma established closer historical links with Bengal in terms of political, economic, commercial reasons. The route from Chittagong to Akyab and parts of Arakanwell connected through road established promising link for emigration. According to the 1901 Census, Akyab has the highest figure, Indians (for the most part Bengalis) in each 10,000 of the population.⁷ The personal accounts of Bengalis collected through filed work extensively describes their ancestors having travelled from parts of Chittagong, Dhaka and Noakhali. An array of Indian professionals including moneylenders, coolies, administrators, military, security forces, educationist and the likes dominated British Burma. It is important to analyse the ethnic ties of the Indian migrants who moved to Burma, their place of origin and their experiences in a foreign land, most particularly how they affected the social and economic structures of the country.

³ <http://egyankosh.ac.in/handle/123456789/27267>, 135

⁴ Ritesh Kumar Jaiswal, *Indian Labour Emigration to Burma (1880-1900) : Rethinking Indian Migratory Patterns*, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 2014 Vol 75 : 911

⁵ *Emigration to Burma*, R & A Department, Emigration Branch, Pros. No. 18-9 F. No. 13, Feb 1882 NAI

⁶ C.C. Lowis, *Census of India 1901, Volume XII Burma part 1*, (Rangoon : Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, Burma, 1902), pp- 26

⁷ Ibid.

The archival data classifies the Indian migrants broadly on ethnic affiliations as mostly – Bengalis, Chittagonian, Hindustani, Oriya, Tamil, Telegu and others.⁸ Whilst there has been seasonal nature of immigration mostly to secure fortune, however some travelled with the motive to permanently settle in the distant land. All communities played a substantial role in shaping the social structure of Burma. In this regard, I would look into the various aspects which could be well analyzed from the documentation during field work. Suprakash Chowdhury, one of the respondent narrates the circumstances which led to the migration of his family from Kolkata. His family moved after independence while his paternal and maternal grandparents were already settled in Burma. Himself being a teacher (Late Sushanta Bikash Chowdhury), there was a strong desire in his dad guided by a philosophical urge to apply the knowledge in beneficial ways and 'build the nation'.⁹ His dad was a graduate at City College, Calcutta and travelled to Burma as a school teacher at Bengal Academy. There was a yearning to promote Bengali language. When Mr. Suprakash Chaudhury was born, his dad took a job at Vivekananda institution and there was a keen interest to expand the activities of Bengali Association, which was a center where Bengali culture thrived in Burma.

Thus, India and Burma both aimed to provide literacy to the middle-class, particularly in terms of higher education. One can encounter a significant representation of "Indian" lineage actualized through the promotion of vernacular language amidst local variant. Various similar instances has been revealed during field work in Myanmar as well. In 1894, Brajesh Kumar Verma, presently resident of Myanmar, recalls how his great grand-father first came in 1894 from *Ara Zilla* as a field laborer who primarily grew sugar and paddy.¹⁰ However, having being exposed to modern facilities of education, he completed his bachelors in Mathematics from Arts and Science University, Yangon. He informs us "how there has been an enthusiasm on part of the Hindi speaking people to keep the native language in use actualized through constant production of literature in an organization named '*Sahitya Sammelan Prayag*', Rangoon".¹¹ A strong commitment towards the preservation of vernacular literature is also seen through the presence of bodies like Myanmar Hindi Literary Society, where Mr. Verma is himself the General Secretary. Though, the colonial rule carefully neglected the age-old links that existed for centuries between India and Burma, it resonated within the ebb and flow of history. More so, a peculiar feature has been the urge of the people to create an intermediate space within the mainstream world, set amidst a perpetual tension between a distant cultural and linguistic world. Besides, the unstable administrative structures and political uncertainties in the mid-nineteenth-century prompted British administrators to try to centralise the bureaucracies of Bengal

⁸ J. J. Bennison, *Census Report Burma 1931, Volume XI Burma Part 1-Report*, (Rangoon, Office of the Supdt, Government Printing and Stationery, Burma 1933), 62

⁹ Suprakash Chaudhury, Interviewed at Jadavpur (Kolkata), October 31, 2019 (All interviews have been conducted for UGC UPE II Project – "Indo-Myanmar Relation : Migration, Diaspora and Cultural Memories")

¹⁰ Brajesh Verma, Interviewed at Yangon, Myanmar, March 2, 2020

¹¹ Ibid.

and Burma; thus Judson College and Rangoon College were both affiliated with Calcutta University.¹² This fact has been reinstated by the respondents as well. Another respondent also informed that his higher education destinations has been India, receiving a Master 's and Doctorate in Philosophy Degree from Bombay University.¹³

Meanwhile, the world order started changing rapidly. The Great Depression of the 1930s coupled with the economic consequences engendered social issues like the spawning of localized sectarian violence and further anti-Indian riots. Race riots took place between Indians and Burmese, while a manifesto came into effect which in May 30, 1930 proposed boycott of Indian shops. There were such riots which warped the social fabric of the Rangoon city meanwhile during 1938. "For the first time in the 1930s , significant number of Indians left Burma for political reasons contributing to the 10 percent decline registered between the 1931 and 1941 census".¹⁴ Burma got administratively separated from India as the Government of Burma Act came into force on 1st April, 1937. This instability prompted a brief repatriation of the *Chettians*, particularly asset they held to Madras during late 1930s.

This paper combines the narratives of repatriates and Diaspora, coalesced with historical facts to understand their socio-economic roles. The Bengalis often were transported overseas via Calcutta port and a section travelled using the inland route or Chittangong port. The ones who came from Calcutta comprised of educated men mostly deployed in a subordinate capacity in railways or local fund service, or in mercantile offices as clerks and some were even shopkeepers and traders.¹⁵ One of the respondents Rina Nag, informed that her father served as an engineer in a British engineering company, Clark and Grey and also later worked in the embassy performing various ministerial duties.¹⁶ The Indian freedom struggle also played a role in generating massive migration of Indians, particularly local Bengali men to Burma, an aspect covered less in existing literature on migration. The international affairs increasingly contributed to a pattern of migration though inherently political. Japan's occupation of Burma in 1942 induced conditions for the great exodus of Indian communities to Burma. Subhash Chandra Bose shifted the headquarters of the 'Provisional Government of Free India' and the Indian National Army from Singapore to Rangoon.¹⁷ This stimulated the need for recruiting Indian men for voluntary services in the national struggle and subsequently INA bank was also set up to raise donations from the Indian community.

¹² Devleena Ghosh, Burma–Bengal Crossings : IntercolonialConnections in Pre-Independence India, Asian Studies Review, 40:2, 156-172, 2016 :159

¹³ Ram Niwas, Interviewed in Yangon ,Myanmar, March 2, 2020

¹⁴ Roman David and Ian Holiday ; Liberalism and Democracy in Myanmar,(London : Oxford University Press, 2018),30

¹⁵ Ritesh Kumar Jaiswal, Indian Labour Emigration To Burma (1880-1900) : Rethinking Indian Migratory Patterns , Proceedings of the Indian History Congress ,2014 Vol 75: 913

¹⁶ Rina Nag , Interviewed atTollygunj (Kolkata), October 22 ,2019

¹⁷ Rajiv Bhatia, India-Myanmar Relations – Changing Contours(India : Routledge ,2015), 76

The early twentieth century witnessed around 1,00,000 such people arriving Burma from India engaged in a multiple activities like running a business, working in paddy cultivation, staffing in railways and custom offices, trading in rice and sugar mills, dealing in timber and so on. The Tamil community, particularly the *Chettiars* from South India, had migrated during this phase and has been well documented in the scholarship. The role of the *Chettiars* have often been undermined through history as predacious ‘moneylenders’ but they cannot be brought down under this strict categorization of the term.¹⁸ Their role was many layered which nonetheless contributed to Burma’s economic welfare, connected particularly with the country’s advancement in agriculture. They provided capital to Burmese cultivators through much of the colonial period charging minimum interest rates compared to their indigenous counterparts.¹⁹ Though they tried to avoid contestation with local power structure, they were eventually expelled from Burma losing land and property as British rule underwent several changes. “Majority of Tamils migrated from Madras Presidency like Ramnad and Tanjore. The middle class Tamils were employed in Government clerical works and mercantile offices. The lower middle as well as the lower classes were involved in the rice mills and as agricultural workers. *Chettiars* came from Chettinad in Madras.”²⁰ N. Marimuthu recalls that his grandparents had migrated during the colonial era, mostly to serve as labor in agricultural field. Tamils as a community were engaged in rubber plantation and worked in rice fields. Quite with an unperturbed enthusiasm, he informs us about the role played by the Tamil Chettiyars. “The Chettiars owned the lands and allowed Tamil people to work there at the onset of British rule. However, after Second World War, their numbers had declined as presumably some left.”²¹ This phenomenon which he talks about can be set in context of the historical event of implementation of Burma Land and Revenue Act of 1876 which brought about significant changes. The final Anglo-Burmese War saw the creation of ‘peasant proprietors’ which would be the basis for generating land revenue to keep the state apparatus functioning. Under the Burma Land Act, the occupiers of land acquired ownership of land via their occupation and payment of twelve successive years of land revenue on it.²² By 1880 the Chettiyars had fanned out through Burma and by the end of the century they had become by far ‘the most important factor in the agricultural credit structure of Lower Burma.’²³ It was precisely through the help of this class, which shouldn’t be treated mutually exclusive, that aided the functioning of the intermediary Maisteries and revived the flow of capital and labor to the colonies. While most respondents informs us that their grandparents travelled mostly to work in the fields, one also shares a story of discomfort when his grandparents reached Myanmar in search of work stemming from food scarcity in the native land. Besides the capital networking system, the *Nattukottai Chettiyars* played

¹⁸ Sean Turnell, *The Chettiars in Burma*, JEL Classification: Q14, O16, O17, N25 : 2

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Jaiswal, *Indian Labour Emigration To Burma*, 913

²¹ N. Marimuthu, Interview at Yangon, Myanmar, dated March 3, 2020

²² Turnell, *The Chettiars in Burma*, p -4

²³ Ibid., 6

contentious roles. M. A. Vallaswami Vellar, presently based in Kumayut Township Myanmar, vividly remembers about his grandfather's arrival to Rangoon dates back to the early twentieth century, probably in the 1920s. "*The Nattukottai Chettiars* invited my grandfather to look after the temple which was situated in Moulmein, around Thaton area. Narayana Chettiar who was the then Chairman of the Congress party invited my grandfather to come here".²⁴ The Indian labors particularly the ones from South India formed an important part of the Burmese socio-economic milieu. There was a huge flow of population which has been enumerated well in the Census Report of 1931. Another section, originally hails from regions of Andhra Pradesh region belonging to Telegu community, could also be identified as repatriates from Burma but are now distinctly settled in the fringes of Kolkata and Andhra belt. N. Ramesh, a first generation Burmese returnee, recollects that his father travelled from Burma in the year 1942 working in the State Bank of India, Rangoon branch in a clerical post. However, the latter was transferred and hence resettled back to India. Though Yaramasetty Munna²⁵ hardly remembers of the circumstances that led to his grand-parents migration to Burma, he vividly narrates his father's occupation in the police force. In this regards, he describes his part of the city where he stayed. They lived in a quarter provided in lieu of his father's job. It was a police camp of sorts, houses built with wood, typically with fence panels of timber.²⁶

IN CONCLUSION

Thus, it can be analysed that the Indian overseas migration to Burma were generated under varying circumstances over the past decades. There were regional disparities considering the number of migrants travelling, though commuting was predominantly labor oriented, though couldn't be reduced to fixed categories of work and labor. In addition, female migration was also a key factor, which should not be undermined of which certain anecdotes had been provided in the preceding pages. However, as we could understand from the narratives of the migrants and the Diaspora, did not completely alienate themselves from the culture of their 'homeland'. Gradually there evolved set of subcultures fashioned with a distinct form of identity and consciousness in a contrasting social set-up.

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²⁴ M.A. Vallaswami Vellar, Interview at Yangon, Myanmar, March 03, 2020 at Myanmar

²⁵ Yaramasetty Munna, Telephonic Interview in Kolkata, March 17, 2020

²⁶ Ibid

BOOK REVIEW : "CONQUEST AND COMMUNITY – THE AFTERLIFE OF WARRIOR SAINT GHAZI MIYAN" – SHAHID AMIN

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In *Conquest and Community –The Afterlife of Warrior Saint Ghazi Miyan*, Shahid Amin enumerates the story of warrior saint Ghazi Miyan and his predominance in the Gangetic plain. With the help of folklore, archival, textual material in different languages, Shahid Amin narrates the story of a Muslim warrior saint or „ghazi ” called Salar Masud, who became a cult figure in U.P. Alleged to be the nephew of Mahmud of Ghazni, the hagiographical accounts of the seventeenth century portray him as a legendary figure martyred in a holy war against the infidels at Bahraich in Northern Uttar Pradesh. Though strikingly absent from the contemporary chronicles about Ghazni, his magnificent charisma becomes an important subject in hagiographies and ballads from seventeenth century onwards.

However at the turn of the thirteenth century, many rulers from the Sultanate dynasty were drawn to the famous shrine of Bahraich. It finds mention in the writing of Amir Khusrao. Sultan Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq is said to have paid a visit to the Bahraich shrine. The shrine attracted pilgrims, transcending sects, from all over North India. Akbar was said to have made a land grant for the upkeepment of the Bahraich shrine. An annual festival is held at Bahraich to commemorate the wedding of young Salar Masud Ghazi which was also the day he achieved martyrdom.

The first part of the book deals with the 'life' of Salar Masud Ghazi as portrayed in the hagiographies. Abdur Rahman Chishti's *Mirat-i-Masudi*, the hagiography of Ghazi Miyan compiled in the 17th century distinctly recounts the brilliant career of Salar Masud Ghazi. Shahid Amin narrates the plot of the *Mirat* discussing the life of Salar Masud Ghazi, the nephew of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, born in Ajmer. It also talks about the magnificent transformation of the young general Masud into a religious and devout 'Ghazi', disseminating Islam and ultimately achieving martyrdom at Bahraich, in a battle with the 'unbelievers'.¹ The other narratives focussing on Salar Masud, particularly the Urdu translation of the *Mirat-i-Masudi* accentuate the accounts of „conquest ”, glorifying the valorous character of Ghazi Miyan. Hussain's Urdu *Mirat* was a gratuitously ungenerous account of 'Hindu defeat' at the hands of the forces of Islam in India.²

The second part talks about the miracles associated with the cult of Ghazi Miyan. The hagiography commemorating the 'karamat' of Ghazi Miyan. These include, firstly, the male child bestowed to a barren woman with the intercession of Ghazi Miyan. The second miracle was

¹ Amin, Shahid, *Conquest and Community –The Afterlife of Warrior Saint Ghazi Miyan*, Orient Blackswan 2015, pp-26

² Ibid, pp-42-43

associated with the blind girl whose immense devotion to the saint made her construct a 'mazar' and cupola over the dome of the warrior saint. The ballads of Dafali narrates the story of the barren woman, Jaswa, who is excommunicated by her in-laws on her inability to give birth to a male child. Ghazi Miyan's birth reverberates feminine concerns about conception and bareness. Mamula runs from one shrine to another in a desire to beget a male child. She takes resort at the dargah of Ajmer but is turned down and instead diverted to seek the blessings of ShahMadar. Madar blesses Mamula but places certain conditions for her fondness of a son. As Mamula defies the order, Ahircowherdsfortell the martyrdom for her embryonic son on the day of his marriage. The central motif in the ballads is the portrayal of ghazi as a groom, who leaves for marriage and achieves martyrdom on the eve of marriage.

There is also another narrative associated with the birth/martyrdom sequence of Ghazi Miyan's life. (Pp-73) The ballads describe in detail the customary rituals associated with ghazis marriage followed by Hindus and Muslims alike. These events cuts across caste and sectarian lines. Another ballad puts it how Ghazi Miyan responds to the cries of Jaswa to save the cows on the day of his marriage, from the arrogant Sohal Deo. Despite his mother's request, Ghazi prepares himself for a war. Ghazi accepts martyrdom for the cause of 'save the cows'. The narrative of conquest has not been consigned to oblivion but they have been refashioned in the ballads and lores to suit the mundane concerns and entail the nature of reverence and the historical process of 'syncretism' of the Ghazi Miyan cult.

The third part of the book explores the routinized aspect of faith : the worship of 'ghazi' at domestic altars, the veneration of the cult and its propagation. Amin also talks about the various groups who worshipped the cult. Ghazi cult is venerated by multi-religious devotees, particularly low caste Hindus and Muslims. The Bahraich Fair has been explicitly studied by Amin. In the annual pilgrimage to the shrine, Amin records the ballads of Dafali, Zainullah and Bashir. Such ballads sings the tales of ghazi and celebrates his iconoclasm. The Dafalis become guides to Hindu devotees seeking boon from Ghazi Miyan since they have the knowledge of Islamic rites. The shrine of Ghazi Miyan was the centre of attraction for the devotees who made significant contributions during their visit. There was a customary display of lances and flags by pilgrims who visited the 'mela' site. Besides the Bahraich shrine, there are number of other sites that memorialized the commanders of Masud's army who also achieved martyrdom. These sites also had their significance attracting boon-seekers.

The fourth part of the book deals with the new counter-narratives that began to emerge sponsored by ulemas and Arya Samaj. The *ulemas* and Muslim elites (*ashraf*) often loathed the low-born people (*ajlaf*) who were participating in the veneration of these cults.³ Abdur Rahman also incorporates incidents epitomizing the antagonism associated with the popular beliefs of the cult which were often referred as un-Islamic. The nineteenth century also witnessed attempts by Islamic revivalists, in the absence of a viable Muslim power, to purify Islam. 'One such early nineteenth-century tract attacked the practice of pilgrimage and beseeching saints for 'every earthly desire – a

³ Ibid; pp-157

(usually male) child, well-being or honour'.⁴ Contesting and warring histories were being celebrated during this period owing to the developments in the domain of language during the nineteenth century. Colonial rule fostered the adoption of Hindi as a language which acted as a singular normative premise and further development of printing press heralded the proliferation of Hindi text. These texts aimed to detach Hindu women from the shrine of Ghazi Miyan, couched in anti-Muslim sentiments. Such narratives helped in constructing Hindu histories against Islam and carefully mobilising the Hindus.

The other onslaught on the existing cult of Ghazi Miyan came from the Arya Samajists. They often re-imagined and re-furnished the popular folklores associated with Ghazi Miyan's cult. The Arya Samajist used the *Mirat*, neglecting the nuances, to argue that Ghazi Miyan was nothing but an invader inclined to kill the infidels. Various suitable narratives have been deployed to rip Ghazi Miyan off his miraculous power. Stories of Hindu-Muslim riots have been furnished where Ghazi Miyan faced defeats at the hand of Hindus which has been purposely made to uphold the supremacy of Hindu faith. These narratives trying to forge a glorious past reconstructed a narrative of Sohal Deo avenging Ghazi where Deo appears to be the protector of cows, portraying Masud as an iconoclast.

This book is an interesting work which fills the lacuna in the existing narrative of this cultic figure. How popular culture developed out of social, cultural, religious conventions, how such culture assumed a composite form, how dynamics of such culture was conditioned by different factors and forces and became a culture not of a particular community or religion but of all—must be taken into account as facts of history and not of interference or assumption.

Amin, however, discusses the entire narrative of Ghazi Miyan in light of the textual evidences available from the 17th century onwards. Due to the absence of contemporary chronicles available during the lifetime of Salar Masud Ghazi or Mahmud of Ghazni, it becomes difficult for readers to conceptualise the refashioning of the narrative of 'conquest' or the transformation of a warrior to Ghazi Miyan. Further Amin fails to delve deeper into the ballads or the historically changing nature of those communities venerating the Ghazi cult which has undermined the intelligibility of this cult figure. The historical analysis of the connotation of 'ghazi' and certain key terms and categories has not been articulated well enough in this book.

⁴ Ibid, pp-159

INTRODUCTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN INDIA; A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL PERIOD

Madhurima Mondal, History (Honours), Semester-6

Abstract :

This paper examines possibilities for strengthening essential public health functions in the context of India's drive to implement universal health. The outcomes of that are rooted in social, political, economic, cultural and ecological conditions. It is important to have a state mediated public health system that can modify the causes of the major public health problems. This calls for strengthening the social epidemiological approach in public health by demarcating public health functions distinct from medical care. This will be a pre-requisite for the growth of the public health profession in the country, because it can offer avenues for newly trained professionals within the country to work in 'core' public health.

Under the Constitution, health is a state subject. Sanitation, public health and hospitals all come under the state list. However, certain health related subject like population control and family planning, food adulteration, drugs, Medical education and compilation of vital statistics are in the concurrent list. The ministry of health and family welfare, government of India acts as a coordinating agency between the state health departments and various agencies dealing with health and related issues. The health care system in India is a mix of public and private sectors. In the public sector, networks of health care facilities at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels run mainly by state government that provide free or low cost medical services. At present less than 30% of the outpatient and less than half of inpatient health care capacity of India is in the public sector while the greater part of the population depends on private health care provisions which often entail a heavy financial burden. During the Tenth Five Year Plan, the National Rural Health Mission was launched. In 2005 under a cadre of accredited social health activists formed under this mission to create awareness on health and facilitate better utilization of health care services in rural communities. The Eleventh Five Year Plan emphasized mainstreaming the ayurveda, yoga, naturopathy, unani, siddha and homeopathy under the National Rural Health Mission to actively supplement the efforts of the allopathic system and revitalize the local health traditions. Unavailability of the skilled human resource remains a key constraint in expanding health service delivery, necessitating an expansion of public sector institutions for the desired capacity building and skilled development. Incorporation of high quality training, appropriate career structure and recruitment policy to attract committed professionals for a dedicated public health cadre has been advocated.

There is no uniform organizational or structural framework for public health personnel in India.

There are wide variations across different states and union territories. Most of them have no designated public health cadre while some have incomplete framework with no well-defined structure. The creation of a new public health cadre has the potential to result in an efficient public health management system delivered by teams of well-qualified and competent workers who are otherwise not burden with providing treatment and care services.

In 2004 a public health administrative cadre was established in West Bengal to revamp the public health planning and management capacity. It oversees the medical facilities as well as the public health services. However, its success is quite limited while the medical and public health services remain combined.

The evolution public health in British India and the history of disease prevention in that part of the world in the nineteenth and early twentieth century provides a valuable insight into the period that witnessed the development of new trends in medical system and the transition from surveys to microscopic studies in medicine. It harbours the earliest laboratory works and ground breaking achievements in microbiology and immunology. The advent of infectious diseases and tropical medicine was a direct consequence of colonialism. The history of diseases and their prevention in the colonial context traces back the epidemiology of infectious diseases many of which are still prevalent in developing countries, once were under Colonial occupation. It reveals the development of surveillance systems and the response to the epidemics by the Colonial government.

The history of western medicine in India dates back to 1600, when the first medical officers arrived in India along with the British East India Company's first fleet as ship's surgeon. A medical department was established in Bengal as far back as 1764, for rendering medical services to the troops and servants of the company. At that time it consisted of four head surgeons, eight assistant surgeons and twenty eight surgeon's mates.¹ In 1869 a Public Health Commissioner and a Statistical Officer were appointed to the government of India. In 1896 with the abolition of the presidential system, all three presidential medical departments were amalgamated to form the Indian Medical Services. Medical departments were under control of the central government until 1919. The Montgomery Chelmsford Constitutional Reforms of 1919 led to the transfer of public health, sanitation and vital statistics to the provinces. This was the first step in the decentralization of the administration in India. The Bhole Committee submitted its report in 1946 and the health of the nation was reviewed for public health, medical relief, professional education, medical research and international health. To fulfill the growing need for health professionals, Calcutta Medical College was established by an order in February 1835, which was the first institute of western medicine in Asia. The total number of public hospitals and dispensaries under the control of colonial Government of India was about 1200 in 1880 and 1902.

Lunate Asylums were established for insane persons under an act of 1858. These were under

¹ MD Umair Mushtaq, 'A Brief account of the history of Medical Services and Disease Prevention in Colonial India', Indian Journal of Community Medicine, 30, no. 1 : (January-2009) pp. 6-14.

the control of civil surgeon of each respective district. From 1895 to 1900, the average number of patients in lunatic asylums was 4600. The sanitary work in British India began with the reports of the Royal Commission of 1859. In 1870, the sanitary department was merged with the vaccination department to form a central sanitary department. In 1880 an act was passed for the compulsory vaccination of the children in Municipalities. Small pox was the main target during that period although vaccinations were also carried out for plague and other diseases. Variolation (an Eastern inoculation technique) was also used initially to control small pox.

When the English East India Company established their authority in India, they had to face the challenge of a new set of diseases that were endemic in that region. Enormous amount of work was done for the prevention of epidemics to save the lives of peoples in India. Various Bengali texts of eighteenth-century documented an increase of infectious diseases among the population during the second half of that century. Shitala, the Goddess of small pox gained much popularity at this context. Many 'Mangala kavyas' were composed at Shitala's glory during that very period.² Highly infectious diseases that had devastating effects during that period were plague, leprosy, cholera, and malaria. The British government took great efforts to prevent diseases but due to insufficient medical officers and funds, the major target was to alleviate suffering and render curative services as it was solely a state responsibility during that period with virtually no volunteer or private sector organizations. Prevention and environmental hygiene had long been neglected.

Walter Charles Rand was an Indian Civil Service Officer in British India. An epidemic of bubonic plague spread in Pune in 1896. On 19th February 1897, Rand was appointed as the Plague Commissioner of the city. Rand took measures that he noted as perhaps the most drastic that had ever been taken to stamp out an epidemic. His efforts to control plague were considered tyrannical and brutal by many in Pune including Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Rand and his military escort Lt. Ayerst were shot by Chapekar Brothers on 22nd June 1897. Ayerst died on the spot, while Rand died of his injuries on 3rd July. Prior to being posted at Pune, Rand was posted as assistant collector of Satara. His assassination rapidly became a part of the 'myth' of Indian National Movement, especially in Maharashtra.

Leprosy was a big problem in British India. IMS medical officers did enormous amount of research on the scientific treatment of leprosy. Despite its limitations and hardships, leprosy research in India received worldwide recognition; many Indian remedies for leprosy have been incorporated into western medicine. G.A. Hansen's discovery in 1873 stated that leprosy is spread by contact, H.V. Carter of the Bengal Medical Department gained an authority over leprosy control in India. He earned great recognition in the central Colonial government of India and suggested isolating lepers. A Leprosy Commission was formed to investigate the etiology and epidemiology of leprosy. It was concluded that leprosy is a disease *sui generis* caused by a bacillus having striking resemblance to tuberculosis. It is not a hereditary disease, but can spread by contagious means but the chances for

² Sukhamay Mukhopadhyay, *Bangla sahityer tathya o kalakram*, A shok kr Barik, (reprint: Kolkata-2011). Pp. 411-419.

that are very small. Its spread is indirectly influenced by poor sanitation and malnutrition. The Commission suggested a prohibition on the sale of food articles , prostitution, and other occupations involving direct interference with people like barbers or waterman by the infected people . It insisted on the improvement of sanitary and living conditions. However, the Government of India passed the All India Leprosy Act in 1898 and Leper Asylums were established in major parts of the country and forcible segregation of lepers was carried out . I have chosen India as the focus of my study because this is where in the nineteenth century the earliest extensive program of construction of asylums took place, and while there were never enough asylums in India to care for all those affected by leprosy, there were more asylums there than in any other country. From the 1870s onwards, the leprosy asylum in India incrementally changed, so that by the 1940s, it could be described as existing in three distinct forms; the well-organised sanatorium for active and infective cases, with proper staff, buildings and equipmentss; the asylum for crippled, deformed , and disabled cases; and agricultural colony in which patients could maintain themselves. Both Sanjiv Kakar and Jane Buckingham have independently provided studies of the leprosy asylum in India. Kakar argues that in the light of medical uncertainties about transmission and causation of the disease, asylums were shaped by religious and medical intentions. Buckingham as part of a larger study of leprosy in colonial south India in the period before missionary anti-leprosy activity, describes the emergence, function, and design of the leprosy hospital in Madras. In addition to British support, there was also strong Indian financial support, both from the British in India and from the Indian elite. In 1920, at the conference of leprosy asylum superintendents in Calcutta the Reverend Frank Oldrieve announced that he had received 186,000 rupees in donations, mostly from Indians . Sometimes the support of the inmates would be shared between the Mission to Lepers and the relevant municipality. When this donated money was allocated to various asylums, the Minutes of the mission to Lepers' meetings reveal how these small amounts of money were used judiciously, making it possible for the Mission to embark on a building program that would bring about progressive changes to the leprosy asylum in India.³

Cholera was the 'classic epidemic disease of the nineteenth century'. Demographically far less destructive than the Black Death with which it was frequently compared, cholera had none the less, a profound effect on the society on both sides of the Atlantic. The epidemics of the 1830s, 1840s and 1860s have been identified as causing popular unrest, accentuating social conflict and providing a catalyst for municipal reform and the development of the public health. Since the bulk of cholera victim came from the lower classes, the epidemics have also been seen as a affording a 'unique opportunity to penetrate class structure' and to uncover the 'social attitudes and living conditions of a broad section of the population.' Ironically a disease in connection with nineteenth century European and American history has received scant attention from historians of India even though the subcontinent was the source of the cholera pandemics and itself suffered millions of death from the disease during the nineteenth and twentieth century. The silence might seem to indicate that

³ Stephen Snelders, *Leprosy and Colonialism* (See Conclusion).Manchester University Press,(Manchester-2017)

because cholera was native to India it generated none of the strong reactions that marked its appearance in the west and that, whatever its demographic impact, it was of marginal, political and social significance. Cholera provides a convenient point of entry for the study of the mentality as well as the material condition of the Indian's subordinate classes while also illustrating the interventionist capacity of the colonial state and the political constraints that acted upon it.

Three factors shaped Indian attitudes and response to cholera. First it is important to recognize the 'individuality of disease entities'. The cholera threatened entire communities, not just isolated individuals, and so called for collective not merely individual or familial responses. But each epidemic has its own characteristics, its own distinctive relationship with human ecology. Hence the reactions cholera epidemics provoked and the signification attached to them were not necessarily identical with the responses with the other epidemic diseases. Secondly the cultural context in which the epidemic occurred profoundly affected the manner of the reception. However the new and alarming the disease, there none the less existed the cultural framework within which Indians sought to comprehend the catastrophe and to survive or come to terms with it. Finally much depended upon the political context of the epidemics and the nature of the state policies towards the specific disease. In a society recently brought under colonial control and retaining a high degree of cultural autonomy from its rulers, initial attitudes to cholera were necessarily affected by the wide social, religious and political gulf between Indian and the British. Rather than by the kinds of class polarities and perceptions that informed European and American responses to the disease. In the countryside cholera had a dual impact. Epidemics alone could cause heavy loss of lives, but this mortality was double, even trebled when epidemic cholera coincided with famine. During the 'Guntur famine' in the Madras Presidency in 1833, Cholera helped to produce a death toll of over two million. The synchronization of cholera and famine was particularly devastating during the second half of the nineteenth century. Although hot dry conditions were inimical to the survival of the generally water borne cholera bacillus, death and draught drove villagers to frequent wells, tanks and stagnant pools which quickly became contaminated with cholera. Chronic malnutrition weakened resistance to the disease, as did the desperate but debilitating search for food and relief, and the consumption of roots, leads and other substitute foods that caused sickness and diarrhoea. The number of deaths attributed to cholera during famine years may have been exaggerated by the government's reluctance to ascribe any deaths to starvation as such and by the lay observer's difficulty in distinguishing cholera from "famine diarrhoea". But there can be no doubt that it was at such time and in such conditions that the rural poor were most vulnerable to the disease.⁴

Fever was one of the leading causes of deaths in India. The situation worsened in the early 19th century. One of the contributing factors was the establishment of the railways and irrigation network

⁴ David Arnold, *Cholera and Colonialism in British India*, Oxford University Press, No. 113(Nov., 1986). Pp. 120-125.

by the British government of India without keeping in view the efficient drainage systems for floods and rainwaters. But this created many fresh water reservoirs for the propagation of mosquitoes. Due to the heavy death toll, economic loss and risk to the lives of British officers serving in vulnerable areas like Punjab, a lot of research was done for malaria control. The medication that was given to the malaria patient was quinine in order to cure the disease that was prevalent earlier also and still now it is continuing. The league of nations criticised the chemoprophylaxis with quinine that was practiced on a large scale by the British Indian government. In high risk areas likesome parts of Punjab and tropics, quinine was made available at special institutions like jails and post offices in small packs that contained five to seven quinine granules with a price of only quarter anna. However it remained so until the introduction of chloroquine and WHO guidelines for the use of DDT. The Indian National Malaria Eradication Programme (NMEP) is reporting 2.5 to 3 million malaria cases, and about 1,000 malaria deaths annually. Malaria in the northeastern states is stable and in the peninsular India unstable. There are six major and three minor malaria vectors, of which *Anopheles culicifacies* transmits malaria in rural areas and *An. stephensi* in the towns. Other vectors are of local importance. *Plasmodium vivax* is the dominant infection and accounts for 60-65% cases whereas *P. falciparum* contributes 30-35% cases. Field operations to control malaria are impeded by resistance and/or exophilic vector behavior, parasite resistance to antimalarial drugs, operational problems in spraying, failure to search breeding of mosquitoes at weekly intervals, staff shortages and financial constraints. Resurgent malaria invaded new ecotypes created by green revolution, industrial growth and urban development resulting in paradigm shift towards man-made malaria. NMEP has launched a world bank-assisted enhanced malaria control project with primary emphasis to protect 62.2 million high risk population in 7 states.

CONCLUSION

This paper suggests that history is essential to an understanding of the challenges facing health policy in India today. Institutional trajectories matter, and the paper tries to show that a history of under-investment and poor health infrastructure in the colonial period continued to shape the conditions of possibility for health policy in India after independence. This will be familiar to development policy makers and institutional economists interested in 'path dependency'. However the focus of the paper is less on institutions that on the insights intellectual history may bring to our understanding. I argue that attention to the ethical and intellectual origins of the Indian state's founding commitment to improve public health are worthy of attention, and indeed that this moral and political arguments continue to shape a sense of the possible in public health to this day. By situating particular policies in the context of the political questions to which they emerge as a response, a historical approach can show that particular solutions adopted were chosen from a range of possibilities, greater or smaller in different circumstances; thus revisiting 'paths not taken' is one evident way in which history can inform contemporary development policy. Thus the paper shows that a top-down, statist approach to public health was not the only option available to India in 1940s, and that there was a powerful legacy of civic involvement and voluntary activity in the field of public

health. Some of these traditions may continue to shape recent move back towards giving civil society and greater role in public health. A historical perspective on the political culture of public health in India suggest that one of the most striking contrasts between the late- colonial period and the period after independence lies in the extent to which the Indian political elite concerned itself with questions of public health. The instrumental argument that it has not been in the 'interests' of India's elite to prioritise public health, given their easy access to high-quality, urban curative health services is indisputable but interests can come into being and unravel through political discourse and as a result of political mobilisation. In the first half of the 20th century, the Indian political elite was deeply concerned with questions of public health, engaging in more or less paternalistic attempts to educate, and uplift the health of the Indian population; after independence as responsibility of health resided increasingly with the developmental state, the culture of public discussion and voluntary activity in the field of health witnessed a rapid decline.

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DALIT FEMINISM

Sayantika Biswas, *History, Semester-1*

ABSTRACT :

Women in the Indian society are suppressed in the patriarchal society. The most oppressed in the society are the Dalit Women. They are deprived of their basic rights and are stripped of their dignity by the upper Caste liberals. Some Dalit feminists have been working on the rights and freedom from oppression for Dalit Women. Some of them are Sharmila Rege, Gopal Guru, Chhaya Datar and many more. The research deals with their work and efforts for the betterment of the society and create a new thought in the feminism for Dalit Women. A brief mention on intersectionality has been included in the paper. The conclusion of this vast topic is hard to derive in one day but a balanced and moderate one is included, as well as the need for further research.

AND WHAT ABOUT DALIT WOMEN ?

"They don't learn anything, must sit separately and are served food last when there is often nothing left."

This lines were said by the father of a child who belong to Dalit community. This is 21st CE and time seemed to have stop in the later vedic period when the Varna and caste system persisted with power and might. When we boast about progress and development, we often forget the things that lure under the mask of civilization. As a woman in this society, i agree that every step and every field has been a battle in surviving the patriarchy and systematic oppression in the society. But standing at a upper class privileged position, my capability is resolved within a word document while the women out there are fighting the demons. The negligence of Dalit women shows the unequal social order and careful discrimination in the society.

"Feminism as an academic discourse recognises that our sociopolitical lives are fundamentally based on inequality between men and women (and other gender minorities). Feminist thinkers hold various standpoints concerning the origin and causes of gender inequality and put forward significant measures that may correct this hierarchical social order based on gender".
(Dalit Feminist theory : a reader by Sunaina Arya and Aakash singh Rathore).

While we define Feminism we need to keep in mind that loopholes exist in every process of development. Often the upper caste feminists fail to address the problems suffered by women in rural areas and tribes. So Dalit Feminism seeks to bridge a gap between inequality in both caste and gender. The roots of the Dalit feminism is hold by B. R. Ambedkar, Jyotiba Phule and Pandita Ramabai who brought both gender and caste inequalities in view. They had the vision to empower Dalit women and highlighted their problems and ensured a steady participation in the activism.

According to Sharmila Rege," The left party based women's organizations highlighted economic and work related issues as also helped develop a critique of the patriarchal, capitalist

state. The autonomous women's groups politicized and made public the issue of violence against women. Though this led to serious debates on class versus patriarchy, these formations did not address the issue of Brahminism. While for the former 'caste' was contained in class, for the latter, the notion of sisterhood was pivotal. All women came to be conceived as 'victims' and therefore 'dalit', resulting in a classical exclusion."

Intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989, indicated the black feminism which fought for the sexism and racism in United States. White feminists fought for their own rights but failed to look through the sufferings faced by black women. Black activists and intellectuals formed organizations such as National Association of colored Women and The National council of Negro Women to fight the white supremacy and patriarchy. A similar situation has been created in India. A dalit woman has to face the problems of labour control, untouchability, Dalit male supremacy and control on sexuality. The deep set brahmanical nature in the Indian feminism overlooks these problems. Susie Tharu, Meena Gopal, Mary. E John criticises the mainstream feminism and exposes the forceful marginalisation of caste by upper caste feminists.

Do you remember Jhalkari bai, Uda Devi, Helen Lepcha or Rani Gidnilu ?

I am sure many will fail to recognise these women. These women fought during the colonial rule and helped during the independence of this country. We do not know these names because our history books don't educate us on their struggle. In the same way we forgot the Dalit social activist Ruth Manorama who created the National Federation of Dalit Women(NFDW) in 1995. The organisation was dedicated to promote the rights of Dalit Women. A similar kind of organisation was formed called All India Dalit Women's Forum along with several state level groups.

"In the 1990s, there were several independent and autonomous assertions of dalit women's identity; a case in point is the formation of the National Federation of Dalit Women and the All India Dalit Women's Forum. At the state level, the Maharashtra Dalit Mahila Sanghatana was formed in 1995. A year earlier, the women's wing of the Bharatiya Republican Party and the Bahujan Mahila Sangh set up the Bahujan Mahila Parishad. In December 1996, at Chandrapur, a Vikas Vanchit Dalit Mahila Parishad was organized and a proposal to commemorate 25 December (the day Ambedkar set fire to the Manusmriti) as Bharatiya Streemukti Divas was advanced. The Christi Mahila Sangharsh Sanghatana, an organization of dalit-Christian women was established in 1997. Though these organizations have advanced different non-Brahmanical ideological positions, they have come together on several issues such as the celebration of the Bharatiya Shree Mukti Divas and on the issue of reservations for OBC women in parliamentary bodies.

The emergence of autonomous dalit women's organizations has led to a major debate, sparked off by the essay 'Dalit Women Talk Differently'.⁷ A series of discussions around the paper were organized in Pune by different feminist groups. A two day seminar was also organized by Alochana, Centre for Research and Documentation on Women, in June 1996. Subsequently, two significant responses to the emergence of autonomous dalit women's organizations – one by Kiran Moghe of the Janwadi Mahila Sanghatana and the other by Vidyut Bhagwat – presented the issues at stake. At the seminar, Gopal Guru argued that to understand the dalit women's need to talk differently, it was necessary to delineate both the internal and external factors which have a bearing on this phenomenon." – Sharmila Rege (A Dalit Feminist Standpoint)

A dalit feminist speaks the language of a dalit women. Dalit feminists and intellectuals share their own experiences and have their own aspects which create a local language. Gopal Guru has stated that Dalit labouring women, who are part of this entire process of empowerment, create a certain local language 'that is full of loaded meaning that has a bearing on their subordinated, suppressed life'. In fact, the point that is being made is that Dalit women's critique is an overall protest directed against any form of exploitation and subordination.

According to a report by Open Democracy, Dalit women form the most common victims of dependency in India. This is because of poor education, unemployment, no lands and mistreat by upper caste men and women. Dalit girls and women are exploited and victimised in cities, towns and villages. The Dalit Freedom Network (DFN) records that they are, "raped, held captives in brothels and temple ceremonies and forced to work as bonded labours, while the young girls are trafficked in prostitution or trapped into domestic servitude".

According to the data released by National Crime records Bureau (NCRB), India recorded 88 rape cases everyday in a year, 11% of which were from the Dalit Community. Dalit feminists form the voice of these lost souls. Their zeal and empowerment push them towards opposing the policies of government

"The intellectual history of feminist standpoint theory can be traced to insights provided by Marx, Engels and Lukacs into the standpoint of the proletariat. A social history of standpoint theory focuses on what happens when marginalized peoples begin to gain public voice. The failure of dominant groups to critically and systematically interrogate their privileged position leaves them crippled, scientifically and epistemologically. A dalit feminist standpoint is viewed as emancipatory since the subject of its knowledge is embodied and visible (i.e. the thought begins from the lives of dalit women and these lives are present and visible in the results of the thought). This position claims a higher emancipatory status than other positions and counters pluralism and relativism which posit all knowledge based and political claims as valid in their own way." – (A Dalit Feminist Standpoint by Sharmila Rege).

A dalit feministic movement involves women from rural areas as well as urban area. Bela Malik in her article in Economic and Political weekly said, "A purely dalit or a purely feminist movement cannot adequately help dalit women. But no matter. Dalit women participants at the Convention against Untouchability and Dalit Women's Oppression were willing to help themselves. Even as they narrated their problems and humiliations, there was pride in a new identity, in being able to withstand hardships, and in the strength and courage to wage attritive battles".

Dalit women lived experiences are very important in theorising Dalit Feminism. Their day to day experiences vary from caste privileged feminists. The vulnerability faced by them in the socio-economic and political status is different from savarna people. They have been discriminated in all fields including Mythologies which portray them as a threat to purity and fortune. Vizia Bharati presents different, deeply degrading images of Dalit women as portrayed in Hindu writings, and offers evidence that ancient as well as modern literature does not depict Dalit women in a humane and dignified manner. Y. S. Alone identifies locations of resistance within current aesthetic practices that speak back to these degrading portrayals. Finally, Sharmila Rege, in her book *Writing Caste/Writing Gender*, initiates a debate over the consumption of Dalit autobiographies by mainstream writers, and

presents a comprehensive review of many Dalit thinkers and creative writers who have reflected on this issue. Often the representation dalit women is restricted to research work or sophisticated discussion by the upper class society.

Dalit feminist stand point is not simply that has to be interpreted within the tightly structured intellectual spaces of postmodernism and feminism. The Dalit faminist stand point has often come to be seen as a weapon of accusation vis-à-vis the second wave feminist movement in India and an intellectual framework in which non Dalit women participate out of their 'guilt ridden confession'.¹ The Dalit feminist stand point it has been strongly stated is situated within the everyday experiences of Dalit women, sensitive to the structural differences over issues related to land and to the history of 'lokyatatas'.

Coming to a conclusion, we all can agree that education is the key to break the barriers in concepts and orthodox mindset. Dalit Feminism contributes to the feminism, keeping in mind the need for the progression and safety of women from all the caste and religions. The first step to this is give the marginalised a voice and the concepts of Indian Feminits. "Smita M. Patil employs categories borrowed from Marx, Mignolo and Oyewumi to argue that Dalit feminist thought presents a challenge to the authenticity of knowledge and offers an epistemic turn for feminist thinking that must be recognised and implemented to advance the efficacy of Indian feminist discourse. Kanchana Mahadevan comprehensively discusses debates concerning the category 'experience' in feminist research, criticising the experience-theory dichotomy, and offers an insightful alternative arguing for theorising by the collective shared experience of those who live, share, as well as articulate experience in a scholarly form." – (Dalit Feminist Theory : A Reader by Sunaina Arya and Aakash Singh Rathore).

Everyone is fighting a battle and seeking for victory. I hope we educate our minds and grow more humanity in our society. A unified work can guide us through the dark tunnel and show a light at the end of the tunnel. The topic is subjected to further research and hard work until we reach a conclusion to the never ending sufferings and miseries. Lastly, I want to end this paper by a poem written by a Dalit feminist poet, Swaroopa Rani :

"When has my life been truly mine ?
In the home male arrogance
Sets my cheek stinging
While in the street caste arrogance
Spits the other cheek open."

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INDIA AND PHARMACEUTICAL POLITICS

Swastika Chakraborty, *Political Science, Semester-4*

INTRODUCTION

India is facing a crisis which has taken away almost 4 lakh lives and has left the entire population in a grey area. We have seen the holiest river, Ganges being dumped with dead bodies, the cremation areas transformed to dead furnace, oxygen cylinders becoming the priority, hospitals transformed to centres of gloom and doom. The events that have followed since the global outbreak of the pandemic is shocking and horrific.

INDIA AND THE BIOLOGICAL DISASTER

But how is India tackling this biological disaster ? What is its role as a global player ?

India is often termed as the Pharmacy of the world. During the outbreak of the pandemic, when the pharmacies were desperate to look for solutions, they turned to India for supply of hydroxychloroquine. It was the former President of USA who made the request for the supply of hydroxychloroquine to India (backed up by a controversial warning). India responded by lifting its ban on export of drugs and provided the necessary aid.

India, during the upsurge of cases during the last year provided help to approximately 155 countries. Amongst these are AEAN, SAARC, BIMSTEC countries. As mentioned in the Upanishads, Vasuvaidā Kutumbakam, the (world is single family), India has personified this phrase by providing medical assistance to the countries in need to fight against pandemic. As part of its “neighbourhood first policy” it has extended its humanitarian hand toward its friendly neighbours like, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives. India provided Covishield Vaccines to its 6 “friendly” neighbours as gifts.

Apart from its neighbours India provided medical aid to other countries too. Now when India is battling the COVID-19 upsurge, it has been receiving impeccable help from around the world. The foreign secretary said that India is set to receive medical aid from at least 40 countries. The C-17 of IAF has been relentlessly carrying out COVID relief operations. The IAF has completed almost 900 plus international sorties dedicated towards COVID-19 relief operations. C-17 Globemaster III, IL-76, C-130J, AN-32 and many other IAF aircrafts has been on the mission to supply COVID-19 medical assistance to the nation.

INTERNATIONAL AID TO INDIA

India has received oxygen concentrators, oxygen cylinders, oxygen generation plants, ventilators, remdesivir and vaccines. In accordance with the EU civil protection mechanism, the EU nations have come forward to assist India. The US Chamber of Commerce has also played its role in requesting the Biden administration in helping India with vaccines. On 30 April 2021, the USA aircraft

carrying medical equipment touched the Indian soil with Oxygen cylinders, pulse oxymetres, and other medical equipment. Mr. Joe Biden while addressing a Press Conference, he said that, his administration is ready to stand in solidarity with India and is ready to send medical assistance to India, like remdesivir, vaccines and other essential drugs. He also said that when USA was in need of essential medical drugs, India provided help the country by supplying the needed medical equipment (referring to the supply of hydroxychloroquine when requested by the former President Mr. Trump), now it's time to help India.

Medical equipments have also arrived from China but not as Grants rather as procurements. A consignment of Oxygen cylinders were received by India from China. This assistance is in stark contrast to the recent border skirmishes in 2020 in Galwan Valley which resulted in the martyr of 20 soldiers.

India developed an electronic platform called COINEX (SAARC COVID-19 Information Exchange Platform), for exchange of essential COVID-19 related information. This was proposed by Indian PM Narendra Modi, during the SAARC video conference in 2020, which was hosted by Pakistan. It is during this conference that PM unveiled the new app called AarogyaSetu, which has now become the inevitable app in every Indian's phone.

At the 17TH India-ASEAN Summit, India had announced a \$1 million aid to ASEAN COVID-19 Response Fund. Now at the hour of need, India has been on the receiving end of medical supplies from the ASEAN countries. Thailand has contributed India with Oxygen cylinders and cryogenic tanks.

Under COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) facility of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisations (GAVI), India decided on providing 1 million doses of vaccine to Africa and UN Health Workers India. Morocco is the largest importer of vaccines from India. Bangladesh have been the largest beneficiary from India, having received approximately 7 million doses of Covishield vaccine.

HOW VACCINES PLAYING A ROLE IN GLOBAL POLITICS

Now let's turn our attention towards the most important agenda- vaccines.

As part of the AtmaNirbhar Bharat initiative, the indigenous COVAXIN has been acclaiming credit in medical sector. The development of this vaccine made use of Whole-Virion Inactivated Vero Cell. This vaccine is developed in collaboration with Bharat Biotech and Indian Council of Medical Research. This vaccine has been provided to almost 95 plus countries around the globe. This is part of what the world is coming to term as Vaccine diplomacy. This concept has a better relevance when we speak about the COVISHIELD Vaccine. This vaccine has been developed by the Oxford and AstraZenica and is manufactured locally by Serum Institute of India. Serum Institute of India has also collaborated with Codagenix to manufacture COVI-VAC which is a live-attenuated intranasal vaccine against COVID-19.

But now due to a steep upsurge in COVID-19 cases, India has turned from an exporter of vaccines and medical equipments to a vaccine importer country. The new Delta Variant of the virus

(B. 1.617) which has caused the havoc in the country and is reported to be highly infectious and transmissible. WHO has categorised Delta variant to be a Variant of Concern (VOC). The National Centre for Disease Control has said that the variant can infect people even after being partially or fully vaccinated, which have raised quite a few eyebrows in the country. This has raised concerns globally, with countries imposing restrictions in flights from India. U.K. has imposed travel restrictions by placing India on red list, implying that whoever has been to or through India in the last 10 days will be refused entry to U.K. US President Joe Biden signed a proclamation to restricting travel from India. Other countries which have imposed travel restriction in their respective countries from India are Iran, Taiwan, Nepal, Kuwait, Israel, Singapore, and many others. This travel ban had its impact on H-1B Visa holders who have been stranded in India and are unable to return to USA to resume their work. The World Bank has predicted a 9% fall in remittances due to the ongoing pandemic. India which ranks the highest in terms of remittances received by any country globally is predicted to experience a fall in the percentage of remittances received due to uncountable migrant workers sent back to their homes and global economic recession.

UPSURGE OF COVID-19 CASES IN INDIA

While the population of 1.35 billion is yet to be vaccinated, many states in the country have imposed strict lockdowns to tackle the dreadful circumstances. Maharashtra tops the chart in daily cases followed by Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. Approximately 4% of the population have been fully vaccinated which is much lower as compared to other countries of the world. For example in the USA the percentage of fully vaccinated is approximately 42.6% of population. Percentage of population fully vaccinated in the United Kingdom is, Wales with 87%, England and Scotland with 77% and Northern Ireland with 76%. We are yet to make our mark in the percentage of fully vaccinated population. India being the “Pharmacy of the world” needs to become “Pharmacy of the population”.

CONCLUSION

COVID-19 is not just a global disaster; it is multi-sectoral disaster. It has trampled the economy, disrupted normalcy, taken away millions of lives, and effected the entire civilisation. The medical sector has dedicated their strength and capability towards the fight of this pandemic. The perfect timing of global aid was made possible by our acclaimed diplomats, with cooperation and tolerance we were able to be united against the global disaster and last but not the least with perfect professionalism, inventions in the field of medicine and medical equipments were made possible. There still stands innumerable challenges to be tackled but these hard times have taught us as a human civilisation to become indomitable and work not individually but with cooperation. We as a human race have become more rational, sensitive and humane.

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