



# ROOTS

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### **Aim & Objectives**

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# A STUDY OF SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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## **Abstract**

*India is the developing countries in the world. This country made new development policy and practices toward economic growth. Traditional India society showing that unequal power relation and limitation in between man and women. India policy focused on such an ecotourism new industry could be tools for fostering economic growth, conservation of natural resources with women empowerment. It is a necessary development because a traditional mass tourism has neglected the issues of ecological sustainable development through women empowerment. However, ecotourism can reduce negative impact of the mass tourism and thus contributed in the conservation for sustainable development. This tourism could be developed the positive impact of employment opportunity, income growth and education for host communities. This paper mainly aims to understand the concept of ecotourism interlink with conservation of natural development. To examine the ecotourism policy and practices for women empowerment in India. This paper applied eco-feminist theoretical framework of Vandana Shiva for understanding women empowerment through ecotourism development. This related data collected from secondary sources like newspapers, books, magazines and internet. This paper concludes that the ecotourism development policies have developed to instate promoted expectation sustainable conservation of natural resources and helping women economic development as a promising.*

**Keywords:** *women empowerment ecotourism, natural resource, conservation, policies, mass tourism*

## **Introduction**

Tourism is the main path of development which has contributed to the national income growth in many countries. Tourism industry development has constructed socio-economic mobilization of people, but several studies focused on critical assessments of traditional mass tourism made self destruction and its contributed in the environmental destruction. Several tourist development has increased major

issues quality of life and upgrading environmental problems like ecological balance, declining air quality, biodiversity loss and water policy. Therefore, International conservation of nature in 1992 has focused on the issue of ecotourism development protect. Its carefully grow and sustainable development manner. This paper mainly aims to understand the concept of ecotourism interlink with conservation of natural development.

To examined the ecotourism policy and practices India.

### **The Concept of Ecotourism**

The ecotourism is late 20<sup>th</sup>-ecntury neologism compounded from eco- and tourism. According to the oxford English Dictionary, ecotourism was first recorded in 1973 and ecotourism, “probably after eco-tour”, in 1982. The Rio+20 Outcome Document “The Future We Want” highlights the role of sustainable tourism so as to come out of the adverse effects of tourism. The United Nations defines sustainable tourism as “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities<sup>1</sup>”. (Das, M., & Chatterjee, B. 2015). The most important aspects of sustainable tourism are that it ensures long-term economic operations, provision of fairly distributed socio-economic benefits to all, through income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities.

Ecotourism originated as a type of sustainable tourism, and the first formal definition of Ecotourism is credited to Hector Ceballos-Lascuráin in the early 1980s. His definition asserts that as “ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas in order to enjoy and appreciate nature that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor

impact, and provides for beneficially active socioeconomic involvement of the local populations”. (Das, S. 2011). According to “The International Ecotourism Society, “responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and sustains the wellbeing of local people”. Ecotourism is environmental responsible travel and visiting relatively undisturbed natural areas in order to enjoy an appreciated nature any type of cultural feature, that promote conservation have low negative visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations (IUCN 1996).Ecotourism can be considered as a subset of sustainable tourism because it represent sustainable way of travelling in natural areas. It is consider as community based tourism to generated benefit of local people and contributed to conservation of natural and cultural areas includes voyages which are ecological, economical and social sustainability.

### **The Concept of Women Empowerment**

Women’s empowerment is the process which women elaborated and recreate what it is that they can be do and accomplish in a circumstance that they previously were denied. Empowerment can be defined in many ways, however, when talking about women’s empowerment means accepting allowing people(women) who are on the outside of the discussion making process into it. Empowerment is the

process that creates power in their individuals over their own lives society, and in their community people are empowered when they able to access the opportunity available to them without limitation and restructuring feeling entitled to make your own development.

According World Bank defines empowerment as *“the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcome. Central to the process is action which both build individual and collective assets and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context which govern the use of these assets.”* According to economist Bina Agarwal (1996,) defines *“empowerment as a process the enhance the ability of disadvantaged and powerless individuals or groups to challenge and change in their favors, existing power relationship that places them insubordinate economic, social and political position.”* (Agrwal, Bina, 1996, *A Field of one’s Own*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press.) Women empowerment has become significant topic of discussion in development and economics its regarding to other trivialize gender in a particular political and social context.

Women empowerment refer to the deal for women to enjoy their right to control and benefits from the resources, assets and income and their own time as well as the ability to

manage rest and improve their economic status and well being. The term of women empowerment have link with the basic rights of natural resource for empowering their minimum assurance to all for ecotourism for individuals and community livelihood life, when they able to assess the opportunity available to them without limitation and restriction. This empowerment includes the action or raising self confidence, literacy, and training among different group discussion create a sense of empowerment in ecotourism development.

### **A Theoretical Framework**

The Eco-feminist also called ecological feminism, branch of feminist that examine the connection between women and nature. Its name coined by French feminist Francoise d’Eaubonne in 1974. This approach examines the effect of social norms injustice dominance over on women and nature it is about environment theory conceived during the 1970 and early 1980 as an alternative worldwide approach to humanity depend on natural word in a way’s conservation and women empowerment. The Indian eco-feminist Vandna Shiva plays a major contributed in the global eco-feminist movement. According to her article on *Empowering Women* (2004) to a more sustainable and productive approach to agriculture can be achieved by renting the system of farming in India that is mover centered

on engaging women.( Ruiz Carreras, María 2016).

Shiva co-wrote the book *Eco-feminism* in 1993 with “German anarchist and radical feminist sociologist Maria Mies. It combined western and southern feminism with “environment, technology and feminist issues all incorporated under the term eco-feminism. (Johnson, Roberta 2013)She argued that against the prevent “patriarchal logic of exclusion”, claiming that a woman focused system would be a great improvement. She believes that ecological destruction and industrial catastrophes threaten daily life and the maintenance of these problems have become a woman's responsibility. (Ralte, Lalrinawmi 2012).

Under this theoretical framework using the study of ecotourism is the most important contribution to understanding women empowerment practices. Once the ecotourism move in, they start the creating women empowerment of their own on ecotourism by participated their local people from their place of origin, to creating a self-reliance in wider area, to contribution a community development of economic status to poor living standards and lower income opportunity in the ecotourism area there for people attracted such call from the women. In this paper used eco-feminism theory to determine to overall appearance.

This study we seek to generalize and expand this theoretical approach

using in women empowerment. Shiva plays a foremost role in the global eco-feminist movement, according to her article *Empowering Women* (2004) a more suitable and productive approach to agriculture can be achieved by reinstating the system of farming in India that is mover centered on engaging women. She advocates against the prevalent “patriarchal logic of exclusion,” claiming that a women-focused system would be a great improvement. She believes that ecological destruction and industrial catastrophes threaten daily life and maintenance of these problems have become women’s responsibility (Shiva Vadana 1993). It combined western and southern feminist with “environmental, technology and feminist issues, all incorporated under the term eco-feminism (Utzeri, Mounia 2017).

### **Research Methodology**

In this research have employed the qualitative research methodology, which includes Case study method have employed for understanding ecotourism policy and programmes contribution in the women empowerment in India. As a qualitative methodology to describe are basic information action, behaviors and changing phenomena about the examine the social reality and experience regarded status of women access gaining social-economic resources as the basic fundamental equal right to education. Thos

secondary data are collected from various authentic website books, journals and articles, research regarding the concept of ecotourism policy impact on women empowerment.

### **Ecotourism Policy in India**

Ecotourism policy and guideline developed by Indian Ministry of tourism in 1998. The ministry of environment and Forest on June 2011 called the State government to frame ecotourism policies to facilitate tourism programme in a protected area in addition, 12th Five year Plan (2012-2017) target to benefit of tourism activities for the poor emphasize that to collect the revenue for protecting area management. At present India has 661 protected area with 100 national park, 514 wildlife sanctuaries 43 conservation reserve and four community reserved in different geographical zone, extended five per cent the geographical area of the country.( Information Brochure, Mangrove forest division (WL), Rajnagar, Kendrapara, Odisha)

The ecotourism policy in India has tried to bring an interlink between livelihood activities and conservation. It has been trying to provide an alternative to the exploitative use of natural resources to the local communities. Women employment opportunities are created for them. They are involved as stakeholders. In the process, they take pride about their natural resources and extend their hands in conservation.

### **Case studies of Ecotourism Projects**

The case of *Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kerela* can be stated as a intelligent example. Periyar Tiger Reserve along with adjoin protected areas form the largest tiger conservation landscape in Southern most Werstern ghats, extending over an extent of 4078 sq kms in Tamil Nadu and Kerala conservation since 1934. The Periyar Tiger reserve is managed under two divisions, namely Periyar East and West Division. With the introduction of ecotourism in the reserve, several economic development committees are formed. Host communities are given viable and innovative livelihood alternatives through opportunities like rafting, trekking, horse riding, nature camp, etc. The project has so far benefited about 40,000 people of 5,540 families. With the help of such alternative livelihood, the poachers and smugglers have been converted as genuine promoters of conservation of forests.

Even in case of *Sunderban Tiger Reserve, West Bengal*, ecotourism has been able to provide decent earning to the participants. The present Sundarbans National Park was declared as the core area of the Sunderbans Tiger Reserve in 1973 and wildlife sanctuary in 1977, on May 4, 1984 it was declared a National Park. The project aims to safeguard the viable population in Bengal in their natural habitats, protecting them from extinction and preserving areas of biological importance as a natural

heritage forever represented as close as possible the diversity of ecosystems across the distribution of tigers in the country. The study of Guha and Ghosh (2007) has claimed that tourism participants spend 19 percent more on food and 38 per cent more on non-food items compared to other villagers. Such increased spending by the tourism participants stimulates different production systems and thus leads to the relative prosperity of the area. Ecotourism, through an increase in standard of living of the local residents, also empowers them socio-politically and fosters respect for different cultures and human rights. Indirect incentives like improved infrastructure, health facilities, awareness and education for tourism development develops a positive attitude towards conservation. In Sunderban Project, it has been noted that a part of the increased income from ecotourism is used to finance the education of their children.

The Great Himalayan National Park is another bright example of ecotourism project in India. This Great Himalayan National Park was constituted in 1984 and formally notified as a national park in 1999. It is located in the Banjar Sub - Division of Kullu District of Himachal Pradesh, India in the far Western Himalayas. The Protected Area management initiated eco-development committees not only for the conservation process, but also for poverty alleviation in support of conservation women empowerment,

developing outreach to the remote villages and linking livelihoods to conservation. The women of poor households, dependent on natural resources of the PA are encouraged to form Women Saving and Credit Groups. These groups are now doing business with their own savings through different income generating activities.

The empowerment of the weakest section of the hill society through strong local level institutions and livelihood based approach has resulted in genuine participation in micro-planning and decision making and thus, a reduction in their forest dependencies. This has resulted in successful biodiversity conservation through economic and social empowerment which is a prerequisite for ecological sustainability (Mishra, Badola and Bharadwaj, 2009). However, many ecotourism projects are strongly criticized for not being able to adhere to the objectives laid down for a successful conservation policy. Often the environmental objective outweighs the other objectives by overlooking the strong linkage between livelihood of the host communities and conservation. (Chatterjee and Das 2015)

### **Conclusion**

We concludes that the eco-tourism have benefited to local people and natural conservation level. This tourism focused on the tourism economy and social cultural sound. This tourism effectively work on environmentally friendly transport

activities, preservation of ecological carry capacity and ecological balance with ensuring acceptance of tourism development. Therefore the local peoples actively participated as local stakeholders in discussion and policy making level. These peoples get benefits just and effectively human working opportunity for empowerment of women and marginalized groups with natural conservation. Eco-feminism theoretical approach has implied for the eco-tourism gets the opportunity to women empowerment and sustainable development process. The limitation of eco-tourism policy showing in this eco-tourism likes local peoples not involved, multinational corporation interested, but profit not equitably distributed misused and inculcating awareness about conservation. Many cases showing the observation that natural beauty is important assets of tourism promotion as greenwashing under eco-tourism policy and practice level.

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# VARNA, CASTE AND CLASS: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

वर्ण, जाति एवं वर्ग: एक समाजशास्त्रीय अध्ययन

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## Abstract

जाति व्यवस्था भारत की एक अनूठी और हजारों साल पुरानी संस्था है। दरअसल, वैदिक काल में भारत में वर्ण व्यवस्था पाई जाती थी जो बाद में जाति व्यवस्था में बदल गई। वर्तमान भारतीय समाज में अब वर्ग व्यवस्था बहुत प्रभावशाली है। इसलिए इन तीन संस्थाओं पर एक साथ चर्चा करना महत्वपूर्ण है, तभी हम भारतीय समाज के वर्तमान परिदृश्य को समझ सकते हैं। यह शोध पत्र भारत के समकालीन समाज को समझने का एक प्रयास है। इस शोध पत्र में आँकड़ों के द्वितीयक स्रोतों का प्रयोग किया गया है।

**मुख्य शब्द-** जाति, वर्ग, परिवर्तन, राजनीति, भारत

स्वतंत्रता प्राप्ति के पश्चात भारत में जाति प्रथा कतिपय नए आधारों पर अपना पुनर्गठन करती हुई प्रतीत हो रही है। इसके दोषों और समाज को होने वाली हानियों पर विस्तृत चर्चा प्रायः यत्र - तत्र सर्वत्र होती रहती है, किंतु इसका विकल्प बनकर कोई अन्य व्यवस्था जन्म लेते हुए दिखाई नहीं दे रही है। अनेक विचारक तो यह भी मानते हैं कि इसकी अपेक्षा वैदिक काल की वर्ण व्यवस्था ही श्रेयस्कर थी, जिसमें जन्म को विशेष महत्व ना देकर मनुष्य के गुण और कर्म के आधार पर उसके वर्ण का निर्धारण किया जाता था। यद्यपि यह भी निर्विवाद नहीं है कि वर्ण व्यवस्था ठीक वैसी ही व्यवहार में प्रचलित थी, जैसी वह वेदों और पुराणों में वर्णित है। अनेक समाजशास्त्री यह मानते हैं कि वर्ण व्यवस्था में भी अनेक दोष महाभारत काल तक आ चुके थे और वर्णों की संख्या 4 से बढ़कर अंतर्वर्ण विवाह और प्रतिलोम विवाह के फलस्वरूप अनेक जातियों को जन्म दे चुकी थी। संप्रति जातियां अपने संख्या बल के आधार पर प्रजातान्त्रिक शासन व्यवस्था में अपनी भागीदारी प्राप्त करने का प्रयास कर रही हैं। अनेक बार तो ऐसा भी देखा गया है कि मिली - जुली सरकार बनाते समय 2-3 संसद सदस्य या विधायकों वाले क्षेत्रीय दल भी सरकार में अपना महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा ले पाए। जबकि उन दलों का आधार अत्यंत संकीर्ण अथवा जातीय या क्षेत्रीय हित ही था। भारतीय राजनीति में जातियों की भूमिका अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण हो गई है। जो जातियां समाज की संस्तरणात्मक व्यवस्था में निम्न स्थान पर थी, वह आज राजनीति का सहारा लेकर, अपना दल बनाकर, जाति के सदस्यों को संगठित कर, कुछ अपने जैसी अन्य जाति की पंचायतों से तालमेल बनाकर विधानसभाओं तथा लोकसभा में पहुंचने में सफल हो जा रही हैं। जिससे समाज में उनकी निम्न प्रतिष्ठा उच्च सामाजिक स्थिति में बदल

रही है। प्रो. जी. एस. घुरिये ने बताया है कि “जाति अपने को एक समुदाय के रूप में संगठित कर रही है जिससे उसके सदस्यों की निष्ठा अपनी जाति के प्रति प्रगाढ़ होती जा रही है। उनमें सामुदायिक भावना इतनी प्रबल पाई जा रही है कि वह अपनी जाति के हितों की पूर्ति के लिए पूरे समाज के हितों के प्रति उदासीन होते जा रहे हैं। जातियां वोट बैंक में बदलती जा रही हैं।” भारत के अनेक राज्य जातीय या जनजातीय आधार पर बने क्षेत्रीय या राष्ट्रीय दलों की सरकारों का अनुभव कर चुके हैं। जो दल स्पष्ट रूप से जाति के आधार पर संगठन बनाए हुए दिखाई नहीं दे रहे हैं, वह भी परोक्ष रूप से अवसर पाने पर सत्ता का अनुचित लाभ पाने के लिए अपने ही दल के सदस्यों को वह लाभ प्रदान करने के लिए व्यग्र दिखाई दे रहे हैं।

प्रो. योगेंद्र सिंह के अनुसार, भारत में राजनीतिक आधुनिकीकरण का एक उल्लेखनीय पक्ष समकालीन राजनीति में जाति की घुसपैठ है। जाति प्रथा सामाजिक संस्तरण की भारतीय व्यवस्था का मुख्य आधार रही है और अनेक अध्ययनों से यह प्रमाणित हुआ है कि यह व्यवस्था जातीय संगठनों के माध्यम से अभी भी सामाजिक संस्तरण की राजनीतिक मांगों को पूरा करने में सक्रिय है। प्रो. रजनी कोठारी ने बताया है कि आधुनिक भारतीय राजनीति में जाति को संगठित रखना और नेतृत्व करना एक अत्यंत लाभप्रद प्रतियोगितात्मक उद्यम के रूप में पनप रहा है। जाति के आधार पर बने संगठन- पंचायत के प्रति सदस्यों की निष्ठा इतनी प्रबल होती है कि कभी-कभी राज्य के कानून की अपेक्षा जातीय पंचायत के आदेश सामाजिक जीवन में अधिक प्रभावी दिखाई देते हैं। जातिवाद के राजनीति में बढ़ रहे प्रभाव को प्रो. कोठारी ने “राजनीति का जातिवाद” कहा है। वास्तव में जातियों का राजनीतिकरण

बीसवीं सदी के अंतिम दशक में चरम पर पहुंच गया। इस दशक में जातीय समूह को अपनी पहचान बनाने तथा राजनैतिक सत्ता पद और शक्ति प्राप्त करने में सफलता प्राप्त हुई।

प्रोफेसर योगेंद्र सिंह ने बताया है कि, जाति की राजनैतिक भूमिका दो स्तरों से होकर गुजरी है, प्रथम स्तर पर यह राजनैतिक परंपरागत प्रबल तथा उच्च संस्करण पर प्रतिष्ठित जातियों तक सीमित रही। इसे प्रो. कोठारी ने मोर्चाबंद जातियाँ (Entrenched Caste) की राजनीति कहा है। दूसरे स्तर पर इन मोर्चा बंद जातियों को मध्यम संस्करण तथा निम्न संस्करण की जातियों ने चुनौती देना प्रारंभ किया और उनमें राजनैतिक चेतना बढ़ी। जैसे उत्तर प्रदेश और बिहार में स्वतंत्रता प्राप्ति के एक दशक बाद ही मध्य संस्करण वाली जातियों जैसे अहीर, कुर्मी, राजभर अनुसूचित और अन्य पिछड़ी जातियों तथा जनजातियों में नई राजनैतिक शक्ति के रूप में जातियों के मुखिया उभरने लगे, जो अपना प्रभाव बढ़ाते-बढ़ाते कई राज्यों में सरकार बनाने में भी सफल होते गए है। प्रो. कोठारी ने इन्हें 'उदीयमान जाति' (Asendant Caste) कहा है जिनके, उदय से भारतीय राजनीति को एक नया जनाधार प्राप्त हो गया है।

पिछड़ी जातियों और हजारों वर्षों से शोषित और दलित जातियों, जिन्हें भारतीय संविधान में अनुसूचित कहकर संगठन का नया आधार दे दिया है। जैसे-जैसे उनमें राजनैतिक चेतना आती गई, वैसे-वैसे उनके जातीय संगठन राजनैतिक शक्ति के रूप में सत्ता में हिस्सेदारी की मांग करने लगे और ऊंची जातियों से राजनीति में ही नहीं सामाजिक उत्सवों और व्यावसायिक गतिविधियों में भी प्रतिस्पर्धा करने लगे। इसके फलस्वरूप देश के विभिन्न राज्यों के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में अलग-अलग जातियों के बीच सत्ता संघर्ष दिखाई दिया। जाति की यह राजनीतिक प्रतिद्विधा कभी-कभी एक जाति के भीतर उप जातियों में भी होने लगती है, जहां उनके निजी स्वार्थ टकराते हैं तो वह उपजाति के सदस्यों को ही संगठित कर अपनी राजनैतिक शक्ति बनाते हैं। राजनीतिक संघर्ष जातीय गणित से प्रभावित होता जा रहा है, जो राष्ट्र हित की चिंता ना कर मात्र अपनी जाति और क्षेत्र के हित की लड़ाई लड़ने में व्यस्त है। जातीय संगठन राजनैतिक सत्ता संघर्ष में सक्रियता के अतिरिक्त अपने सदस्यों की सामाजिक प्रतिष्ठा को बनाए रखने और उत्तरोत्तर उसमें वृद्धि करने तथा अपनी जाति के सदस्यों को अधिक सुविधाएं जैसे- छात्रवृत्ति, प्रवेश, नौकरियों में आरक्षण, प्रशिक्षण एवं व्यवसायिक शिक्षा, चिकित्सा संबंधी सुविधाएं दिलाने में भी सक्रिय योगदान कर रहे हैं। जातीय संगठनों के माध्यम से आज भी जीवन साथी के चुनाव और पारिवारिक अथवा जातीय विवादों को सुलझाने तथा अपनी जाति के सदस्यों के व्यवहारों पर नियंत्रण रखने का भी कार्य किया जा रहा है।

ऐसे में अनेक बार यह प्रश्न उठता है कि क्या जाति व्यवस्था वर्ग व्यवस्था में परिवर्तित हो रही है?

वर्तमान में बड़ी तेजी से नगरीकरण, औद्योगिकरण और भूमंडलीकरण में हो रही प्रगति के फलस्वरूप जाति व्यवस्था प्रतिबंधों से मुक्त होती जा रही है। व्यवसाय में वृद्धि और शिक्षा के प्रसार के कारण जातियां अपने व्यवसाय से हटकर अपनी आधुनिक व्यावसायिक शिक्षा के बल पर नए-नए व्यवसायों में अपनी कार्यकुशलता दिखा रही है। ऐसा लगता है कि जाति के भीतर ही आर्थिक संपन्नता के आधार पर नए वर्ग पैदा हो रहे हैं। जातियां अपना संगठन बनाकर वर्ग की तरह कार्य करने लगी है। डॉ. रजनी कोठारी के अनुसार सरकारी नौकरियों, लोकसभा, विधानसभा, जिला पंचायत, क्षेत्र पंचायत और ग्राम पंचायतों में अनुसूचित जातियों और पिछड़ी जातियों को आरक्षण की सुविधा के कारण उनमें बढ़ रही राजनीतिक एकजुटता की प्रतिक्रिया में अन्य जातियां भी अपने हितों की रक्षा के लिए एकजुट होती जा रही हैं और शनैः-शनैः समान परंपरा - प्रथा और स्तर पर रहने वाली जातियां वर्ग की विशेषताएं ग्रहण करती जा रही है। फिर भी यह कहना कठिन है जाति व्यवस्था पूर्णतया समाप्त होकर वर्ग व्यवस्था में बदल जाएगी। क्योंकि जाति का आधार जन्म और सामाजिक परंपरा है, जबकि वर्ग का आधार स्पष्ट आर्थिक समानता है। इसी संदर्भ में डॉ. योगेंद्र सिंह ने लिखा है कि कसी समान राजनीतिक अथवा आर्थिक लक्ष्य की प्राप्ति के लिए कई बार कुछ जातियां संगठित हो जाती हैं और इस प्रकार उनमें वर्ग की विशेषताएं दिखाई देने लगती हैं। लेकिन यह परिवर्तन अस्थायी है, क्योंकि उन लक्ष्यों की प्राप्ति के अनन्तर जातियां ववाह, भोजन और धार्मिक अनुष्ठानों से संबंधित प्रतिबंधों पर लौट आती हैं।”

डॉ. नर्मदेश्वर प्रसाद ने लिखा है कि "भारतीय जाति व्यवस्था धार्मिक- पौराणिक किस्म की है, अतः योरोप की भांति यह कभी भी आर्थिक और राजनैतिक आधार पर वर्ग व्यवस्था में परिवर्तित नहीं होगी।”

डॉ. कैलाश नाथ शर्मा ने अपना मत देते हुए लिखा है कि “जाति की प्रकृति संस्कारात्मक एवं धार्मिक कार्यों से हटकर चुनावों, व्यवसायों और नौकरियों में अपने सदस्यों को सुविधाएं प्रदान करने में बदल गई है लेकिन जातियां किसी विचारक के द्वारा बताए हुए वर्गों को जन्म नहीं दे

रही हैं” स्पष्ट है कि भारत की जाति प्रथा के वर्ग व्यवस्था में परिवर्तन की संभावना नहीं के बराबर है। यह अपने पुनर्गठन का नया आधार ढूँढने में सक्षम प्रतीत होती है। इसकी जो धार्मिक विशेषताएं और जातीय अस्मिता से जुड़ी हुई प्रथाएं हैं, संस्कार और वैवाहिक रीति-रिवाज है, वह इसके अस्तित्व को बनाए रखेंगे।

प्रत्येक समाज में सदस्यों के ‘कार्य’ और ‘पद’ को सुनिश्चित करने तथा सामाजिक व्यवहार को नियंत्रित करने के लिए कोई सामाजिक व्यवस्था अवश्य होती है। इस सन्दर्भ में प्रत्येक समाज में किसी न किसी आधार पर सामाजिक संस्तरण अवश्य पाया जाता है। जाति व्यवस्था भी ऐसी ही सामाजिक संस्तरणात्मक व्यवस्था है, जिसे समाप्त करना पूरी तरह से संभव नहीं होगा। क्योंकि कोई न कोई सामाजिक संस्करण तो देना ही होगा। अतः जाति प्रथा की बुराइयों को मिटाकर इसे एक सामाजिक संस्था के रूप में शक्तिशाली बनाना होगा। युगानुरूप जाति-व्यवस्था में अनेक परिवर्तन आए हैं आगे भी इसमें अनुकूलन करने की पर्याप्त क्षमता है। डॉ. के.एन. शर्मा का कथन है कि, जाति व्यवस्था में समय के साथ अनुकूलन करने एवं समुत्थान की शक्ति निहित है, जो जाति प्रथा की समाप्ति के झूठे भय को अप्रमाणित करती है। इसी प्रकार प्रो. एम. एन. श्रीनिवास ने गुजरात, उड़ीसा, आंध्र प्रदेश, बिहार तथा उत्तर प्रदेश में जातियों में उभरती जागरूकता और नवीन जातीय संगठनों के निर्माण की प्रवृत्ति के आधार पर जाति व्यवस्था के शक्तिशाली होने की बात कही है। प्रो. योगेंद्र सिंह का मत है कि जाति में होने वाले परिवर्तनों को समुत्थान एवं लचीलेपन की दृष्टि से देखा जाना चाहिए। दीर्घ काल तक जाति राजनैतिक, आर्थिक तथा सांस्कृतिक क्षेत्र में आधुनिकीकरण करने वाली सामाजिक संरचना के लिए संस्थात्मक आधार प्रदान करती रही है। अतः यह सोचना वैज्ञानिक दृष्टि से तार्किक नहीं है कि, जाति व्यवस्था वर्ग व्यवस्था में परिवर्तित हो रही है। प्रो. जी. एस. घुरिये एवं प्रो. श्री निवास का मत है कि, अंग्रेजी शासनकाल में जहां एक ओर जाति प्रथा के बंधनों को ढीला किया गया, वहीं जाने-अनजाने जाति प्रथा को प्रोत्साहन भी मिला। सुधार आंदोलन और जातीय संगठनों ने जाति प्रथा को मजबूती प्रदान की। प्रो. श्रीनिवास का मत है कि भारत में ऐसे भी लोग हैं जिनकी जाति की संख्या अत्यंत कम है फिर भी वह गुणात्मक दृष्टि से इतने महत्वपूर्ण है, कि उनकी उपेक्षा नहीं की जा सकती। अधिकांश हिन्दू आज भी जाति प्रथा के पक्षधर हैं, अतः किसी ऐसे-ऐसे भारतीय समाज की कल्पना नहीं की जा सकती, जो जातिविहीन हो। गांव में रहने वाली जनता के लिए जातियां आज भी वह सारा कार्य करती है, जो पश्चिमी देशों में कल्याणकारी राज्य करता है। अतः हम कह सकते हैं कि एक गतिशील सामाजिक संस्था के रूप में जाति व्यवस्था हजारों वर्षों से अनेक परिवर्तनों से समझौता करके जीवित

है। उसी प्रकार भविष्य में भी अपने लचीले स्वभाव और अनुकूलन क्षमता के भरोसे यह अपना अस्तित्व बचाने में समर्थ सिद्ध होगी। भले ही उसकी विशेषताओं में परिवर्तन आ जाए, जो स्वाभाविक भी है और दृष्टिगत भी होने लगा है।

साथ ही अभी यह कहना कठिन है कि भारत में जाति व्यवस्था समाप्त होकर वर्ग व्यवस्था में बदल जाएगी या नहीं। कारण यह है कि जातियों का चरित्र बदल रहा है, वह नवीन सामाजिक परिस्थितियों के अनुसार समायोजन कर पुनर्गठित हो रहे हैं और सामान्य चरित्र वाली जातियां एक-दूसरे से निकटता बढ़ा रहे हैं जिसके परिणामस्वरूप यह भ्रम हो रहा है कि जाति व्यवस्था वर्ग व्यवस्था में बदल रही है। वस्तुतः वर्ग व्यवस्था पूंजीवादी समाज की अपनी विशेषता है जैसे-जैसे समाज में अर्थ का महत्व बढ़ेगा और समान आर्थिक स्तर की जातियां परस्पर निकट आकर संगठन बनाएंगे वैसे-ऐसा आभास होना स्वाभाविक है। किंतु जाति की अन्य विशेषताएं न बदलने के कारण उसका अस्तित्व निश्चित रूप से ही बना रहेगा। जाति प्रथा को उखाड़ फेंकना संभव नहीं है। क्योंकि जाति के आधार पर आज भी जनगणना की जाती है जाति का प्रमाण पत्र देखकर शिक्षण संस्थाओं में प्रवेश किया जाता है, और जाति के आधार पर नौकरियों में आरक्षण मिलता है। साथ ही वोट की राजनीति के कारण जिस जाति को सुविधाएं शासन द्वारा प्रदान की जा रही हैं, उन्हें समाप्त कर पाना राजनैतिक इच्छाशक्ति के अभाव में और राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर नित्य कमजोर होते जा रहे राजनैतिक दलों के माध्यम से संभव दिखाई नहीं देता। वर्तमान भारत की सांस्कृतिक आर्थिक राजनीतिक प्रवृत्तियां और परिस्थितियां ऐसा संकेत दे रहे हैं कि जाति व्यवस्था अपने अतीत में आने वाले संकटों की ही भांति इस दौर को भी पार कर जाएगी और नए आधारों पर अपनी पहचान बनाए रखने में सफल होगी।

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## **MAGIC REALISM IN *THE PLAY LION IN THE STREETS* BY JUDITH THOMPSON**

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### **Abstract**

*Franz Roh first coined the term Magic Realism in 1925 in connection with Post-Expressionist art. It was aligned with that of the "marvellous" as something ontologically necessary to the regional population's "vision of everyday reality", the term was also applied to works varying widely in genre and discursive strategy. Hence locus for critical studies on magic realism has been broadened outward from Latin America and the Caribbean to include speculations on its place in the literature of India, Nigeria, and Canada. Magic realism provides a positive and liberating response to the codes of imperial history and its legacy of fragmentation and discontinuity. Since it conveys two-fold and often dominating, oppositions of real social conditions through the "speaking mirror" of their literary language, magic realist texts implicitly suggest that enabling strategies for the future require envisioning the seemingly tyrannical units of the past in a complex and imaginative double-think of "remembering the future." This process can transmute the "shreds and fragments" of colonial violence and otherness into new "codes of recognition". This paper plans to focus on Judith Thompson's play *Lion in the Street* to show how the text reiterates, in both its narrative discourse and thematic content, the real social and historical relations that are obtained within the post-colonial culture.*

Magic realism as a narrative mode provides "a way to discuss alternative approaches to reality with that of Western philosophy, expressed in many post-colonial and non-Western works of contemporary fiction" (Bowers 1). The popularity of magic realist fiction in English in post-colonial nations has promoted a debate on the suitability of magic realism as a post-colonial strategy of writing.

Stephen Slemon, in his influential article "Magic Realism as Post-Colonial Discourse", calls on a mixture of postmodernist assumptions to claim that magic realism is to express several

post-colonial elements. Slemon draws attention to the production of binaries and dualities operating in settler cultures that foreground the "gaps, absences and silences produced by the colonial encounter" (Slemon 410). Slemon, claims that magic realism's strength is that it encodes "a concept of resistance to the massive imperial centre and its totalizing systems" (410). He encloses, "magic realism, at least in a literary context, seems most visibly operative in cultures situated at the fringes of mainstream literary traditions" (408).

Slemon explains that there are two discourses in the magic realist narratives that each of them has a different perspective: the magic and the real. The theorist tries to elaborate that neither of the two is dominant, there is continuous tension and resistance between them. This structure reflects the tension between the ever-present and ever-opposed colonized and colonialist discourses. In a post-colonial context in which the narrative structure reflects the relationship between the two the "texts recapitulates a post-colonial account of the social and historical relations of the culture in which they are set" (409).

Magic realism describes virtually any literary text in which binary oppositions, or antinomies, can be discovered. It is also spoken so loosely as a historical-geographical term that its textual implications tend to become obscured.

The prevalence of the term is particularly questioned and confirmed by many practitioners of the relatively new field of post-colonial studies. Critics agree that magic realism seems to be a mode particularly well suited to express the native element in cultures of post-colonial countries, the component previously suppressed or misrepresented. Wendy Faris perceives the style as reproducing, through its narrative hybrid and "cultural environment, the hybrid nature of much post-colonial society" (Faris 2004).

Canadian literature owes a lot to its sturdy realism. Reaction against the seeming artificiality and shallow escapism of early fiction and the increase in nationalism and an attempt to forge a distinctively Canadian cultural identity are the two chief sources highlighting Canadian literature. The attempt to sharply delineate a Canadian identity through literature, arising from "the deep uncertainty implicit in the very idea of Canada," lasted until at least the late 1960s (Besner 9). Modern Canadian literature is interested in exploring and interrogating the various constructs of Canada, rather than attempting to define national identity.

Judith Thompson is one of Canada's chief playwrights. Her stage plays, radio plays and monologues have moved and disturbed audiences across Canada and around the world for more than 15 years. She has penned four major plays that include *The Crackwalker* (1980), *White Biting Dog* (1984), *I Am Yours* (1987) and *Lion in the Streets* (1991) and in January 1997, the Tarragon Theatre in Toronto produced her newest play, *Sled*. She was awarded twice the Governor General's Award for Drama: in 1984 for *White Biting Dog* and in 1989 for a collection of her works called *The Other Side of the Dark*.

In *Lion in the Streets*, an entire neighbourhood is explored and the worlds of reality, fantasy or dream are simple shifts which are not pointed to or explained. Jen Harvie, in her article

"Constructing Fictions of an Essential Reality or, 'This Picture is Nice' comments that Judith Thompson's *Lion in the Streets*, "may be seen to combine a powerful level of realism with an equally powerful deconstruction of reality" (Harvie47).

*Lion in the Streets* presents the viewer with a fragmented, relay-structured narrative. The narrative begins realistically and quickly slides into the realm of the fantastic without explanation or resolution, before slipping into the next. The recurring character is Isobel, the ghost of a young murdered Portuguese girl who attempts to find redemption through an assertion of her subjectivity.

Realism represents the hegemonic discourse of the colonizer; magic refers to the strategy of opposition and resistance used by the colonized. The magic realism of Thompson's play addresses historical issues critically and attempts to heal historical wounds. It reflects the history and also seeks to change it. This paper tries to read the play *Lion in the Streets* a post-colonial historiographical intervention, a strategic re-centring of Canadian history in the lives of the Canadians historically dispossessed.

Ghosts thrive in magic realist fiction and are central to definitions of magic realism as a literary mode. Ghosts make absence present, Lois Parkinson Zamora states, "they foreground magic realism's most basic concern -- the nature and limits of the knowable -- and they facilitate magic realism's

critique of modernity" (Zamora 498). Zamora states that

"ghosts embody the fundamental magic realist sense that reality always exceeds our capacities to describe or understand or prove and that the function of literature is to engage this excessive reality, to honour that which we may grasp intuitively but never fully or finally define" (Zamora 498).

With *Lion in the Streets*, Thompson no longer examines one or two families but a neighbourhood, a community of families, thereby allowing us to glimpse briefly into the lives of 28 characters. We are led through the neighbourhood by Isobel, the ghost of a nine-year-old girl murdered seventeen years ago. Isobel's position as a ghost allows her to take us into the lives of her neighbours. She often remains as an invisible observer though seen by other characters. She watches the horrible acts the characters commit upon each other.

Thompson's play begins with an address to the audience by Isobel, the ghost of a murdered Portuguese girl. Isobel may seem to be a unified subject--a real person with real problems. Her appearance on stage combined with her descriptions of her home, family, and her accent, make her seem all the more believable as a person. Her first words are "Doan be scare. Doan be scare. Doan be scare of this pickshur. This pickshur is niiiice [sic], nice! I love this pickshur, this pickshur is mine!" (Thompson 15).

When she identifies her street, saying she and her siblings play with the neighbourhood children, she has a revelation:

"But...when did tha be? Tha not be now! Tha not be today! I think tha be very long years ago I think I be old. I think I be very old. Is my house but - is not my house is my street but is not my street my people is gone I am lost. I am lost. I AM LOOOOOOOOOST!"  
(Thompson16)

Isobel presents the audience with the idea of artificiality as soon as she identifies the scene as a picture. She believes in the reality of the representation until she begins to reconsider her words and realizes that the street is unfamiliar in as many aspects as it is familiar. As Isobel re-evaluates her identity, she becomes a subject in the process. She constructs a sense of her identity as she goes along, becoming herself, rather than realizing who she is through an epiphany.

As the play progresses, Isobel becomes invisible to the other characters, which eventually leads her to the acceptance, "I am gone, I am dead, I AM DEADLY DEAD!...I am no more" (Thompson36). She experiences her horrible revelation as she overhears two friends, Joanne and Rhonda, talking in a bar. Joanne tells Rhonda that she has bone cancer, leading Isobel to scream inaudibly at her: "We are both picture now. WHO WILL TAKE US? WHO WILL TAKE US TO HEAVEN,

HA?" (Thompson 36-37). Isobel is aware of her liminal position and that she seems to be a ghostly representation of herself in this scene. Isobel and Joanne struggle to construct subjectivities that will allow them an afterlife, whether in heaven or on earth.

Like Isobel, the other characters in the play are self-consciously aware of their artificiality. At one point, George, a friend of Sue, the character who rescues Isobel from bullies at the play's opening, is speaking to his wife, Laura, and suddenly he "grabs a tablecloth and wraps it around his head, like a shawl, speaking in a Portuguese accent" (Thompson25). George has somehow turned into Maria, Isobel's mother, and begins conversing with Laura, who is completely unfazed by the transformation.

In another scene, David, a waiter from Rhonda and Joanne's bar, wanders into a church on a whim, only to be greeted by Father Hayes claims David is an altar boy who drowned as a child. David tells the priest that he is mistaken, but on his way out, his parting words are, "it was nice on the water, you know? It was neat, so calm, as I slipped underneath I wasn't scared, I'll tell ya. I wasn't scared a bit. The water was so...nice!" (Thompson 42). Neither Father Hayes nor the audience can tell if David is making a morbid joke, or whether he is a ghost. The word "nice" at the end of his sentence echoes Isobel's "niiiice" from the first scene, strongly hinting that he is also dead.

Isobel's redemption at the end of the play endures a change as she is about

to kill her murderer. To enter heaven, she chooses to forgive him. Isobel addresses the audience before her ascension, "I want you all to have your life" (Thompson63), and so it is up to the audience to create a happy ending for the narrative.

Fractured subjectivities of the characters and fragmentation on the structural level are replicated through the intersecting narratives in the play. This appears disorienting and frightening, but it leads to a kind of liberation for the characters and even the audience. Terror and confusion experienced by the characters in the play help to perform psychical healing.

In *Lion in The Streets*, Thompson thrives into magic realism by developing a dream landscape devoid of all confines of realism, focused on a plotline perpetuated by the casual flow of free thought. The unconscious lives of the characters are acted out as an inner dialogue blatantly voices their most intimate thoughts and feelings, skinning them of their public facades. We realize how extraordinary and complex the human-animal is.

This play witnesses a succession of characters groping for understanding and meaning through the attainment of power, wealth and material desire. Other characters fail miserably except for Isobel. Isobel alone is willing to risk the inner path and make the journey to self-realization.

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## CONFLATION OF SMELL AND INFERTILITY: A READING OF AMRITA PRITAM'S STENCH OF KEROSENE

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### Abstract

*Infertility has become one of the major concerns of the current time. The factors like changes in food habits, lifestyle, and stress have contributed to the growth of infertility. Infertility can affect both men and women equally, but women are blamed for not having children. However, feminism has not given due attention to this issue, evident from the very few research works on this area. In India, writers like Manju Kapur, Amrita Pritam, Perumal Murugan, and Gita Hariharan are some of the writers who have delved into the concept of infertility. In this paper, I have attempted to closely read Amrita Pritam's short story Stench of Kerosene to analyze the representation of infertility in the Indian cultural and social context. The repercussions of infertility on both males and females are juxtaposed to understand society's attitude towards different genders.*

**Keywords:** *infertility, patriarchy, motherhood, gender stereotyping*

India is now the second-most populous country in the world after China. Perhaps, it is expected that India might overtake China in terms of population in the coming years. Nevertheless, this seems doubtful as the fertility rates in India are steadily decreasing according to the reports of the National Family Health Survey- 5 (2019- 21). *The Citizen* reports that "the country's fertility rate has come down to just 2.0 from 2.2 in the National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-2016) and 2.7 in the National Family Health Survey- 3 (2005-2006)" Kaur. These figures are alarming, pointing toward many couples in India suffering from the trauma of infertility. Hence it is high

time to recognize this problem and address it at the earliest.

Though infertility has become a severe problem in India, very few books deal with the theme of infertility and childlessness in Indian literature. Perumal Murugan's *One Part Woman* (2010), Manju Kapur's *Home*(2006) and *Custody* (2011), Gita Hariharan's *Thousand Faces of Night* (1992), Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), Bhabani Bhattacharya's *Music for Mohini* (1952) are some of the works which deal with the theme of infertility as main plot or subplots. There are also some Bollywood movies which has the theme of infertility and childlessness, like *Parched* (2016), *Fire* (1996), *Good*

*Newwz* (2019), *Filhaal* (2002), and *Swarg Se Sunder* (1986), to name a few. Hence writers should bring this issue of infertility, childlessness, and the trauma of infertility faced by both males and females to the limelight.

Amrita Pritam is one of the earliest Punjabi writers who vehemently attacked and challenged the stereotypical notions of gender roles and female sexuality. She is the first Punjabi women writer to receive the Sahitya Akademi award. She wrote in Punjabi, Hindi, and Urdu, and her works are widely translated into foreign languages. She is best known for her works *Sunehade* (Messages) (1955) and *Kagaz Te Kanvas* (1981). The *Stench of Kerosene* is her short story that discusses the theme of infertility, love, marriage, guilt, and loss.

This paper critically analyzes the portrayal of infertility in Amrita Pritam's *Stench of Kerosene*. It explores the patriarchal society's attitude toward a woman who cannot perform her cisgender naturally. Further, it discusses how women themselves perpetuate patriarchal ideologies and destroy another woman's life. It also juxtaposes the experience of infertility by both male and female and the society's attitude toward them. The *Stench of Kerosene* narrates the story of a childless couple, Guleri and Manak. They have been married for seven years and are still childless. Unable to produce children is always considered a shame irrespective of class, caste,

gender, and location. But it is a known fact that childlessness can also be due to the problem of men; an article that appeared in *the Times of India* elaborates the same, "a man can equally be responsible for fertility issues, just like the woman. Female infertility is at 40- 50 percent, and male infertility is 30- 40 percent. Some infertility cases can be because of both the partners too" (Sharma). Nevertheless, it is always women who are held responsible and stigmatized and has to bear the consequences of infertility. This stigmatization can be seen in the *Stench of Kerosene*, too, as Guleri is not able to fit into the predetermined roles given to women by the patriarchal, male-dominated society.

Feminist theorists criticized the notion of considering motherhood as a symbol of a 'true female.' Women are usually reduced to body and biology while defining them. Simone de Beauvoir, in her seminal work *Second Sex* (1949), which paved the way for the theoretical discussions of the second wave feminism, states the common perception of the female as, "she is a womb, an ovary; she is a female- this word is sufficient to define her" (33). She further notes that "it is in maternity that woman fulfills her physiological destiny; it is her natural calling since her whole organic structure is adapted for the perpetuation of the species(467).", which is widely accepted as the destiny of the females. Thus it can be seen how

vital maternity and motherhood are to a woman. It is believed that a woman becomes complete only when she becomes a mother. However, the question persists as to what will happen to a female who is not able to fulfill these criteria. Will she become less feminine or less of a woman?

Infertility, childlessness, or sterility is the state in which a person is not able to conceive and have children. There are various definitions of infertility according to the time period used to diagnose infertility and the gap between the delivery of the first child and the waiting for the second. The World Health Organization defines infertility as "a disease of the male or female reproductive system defined by the failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse"(WHO website). However, these definitions do not entail the social, psychological, and economic consequences of infertility on either sex. Indeed, in most cases, it can be seen that people take refuge in religion or artificial reproductive techniques to deal with infertility.

Nonetheless, in *Stench of Kerosene*, Manak is asked to remarry as Manak is the only son and to continue their race, they need a progeny, particularly a male child. Even after seven years of conjugal life, when Guleri was not able to conceive, her mother-in-law declared that "I will not let it go beyond the eighth year"(Pritam, cited by Tauheed). In *Custody*(2011) also, there is this same scenario, Ishita's mother-in-law

says that "For us, money is not as important as family. But beta, it is essential that Suryakanta have a child. As the only son, he has to make sure that the bloodline of his forefathers continues (Kapur, 66)". Kakkar writes in *Feminine Identity in India* –

For an Indian woman, imminent motherhood is not only the personal fulfilment of an old wish and the biological consummation of a lifelong promise, but an event in which the culture confirms her status as a renewer of the race and extends to her a respect and consideration which were not accorded to her as a mere wife.(68)

Thus it is evident that how motherhood, reproduction, and giving birth to a male child are essential for a woman to sustain her marriage and elevate her status in society. Moreover, if she is not able to perform this role, society will call her names like baanj, barren; she is considered an outcast, often considered a witch, ostracized and will be punished.

Amrita Pritam gives a poignant picture of how women hurl violence against women and thus become silent watchdogs and perpetrators of patriarchy. Manak's mother is the matriarch of the family, which is evident in how she controls her son. Manak remains silent and obeys his mother's decision to marry Roopa in the absence of Guleri. "This year, true to her decision, she had paid Rs. 500 to get him a second wife and now she had waited, as Manak knew, for the time when Guleri went to her parents to

bring in the new bride" ( Pritam, cited by Tauheed). Unable to reveal this to Guleri, Manak indirectly tried to stop her from going to her parents' house. Manak said, "Guleri, do not go away", he begged her. "I ask you again, do not go this time" (Pritam, cited by Tauheed). Manak's body reacted to the new bride in accordance with his mother's wishes and customs. His heart, on the other hand, was dead within him. This shows the immense love Manak has for Guleri despite her being infertile. However, Guleri could not bear the news of her husband's remarriage and committed suicide by pouring kerosene and burning herself alive. Thus Amrita Pritam portrays Guleri as the symbol of the victim of ruthless patriarchy.

Manak, too, became a victim of gender internalization and had to deal with the consequences of infertility. He loved Guleri so much that he did not want to abandon her. Though he married another woman under pressure, he could not love her duly, Roopa always complained that "I am not his spouse", complained his second wife. "I am just someone he happened to marry". He always had a blank look on his face. Finally, when he became a father, he could not confront his child because it reminded him of the injustice done to Guleri. The moment he saw the baby, he screamed and said "take him away!" he shrieked hysterically, "Take him away! He stinks of kerosene"( Pritam, cited by Tauheed).

In the Indian context, many metaphors denote infertility; the most popular ones are 'barren,' 'baanj,' and 'manhoos.' Here in this story, Amrita Pritam uses the metaphor of stench to describe infertility. When Manak sees the baby, he screams and says it stinks of kerosene. Like Guleri's body, it has burnt his life too. Here kerosene refers to infertility itself. He has only contempt for this stench of kerosene. Through this, the author criticizes the patriarchal society for internalizing gender roles and imposing them blindly, thus creating havoc on others. Thus, though both genders are equally responsible for being childless, it is women who are blamed initially by society. However, this is a bit easier for men as the primary role of reproduction is upon women due to their biology. As it can be seen, Manak is asked to remarry, and Guleri is sent off to her paternal home while it was not at all a concern of Manak's parents whether it was the fault of Manak. In rural Indian villages, people resort to a second marriage to deal with infertility, unlike the urban people who opt for fertility treatments and Artificial Reproductive Technologies, the primary reason being economic depravity. Amrita Pritam has very tactically used the metaphor of smell to bring out the emotion of guilt from Manak. The stench actually stands for the violence committed on women due to the internalization and imposition of gender roles by society on women. It was also found that it is high time that

we focus on the issue of infertility as it is engulfing the society rapidly than expected.

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# ANALYSIS OF THE SAPTANGA THEORY OF KAUTILIYA

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this article is to examine Kautilya's Saptanga Theory. It describes seven elements of state, which are similar to the modern theory of state. The paper also investigates contemporary concepts of statecraft. Political thought is primarily concerned with state and its functions. There are differences of opinions among various political thinkers, regarding the origin, nature, boxes, objectives, and elements of the state.

The idea of the states as an organized society goes back to the Greek city states. Aristotle described it as the natural growth of families and villages.

It was for the first time in India that the Arthashastra of Kautilya gave a definition of state. According to him, "no territory is deserves the name of the kingdom unless it's full of people and controlled by an agglomeration of power with absolute authority of the territory.

Kautilya's Arthashastra is not a theoretical treatise on political science. It does not directly concern with the origin of state but its entire teaching is addressed to the concept of king, single ruler of the state.

## **Research Questions**

1. What is Kautilya's Saptanga theory?
2. What are some of the criticisms of the theory?

## **Research Objective**

The main objective of this paper is to analyze

1. To look at an overview of who Kautilya was and his theory of state.
2. To understand the relevance of the Saptanga theory in the present time.

## **Research Methodology**

The researcher employed the secondary researcher approach, taking into consideration the nature of the issue and subsequent research questions. The researcher used several publications that were widely accessible on the internet, as well as numerous cases and books published by well-known writers. The research paper was written on the basis of these resources.

## Literature Review

### Indian Political thought by B.N Ray and R.K.Mishra

In this book, chapter one is basically what is referred for this paper. It basically gives a very brief overview of who Kautilya as a thinker was, how he devised the Saptanga theory, what the theory is all about and what are its shortcomings. The chapter also speaks about the mandala theory given by him, though it was not much of help but it helped the researcher in understanding the thinking of Kautilya, and the lines upon which he worked.

Foundations of Indian Political thought by V.R.Mehta: in this book chapter five was mainly referred. It tells about the Arthashastra devised by Kautilya in great detail. It also talked about the saptanga theory in great detail. It speaks about its relevance and importance. It brings upon a comparison and similarity report connecting the theory with the present time governing system. It also speaks about its merits and demerits and establishes kautilya's Arthashastra as a whole.

Theorizing Kautilya's perception of state: Saptanga theory and its relevance to modern state system: this research paper basically gives a brief about the saptanga theory, its shortcomings, and its present day relevance. It also talks about Kautilya's life and Arthashastra in brief. It brings upon a comparison of the present day governance system and the then time governance system. It also tells how

this theory is best for the then time governance system. Overall it provides a good analysis of the theory and Kautilya.

### Chapter 1 Background: Who is Kautilya

The mystifying figure of Kautilya, also known as Chanakya or Kautilya stands on the dark entrance of ancient India. In some ways, Kautilya is remembered as an ancient Indian scholar, teacher, philosopher, visionary, economist, jurist, first political realist, and royal adviser. He was the most astute political thinker and is regarded as the father of ancient Indian political thought. He is known as the "Indian Machiavelli"<sup>1</sup> for his keen understanding of political and diplomatic strategies. In India, he is regarded as a pioneer in the fields of political science and economics.

It is widely assumed that Kautilya was born in 'Chanaka' in Takshashila, the capital of Gandhar Desh and a prominent educational center in ancient India (Now it is situated in the North-West and Rawalpindi district of Punjab in Pakistan). However, his birthplace is mentioned in the Jain Scriptures (the Adbidhana Chintamani) as being in South India, near present-

<sup>1</sup> "Kaur, Kiranjit. "KAUTILYA □: SAPTANGA THEORY OF STATE." *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 71, no. 1, 2010, pp. 59-68, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42748368>. Accessed 23 Apr. 2022."

day Kerala. There are also differing opinions on his name and title. One school of thought holds that because he was a son of Chanak, he was named 'Chanakya,' and because he was a shrewd politician, he was named Kautilya. Another school of thought holds that he was given the name Chanakya because he was born in the village of Chanaka. Others believe that because his clan (Gotra) relationship was 'Kutal,' he was named 'Kautilya.'

It is widely assumed that Kautilya or Chanakya was a highly educated individual in India. He is thought to have influenced the great poet Kalidasa, Yajnavalkya, Vishnu Sharma, Vishakhadatta, and the famous dramatist Bana, among others.<sup>2</sup> He attended the University of Nalanda, a world-renowned university at the time. It is believed that Kautilya met Chandra Gupta, who had come to this university to further his education, at this university. Chandra Gupta left a favourable impression on Kautilya. He was convinced that Chandra Gupta possessed all of the characteristics of a true Indian king. He elevated Chandragupta Maurya to the position of Emperor. Thus, his dream of enthroning Chandra Gupta as King of Magadha was realized when he became not only King of Magadha, but also Emperor of India. Kautilya served as

<sup>2</sup> de Casparis, J. G. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 81, no. 4, 1961, pp. 432–34, <https://doi.org/10.2307/595694>. Accessed 23 Apr. 2022.

the renowned Minister of Chandra Gupta, the founder of the imperial Mauryan Dynasty that succeeded the Nandas' dynasty.

As an individual, he was a realist, and as a leader of the Kingdom, he was a practical statesman who solved the problems that the world faced at the time. The Arthashastra is a well-known book written by Kautilya. It's a magnificent work on the science of statecraft. It is thought to have been written between 321 and 300 BC. The Arthashastra of Kautilya is a prose work divided into 15 books and 150 chapters.<sup>3</sup> It is a book about the acquisition and preservation of dominion, i.e. the state. Arthashastra is a book that discusses important topics such as kingship, ministers, inter-state relations, diplomacy, war, religion, punishment, justice, finance, and so on. It is a form of state governance. It is a theoretical book that deals with practical issues of state administration.

## Chapter 2 Kautaliya's Theory of State

According to Kautilya, the state is made up of Raja (king) and Praja (subjects).<sup>4</sup> The king has total authority

<sup>3</sup> Saad, M., 2020. *National Security in Kautilya's ... - theshillonga. The Shillonga*. Available at:

<https://theshillonga.com/index.php/jhed/article/view/84> [Accessed April 23, 2022].

<sup>4</sup> Banerjee, Prathama. "Chanakya/Kautilya: History, Philosophy, Theater and the Twentieth-Century Political." *History of the Present*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2012, pp. 24–51,

over his subjects. However, the king is bound by divine law. It is the kingdom where everyone follows a strict regimen. A king is wise and virtuous, and he is assisted by officers known as state-officers during his reign. They are truthful in their work. The subjects are the people, and they believe in their Raja because there is no distinction between Raja and Rajya in their eyes (state). The king's Dharma is the security of the state. The law applies to the king as well, and he must abide by it. According to Kautilya, the king is a public servant, and the happiness of the people is the king's happiness. The king's good is found in their goodness. The king cannot claim that his happiness is for the benefit of the people. The king's well-being should be seen in the well-being of his subjects. So, for Kautilya, a kingdom is a state whose president is the king. The people are led by the king. Even though the king rules over them, he is not above the law. His duty and Dharma are to rule. The state is a legacy, and it should be ruled in accordance with the law. Failure to do so would be a violation of Dharma. In Kautilya's state, Dharma reigns supreme, and this is the divine doctrine.

### **Kautilya's Saptanga Theory**

Kautilya's Saptanga theory or the seven elements of the state theory, is based on the fact that according to Kautilya

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the state or the 'Rajya' has seven elements, which when comes together forms a state. In the Arthashastra, Kautilya used the term 'Rajya,' or 'state,' for the first time, as a seven-element system. When these seven elements of state work together as if they were the body's limbs, they become valuable assets to the King. Swami or Raja, Amatya, Janapada, Durga, Kosha, Danda, and Mitra are the seven elements of the state described by Kautilya in the first chapter of the sixth Adikaran of Arthashastra.

### **Swami or Raja**

Swami is the state's first and most important organ. He is the state and government chief, and he holds a prominent position in Kautilya's polity. The entire government structure revolves around him. His power in the state is concentrated in his hands. He is the political body's backbone. He is the boss. He possesses sovereignty. He wields political power. He represents both the punisher and the punishment. He is the driving force behind the expansion of the empire and the maintenance of a healthy social system. He is the guardian of the public interest, the promoter of religion, and the manager of the law. He is the focal point of governance and the final judge of justice. He is the means by which man's desires, Dharma (religion), Kama (desire), Mokshya (salvation), and Artha, are realised (the pursuit of wealth or

material advantage). According to Kautilya, the Swami must be completely righteous and have no downsides.

### **Qualities of a Swami or Raja**

1. Born in high family.
2. Interested in religion.
3. Must be honest, ambitious and hardworking.
4. He should identify and respect meritorious people.
5. He should be an education lover.
6. He should have good knowledge of scriptures, sharp memory, and good reasoning skills.
7. He should be brave, courageous, have self-control, and he is enthusiastic and stunning.
8. He should have the power to forgive criminals, save people at the time of famine, good knowledge of usage of weapons and he should have the ability to understand the weakness of the enemy in a jiffy.
9. He should be free from: a. Kama (desire) b. Moha (attachment) c. Lobh (greed) d. Krodh (anger).
10. He should speak sweet words, and he should be a person who does not get influenced by others.

Hence Kautilya says: The other elements will be progressive if the Swami becomes progressive. If the Swami becomes obsessed, all other elements will follow suit.

As a result, Kautilya's King resembles a modern head of state, who is all powerful as long as he performs his duties.

### **Amataya**

The Swami, no matter how clever, intelligent, or efficient he is, cannot do all of the state's work on his own. As a result, he requires an intelligent, talented, royalist Amatayas to carry out the state's functions smoothly and effectively. Kautilya in his Arthashastra has also mentioned that if we look at a vehicle, it cannot run on itself with a single wheel, he needs other wheels to balance itself and run itself, similarly a swami cannot run the state alone, he needs the help of amatyas to carry out the functions of the state.

According to the Arthashastra, amatya's are described as a body of service from where officials at higher post like chief priests, ministers, collectors, officers, envoys, superintendents from different departments are recruited. It also describes amatyas as the high rank officers or other royal employees of the state and or the administrative personnels. .

### **Appointment**

On the basis of their qualifications, and most importantly they should be honest and incorrupt.

### **Functions**

1. Giving right advice to the swami in state affairs.
2. Giving advice to the king on matters of collection of taxes, maintain defense, maintaining security of the state.
3. Handling civil and criminal administration.

## **Kautilya Divided Amatya's into Two Categories**

1. The ones who belonged to native noble origin and who possessed virtues like intellect, cleverness, bravery, loyalty to the king, enthusiasm, superior capability to run the administration, and respective positions were promoted to higher ranks.
2. The remaining ones were promoted to lower posts according to their quality and qualifications.

The significance of Amatyas is demonstrated by the accomplishment of the state's affairs and the achievement of its goal.

## **Janapada**

- The Arthashastra's definition of Janapada includes both territory and people. A state cannot survive without either its population or its land. The Janapada, according to Kautilya, is made up of 800 villages, including a group of 400 villages known as 'Dronamukh,' a group of 200 villages known as 'Kharbatik,' and a group of ten villages known as 'Sangrahan.'
- A 'Pura' or Durga known as 'Sthaaneey' (local) is located in the midst of the Janapada 'Pura' (city) or Durga is primarily responsible for Janapada security. In the midst of the Janapada, there should be a border and Durga. Its land should be so fertile that it can generate food with little more than a little hard labour, and that food can meet

the needs of both locals and visitors.

- Territory of the Janapada: Mountains, rivers, and woods should be present in Janapada so that they can assist in times of need. The Janapada mineral reserves should be adequate. For the cattle, there should be adequate pasture land. Janapada, the adjacent state, should be impotent, and its terrain should be free of dirt, rocks, ferocious animals, dense forest, burglars, and insurgents. The Janapada's environment should be pleasant and scenic, owing to its rivers and springs, and sale and purchase, including valuable commodities, should be open to everyone. The subjects should be capable of withstanding punishment and taxation.
- Characteristics of population of Janapada: Residents of Janapada, according to Kautilya, should be royal worshipers and pure-hearted individuals who are hardworking and antagonistic to the enemy. In addition, the majority of the low Varna residents amongst subjects in the Janapada should be obedient. Farmers should work diligently because the state's prosperity is dependent on them. Men of high integrity and loyalty, knowledge, wise masters, and slaves should all be present.

## Durga

- Durg's literal meaning is "fortification." It appears that Kautilya used it to refer to a fortified capital. In his Arthashastra, Kautilya mentions 'Durgavidhana' and 'Durganivesa.' In 'Durgavidhana,' he refers to fortress construction, whereas in 'Durganivesa,' he refers to capital design and layout. According to him, the capital should be established in a central location, with separate regions set up for various Varnas, artisans, and Gods.
- Durga, he believed, is the seat of power. Power is required for the state to exist. The king should construct a fort around his own border territories to protect the Kosha, Janapada, and Danda. It should be beneficial in the event of a battle, and it should be built on inaccessible and rugged terrain. Overall, it serves as the Janapada's safe haven in times of trouble. According to Kautilya, those whose Durga is powerful cannot be easily defeated.
- Kautilya has devised four types of forts which are:
  - i) 'Parbat' Durga (Mountain Fort): This is a gloomy cave with mountain peaks, rocks, and other features.
  - ii) 'Oudak' Durga (Wetting Fort): The fort is surrounded by water and appears to be an island in the midst of it.
  - iii) Durga 'Dhawan': This fortress occurs in the desert, where there is

no access to water, trees, or grass.

- iv) 'Bana' Durga (Forest Fort): There are bogs and prickly plants around this sort of fort.

Both the Oudak and Parbat forts, according to Kautilya, aid in the security of Janapada during a crisis. Furthermore, in times of extraordinary difficulty, the monarch can flee to forts such as Dhawan and Bana and seek refuge there.

- War, according to Kautilya, is a need for the state. He claimed that war aids in the growth of a state's authority. Durga is extremely important during wartime. There fortification is highly beneficial in defeating the adversary during an attack. According to Kautilya, all types of armed services and food supplies should be placed in Durga ahead of time so that when the enemy attacks, troops locking the gateway can get into Durga and battle the enemy for the state's safety. In addition, the monarch can seek refuge in Dhawan and Bana Durgas, and the enemies will be unable to surround such Durgas because food and water may be scarce.

## Kosha

Kosha in the very basic terms mean money or the treasury, the financial pillar of a state. Without Kosha, no state can function. The Kosha is essential to the state's survival and prosperity. Finance, according to Kautilya, is the most important element

in the world. Kosha is the foundation for all of the state's endeavors. Everything depends on the existence of Kosha, from the repair and preservation of Durga to the extermination of enemy Durga, and from the control of Janapada, Mitra, and Satru (enemy) to motivating the Swami to support the immigrant kings. When faced with a challenge, Kosha can do whatever under his control and get away with it. It is necessary for the accomplishment of Dharma, Kama, and Mokshya. As a result, the king must first consider Kosha.

The Kosha, according to Kautilya, should only be filled with sacred items. It should not be filled with people who are not religious or who harm others. The supply of Kosha should be plentiful. According to Kautilya, the Kosha must be filled with the king's ancestors' wealth and gold, silver, precious gems, and other valuables, as well as the adequate sum of funds and other materials received in the form of tax, so that it can withstand long calamities such as famine and wealth expenditure.

The monarch may take one-sixth of the food, one-tenth of the trade, and fifty percent of the animals and gold from the subjects. In both times of crisis and tranquilly, the Kosha is there for the king. Kautilya goes on to propose that taxes should be obtained from the public based on their ability to pay. He has also provided a detailed summary of Kosha's expenditure operations. It is required for the

security and upkeep of the state in general, as well as the army in particular. If the army runs out of Kosha, for example, it may abandon the Monarch or even assassinate him.

### **Danda or Bala**

- The Danda is seen by Kautilya as a king's splendor. The King requires an army to quell internal unrest and defeat exterior aggression. He saw the ability to punish as a sign of authority and the foundation of sovereignty. The sovereign king is the one who wields the scepter.
- The Swami should maintain an organized and powerful army for the security of the state, which will be made up of troops from the ancestors' military tradition. The troops would've been Kulvir (brave soul or family hero) and enthusiastic, according to tradition. They are trained in military discipline as well as martial skills. Their family members will be cared for by the state, so they won't have to worry about them. Swami is responsible for providing support to the dependents of troops who have gone to combat or perished on the battlefield.
- Disciplined, obedient, and tolerant soldiers are required. They must have prior military experience, be skilled in the use of numerous weapons, be Swami Devotees, and be willing to serve Swami at all times. Every soldier in the army should be fearless, brave, and eager.

- Kautilya regarded the army's four major components. This part, he claims, is made up of inherited and recruited soldiers who are divided into two categories:

1. Infantry
2. Chariots.
3. Elephants.
4. Cavalry.

At the time, he thought the elephant force was the finest in the army. Because this element of the force was crucial in defeating the enemy's army, Durga, and camp, among other things, Kshatriyas made up the majority of the army. Kautilya encourages the king to enlist the help of the Kshatriyas in the army. Though he preferred the Kshatriya army, he also valued the army of Vaishya and Shudra caste men. However, he advised the king against enlisting the army of Brahmin, the main reason was that they were very soft hearted and had power of forgiveness; they could forgive the enemy even after a single meeting.

### **Mitra**

- The Mitra is critical for the state's and Raja's protection. To him, the Mitra should be dynastic, traditional, faithful, permanent, and kind, as well as those who understand their own state and Raja and are willing to assist the Raja and the state in both peace and war.
- The king should always maintain friendly relations with neighboring states, according to Kautilya's

advice. According to Kautilya, when selecting friendly kingdoms, the king should provide supreme status to friendly kings who follow dynasty tradition. When creating allies, the king should put the kings to the test in other ways.

- A trustworthy Mitra, according to Kautilya, would be useful in combating an enemy. Mitras are divided into two categories: Sahaja and Krutrima. A Sahaja, or hereditary Mitra, is someone who has known the King while his father and grandfather were alive. A Krutrima, or fake Mitra, on the other hand, is a person who forms an alliance for the express aim of defending riches and life. According to him, the genuine Mitra should be inherited rather than created.

### **Relevance of the Saptang Theory in the Present Time**

The Saptanga theory is very much relevant in today's day and age, and this can be analyzed by the following points:

It has provided an essential element of state. It has pointed the amataya (ministers) as an essential element, which is actually a replica of the present government, where in the prime minister has the cabinet along with him to help him take the right decisions, and also lets him know about problems in the various sectors of economy of the country. We can also Janapada as a definite territory and population, and we find sovereignty in

the swami or the king or the present day president and the army that is danda.

- 1) The way it gives a continuous importance to the army, it also gives importance to the very existence of the treasury. It is very established that if the economy of a state is not strong it cannot define its own existence; it cannot make a respectable position in the international politics. This can be seen in the present times that many small states still depend on powerful states for their economic development and security. Hence it can be said that the theory has given a very realistic composition of a state.
- 2) Kautilya has given quite an analytical description of the institution of state. He has portrayed the procedural and institutional aspects of the state in a very well descriptive, analytical and explanatory manner. It can be inferred that his view is very wider in comparison with western thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Marx or even Socrates etc.

### **Criticisms of the Saptanga Theory**

This theory also has some shortcomings which can be stated as follows:

1. It has neglected democratic values. The theory is only related with monarchy, the elements of democracy like voting, representative governance,

accountability, people's right to choice and so on are completely missing from the theory. It just focuses on the fact that there is one king of whom people need abide to irrespective of the fact that he knows of the common people's problems or not, it spreads the notion that people also do not have the right to speak to the king about the problems and hence the main basic principle of democracy that is people's voice and the ruler's accountability is missing from the theory.

2. It has not taken into account all the elements of the modern state. Like for example the prevalence of international organizations like the United Nations, or the European Union has not been taken into consideration but these do act as an essential element in the present time. Without these growing for an economy is a task in itself in the present time, as a country cannot grow without allies and allies help for benefit especially in the present times and these organizations are where the benefit can be acquired from.
3. No mention of sovereignty in the theory. In the present time, sovereignty is considered as the sole of a state, in this theory Kautilya failed to directly and explicitly mention about the sovereignty of the state. It has not provided for any rule book or guidance (like the Indian constitution in present

- times) to fall back on if the monarchy converts into autocracy.
- It has given to much importance to army, treasury and fort than required. These are not the only foundational elements of state. Elements like international trade in not given importance or can say rather it is ignored. Army is given too much importance, forgetting the fact that for functioning of army there is requirement of funds and funds come from international trade and taxes, which is given very less importance.

### Conclusion

In current political theory, a state consists of four elements: a defined territorial, a population, a government, and sovereignty. In addition to these four elements, three other elements are present in Kautilya's theory of state: Danda, Kosha, and Mitra. While establishing the seven components of state, Kautilya emphasized the importance of the last three elements of state, Danda, Kosha, and Mitra, in strengthening the state structure. Kautilya's Saptanga theory can be partially incorporated in modern times, although many of its concepts can be embraced. Indeed, Kautilya's theory is a theoretical masterpiece for the then time period. Kautilya intended to speed up the state governance for the smooth running of the state's activities by prescribing the seven constituents of state. While pushing for a powerful king or ruler, Kautilya did not give the

king or ruler total power; rather, he fiercely campaigned for the monarch or ruler to be duty-bound and much more of a democratic slave. To avoid anarchy in the ancient period, Kautilya suggested a contract between the subjects and the king, which is manifested in his theory of state, which states that the creation of the king is the consequence of contract.

In order to provide good administration and benign administration, the Kautilyan monarch should be gifted with other qualities such as virtuous, completely trained, and self-restrained, in addition to the king's duty-bound status. In summary, Kautilya's definition of the seven parts of the state exemplifies the imprint of ancient Indian political philosophy. To summarize, Kautilya's Saptanga theory of state is a scenic exemplification of his excellent understanding of not only the political macrocosm of man, but also the functioning of political institutions, particularly the state.

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## REVISITING PROPP: A STRUCTURALIST ANALYSIS OF MARMAAYA PATTU OF KURICHYAN TRIBE IN WAYANAD

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### Abstract

*Kurichyan, known as Malai Brahmins or Hill Brahmins, is one of the major tribal communities with a rich oral tradition in Wayanad, Kerala. The present paper makes a structural analysis of the origin myth of Malakkari mentioned in Marmaaya Pattu (Tree Song), sung by Kurichyas during Malakkari Thira, using Propp's narrative framework. The aim of the paper is to investigate, whether the Malayali folk songs can be fully described using Propp's Morphology. Propp's model of the meta-folk fairy tale was developed inductively based on a rich, comprehensive, yet limited, corpus of Russian folk fairy tales, which opens up space for further testing of the proposed model. The result demonstrates that Propp's analysis may not be applicable to Indian, especially Malayali narratives, in its entirety.*

**Keywords:** structural analysis, Kurichya tribe, folksongs, Marmaayi Pattu, origin myth

The Kurichyan tribe of Wayanad, Kerala has a rich oral tradition. They possess a vast collection of folk songs that is unmatched by any Adivasi group. The songs are mostly not documented, but 21 of them have been documented by M. R. Pankajakshan in *Wayanattile Adivasikalude Pattukal* published by Kerala Sahitya Akademi in 1989. A comprehensive work on the oral literature, language and art forms of Kurichyas is also done by KIRTADS, Kozhikode and published as 'Kurichyan's Oral Literature, Language, & Art Forms' in 2020.

The present paper hopes to make a structural analysis of the origin myth of *Malakkari* mentioned in *Marmaaya Pattu* (Tree Song) using Propp's narrative framework. According to

Tzvetan Todorov, the main object of structural analysis is the literary discourse and,

“such analysis seeks no longer to articulate a paraphrase, a rational resume of the concrete work, but to propose a theory of the structure and operation of the literary discourse, to present a spectrum of literary possibilities, in such a manner that the existing works of literature appear as particular instances that have been realized.”

Frank Whitehead rightly points out that structural analysis is a “scientific method capable of identifying the general laws governing the phenomena of language, culture and society, so that attention came to be targeted not on activities specific to a particular

human grouping but rather on the underlying structures of which these were said to be merely manifestations". Vladimir Propp's structural analysis of the basic plot components of selected Russian fairytales is considered as the most initial and fundamental step in this regard. It created the foundation for new disciplines like semiology, narratology and structural anthropology.

Propp claimed to approach fairytales in an investigatory manner instead of contributing an informational material to the literature. To him, the solution to the unresolved conundrum of the tales across the world being similar is "correct morphological study. . . If we are incapable of breaking the tale into its components, we will not be able to make a correct comparison. And if we do not know how to compare, then how can we throw light upon, for instance, Indo-Egyptian relationships, or upon the relationships of the Greek fable to the Indian, etc.?" (Propp, 1968, p. 15). Propp chose 102 fairytales (Number 50-Number 151) from Aleksandr N. Afanás'ev's collection of Russian Folktales and separated the component parts of a fairytale. By analyzing the folk tales, Propp discovered that there are typically eight broad character types in any narrative. These main characters perform 31 functions within any narrative. Functions of characters form the foundation based on which narratives are developed. Propp makes three important observations about the

nature of the functions in narratives: (a) the functions are stable across narratives, (b) there are only 31 functions, and (c) the sequence of functions is identical and logical.

The Kurichyas sing the *Marmaaya Pattu* (Tree Song) during *Malakkari Thira* (the special festival to appease their deity). A *thara* (ground) is arranged in the place where the Thira is to be performed. They believe that there is the presence of God in the *thara*. Three to four people sing the *Maramaaya Paattu* around the *thara* with the accompaniment of drum. The song describes how *Malakkari* saved the world with its origin. They see the entire world as an island surrounded by water.

*Malakkari* is the seventh incarnation of Lord Shiva. *Malakkari* inhabited the mountain top of Banasura (a tourist spot in Wayanad, 11°40'7.19" N 75°57'16.79" E.) Demons ruled over the Banasura fort. They fed on humans. *Malakkari* once reached the fort in disguise of a saint to conquer Banasura fort. It was the nuptial ceremony of *Raasashan's* (the demon's) sister *Kadalkunki* and *Raasashan* was getting ready to attend the wedding. His attendance was important because he would be back at the fort only after twelve years. He was worried that there will not be anybody to take care of the fort in his absence. It was at this time that *Malakkari*, in the guise of a saint, reached the fort. The guards did not let *Malakkari* in and *Raasashan* ordered to let him in.

*Malakkari* said that he came only to visit him and *Raasashan*, in reply, asked *Malakkari* if he could take care of the fort in his absence. The saint replied that he could not watch over and protect the fort alone. *Raasashan* promised to fence the fort with arrows and the saint agreed to the proposal.

Twelve years later, *Raasashan* arose in the Eastern sea, but the saint pushed him down using the arrows. When *Raasashan* rose in the Western sea, the saint defeated him there. *Malakkari* then drew a line on the other side of the sea using the arrow and warned the *Raasashan* (demon) not to cross the line. Thus *Malakkari* drove out the demons (the host like in Paradise Lost: troupes) in the Eastern sea and seized the Banasura Fort.

One day, *Malakkari* saw a wild boar digging up the turmeric planted by *Pulliyaran* King in the *Narinarangu* hills. *Malakkari* shot arrows at the boar. He missed it in the first two attempts. He hit the target on the third occasion and went to the hill for the boar. The King asked to bring the boar to the butchery in Vellamunda without using rope or stick. *Malakkari* threw the boar from the hill and it reached the butchery. The King was surprised. In order to test *Malakkari* further, the King asked *Malakkari* to cut the boar without using any knife. *Malakkari* cut it with his forefinger.

To test the King, *Malakkari* said that they can have meat along with toddy. The King asked where the toddy will be available. *Malakkari* meditated

on *Muthappan* for his aid in fetching toddy. *Muthappan* presented himself before *Malakkari* with toddy. *Malakkari*, King and the stewards were a group of nine members. The King ordered one of the stewards to bring arrowroot leaves to drink the toddy in. He also instructed the steward to bring only eight leaves and the steward acted accordingly. *Malakkari* rubbed his palm once with his finger and a bowl appeared in his hand. He said that he only needs enough toddy that can be contained in the small bowl and the others can drink the rest of it. *Muthappan* started pouring toddy into the bowl, but it never got filled. *Malakkari* asked *Muthappan* to bring more toddy. *Malakkari* had drained toddy in all the palm trees. *Muthappan* searched for toddy in all palm trees, but couldn't find any. *Muthappan* decided to flee as he could not go back without toddy to *Malakkari*. He got bitten by a snake on his way. But owing probably to his supernatural and godlike powers, he is only slightly affected and reached Parassini (a place in Kannur, Kerala) where he found his seat on a stone.

*Malakkari* drank the toddy and decided to share the boar meat among the remaining group. He demanded that he wanted one third of the meat and asked them to bring his share to Banasura (a hilly area of scenic beauty, named after the mythological figure, Banasura). The first and second stewards of the King went with *Malakkari's* share to the Banasura

Hills. Another steward was asked to go in search of *Muthappan* and he saw *Muthappan* sitting on a stone, after being bitten by a snake. *Muthappan* described all that occurred to the steward and the third steward never returned. It is believed that this steward, who is called Valya *Muthappan*, is still in company of *Muthappan* in Parassini.

The two stewards who went with the boar meat settled in Banasura Hills. Thus the three stewards of the King settled themselves in different places. *Malakkari* later seized the territory of the King.

*Malakkari* wanted palm toddy to destroy the vampires and other evil spirits in the Banasura Fort after he seized it. Only *Muthappan* could fetch toddy. *Malakkari* decided to bring *Muthappan* to Wayanad. *Muthappan*'s seat was on the Bellyam rock in North Vaikuntam. *Malakkari* went to *Muthappan* and asked him to come along with him and offered him one fourth of his land. *Muthappan* agreed to it and went along with *Malakkari*. On his way to Wayanad, through Kottiyur Hills, *Muthappan* carried small stones in his hand and dropped them in different places. Palm tree, bamboo and Cycas (*Eenth* in Malayalam) grew in places where the stones fell. This is

how *Muthappan* reached Wayanad from North Vaikuntam.

### **Distribution of Characters to Narrative Roles**

*Malakkari*, *Raasashan*, *Raasashan*'s sister *Kadalkunki* (no narrative role), guards (no major narrative role), *Pulliyaran* King and the stewards (only four stewards out of eight have a narrative role) are characters in narrative roles, though *Kadalkunki* and some stewards contribute little to the narrative:

- Protagonist A... *Malakkari*
- Protagonist B... *Pulliyaran* King
- The Villain, in conflict with the Protagonist A... *Raasashan*, Wild boar
- The helper, who assists, rescues, solves and/or transfigures (also transforms) the Protagonist.
  - *Muthappan* as helper
  - Steward 1, the helper... assists Protagonist B in getting the arrowroot leaves
  - Steward 2 and 3, the helpers... assist Protagonist B in taking the boar meat to *Malakkari*
  - Steward 4, the helper ... assists Protagonist B in searching for *Muthappan*,

**Table 1: Propp's 31 Functions adapted from *Marmaaya Paattu***

**A=Propp's Functions**

**B= Functional Sequence in *Marmaaya Paattu***

A	B	Function	Definition of Functions
		Initial Situation	All the characters are introduced

1	16	β- Absentation-One of the members of a family absents himself from home.	<i>Muthappan</i> decided to flee as he could not go back without toddy to <i>Malakkari</i> . <i>Muthappan</i> got bitten by a snake on his way and reached Parassini(a place in Kannur, Kerala) and found his seat on a stone in Parassini.
2	18	Γ- Interdiction-An interdiction is addressed to the hero.	He demanded that he wanted one third of the meat and asked to bring his share to Banasura. This is a variation because one chief protagonist is making a demand on the other chief protagonist.
3		Δ - Violation- The interdiction is violated.	
4		ε - Reconnaissance- The villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance.	
5		ζ - Delivery- The villain receives information about his victim	
6	14	η - Trickery -The villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or of his belongings	<i>Malakkari</i> draws a line on his palm and a bowl appeared on his hand. He told that he only needs the toddy that can be contained in the small bowl and the others can drink the remaining toddy. <i>Muthappan</i> started pouring toddy into the bowl, but it never got filled. <i>Malakkari</i> asked <i>Muthappan</i> to bring more toddy. <i>Malakkari</i> had drained toddy in all the palm trees. 10 C also may fit this feature. But <i>Malakkari</i> has already begun the counteraction
7		θ - Complicity- Victim submits to deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy.	
8		A - villainy- The villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family	

	1	8A - a -Lack- A member of a family lacks something or desires to have something.	<i>Malakkari</i> reaches Banasura fort to conquer it.
	2		Nobody to take care of the fort when the demon leaves for marriage. Here, the lack is on the part of the villain.
	15		<i>Muthappan</i> searched for toddy in all palm trees, but couldn't find any.
	23		<i>Malakkari</i> wanted palm toddy to destroy the vampires and other evil spirits in the Banasura Fort after he seized it.
9	3	B - Meditation- Misfortune or lack is made known; the hero is approached with a request or command; he is allowed to go or he is dispatched.	<i>Raasashan</i> asks if <i>Malakkari</i> can protect the fort. <i>Malakkaari</i> acts as a potential helper and to approach him with a request.
	19		The first and second stewards of the King went with <i>Malakkari's</i> share to the Banasura Hills. Here, instead of the hero, the helper is approached with a command and then dispatched.
	24		<i>Malakkari</i> went to <i>Muthappan</i> and asked him to come along with him and offered him one fourth of his land.
10	4	C - Beginning counteraction- The hero agrees to or decides upon counteraction.	<i>Malakkari</i> agrees to take care of the fort.
	17		<i>Malakkari</i> drank the toddy and decided to share the boar meat among them.
	25		<i>Muthappan</i> agreed to it and went along with <i>Malakkari</i> . On his way to Wayanad, through Kottiyur Hills, <i>Muthappan</i> dropped small stones in his hand in different places.

11	5	↑- Departure- The hero leaves home.	<i>Raasashan</i> leaves for his sister's marriage. Here also, we see a difference between Propp's structure and Malayali structure where instead of the hero, Protagonist A, Protagonist C (the villain) departs.
12		D- First function of the Donor- The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked etc., which prepares the way for his receiving either a magical agent or a helper.	
13		E- The hero's reaction- The hero reacts to the actions of the future Donor.	
14		F- Provision of a magical agent- The hero acquires the use of a magical agent.	
15		G- Guidance- Hero is led to the whereabouts of an object of search	
16		H- Struggle- The hero and the villain join in direct combat	
17		I- Branding- The hero is branded	
18	7	J- Victory- The villain is defeated	<i>Malakkari</i> plunges <i>Raasashan</i> into the sea
	8		<i>Malakkari</i> kills the boar
19	22	K- Liquidation of Lack- The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated	<i>Malakkari</i> later seized the territory of the King.
	26		Palm tree, bamboo and Cycas grew in places where the stones fell. Thus <i>Muthappan</i> reached Wayanad from North Vaikuntam.
20	6	↓- Return- The hero returns.	<i>Raasashan</i> returns after twelve years. Instead of the hero, it is the villain who returns, fulfilling function 20↓.
21	20	Pr- Pursuit- The hero is pursued	Another steward was asked to go in search of <i>Muthappan</i> . Here, instead of the Hero, the Helper is pursued.

22		Rs- Rescue- Rescue of the hero from pursuit	
23		o- Unrecognized arrival- Unrecognized, he arrives home or in another country	
24		L- Unfounded claims- A false hero presents unfounded claims	
25	9	M- Difficult task- A difficult task is proposed to the hero	<i>Pulliyaran King</i> , Protagonist B, tests <i>Malakkari</i> , Protagonist A-The King urges <i>Malakkaari</i> to bring the boar to the butchery in Vellamunda without using rope or stick/ To cut the boar without using any instrument including a knife.
	11		<i>Malakkari</i> tests <i>Pulliyaran King</i> - <i>Malakkari</i> suggests that they have meat along with toddy. Here the protagonists mutually test each other whereas Propp does not provide for such a functional event.
	12		<i>Malakkari</i> assigns <i>Muthappan</i> (helper/donor with magical abilities) the task of bringing toddy which assignment he completes successfully. However again, Propp does not provide for any functional event where the donor is assigned a task.
	13		The King commands one of the stewards to bring <i>Koova leaves</i> (arrowroot leaves) to drink the toddy in. Here also, Propp does not provide for any functional event where the helper is assigned a task by the hero.
26	10	N- Solution- The task is resolved	<i>Malakkaari</i> takes up the challenge and completes the difficult task by throwing the wild boar from one mountain to the other and then cuts it with his finger.
27		Q- Recognised- The hero is recognised.	
28		Ex- Exposure- The false	

		hero or villain is exposed	
29	21	T- Transfiguration- The hero is given a new appearance	The steward saw <i>Muthappan</i> sitting on a stone, after being bitten by snake. <i>Muthappan</i> described all that happened to the steward and the third steward never returned. It is believed that this steward, who is called <i>ValyaMuthappan</i> , is still in company of <i>Muthappan</i> in Parassini. Here, the helper is given a new appearance.
30		U- Punishment- The villain is punished	
31		W-Wedding- The hero is married and ascends the throne	

### Findings and Conclusion

Out of the eight character types devised by Propp, four character types are present in the Kurichyan song. There are two characters sharing the narrative role of Hero, *Malakkari* and *Pulliyaran* King. Though five helpers can be identified in the song, all of them cater to Protagonist B and none to Protagonist A. Protagonist A himself is a character with magical powers and thus, there is no scope of a Donor. The narrative roles of the princess, her father, dispatcher, victim and false hero are not found in the song.

Further, the structural analysis of *Marmaayi Paattu* yielded 26 Proppian functions. It is observed that the function in *Marmaayi Paattu* corresponding to Proppian Lack (8A) is on the part of the villain and the helper, unlike in the functional event of lack proposed by Propp. It can also be assumed that the villain functions as a family member who alone can fulfil 8A. In the case of the function, Departure

(11), we see a difference between Propp's structure and Malayali structure where instead of the hero, protagonist A, the villain departs. In function Return (20), the villain returns instead of the hero. In *Marmaaya Paattu*, protagonists mutually test each other for the function Difficult Task (25) while Propp does not offer a provision for the same. In the event of *Malakkari* assigning *Muthappan* a task, there is no corresponding Proppian function where the Donor is assigned a task. The Proppian function of Interdiction is also presented with variation in *Marmaaya Paattu* because one chief protagonist is making a demand on the other chief protagonist. When one of the stewards was asked to go in search of *Muthappan*, the Proppian function of Pursuit is altered as the Helper is pursued instead of the Hero.

The analysis also yielded that the functions do not follow the sequence purported by Propp. The non-linearity

in Kurichyan folksongs may be because they are innocent portrayals of the way human memory recalls events. It may also be justified with the fact that oral narratives are mostly reliant on the audience's choices and interactions.

Thus, the paper concludes with the view that all of Propp's analysis may not be applicable to Indian, especially Malayali narratives.

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# A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ILLEGITIMACY IN KHALEDHOSSEINI'S A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS AND THE EPIC MAHABHARATA

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## **Abstract**

*Spanning from the 1960s till the early 2000s, Khaled Hosseini's novel, A Thousand Splendid Suns, published in 2007, is a landmark novel for breaking grounds on the reverent theme of illegitimacy. The present paper seeks to identify where and why the article of illegitimacy appears in fiction and demonstrate how wide-ranging its forms can be in addition to the potency of traumas, it creates in particular. The novel's protagonist is read in contrast to the mythological figure of 'Karna' from the epic Mahabharata. In particular, it will draw attention to the significant reworking of sociological conditions of the society. This paper attempts to explore the plight of Afghan women (as stipulated by Hosseini himself) along with the outrageous theme of an illegitimate children through the lens of feminist critique. Many sociologists, philosophers, anthropologists and modern writers alike have been unable to deliver an exact definition of "illegitimacy" instead of "legitimacy". A stark contrast between the women of the novel with the woman of Mahabharata is presented, which would be of universal relevance, since social structures are more or less varied.*

**Keywords:** *illegitimacy, traumas, Mahabharata, social structures, feminist critique*

## **Introduction**

The novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, examine the predicament of the main protagonist, Mariam, who underwent a series of discriminations in her life owing to; first being a woman and then due to her illegitimate social status. The study focuses on the critical societal attitude and discrimination faced by the illegitimate children, Mariam and 'Karna' from the major

epic *Mahabharata*. While going through the epic and novel, one can understand the trauma and humiliation that the illegitimate children had to face in community. The procreation of children in our society is bound by rules. The illegitimate child is, to use Jenny Teichman's definition, in *The Meaning of Illegitimacy*, "one whose conception and birth did not occur according to

the rules which, in its parents' community, govern reproduction" (54).

Mariam was born due to an extra-marital relation between her mother, Nana and Jalil, a wealthy local businessman. The family, consisting only of Nana and Mariam, live outside of the city in order to avoid confronting Jalil's three wives and nine legitimate children. Nana resents Jalil for his mistreatment of her and his deceptive attitude towards Mariam, whom he visits every Thursday. In the novel, Mariam's life begins with the slang "harami" (illegitimate) status for shattering a plate. When Nana saw the bowl, she grabbed Mariam by the wrists, pulled her close and said, "you are a clumsy little harami. This is my reward for everything I've endured. An heirloom - breaking, clumsy little harami"(4). As Jenny Teichman points out in *Illegitimacy: A Philosophical Examination*,

the child who ought not to have been born is a half-caste, while for a eugenicist, it is the child with a mental or physical handicap. "The traditional idea in our society, however, is economical, as it were, so that a child who ought not to have been born" is ... a child which will have no one to care for it and protect it, an unwanted child, a child who will become a burden to the state and the taxpayer and, in all probability, a misery to itself; in other words, a child with no legal claim on a breadwinning (male) parent - an illegitimate child. (1982, 7)

Mariam neither understood the word "harami" - bastard and nor was she old enough to understand the injustice that "it is the creator of harami who is culpable not the child, whose only sin is being born" (4). Still, later, she understood that she was an illegitimate person who would never have a legitimate claim to love, family, home and acceptance. Mariam was very fond of her father, but Nana always reminded her truth by saying, "He betrayed us, your beloved father. He cast us out. He cast us out of his big fancy house like we were nothing to him. He did it happily."(5)

One day while Nana was working, she looked at Mariam and said, "better for you too, maybe. It would have spared you the grief of knowing that you are what you are. But he was a coward, my father. He didn't have the dil, the heart, for it" (6-7). It is in the society's vested interests that what happens with illegitimate children does not happen by chance, but as a result of social policy that is either governed officially or unofficially. Nana also added that even Jalil didn't have the heart to do the honourable thing by taking up a stand against his family and wives by accepting the responsibility of what he had done. Nana tells Mariam that Jalil has accused her for forcing herself on him. Khaled had been cautious of creating these Afghan women with a voice, a voice that was nowhere to be heard in the earlier times of the Mahabharata. When Khaled was penning the

characters, he stated on one of his interviews,

When I began writing *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, I found myself thinking about those resilient women over and over. Though no one woman that I met in Kabul inspired either Laila or Mariam, their voices, faces, and their incredible stories of survival were always with me, and a good part of my inspiration for this novel came from their collective spirit. (An Interview with Khaled Hosseini, Bookbrowse)

The contrary, Kunti was frightened after having a child conceived at the maiden stage. She placed the child in a basket and discarded him afloat in a river. A critical analysis of the behavior of Kunti shows the narcissistic traits which, as a consequence, affected Karana's behavior later in his decisions and adult life. Alan Rappoport wrote in his article that narcissism is a psychological state rooted in extremely low self-esteem.

Selfish people are very fearful of not being well regarded by others, and they, therefore, attempt to control others' behavior and viewpoints to protect their self-esteem. The underlying dynamic of this behaviour usually projects the dangers blame and rejection. (Co-Narcissism: How We Accommodate to Narcissistic Parents)

Kunti's decision to abandon Karna can be considered as an act of protecting herself from blame, rejection

and fear of not being well regarded by others. An act of attempting to control others' points of view about self was rooted in extremely low self-esteem. Karna, the great warrior, is seen throughout his journey of life as ignored and rejected by most of the elite clan of Kauravas and Pandava due to his low birth. He was abandoned by his natural mother, his brothers, his teacher, and even Godfather.

Even after identifying Karna by his armour and earrings during the competition at Hastinapur, Kunti failed to have the doughtiness to share her pre-marital stigmatized wrongdoing with anyone (which in her case was the boon for which she had ultimately paid). So it was Karna who suffered the punishment for what he was not responsible. It was Kunti's reluctance to accept which was responsible for Karna's miserable life. It was not the provider, but Karna's friend, Duryodhan, eldest of Kaurav, who gave Karna the title of "angraj" by making him king of Anga by his merit and not by his birth. This was the only authentic and pure relationship which Karna had, and so he remained a true friend to Duryodhan till his last breath. Nana's blame on Jalil's irresponsible behaviour as a man without manliness projects a sense of questioning in the modern woman, who drew awareness in Mariam's childhood against nature as well as man's stake amidst the working of the society. She directs Mariam, "You know what he told his wives by way of defence? That I forced

myself on him.”(7). By these lines, the writer highlights the fact that only a woman is questioned for every action which has gone against the acceptance of society. She quoted, “learn this now and learn it well, my daughter: Like a compass needle that points north, a man's accusing finger always finds a woman. Always. You remember that, Mariam.” (07). Nana here recalls the image of otherness in women. She brings Simone Beauvoir's idea of ‘Otherness’ or ‘Othering’. Because women are mystified by men, this mystification, in turn, is rudimentary in creating identity. In her, *The Second Sex*, she argues that women are always the negative of men, where a man was the ideal, the norm and the woman the deviant or the Other. Women are measured by the standard of men and found ‘inferior’. This inferiority is subjected to numerable allegations and responsibilities imposed, especially by the patriarchal mindset of males.

It was before Mariam's fifteenth birthday when she asked Jalil to take her to the cinema. Nana berates Mariam for being ungrateful, for wanting to leave Nana alone. "Of all the daughters I could have had, why did God give me an ungrateful one like you? Everything I endured for you! How dare you abandon me like this, you are treacherous little harami!" (27) Next, she tried to instil guilt in her, to stop Mariam from going by saying that she will die if Mariam will leave her and that she loves her and cannot live without her. When Mariam returned

home, she saw that Nana has hung herself. As theorized by Nancy Chodorow in her *Reproduction of Mothering* (1978), the mother-daughter relationship undergoes a few stages. Nana perceives Mariam as her only double, for whom she is protective of the patriarchal world and constantly attempts to make aware her. Mariam acquires her volatile weak identity as a “harami” from Nana only and consequently lacks self-control. Mariam could not derive autonomy as an individual from her mother, which prompts Mariam to turn towards her father Jalil for the outer world, for the privileges a man possesses because of his organ superiority. Nana thus becomes a complex figure for her daughter to comprehend and deduce an identity. At the same time the relation between the mother and the male child can be inferred from Kunti and Karna. From the very birth, Karna was detached from her mother to gain autonomy over herself. Kunti could not see Karna as her double but rather, as separate from her. The independence Karna was bestowed with is apparent in the act of being left out alone by the mother, as well as his masculine gender conditioned in the absence of a blood mother.

Here, Khaled Hosseini draws attention to the societal attitude and maternal acceptance of an illegitimate children. As in the novel, Nana knew that society was not very kind towards illegitimacy. Hence, she decided to leave her father's house and started

living in a Kolba, detached and removed from the city where she didn't have the fear of insincerity and staring eyes of neighbours. Nana was a blend of fearless and emotional human as she accepted her responsibility towards Mariam.

After Nana's death, Jalil took Mariam to his house and then she was forced to marry Rasheed, a forty-five-year-old widower, and a respected shoemaker in Kabul. When Mariam pleaded with Jalil, he dismissed her by saying that she could not spend the rest of her life at his place and that she needed to get married to have a family of her own. Khaled Hosseini impeccably draws the intention toward the rights and will of an illegitimate woman. Illegitimate or not, Lacan presupposes and locates women in the social sphere where she is constructed as an object of exchange. Women rarely acquire power or place within the state structure and are often victims of unfair legislation. The State law reinforces society's masked equality among men and women. Jalil's statement explaining that Mariam could not stay in his house and had to move to another's house to start her own family negates women their rights over their father's property.

Lawrence Stone in his *Family, Sex and Marriage*, proffers that the bastard sons of the nobility were usually well educated, and appear 'to have suffered no social discrimination, in terms of professional career or marriage. In the *House of Lords* in 1800, Lord Mulgrave

posits that "bastardy is of little comparative consequence to the male children". Illegitimate female children, however, "have to struggle with every disadvantage from their rank in life", since the only career open to a woman of this class was marriage." (331)

According to the mythology, princess Kunti was blessed with a magical formula to summon the sun god, Surya. She used that boon without knowing the proper consequences, and so the sun god was compelled to give her a child. Kunti was frightened of having a child conceived at the maiden stage. Hence, she placed the child – born with natural armour and divine earrings in a cane basket and discarded him afloat to a river which took Karna into the house of Adiratha (foster father), a charioteer. Everyone, including the elite clans of Pandavas and Kauravas, natural mother Kunti and god, turned blind eye towards Karna for his low birth as a charioteer.

The significant dialogue between an abandoned son with his blood mother is explicitly ironic because the true identity of Karna is now revealed by his mother, Kunti. However, though the reason behind this revelation is to save five Pandavas.

Karna said: "I am the Kama, son of Radha and Adhiratha. For what, O lady, hast thou come here? Tell me what I am to do for thee?"

"Kunti said: "Thou art Kunti's son, not Radha's. Nor is Adhiratha thy father. Thou, O Kama, art not born in the Suta order. Believe what I

say. Thou art brought forth by me during a maiden. I held the first in my womb. O son, thou were born in the palace of Kuntiraja. O the Kama, that divine Surya who blazeth forth in light and maketh everything visible, O foremost of all wielders of weapons, begat thee upon me.

Karnasaid: "O Kshatriya lady, I cannot admit what thou hast said, viz., that obedience to thy commands constitute (in my case) the highest of my duties. O, mother I was abandoned by thee as soon as I was born. This significant injury, involving risk to life itself, that thou didst me, hath been destructive of my achievements and fame. If, indeed, I am a Kshatriya, I have, for thee, been deprived of all the rites of a Kshatriya. What enemy would have done me a greater injury?...Thou hadst never before sought my good as a mother should. Thou addressest me today, however, desiring to do good to thyself. (UdyogaParva, Section CXLV, 289-90)

Karna's identity can be derived from the post-colonial perspective of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's concept of 'subaltern'. A subaltern, according to Spivak, is a person from 'an inferior rank' living at the edge of society. Kunti's son Karna, though in reality was born in the lineage of the royal family, was never given the desired status, instead was known as suta-putra to the external world because of

his suta parentage. During his lifespan, Karna was never given due respect because everyone regarded him as a person of an inferior rank. Everyone refused and rejected him due to his low origin.

It is a question of social consciousness that overpowered Kunti's motherly affection for Karan. She might have revealed his true identity before her five legitimate sons and begged Karna's life instead. But she did not do that. Kunti was threatened by the overwhelming patriarchal society where bearing a child without marriage is an illicit act and would only become demeaning to a woman, who carries it in the womb, not to the male who happens to be equally responsible for it. She had confronted the stigma of rejection from society for which she could not have accepted him in front of all at the time of Pandava's first military exhibition. When Karna, for the first time, challenged Arjunain an archery competition but he was refused and was humiliated by all due to his low origin. It would be a dishonour for Arjuna if he fought with a suta. At that time, Kunti could have disclosed Karna's true identity and saved her son from utter humiliation instead of remaining a silent audience of her son's mockery.

In the novel, where on the one hand, Mariam could not escape the tag of an illegitimate child, Laila resorted to providing a name for her child in the womb. She marries Mariam's husband,

Rasheed to get away with the ridicule by society. Despite her efforts, Rasheed got to know about the illegitimate child and started behaving indifferently towards Laila. Initially the object of his frustration was Mariam only. Mariam and Laila attempted to take the children and leave Rasheed, but the women and children were caught. Under the Taliban, it was illegal for women to run away from their husbands. Rasheed beat Laila and Mariam for trying to leave, and he threatened them with worse. Laila is disgusted with Rasheed's glee over the punishments and hangings, in response to which Rasheed reminds Laila that he is the only reason for the survival of Laila and Aziza as Aziza is an illegitimate child and society won't accept her. In one of the violent outbursts of Rasheed, Mariam stood for Laila and her child and ultimately fired a bullet on Rasheed's temple. Mariam was executed for the crime, and she utters with the least regret of her action, and says, "legitimate end to a life of illegitimate beginnings". Mariam's last thoughts were from the Koran, asking Allah for forgiveness. The acceptance of an illegitimate child like both Nana and Laila aims to motivate women to develop the resistance and strength which lies within them to fight for their happiness, just like the strength that has been displayed by Mariam. The violence and oppression she endures is not something which has to be moaned only, but it is something to be confronted and fought

back. Mariam's efforts and resistance against subjugation and discrimination determine active feminism on her part.

**Conclusion:** The texts, the epic *Mahabharata*, and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, revoke the narratives set across centuries and nations. Only when the war was near the end that Kunti broke the truth to her sons about Karna's inherited blood. Karna had been abandoned by his natural mother years ago, given an identity by his foster parents, and a place in society by Duryodhana. The son had been acknowledged by his mother after his death. The hardships of Karna's life are different from that of Mariam's since she is a woman and doubly negated by society. She has not been taken by foster parents instead, as the convention, she was married at an early age to continue with worldly affairs when she demanded her father's love and attention. The Human nature of society is to target and question the child and mother for the birth. All the hardships are to be faced by both of them. On the one hand, Kunti abandoned Karan and left him to fight alone, while on the other hand, Nana and Laila had a firm hold on their responsibilities. The rules and restrictions of society never allowed Kunti and Jalil to accept and love their illegitimate children.

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