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తేదర్శ శ్రీలక్ష్మి

తెలుగు అధ్యాపకురాలు,
ప్రభుత్వ చిగ్గి కళాశాల,
శృంగవరపుకోట, విజయనగరం (జిల్లా),
పిన్ నెం:9948841065.

“అదిరాజ యలోలింబ మాదర్శం ప్రాప్త వాఙ్మయం
శేషామనస్సురావేమన స్వయం వత్సనత్వతి” (దండికావ్యాదర్శం:1-5)

రాజులు గతంలోను, రాజ్యాలు సోయాలు, అయినా కొందరు రాజుల కీర్తి ప్రతిష్ఠలు మాననిపోలేదు. ప్రజలించా ఆ రాజులకు దూరామణులను గుర్తుపెట్టకున్నారు. వారి గొప్పతనాన్ని కీర్తిస్తున్నారు. వారి పౌరుష ప్రతాప అగ్ని నిరంతరం బాటి వివాసాన్ని వెలిగిస్తూనే ఉంది. అటువంటి రాజులలో తెలుగువాతి సాగునూ, తెలుగు వ్యవహారాలనూ, సాహితీ సమరాలేపరుడూ, అంతరాళానికి స్వర్ణయుగాన్ని చూపించిన వంగారు ప్రాంతంగా, జాతీయ ప్రభుత్వగుణాలను సమంగా చూపిన అదర్శ ప్రతిభామూర్తి అంతరాళానికి స్వర్ణయుగాలు ముహూర్తాల్లాడు ఒక వాఙ్మయనీ అలంబనా వివాచాలు నాయకులైతే ఒక వ్యక్తి సమగ్ర వివాసానికి, శ్రీ శృష్టివేదకార్యాలను ప్రధాన కారణం అతని/అమె తల్లి సేర్పించిన సాహిత్యం, తీర్చిదిద్దినవైనం, రూపుదాల్చిన తేజం, మూర్తిమూర్తి రూపులను ప్రధాన కారణం అతని/అమె తల్లి సేర్పించిన సాహిత్యం, తీర్చిదిద్దినవైనం, రూపుదాల్చిన తేజం, అందుకే “యత్రవాక్యంతు పూర్వతేతత రమంతి దేవతా” అన్నా, మాతృదేవోవిన అంటూ తల్లికి మొదటిస్థానం ఇచ్చినా, త్రిమూర్తులు వైతం వాక్యతో, శరీరంతో, వ్యవధులలో అంటే మనసా, వాదా, కర్మదా శ్రీక సైతం ఇచ్చినా, బుద్ధిబామువంటి కష్టాలు ఈ శృష్టి నిర్మాణానికి తెలిగిన ద్వారాలు క్రితవాన్స సమస్త నిర్మాణరూపంగా, లక్ష్మీ స్వరూపంగా క్షీయే వర్ణిస్తోంది. ఒక్క శ్రీకే సాధ్యమైంది. అందుకే శ్రీమూర్తి సహా, సోఅన్య, తాంత, కరుణాక్షరమూర్తి అమె ద్వారానే సమస్తం సృష్టిస్తోంది. చర్చిత భారతరీత చరిత్రలో ఒక స్వర్ణయుగం, ఒక జైలు రాంబాగా నిలిచిపోయిన పరిపాలనను అందించిన శ్రీకృష్ణదేవరాయల అదర్శ, మనోజ్ఞ, పీఠ, శౌర్య, శాస్త్ర పారంగత, కావ్య నిర్మాణకారులకు అర్హత లభించి సమస్తరీత వంటి గుణ ఉద్భవన, పరశీత, వివాసాలను అతని తల్లి నాగాంబ మహిమార్గిత వ్యక్తిత్వం ఉన్నదని, ఆదే ప్రధాన కారణమని చరిత్ర ఎరిగిన వ్యక్తులందరూ పరిచితిమే. అదర్శ మూర్తిమూర్తిగా నాగాంబ పౌరుష ప్రతాపాలు ముక్తీభరించిన నింజైన రూపాన్ని శృష్టరాములుగా వాటి అందించిన వైనాన్ని దా॥ భూతపురి సుబ్రహ్మణ్యశర్మ గారు వారి శ్రీకృష్ణ భారతం అను కావ్యంలో ఎంతో వైభవంగా వర్ణించారు.

భౌగోళిక వేవధ్యం, దాని తాటుకూ వారసత్వ సంపద భాషాకలితా వివాసాలను ఇతోధిక మేలు చేస్తుంది. అటువంటి భౌగోళిక ప్రాంతాలలో రాయలసీమ ప్రాంతానికి తెలుగు సాహిత్యంలో విశిష్టమైన స్థానం ఉంది. ఎందరో కవులకు, మహాకవికారులకు, పోరాట పౌరుష పదమమ పుష్టినిచ్చగా రాయలసీమ ప్రాంతం విలసిల్లింది. ఎందరో మహాకవుల సరసన నిలవడమనే కలితేజులు, అవధాన ప్రాప్త వాఙ్మయమూర్తి ముక్తావ్యుత్పాదక గారు ఆదే రాయలసీమలోని కదప జిల్లా, వల్లూరు మండలం, కొత్తవల్లి అను గ్రామంలో 1938 ఫిబ్రవరి 14న భూతపురి సార్వత్రికమైన సువ్యయ్య దంపతులకు జన్మించారు. వీరి పూర్వీకులు శ్రీ.వ.13వ శతాబ్దంలో తెలంగాణ రాష్ట్రంలో మహమూరవగిర జిల్లా బుద్ధపురంలో నివసించేవారు. ఆ ప్రాంతాన్ని పాలించే గోసమయ్యారెడ్డి అస్థానంలో ఉపయోగ పోరాడేవారుగా వర్ణించారు.

బుద్ధారెడ్డి వీరి వంశస్థులకు కదప జిల్లా కమలాపురం తాలూకాలో “నిడమర్రు” గ్రామ సరిహద్దులో 250 ఎకరాల భూమిని ఉవామీగా ఇచ్చాడు. బుద్ధారెడ్డి కుమారసంతకం వీరి వంశస్థులు బుద్ధపురం నిడువాల్కి వలసవచ్చి అదర్శ స్థిరపడినారు. అప్పటి నుంచి బుద్ధపురం నుంచి వచ్చిన వారని జనులు పిలుస్తూ బుద్ధపుర వారు అని, అదే నేడు భూతపురిగా వ్యవహరించుచుఉంది. భూతపురి సుబ్రహ్మణ్యశర్మగారు సంస్కృత, అంధ్ర భాషల్లో మొత్తం 17 గ్రంథాలు రచించారు. వాటిలో



ప్రమాంధ్రాచ్యుతయం, శ్రీకృష్ణచారతం, అహల్యా నాటకం, శ్రీకృష్ణ సంగ్రహం నాటకం, శ్రీకృష్ణం మహాశ్యం మొదల రచనలు దీనికి విశిష్టత్యాదిని తీసుకువచ్చాయి. 1993లో శ్రీకృష్ణచారతం కావ్యానికి తెలుగు విశ్వవిద్యాలయం ఉత్తమ పద్య కావ్యం పురస్కారాన్ని ఇచ్చింది. మహాకవి, కవిసార్వభౌమ, కవన కళాప్రపూర్ణ, కవిమామూ, అవదానవాచస్పతి వీరులు, స్వర్ణగంధమేదేవ సత్కారం పొందారు.

సాహిత్యంలో 16వ శతాబ్దంలో వచ్చిన ప్రౌఢ ప్రచందాల సరసన నిలవదగిన ప్రచందరాజం భూతపురి వారి 'శ్రీకృష్ణచారతం' ని అత్తాసాలతో, మూడు వేల మూడు పద్య గర్వాలలో శ్రీకృష్ణవేదాలయం చేరిత విశేషాలను దానితో, రాజకీయ విషయాలను, కవి-కవితా పోషణను యుద్ధాలలో చూపిన శౌర్య పరాక్రమాలను విశదంగా వర్ణించి ఈ కావ్యం. ఒక మహా సామ్రాజ్య నిర్మాణ చిత్రపత్రిగా, హైందవ ధర్మ సముద్ధరణ కావించిన పుణ్యమూర్తిగా, శౌర్యపరాక్రమ దీరునిగా, కావ్య నిర్మాణ చతురత కల కవిగా, లలిత కళాపోషకునిగా, విశిష్ట వ్యక్తిత్వం సమర్థత అదర్శ మూర్తిగా శ్రీకృష్ణ రాయలను తల్లి నాగంబ తీర్చిదిద్దినది కావ్యోత్కృష్ట సుప్రసిద్ధాశ్చర్య గారు 'శ్రీకృష్ణ చారతం'లో వర్ణించారు. రాయలకి ఇన్ని విశిష్టగుణాలు అచ్చుదానికి తండ్రి తులన నరసాయల పాలన ద్వారా తల్లి నాగంబ రాయల ఎదురుగా ఉంచిన ఈ కావ్యం చదివితే అర్థమౌతుంది. తులన నరసరాయల ముగ్ధు లాబులైన తిప్పెంబ, నాగంబ, ఓవాంబలలో నాగంబ 2వ రాణి

"అమ్మమ్మరు రాజులలో దిప్పెంబ వన్నెయ నానియ గంది, రెండవ చేతి నాగంబ యవదాతవృత్తి, దివ్య వదాన్యుడా తీర్చి కలిత, మాగధీవృత్తి సంధాపణా చరిత, దాంపేయ సుగంధి యగు నామెతో కడివిన రాజు పరిమళత భూషణం, బద్దెని ములువ లేదాదా".... అని

(శ్రీకృష్ణచారతం ప్రథమాశ్వాసం: 55)

"కఱిగించున్ ధపు నాగరాళయకీ వాగ్దేవి, నా లేమకీ శ్వేదపాని స్నానము విన్న తుప్పుపవనానీతంబు పుష్పించు భావ్యరమాయార గళాన నవ్వనిత వాక్యారంబు గానించులో సురరాజులు వచ్చు వానకారలరె సుంచున్ సంతపించు మదిన్"

(శ్రీకృష్ణచారతం ప్రథమాశ్వాసం: 56)

నాగలాంబ వాగ్దేవికి భాద్రా కవితా కలిగించకలదు. ఆమె కిన్నెరసాని (గంధర్వగాన) వింటే పూయని పూవులు కూడా పూస్తాయి. వెమలిలా చాపింకే రంగుతో ఆమె మూలు నలోకరం చూస్తే దేవతా సమానులైన ఆ తులన నరసరాయలకి వానమచ్చలు వచ్చాయి అంటూ మదిలో సంతోషపడతారు.

నాగంబ దివ్య లక్ష్మణుని కవి అద్భుతంగా వర్ణించాడు. ఆమె సంపెగ పుష్ప సుగంధం కలకని, మాగధీవృత్తి అంటే మృదువైన, మధురమైన, సరళమైన, మూలు సంభాషణలు కలిగినది అని చెప్పడంతో అచ్చందో ఆమె కడుపున పుట్టడం వల్లనే మూలు ప్రాగై నరసత కలిగిన మహాకవి అవడంలో తల్లినుండి ఈ గుణం రాయుడి అలవడింది అని కవి అరడంగా నాగంబని వర్ణించాడు. ముగ్ధుడు రాజులలో నాగులాంబ గురించే విస్తృతంగా వర్ణించాడు. దాంపేయమగంధి అంటే "సంపెగ పూవు వాసన కలదని" వర్ణించాడు. చ్చాపరు సత్యవతిని యోజన గంధిగా, ద్రావడిని ఉత్పల గంధి అని, కనుపల్లి అప్పయమాత్యుడు నాయకని విడికల గంధి అని వర్ణిస్తాడు. విడికలం అంటే "మల్లెపూవు" అని అర్థం. ప్రాచీన కవులు కావ్యాలలో లోకోత్తరమైన వాళ్ళ ధగ్గర, దివ్యమైన కాలికి చెందిన వారి ధగ్గర సహజమైన సుగంధం ఉంటుంది అని వర్ణించాడు. అలా నాగంబ కూడా దివ్యమైన కాలికి చెందిన స్త్రీ అని భూతపురి వారు దాంపేయ సుగంధి అను ఉపమానంతో వర్ణించారు.

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పరియోగ దానము బాటబ్రతుకమును నాడుకొని సాహిత్య పం
తరి తీరార్చుచు సాధు పంతురికి విస్తరితములైనట్లున్నది."

(శ్రీకృష్ణవారతం. ప్రథమాశ్వాసం: 79)

వైరాగి గోసాయి ధ్యాయము, జపంతి వచ్చి వారికి, రాజు, నాగాంబ టిండి, దక్షిణ, నెయ్యి మొనరి దివ్యులారము
వేలు, లక్షలు మోయులారు. సాధుసంతతికి దాన దర్శనాలు చేశారు. నాగాంబి, తండ్రికి ఉన్న ఈ దానదర్శన గుణం
శ్రీకృష్ణదేవరాయలలోనూ ప్రతిబింబించింది. తల్లివేల్చిన ఈ సుగుణమే జపని యుగాన్ని సృష్టించునదనానికి దారితీసినదనవచ్చు.
భక్తి తత్వరత :

నాగాంబి దైవభక్తి మందుగా కల న్నీ, ఆ భక్తి తత్వరత అమె శ్రీకృష్ణదేవరాయలకి నేర్పించింది. ఎన్ని గుళ్ళలో, ఎన్ని
దేవాలయాలకు రాయలు మాన్యారిచ్చాడో, తిరువతి ప్రాంతాన్ని 21 మారులు దర్శించి సృష్టి, చక్రమయ దానదర్శన విస్తృతమయ్యిందామె
ఆ భక్తి, జలయ ఉద్ధరణ గుణం నాగాంబ దిగ్భవతనం నుంచే రాయలకి గుడికి స్వయంగా వెంటబట్టిన వెళ్ళడం నుంచే
జనవదింది. ఈ విషయాన్ని కవి ఈ క్రింది పద్యంలో జూర విస్తావించాడు.

"ప్రతి దినవచ్చు నిశ్చయి రాడి సుతని వెంట

జనుచు రాము గొల్చిన వెన్న పర్వవెన్ను

నాథు గణపతికి నతులొనర్చుతేయు

భావగతికి బ్రత్యూహమ్ము పలుకకుండ"

(శ్రీకృష్ణవారతం. ప్రథమాశ్వాసం: 114)

తూర్పున నూర్పురు ఉదయించగానే పారిష్టుర చేసి కొడుకుని మేల్కొల్పామని. స్వాసం చేయించి, పూవులు తీసుకుని
కొడుకుతో కలసి విద్యానగర పూర్వ దేవాలయమైన రాముని గుడికి వెళ్ళి పూజలు చేస్తుంది. తన శృష్టరాయల ఉన్నతమి
కాండైంది ప్రతిరోజు గుడికి వెళ్ళి కొడుకుని తీసుకెళ్ళి రాముని పూజించి, అటుపై గణపతిని పూజిస్తుంది. భరిత్యత్వంలో మారా
జలానే చేసేలా చేస్తుంది

రాజ్యవిర్మాద చతురత :

శ్రీకృష్ణవారతం ప్రథమ, ద్వితయ అశ్వాసాలలో నాగాంబ శ్రీకృష్ణ దేవరాయలకి తిమ్మరుసు పూర్తి పరిత్రను, సేవారూ
ఉన్న సుతున నరసరాయలు ఎలా విజయ నగరానికి రాజయ్యాడో సమగ్రంగా వివరిస్తుంది. వీరిద్దరి కడ చెప్పు అసలు రాజు
ఎలా ఉంచారి, దండనాడుడిగా ఉన్న తండ్రి ప్రభుత్వం ఎలా రనవరిరాడో రాజ్య క్షేమం కోసం అపార్థితులు ఎలా సోలు
పడ్డాడో, మూర్ఖుడైన రాజుని (జమ్మలి నరసింహ) తొలగించి, సాహసించి విజయనగర సామ్రాజ్య బిడ్డత్వం కాపాడటం కోసం
ఏ లక్ష్యంతో సామ్రాజ్య స్థాపన జరిగిందో, ఆ ప్రతిష్ఠని కాపాడటం కోసం రాజు ఎలా అయ్యాడో, సాహసం, శక్తి, నీతి, యశ్శ్రీ,
మతిమంతుల సాంగత్యం కలిగిన రాజు ఎలా అభివృద్ధి పొందుతాడో అని సమస్త రాజకీయతలం, రాజ్య నిర్మాణ చతురత, దీక్ష
అను గుణాలను బిడ్డత్వంలోనే కొడుకుకి తెలియచేసింది.

"సుస్థాంతుడు రాజు సేతుజి; ప్రశాంతకల్పను మీ; క భర్తరా

ద్ధాంతములెల్ల మూలపడు; ధార్మిక మాత్రము లింత వెల్లుతన్"

(శ్రీకృష్ణవారతం. ద్వితయ శ్వాసం: 100)

"పల్లెల్ల విషయమ్ము పహితము క్రద్ధగరిగ

యరని, తీర్చెనెంచును పహితాక్షుడగుచు

జాతచక్రము రూపైన సామైయనగ

పర్వనైన్యాధిపత్యమ్ము నిర్వహించ"

(శ్రీకృష్ణవారతం. ద్వితయ శ్వాసం: 115)



“విమల నాటక చరిత్రనుండి వేరమ నోము పొందు
శ్రమపాటుందు, సాధగూనివద్ది” (శ్రీశృంగారతం.ద్విశ్రీయ శ్లాసం.32)

“దశకు మహావ్యస చక్రశిశి సరికింయమ జేమ జోష, య
వృత్త గు గుర్తలంగమల” (శ్రీశృంగారతం.ద్విశ్రీయ శ్లాసం.33)

జానా దాని వర్ణనను చెప్పే సమర్థుడైన రాజా లక్ష్మణులు జానా ఉంచాలంటూ రాయల మనసులో నాటుదునేలా చేసింది.
ఉపసంగహారం :

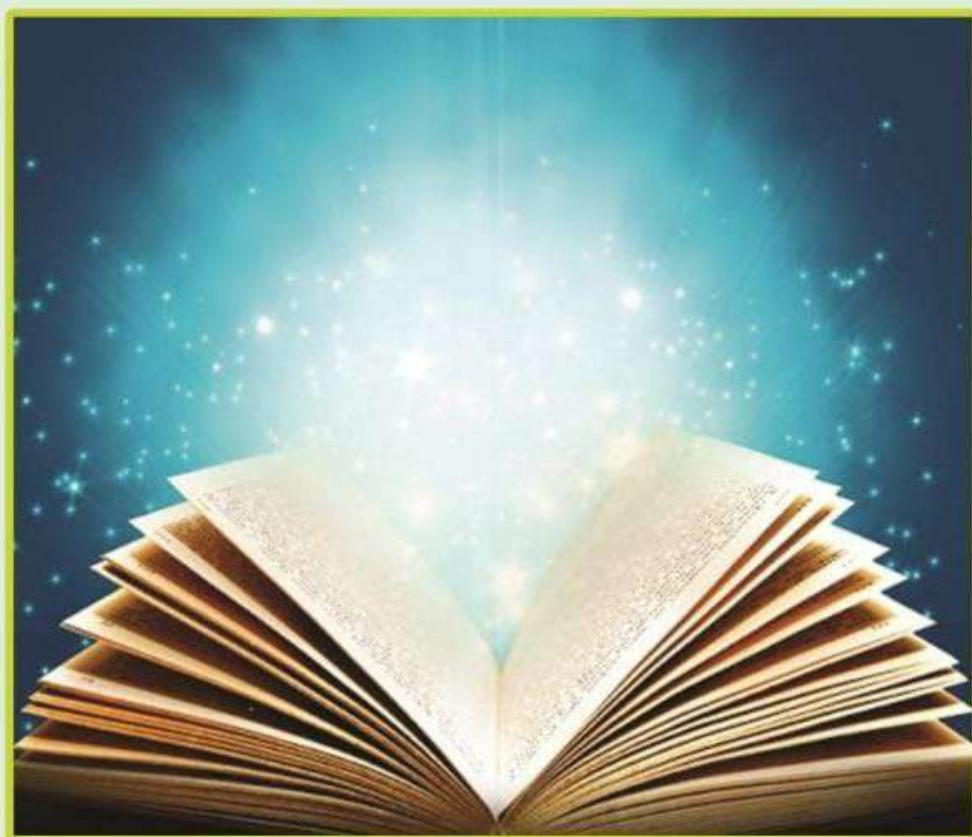
శ్రీశృంగారతంరావయి కడ తెలుగు వారి వద్ద తెలుగు నేలను సారించారు. కవులను పోషించారు. శ్రీ శృంగారతం
నేరు తెలుగున తెలుగులాడుకున్నారు. అంతగా తెలుగు ప్రజలకు అందరవీరుమీదైన రాయల దీక్షత్వీ, దీనగుణం, రాష్ట్ర నిర్మాణ
చింతనకైనా ఆధారాలు అతిపెద్ద నేర్పించిన సంస్కారం ఉంది. శివుడు తల్లి మొదటి గురువు. అందుకే మార్గదర్శిగా
అది శివుని మొదటి స్థానం అలాగే రావయి శివునిగా అందరూ అభిమానిస్తున్నారు. వీరమాత, పరిశ్రమలో అమోఘసం
గెలుపు. శ్రీశృంగారతంలో భాగవతి మహావ్యసానం గారు నాగాంబరి నింపిన మహిళా మణిపూసగా, వీరమాతగా
కీర్తించారు.

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(భాగవతి మహావ్యసానం)

The Reflections of Society in Literature: Contemporary Currents



Dr. Santoshkumar Patil

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DEGENERATING ETHICS AND VALUES IN CHETAN BHAGAT'S HEROINES

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Abstract

Literature influences society and the prevailing conditions in existing society influence writers as well. Many writers put in their works what they see in society and sometimes readers try to imitate what they read in books. Thus, contemporary society is often reflected in literature. In other words, literature symbolizes the society of the day. Chetan Bhagat is one of the most popular contemporary writers in Indian English literature whose novels strike a chord with the modern Indian youth. Drinking alcohol, making love with a tutor or father's student or a class mate in the name of tuition or love or combined study, sleeping with a stranger for modeling career, celebrating the loss of virginity are some of the notorious characteristic features of his heroines. Many a time they neither seem to show respect for ethics and values nor do they display any inhibitions or sense of guilt for their actions. The present paper throws light on degenerating ethics and values among the present day Indian youth with reference to heroines of Chetan Bhagat's novels.

Key Words and Phrases: contemporary, literature, society, influence, youth, degenerating, ethics, values, female protagonists, heroines, loss of virginity.

Full Paper:

Degenerating Ethics and Values in Chetan Bhagat's Heroines

Literature influences society and the prevailing conditions in existing society influence writers as well. Many writers put in their works what they see in society and sometimes readers try to imitate what they read in books. Thus, contemporary society is often reflected in literature. In other words, literature symbolizes the society of the day. The impact of literature on contemporary society is unquestionable because it acts as a form of expression for each individual author. Literature allows us to be aware of the world we live in. We are easily connected to the psyche of authors through their writings. Literature confirms the real complexity of human conflict.

The relation between literature and society is usually discussed by starting with the phrase, derived from De Bonald that "literature is an expression of society." (Wellek, 110)

Chetan Bhagat is one of the most popular contemporary writers in Indian English literature whose novels strike a chord with the modern Indian youth. Besides their positive traits, his female protagonists are also known for many negative characteristics. Drinking alcohol, making love with a tutor or father's student or a class mate in the name of tuition or love or combined study, sleeping with a stranger for modeling career, celebrating the loss of virginity are some of the notorious characteristic features of his heroines. Many a time they neither seem to show respect for ethics and values nor do they display any inhibitions or sense of guilt for their actions. The present paper throws light on degenerating ethics and values among the present day Indian youth with reference to heroines of Chetan Bhagat's novels.

In all his first five novels, the female protagonists namely, Neha in *Five Point Someone*, Priyanka in *One Night @ Call Center*, Vidya in *Three Mistakes of My Life*, Ananya in *Two States* and Aarti in *Revolution 2020* seem to have no respect for ethics especially about chastity. Without any inhibitions or remorse they indulge

pre-marital sex. They don't have any qualms about losing their chastity. Neha in *Five Point Someone* is ecstatic after making love with her boyfriend and declares happily that "I am a bad girl now". (FPS, 169) In *One Night @ Call Center*, Priyanka wants to get married to Ganesh despite the fact that she has had an affair with Shyam. Esha sleeps with some stranger for her modeling career though she is aware that Vroom sincerely loves her. In *The Three Mistakes of My Life*, Vidya provokes her tutor, a close friend of his brother to have sex on her eighteenth birthday. Even in *Two States* too, Krish and Ananya participate in sex occasionally before their marriage while they have made combined study at IIM, Ahmadabad. Aarti in *Revolution 2020* is seduced by Gopal though she has already been in love with Raghav. Here the notable point is that most of the times, none of these persons feel sorry for their dishonest actions. They don't have a sense of penitence.

One must indulge in righteous action and lead a life adhering to the frame-work of morality and ethics chalked-out by religion and society. In fast-paced race of modern world, moral values and ethics appear to be losing their significance. Chetan Bhagat is one such popular fiction writer whose novels reflect a strong under-tone of morality and ethics. (Rajani)

In *Five Point Someone*, Bhagat portrays Neha's character in a bold manner. She is not a hypocrite. She openly expresses her inner feelings which most of the girls generally tend to hide. She follows her heart. She craves for absolute freedom of expression. Bhagat depicts the changing mind set of the women of metropolitan cities of the 21st century. In a letter written to her dead brother, Neha expresses her inner feelings about her boyfriend very boldly:

Sometimes I feel this guy is only interested in getting physical. Other girls who have boyfriends tell me all boys are the same, want the same thing. But can I tell you something? Even I want the same. No, no I haven't done anything yet. But then, every now and then I get curious,

start imagining what Hari would if I let him. Is thinking that a bad thing? (FPS, 134)

Neha has the guts to invite her boyfriend to her house when her parents are away from the house just for two hours. In a society that views women who seek sexual pleasure as immoral, she intrepidly states that she has enjoyed it in unequivocal terms. After having sex, she demands her boyfriend to get her cigarettes too. She doesn't regret at all her decision to sleep with the man who also happens to be a student of her father. Moreover she expresses her contentment in an unusual manner:

'Thanks. I liked it too. I guess I am a bad girl now. (...) Here I am, lying naked with a man who was drunk in his viva, while my Dad is less than a kilometer away in his office,' she said and laughed, 'It's so liberating.' (FPS 169)

Generally, there is a lot of guilt and shame involved while, after or before doing anything 'unaccepted' as per the norms of the society. Many urban, independent young millennial women want to free themselves from these shackles and take their decisions with absolute freedom. As J. Cecile Priya observes:

Neha's character depicts that women in Bhagat's novels initiate fearlessly, they are bold and it shows that modern women don't wait for others consent and they aptly know what is best for themselves. (Priya, 3016)

In *The Three Mistakes of My Life* too Bhagat exposes the modern girls' audacity regarding pre-marital sex. Vidya falls in love with her tuition teacher who is a close friend of her brother, Ishan. In fact it is only infatuation but not love because she is not even eighteen. Omi, a common friend of Govind and Ishan too comes to know about Govind's love affair with Vidya and warns him of the consequences. But Govind ignores his advice. Even Govind is aware that what he is doing is unethical.

'Be serious, Vidya. This is not right. I am your teacher, your brother trusts me as a friend, I have responsibilities (...) You are not even eighteen.'

‘Two months,’ she wiggled two fingers. ‘Two months and I will turn eighteen. Time to bring me another nice gift.’ (TMML 183)

Vidya exploits the weaknesses of her parents and her brother. She knows very well that her parents have bad knees and they cannot climb up to the terrace. Whereas her brother is so fond of cricket and when India is playing against Pakistan he doesn’t leave the drawing room watching TV until the match is finished. Even Govind is shocked at her reply to his question what might be the reason for her ultimate boldness in her advancement in making love with him.

‘What if someone comes?’

‘Both my parents have bad knees. They never climb up to the terrace. And Ish, well there is a match on.’ (TMML, 199)

What is more interesting is Vidya’s reaction after having made love with her tuition teacher. She hasn’t even an iota of fear, shame or guilt for what she has done. Moreover she is so ecstatic that she is no more a virgin now. But Govind is fully aware of his mistake and he feels guilty of it.

‘Wow, I am an adult and am no longer a virgin, so cool. Thank God,’ she said and giggled. A sense of reality struck as the passion subsided. What have you done Mr Govind Patel? (TMML, 201)

Radhika, the female protagonist of *One Indian Girl* also celebrates when she loses her virginity. In fact, she desperately waits for the chance to make love with Debu, her first boyfriend. As a matter of fact, it is Radhika who successfully provokes him. When he quips that she looks hot in the red dress she is wearing, her soul break-dances inside her. She has frantically waited for his moves to get physical with her. Her reaction is almost similar to that of Neha or Vidya when she has lost her virginity:

Radhika Mehta, you are finally having sex, I said to myself and mentally high-fived myself. It felt like a major milestone in life, on par with getting into IIMA or scoring Goldman Sachs. Or distressed debt. (OIG, 58)

Most of Chetan Bhagat heroines have a care free attitude. While the heroes undergo mental agonies, conflicts, traumas, their female counterparts are portrayed as having taking things in lighter vein. While Vidya is on cloud nine after experiencing sex for the first time in her life, her boyfriend is in full of despair for having committed the sin. The very reason for Govind's attempt for suicide is his spat inability to cope up with his guilt which finally forces him to make a suicide attempt.

I didn't know why, but had tears in my eyes. Maybe I felt scared. (...) Maybe because I had betrayed my best friend. I normally never cried, but with so many reasons at the same time, it was impossible not to. (TMML 200-202)

In *Revolution 2020* the protagonist Gopal exploits Aarti's weak point of being ignored by her fiancé and persuades her to make the sin. She pleads him not to get physical with her but he doesn't melt.

When I hugged her again, she said, 'This is wrong.' (...)

'Gopal, you realise what is happening?'

I shook my head.

'We shouldn't...' she said.

'I have a boyfriend,' she reminded me. 'I am not that kind of girl, Gopal,' she said on a sob. (R2020, 221)

Bhagat appears to be on his heroines' side when it comes to sexual freedom. Except Riya of *Half Girlfriend*, the rest of Bhagat's heroines are dynamic and bold in the matters related to sexual freedom. They are very open-minded about their relationships with their boyfriends. "Bhagat celebrates the moment when his lady loses her virginity." (Mishra, 22)

Chetan Bhagat advocates premarital sex as a very common thing and it is no more a taboo and naturally he appears to be messiah for womenfolk. Sex itself is a very sensitive subject in India let alone pre-marital sex. Public discussion on sexual matters is still considered a proscribed issue in Indian society. There is a sea change in the Indian youth's perspective of sex in the last few decades thanks to the technological revolution

across the globe especially in social media and the writings of authors like Chetan Bhagat who have brought radical changes in the mindsets of young people.

Chetan Bhagat is proved bold here in dealing with sex, realistically and exploring sex relations in almost all of his novels. Bhagat's novels give plenty of clues to the readers throughout his novel that the physical intimacy is the most important thing in man woman relationship that provide exquisite pleasure. (Perveen)

Most of the Chetan Bhagat's protagonists are like the boy/girl-next-door types. They represent the contemporary middleclass Indian youths. This is also one of the reasons for Chetan Bhagat's exceptional success as a writer because common middle class Indian youths tend to identify themselves with each of his characters. The writer may simply argue that he is only showcasing in his novels what he sees in society but there is another problem with this phenomenon. It is also equally possible that the young boys and girls who read his novels may get inspired by his characters and try to imitate more their vices rather than virtues.

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Estranged Father-Son Relationship in Chetan Bhagat's Two States

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Abstract:

Family estrangement can be an emotional distancing, a cessation of communication or a cold war between the members of a family. Chetan Bhagat, one of the most popular contemporary writers in Indian English literature has exhaustively dealt with family estrangement in his novels. Coincidentally, the strained relationship mostly happens between a father and a son. Unconcern, coldness, indifference, inability to recognise the inherent talents of children, over dominance, abuse, over possessiveness and emotional blackmailing are some of the common characteristics of a protagonist's father in any of these novels of Chetan Bhagat. The paper focuses on the estranged father-son relationship in his autobiographical novel, *Two States*.

Key Words and Phrases: Family estrangement, indifference, father-son relationship, abuse, domestic violence

Family estrangement can be an emotional distancing, a cessation of communication or a cold war between the members of a family. It is so widespread and so difficult to talk about that it is sometimes considered a silent epidemic. It is very often not discussed in the family but most of the times it is misunderstood. As a matter of fact, an estrangement may not necessarily last for a long-time. According to Wikipedia, 'Estrangement is the loss of a previously existing relationship between the members of a family, through physical and/or emotional distancing, often to the extent that there is negligible or no communication between the individuals involved for a prolonged period.' (Family)

Paul Johannes Tillich, one of the most influential theologians of the twentieth century, in his book *Systematic Theology*, emphasizes that estrangement prevents the process of self-realization; it

in fact operates as an intimidating force highly destructive to the elemental self. "Man's estrangement from his essential being is the universal character of existence." (Tillich, 74)

Chetan Bhagat is one of the most popular contemporary writers in Indian English literature whose novels strike a chord with the modern Indian youth. His novels have been best sellers in recent times in India. Interestingly the first six novels of Chetan Bhagat have dealt with family estrangement. Coincidentally, the strained relationship mostly happens between a father and a son. Unconcern, coldness, indifference, inability to recognise the inherent talents of children, over dominance, abuse, over possessiveness and emotional blackmailing are some of the common characteristics of a protagonist's father in any of these novels of Chetan Bhagat. The opinion of the protagonist of *Two*



States about his father generally applies to any father character in Chetan Bhagat's novels: "I didn't want my father's chapter in my life again. No father is better than a bad father." (TS, 116)

Chetan Bhagat himself reveals about the dysfunctional relationship between the protagonist and the father in an interview to *Times of India*:

I wrote three books while I was at the bank, when I met a French journalist friend and he said to me, 'In all three books of yours, the relationship between the protagonist and the father is dysfunctional. In *Five Point Someone*, one guy doesn't like his parents, the other guy has a paralysed father and the third guy has a strict father, in *One Night @ the Call Center*, Shyam is under-confident and his parents are always fighting. In *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*, the father has deserted him and even Ishan's father slaps him and he has a bad relationship with his father. (Gupta)

Among all the novels of Chetan Bhagat, *Two States* deals with 'father-son' estranged relationship most extensively. It is largely based on his real life incidents. It describes the protagonist's never compromising attitude with his rebellious nature and his hatred towards his father who horribly ill-treats his mother. Krish seems to be always cheerful and in high spirits except in the presence of his father. He is so tolerant whenever

he faces any difficult situation either it be his attempts to impress his in-laws or his girl friend. But he loses his cool at the very mention of his father's name and behaves very wild.

Krish's father is a retired military colonel who is very autocratic. He ill-treats his wife and son in every possible way. He cannot tolerate even if his wife speaks to her sisters or other relatives. He would never appreciate any of her sisters or other close relatives visiting his house in his presence or absence. He would be very unkind to them. Even if anyone visits his house anytime by chance, he will be so ruthless that he even doesn't mind showing them the door.

'I said hello jija-ji.' Shipra masi said and smiled.

'I like your goodbye more than hello,' my father replied.

'I would appreciate it if you don't interfere in our family matters,' my father said. (TS, 69)

Krish's mother has suffered many insults by her husband since her marriage with him. She is very scared of his presence at home. As long as he is busy outside with his work, she is so relieved. She watches TV only in his absence. Her husband despises anyone watching TV be it his wife or son.

The doorbell rang twice.

'Oh no, it's your father,' my mother said. 'Switch off the TV'

'It's OK,' I said.



My mother gave me a stern glance. I reluctantly shut the television. (59)

Krish's father stoops to such a low level that as soon as he returns home, he immediately touches the TV top to check how hot it is just to know whether it has been switched off only recently. Krish would have tolerated all this torture while he had been a young boy but now he has grown up and fetched a good job too. So he gains some courage to argue with his father and he has decided not to endure his father's authority on his mother or him anymore.

My father went and touched the TV top. 'It's hot. Who watched TV?'

'I did. Any problem?' I said.

'I hope you leave home soon,' my father said.

'I hope you leave the world soon,' I responded mentally as I took my plate and left the room. (59)

When Krish asks his mother why she should not leave him rather than bearing all the torment, she simply says that her husband doesn't stay at home most of the time. He either goes to his army mess or visits his partners with whom he tries his harebrained business schemes like security agency. He is always quarrelsome with anyone he encounters with. He picks up fights with customers at the very first meeting making them feel scared. She also tells her son that she has got used to his persecution and she only worries about his son who gets angry and fights with him at the simplest annoyance he causes. Krish by no means spares his father who harasses his mother for no reason.

Krish's father never hesitates to declare that his son's rebellious nature is the result of her wrong parenting.

'I don't want to eat this,' my father said.

'Why don't you say you've already eaten and come?' I butted again.

My father stared at me and turned to my mother. 'This is the result of your upbringing. All degrees can go to the dustbin. You only have this at the end.' (59)

During their combined study at hostel in IIMA, Ananya often asks her boyfriend, Krish about his family but he never shows interest in talking about them and more importantly he avoids the topic of his father. But she loves to talk about her family and how much close she is with her father. Once Krish makes a phone call from an STD telephone booth and his father receives the call. But Krish is reluctant to speak to him. He hangs up and calls again until his mother receives the call. Ananya who has observed this has been puzzled and asks him the reason for his odd behaviour with his father.

'I never speak to my father,' I said

'Why?' Ananya looked at me.

"Long story. Not for tonight. Or any night. I'd like to keep it to myself.' (17)

When Krish asks his mother whether his father is attending his convocation along with his mother, she replies that he has work. He wonders that what more important work his retired father has than attending the convocation of his son. Ananya's parents both attend the convocation to share one of the happiest moments of their daughter with them. But Krish's mother alone attends the ceremony



leaving her indifferent husband at home.

'No, why don't you ask him to?' she prepared to put me on hold.

'Mom, no. I don't want to call him if he doesn't want to come.'

Which father needs an invitation from his son to attend his convocation? Screw him. I said to myself. (41)

Ananya who is present during the telephonic conversation between Krish and his mother is perplexed at Krish's facial expressions. She is very enthusiastic about the convocation ceremony because it is a big opportunity to introduce Krish to her parents who have decided to attend it. She has thought that their families can get along with each other. She is a little bit disappointed when she comes to know that only Krish's mother will be present at the convocation. Since she has loving parents she naturally expects all parents and children will have the same kind of cordial relationship. She is always inquisitive about the reason for Krish's apathy towards his father. Krish never intends to talk about his father and he remains silent whenever such discussion arises.

'Dad's not coming,' I said.

'Why?'

'We have no relationship, Ananya. Don't try and fix it ever. OK?'

'What happened though?'

'I don't want to talk about it.' (41)

Generally children long for the arrival of their father from work. They want to spend more time with him if he is affectionate and caring. But Krish has bitter experiences with his father since his childhood. He loves to spend time with his mother. He helps her in the kitchen and they discuss many a thing joyously. But all their happiness evaporates and panic spreads in the house whenever Krish's father is at home or whenever he arrives home earlier than usual. "I never welcome my father home." (70)

Krish as a child and an adolescent was very studious and docile. He had been so tolerant with his father until he finished his education. But he never forgets the kind of horrible conditions he had undergone all through his childhood and the misery of his mother who is deprived of all kinds of freedom because of his tyrannical father. His promising job has given him the audacity to argue with his father whenever he crosses the border.

'I don't know why I come to this house,' my father said.

'I was thinking the same thing,' I said.

'Bastard, mind it!' he shouted at me like he did at his army jawans ten years ago. (...) 'He can't be my son. Nobody talks to their father like this,'

'And no father behaves like this,' I said. (70)

Parental estrangement, apathy and neglect are some of the most important menacing factors which influence the psychological and behavioural development of the children and are usually linked with an array of serious harmful effects in adulthood. They include psychological maladjustment,



internalizing and externalizing behaviours, and negative behavioural characteristics of children. Seth Meyers, a psychologist clarifies the reason for the estrangement of youth in the journal, *Psychology Today*;

Sometimes families become so dysfunctional that a family member decides that he can't stay connected any longer to a specific person in the family or, in some cases, the entire family. Typically people who estrange themselves from family tend to be over the age of 18 years, because that is the point when they begin to reach adulthood and have more independence. (Meyers)

Krish's mother is fed up with her husband's tantrums but she is helpless since both she and her son have been dependants on him until her son's clinching a job. She wants to divert herself from the torment of her husband by focussing on her son's wellbeing. She has found her happiness in her son's accomplishments. His father would always look down upon his son's achievements and curse his son that he will bite the dust for not being polite with him. He declines to attend his son's convocation on the flimsy reason that his son has not invited him. So only Krish's mother attends the event where his son receives the diploma. He is ecstatic to see his mother's happiness for he knows very well that his success will be the only medicine that can soothe all the wounds caused by his father's callous behaviour and unconcerned attitude.

My mother was standing and clapping. 'I love you,' she screamed. I smiled back at her. For the last ten years my father had told her that her

son would get nowhere in life. I held up my diploma high and looked up to thank God. (48)

Before falling in love with Ananya, Krish has loved another girl. When Krish tells his father that he is in love with the daughter of an IIT Professor, his father ridicules him making an indirect comment that he has done nothing good at IIT except loving the professor's daughter. Krish pleads his father to go and talk to the Professor since he is going abroad to get her engaged to someone. Surprisingly his father turns his anger towards his wife for not letting him know about these developments. Just like many men who adapt a kind of defence mechanism by directing their strong emotions and frustrations toward a person or object that doesn't feel threatening which allows them to satisfy an impulse to react, but they don't risk significant consequences, Krish's father also diverts his anger to his wife whenever he is going to lose an argument with his son. He is never ashamed of himself to physically abuse his wife in front of his grown-up son. He does not hesitate to slap his son who has attained marriageable age and who procures a very well-paid job in a multinational bank.

'Why was I not informed about the girl earlier?' my father screamed.

'He told me only a few weeks ago,' my mother said.

'And you hid it from me, bitch,' my father said. (165)



Domestic violence, spousal abuse, marital violence, or wife-beating is covert or overt; it occurs in upper or lower class households. The secrecy and shame surrounding the abuse perpetuated the problem and delayed legal protection for women of all classes. Krish's father resorts to verbal abuse as a means of maintaining control and power over his wife. Being a grown-up son, Krish is unable to tolerate his father's pejorative slang addressing his mother. Meena Kandasamy, the writer of the novel, *When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* in an email says that even stronger women are also not exceptional to domestic violence:

I believed that no man, no husband could lay a hand on me. I was fierce and feminist and no-nonsense. Then, within an abusive marriage, I actually realized that your strength is also what makes you a perfect target for an abuser. (Bhandare)

Krish's father, in spite of being a military colonel, resorts to physical abuse of his wife in the very presence of his highly qualified and abundantly paid son. There is no wonder that he is despised by both the mother and son.

'You are responsible for bringing him up like this,' my father screamed at my mother. I heard the sound of a glass being smashed against the wall.

'What have I done? I didn't even know about this girl...'

Slap.... slap.... my father interrupted my mother. I banged the door as I heard a few more slaps. I saw my mother's hand covering her

face. A piece of glass had cut her forearm. (...)

I saw the tears on my mother's face. My face burned with rage. She had lived with this for twenty five years. I did know why- to bring me up; I didn't know how she did it. I slapped his face once, twice, then I rolled my hand into a fist and punched his face. (166 & 167)

Krish's father goes into a state of shock after being manhandled by his own son and he cannot fight back. He has never expected such reaction from his son. All his childhood, Krish had merely suffered his dominance. The reason for his extreme step is not necessarily because of his unconcern to his girl friend's issue. Probably it is a reaction to his almost two decades of abuse of his mother and him. Never ever he has thought that he would manhandle his father like this. He was a studious child who stayed with his books all his life. He almost seems to have sworn vengeance on his father for all his wrong deeds. After a few minutes he looks at his father vows never to speak to him again.

During Krish's stay in Chennai, he happens to meet a Guruji, a seventy year old sage. When he tells him about his stress due to his worry over his marriage with Ananya because both the families are against it, Guruji probes him further whether there is any other agony for him besides the marriage issue. Then he reveals about the estrangement between him and his father. He narrates the whole episode that has lead to his manhandling his father. Then Guruji advises him to apply one word to his life.

'I will give you just one word to apply in your life.'

'What?'



'Forgiveness' (168)

Krish wonders how he can forgive his father for all his wrong doings. He expresses his helplessness in this regard because it is impossible for him to forget his father's callous behaviour and the way he has ruined his mother's life. Moreover he has never loved him.

'I am not saying he did the right thing. I am asking you to forgive him.'

'Why?'

'For you. Forgiving doesn't make the person who hurt you feel better, it makes *you* feel better. (168)

In spite of Guruji's advice Krish's hatred towards his father has continued until Ananya breaks up with him due to his mother's hurting comments on her parents and Krish's unintentional yet unpleasant remarks on Ananya. When he is in deep depression, his father starts showing concern for his son and wants to know the real cause of his son's misery. He flies to Chennai one day without the knowledge of his son and wife and meets Ananya's family and solves the problem. Krish can't believe his father has done such an amazing thing. When Krish asks his father how it is possible, his father simply replies that he is his father and he knows very well what his son really needs.

His eyes met mine, he said, 'Because I am your father. A bad father, but I am still your father. (...) 'I'm not perfect. But don't deprive me of my son in my final years,' he said. (...) The world celebrates children and their mothers, but we need fathers also. (246)

Though the reconciliation of Krish with his father is possible in the novel, it

hasn't happened in the real life Chetan Bhagat. Krish could apply Guruji's one word panacea i.e. 'forgive' to solve his problem, but in real life Chetan Bhagat could not forgive his father. Maybe for ending the novel in a dramatic and cinematic way, he might have thought to bring remorse and realization in Krish's father. In an interview to *Times of India*, Chetan Bhagat reveals that since it is difficult for him to forgive his father in real life, he forgives him in the novel at least. "It was difficult for me to forgive him, but 2 States helped me forgive my father." (Gupta)

Interestingly, all of Chetan Bhagat's father characters have estranged relationships with their sons or daughters. In *Five Point Someone*, Prof. Cherian and his son Sameer has a much stressed relationship which ultimately leads to the suicide of the son. The dynamic, macho and exuberant Ryan too has strong differences with his parents. Even the narrator Hari has a tyrannical father because of whom he has problems related to public speech. In *One Night @ the Call Center* Military Uncle and his son are not in good terms. In *Three Mistakes of My Life*, Ishan is always disliked by his father and they are always in no talking terms. In *Revolution 2020*, Gopal and his ailing father indeed have an affectionate bond but the son's negligence in his studies due to the love failure dampens the prospects of his success in IIT entrance examination and it leads to his father's dejection and finally to his untimely death. In *Half Girlfriend*, instead of father-son relation, the writer throws light on the father-daughter strained relationship which occurs probably due to father's sexual abuse towards his daughter in her childhood. We can only see a caring and loving father in *One Indian Girl* and



again in his latest novel, *The Girl in Room 105*, the father-son conflict is repeated again. Probably Chetan Bhagat is quite unable to come out from the influence of his real life experiences with his estranged father.

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ONE DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR



ON 1st February, 2020

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: GEN-NEXT PERSPECTIVES



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WhatsApp as an Effective Tool for English Language Teaching-Learning Process

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Social media is an inevitable social evil nowadays. It is like double edged sword which has both favourable and unfavourable consequences. Despite the criticism it receives from various corners, we cannot deny its advantages on many fronts. It is a great opportunity for those who want their message to reach a large pool of people and connect directly with their audience. It can be used effectively in the field of education. It has many advantages for the students and teachers. It is very easy to get educated from diverse experts and professionals via social media. We can follow anyone and can enhance our knowledge about any field. Irrespective of our location and educational background we can educate ourselves without paying for it. Social network applications such as face book, twitter, LinkedIn and WhatApp have been amazingly popular in the communication world.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become inseparable from man's day to day activities. It has enriched and accommodated human life in an incredible way. The use of ICT can improve the quality of education especially in learning language skills effortlessly. There is no denying that WhatsApp has become part of our life. In recent times it is being used as an influential teaching tool. If properly utilized it can do wonders in teaching-learning process. It can be used to improve English language skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening. Various features in the application of WhatsApp offer collaborative language learning and facilitate learning beyond classroom borders and can enhance learning process. WhatsApp in fact permits learners' autonomy.

WhatsApp Messenger, the most popular recent social network is a technological sensation that has changed the life styles of the people across the world. It just requires a smart phone that has internet connection. It has more than 500 million daily active users. On average one million people register on WhatsApp daily. Its users can send text messages as well as voice messages. They can also make voice and video calls. Images, documents, user locations and other media can be shared on a large scale. This application is accessible on mobile devices but can also be used from desktop computers. The users are required to provide a standard cellular mobile number for registering with the service. Most of the WhatsApp users make use of this application as a chatting platform and to send text messages, share photos and videos. But a few people know the hidden features which are highly useful in many ways.

WhatsApp offers several options when it comes to messaging to other users. You can write messages to individual contacts, groups or broadcast them. The feature broadcasting can be compared to the BCC option in emails.

Teaching through WhatsApp group has many advantages. Especially when the teacher wants to encourage a kind of healthy discussion, it's very useful. For example, the teacher can put a question, *what part of speech is 'Please'?* Or *what is the question tag for 'Go to the class'.* Different members of the group may respond differently and the teacher can give his final view upon the issue. The disadvantage with a group is it attracts unnecessary discussion sometimes. In spite of many appeals from the admin the members post 'Good Morning, Good Night kind of messages which make the participants lose interest to continue an active participant of an important discussion. However, recently, WhatsApp introduced a new feature that lets the admin restrict the replies in a group. Using this feature, only the admin can send messages in a group and no one else. Other members won't get the reply box. Still there is a disadvantage with WhatsApp group, especially if is a co-education college. Everyone has an access to the others' mobile numbers and there is a possibility of some boys sending unnecessary and indecent messages to the girl students personally.

Using the WhatsApp's broadcasting feature we can send a single text, document, image or video to a number of recipients individually with a single click. First of all it saves time. The next big advantage is each receiver feels that the message has been sent to him/her exclusively. This will give the recipient a sense of accountability. The recipient feels very responsible. When it comes to a group chat, some participants don't respond at all thinking that someone else will give the answer or respond somehow or other. There will be many passive participants and thus the real purpose will not be served. But sending a message to broadcast list makes the receivers feel that they alone have received it. It also avoids the unnecessary greetings like; *Good Morning, Good Evening* etc. The replies to the message are known the broadcaster only but not others. The message will be broadcast to only those who are in the broadcasting list. To keep the chats private and personal, all the replies will be restricted to the broadcaster only and no one else will get the reply of the message except the one who has sent it. But in a group, the message can be seen by each of its members and everyone knows who else has seen the message.

The teacher should create separate broadcast lists for each class he teaches. He can name the group. He should add all the students whoever has the smart phone with internet. Before teaching a particular lesson he can select a list of words he wants to introduce to the students. He should not send all the new words on a single day in a single message. If it is so, the students may feel it an impossible task and chances are very bright that they totally ignore the message.

The teacher can ask each student in his message to come prepared to the class with the meanings of certain words. In a normal class where the strength of a class is above 60 it is very difficult for the teacher to pay individual attention the span of just 45 minutes. But in WhatsApp Broadcasting it's quite easy for the teacher to create an impression among all the students that the teacher is talking to him/her directly. For example, if the teacher is going to teach the lesson on Martin Luther King Junior's famous speech, '*I Have a Dream*', he can send the picture of King's photograph and his brief biography to all the students' through broadcasting and they will be familiar with him by the time the teacher starts teaching the lesson in the class. He can also share the original video of the speech before or after teaching the lesson.

For teaching grammar and vocabulary also WhatsApp Broadcasting feature is immensely helpful to both the teacher and the taught. For example, if there are some 100 prescribed One Word Substitutes, the teacher can send some five words a day to the students to lessen the burden on the student. The teacher should allot at least five to ten minutes to discuss these words in the class. Before teaching 'Tenses', the teacher can send the three verb forms of some important verbs. It saves the time of not only the teacher but also the student. The teacher should test one two students whether they have learnt these forms to keep the students alert so that they will not take the messages easy.

The teacher can put some questions to the students through broadcast to test how far they have learnt a particular topic. Here, the student need not feel shy to give answers because it will be read only by the teacher but not other students of the class unlike in a group chat. He need not worry about what others would think about him if his answer is wrong because the chats are private and personal and all the replies will be restricted to the broadcaster only and no one else will have the access to the reply of the message except the one who has sent it.

Whenever the teacher sends some notes to his students through WhatsApp he must ensure that the students should also copy down it later in their note books so that they will not neglect writing skills. Sometimes the teacher wants to convey some important tips to the students before the exam. He cannot call everyone for that purpose. So he can send the message through WhatsApp and the purpose will be served. If the teacher wants feedback from the students privately without letting other students in the class he can use the broadcast.

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HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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31. Character Building through Reading

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The advent of modern technology has indisputably brought so much comfort in our lives. The world has become a global village. At the same time it has its disadvantages too. One of the worrying facts is that the hobby of reading books shows a steady decline. When technologically advanced smart phones are luring us with their highly advanced features, no one is ever bothered to read a book which seems to be a tedious job in the changed scenario over the last two decades. Reading a good book was once considered a kind of entertainment but nowadays most people derive utmost pleasure in scrolling their phones and reading the latest gossip from online newspapers and magazines or chatting with a friend on face book or WhatsApp.

The most important objectives of education should be enabling students to gain knowledge and moral values. The young students are provoked to violent behaviour, falsehood, and other social problems through the social media and the real life incidents. If moral values are taught in a systematic way, these problems wouldn't have arisen. Regrettably, many of the role models of the youth are setting bad precedents. These vary from irresponsible behaviour towards the society, sexual immorality, degrading of women, encouragement of violence, and the adaptation of dishonest methods in order to succeed.

Literature in fact is a value addition. It not only depicts reality but also adds to it. It supplements the necessary skills that daily life requires and provides. It includes stories, epics, Holy Scriptures and classical works of the ancient as well as modern times. Classical literary works provide us a food for thought and a stimulant for imagination and creativity. The great literary works like the Bible, the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata provide society with the guiding principles of life. Reading helps a person take a closer look at the different facets of life. In many ways, it can change one's viewpoint towards life. Literature serves as an enormous information base. It lays the foundation of an enriched life and adds 'life' to 'living'.

During the 70's and 80's the print media dominated. The youth were crazy about reading novels, serials and short stories. Especially serials in the weeklies and monthlies had a great impact on the youth. The protagonists in the serials and novels were the role models for them. The hero or the heroine of popular novels had extraordinary good qualities which everyone at least admired whether they wanted to follow them or not. With the advent of the TV and Computer the scenario has changed. The reading habit tends to diminish. The popular novelists have turned into screen-play writers of the serials. People are glued to the TV sets to watch soap operas, game shows and reality shows.

The objective of most of the TV serials and shows is minting money. The themes of the serials are one and the same. All these revolve around polygamy, polyandry, kidnapping, child abuse, blackmailing, lady villains planning to destroy their antagonist family members and so on. There are no values at all forget the human values. The house-wives spend most of their leisure time watching these serials. People think it's just entertainment but it does something to our mind when we watch them. They screw us up, make shocking things less shocking. So normal life becomes boring and people need to act out.

People hardly read any novels or standard writings of the past now. The children are so passionate about playing video games or watching Cartoon Network or Pogo. They don't show any interest to read great epics or books that have great moral values. The youth are so obsessive for latest electronic gadgets and internet. Sending messages on mobiles, chatting on WhatsApp, Face book, down-loading movies, songs and games have become a common phenomenon. The adverse affect of social media on young minds as well as the rest is alarming. Mass media and social media have to be blamed for the decay of virtues in the past two decades.

People are now putting less heart into their work and more greed. The children who grow up without desirable virtues will never know what true virtues are. The nuclear family has been disintegrating for decades. Our children are left to fend for themselves while parents pursue their own pleasure. Anti-social behaviour among school going kids is alarmingly increasing due to the adverse affects of social media. Courage, honesty and humility have been displaced by contempt, selfishness and audacity. Adults passively but deliberately accept and allow the exposure of their children to violence and sexual promiscuity through what is deemed *entertainment*.

Society as a whole is slowly failing into something an implosion of values and merits. Media plays the spoilsport. The family values are slowly waning and every day more and more people are beginning to think more as an individual rather than a whole in society. We have nowadays a much more aggressive propaganda on individualism and parents are simply helpless in many cases and the result is that the children are addicted to movies, TV shows, smart phone etc. So children are alienating themselves from their families and live in their own world.

Interestingly many people believe that values are not deteriorating but they are changing. Fifty years ago we valued our grandparents, honesty and character. Now we value celebrities irrespective of their own flaws. Values are the good habits that are transmittable. They are passed down through generations. Values connect us together and set us apart. Unfortunately the present day society is ignoring these facts. We claim ourselves that we have a great heritage but we fail to pass on these values to next generations. Our society needs a value check and mindset change. People are forgetting the values of extreme importance which we need to focus on such as *empathy, mutual respect, love, loyalty, humility and honesty*.



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Violence against Women in Shashi Deshpande's Short Stories-C.V. S. Ravindranath

Violence Against Women Seminar Proceedings - February 18, 2020

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Violence against Women in Shashi Deshpande's Short Stories

ABSTRACT:

Violence against women is widespread, and may affect women of any age, class, race, religion, sexuality, or ability. Among all forms of brutality and abuse, women are most at risk surprisingly from men they have already known. Shashi Deshpande, one of the popular Indian feminist writers of the last quarter of the 20th century writes about the unspoken realities of women's lives, drawing attention to issues ranging from domestic violence against women, strained relationships between wives and husbands, loneliness and rejection within arranged marriages and other issues affecting women. She has made bold attempts at giving a voice to the disappointments and frustrations of a woman. This paper focuses on the problems of suppression, oppression and victimization of women in the short stories of Shashi Deshpande with special reference to her short story, 'My Beloved Charioteer'.

Key words & phrases: Violence against women, abuse, strained relationships

Violence against women can be any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, compulsion or subjective deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. It has a considerable impact on the health and socio-economic status of women. It affects the health and welfare of children and young people who witness violence against women who happen to their members of the family.

Bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets is called Cyberbullying. It can occur through face book, whatsapp, instagram and other forums where people can view, participate in, or share content. It includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, destructive, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing humiliation or uneasiness. Sometimes cyberbullying leads into unlawful or criminal behaviour.

Domestic violence, spousal abuse, marital violence, or wife-beating—it is written about by leading authors of the time. Indeed, there is no such phrase as “domestic violence” in the nineteenth century. Although there are cases of husbands being abused by their wives, the majority of victims of abuse are female. Domestic violence is covert or overt, it occurs in upper- or lower-class households, the secrecy and shame surrounding the abuse perpetuated the problem and delayed legal protection for women of all classes. When husbands physically abuse their wives behind closed doors, the victims have different reasons for keeping silent about the violence. Men seek to protect their reputations in the community while verbally and physically battering their wives in the privacy of their homes. Women have a far more humane reason for keeping the violence hidden: they want to protect their children and other family members from learning of the abuse so as not to frighten them or to be a burden.

Domestic violence is blind to social status. Absolutely everyone is at risk of becoming a victim of domestic violence when there is no mutual respect between marital partners, there is no sense of morality that deems the very thought of abusing or threatening another as unthinkable, and there are no comprehensive laws with sufficiently prohibitive sanctions.

Shashi Deshpande is an Indian short story writer and novelist and the recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award. She is the recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award for the novel ‘That Long Silence’ in 1990. Her stories show frankness and boldness not found so far in Indo-English short fiction. Her women tend to be the architects of their own fate. Hers are the authentic, poignant tales of the middle class educated women and their exploitation in a conventional male-dominated society.

Deshpande’s short stories are more or less a fictionalization of personal experiences. Most of the novels present a typical, middle-class housewife’s life. Deshpande’s main concern is the urge to find oneself, to create space for oneself to grow on one’s own. One striking thing about her novels and short stories is the recurrence of certain themes in them. But the predicament of women – especially those who are educated and belong to the middle-class – has been most prominently dealt with. Many of her characters are persons who are frustrated either sexually or professionally. Shashi Deshpande’s short story “My Beloved Charioteer” describes how three generations of a family live together with different mindsets. The story also reveals the hardships faced by widows in a male dominated society.

Arti is the mother of Priti. She has been in deep depression since the death of her husband, Madhav. She loves two persons in life – her father and her husband. As both of them died, her grief knows no bounds. Arti’s mother reacts to her daughter’s love towards her father.

For Aarti, it was always her father ... Even after his death; he can give her something I can't.

Arti is unable to return to her normalcy. She does not talk to her mother as well as her daughter. All the day she either sleeps or smokes. She doesn't bother about her looks or dressing. She is confined to four walls.

The grandmother in the story is the narrator. She is called Ajji. She finds solace in her granddaughter Priti's company. She is a ray of hope in her meaningless life. Priti too is happy to spend her time with Ajji. Arti is lost in her own grief in such an extent that she neglects the needs of her daughter. But Ajji can't see grief-stricken Arti. She tries her best to bring her back to the happiness but is a failure. She hopes that Arti will talk and laugh again one day. The mother wants to share the sufferings, sorrows of her daughter but cannot. It hurts mother that Arti can find her comfort from her dead father and not from her living mother. The incident of breaking the glass on her late father's photograph comes like an opportunity to mother. Arti always has loved her father than mother. But now mother introduces Arti to her father's latent traits of character. The mother tells Arti that she was always dominated by her husband.

He was your father... but what was he of mine? I lived with him for 25 years. I know he didn't like unstringed beans and stones in his rice. I know he liked his tea boiling hot and his bath water lukewarm. I know he didn't like tears. And so, when your baby brothers died, I wept alone and in secret. I combed my hair before he woke up because he didn't like to see women with loosened hair, because he hated to find stray hairs anywhere. And once a year he bought me two saris; always colours that I hated. But he never asked me and I never told him.

Arti at first refuses to know the dark side of her beloved father. But her mother insists on realizing the true picture of her father a husband.

At night, I scarcely dared to breathe; I was so terrified of disturbing him. And once, when I asked whether I could sleep in another room.... I don't how I had the courage... he said nothing. But the next day, his mother, your grandmother, told me bluntly about a wife's duties. I must always be available. So, I sleep there, afraid to get up for a glass of water, scared even to cough. When he wanted me, he said, 'Come here'. And I went. And when he finished, if I didn't get out of his bed fast enough, he said, "You can go". And I went.

The mother discloses the husband's oppression she has experienced throughout her life, which opens her daughter's eyes to the character of her father which results in the reconciliation of the daughter with her mother. At the end mother is happy because she makes her daughter to look at her. She does not bother whether there will be change in attitude of Arti towards her. She is satisfied because the locked door of the communication is opened. Arti comes to know that her mother is "a victim of gender based oppression and patriarchal socialization." At last the mother is successful to bring back her daughter to this living world again. Mother feels that the daughter is with her now, giving her new strength for new battle. Arti becomes the beloved charioteer of her mother.

Deshpande etches the dark pictures of an incompatible married life that is more a rule than an exception. The widowed mother of the story 'My Beloved Charioteer' discloses to her widowed daughter the oppression she experienced throughout her married life of twenty five years. The point of interest in the story is that despite the sexual and emotional oppression for twenty five years, the mother is not broken like

the daughter, who neglects her child and herself after widowhood. The mother constantly remains constructive and overcomes the destructive forces of society.

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**PERSPECTIVES ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL INDUSTRIALIZATION IN
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ENGLISH SKILLS FOR EMPLOYABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Unemployment is one of the major problems in the developing countries like India. Even though there are considerable job opportunities, many students fail to grab them irrespective of their high educational qualifications. One of the most important reasons for this peculiar situation is lack of good communication skills in English. The faulty education system, the dearth of skilled teachers and poor infrastructural facilities are the major causes for the failure of English teaching-learning process in India. The paper deals with some of the informal methods to learn the necessary techniques to acquire good communication skills in English which pave the way for employment.

Key Words & Phrases: Unemployment-communication skills in English- informal methods

Introduction:

Though unemployment is a worldwide problem with more than 73 million youth unemployed worldwide, it's more alarming in developing countries like India. India's unemployment rate stood at 6.1% in the Financial Year 2018. Underemployment is even higher. But the kind of opportunities available in the country is no way related to the rate of employment. Skill development makes all the

difference and it is undoubtedly the key ingredient to robust economic growth. The two key challenges for India in this regard are human capital and sustainable resources. Human capital is generally comprised of education and skills. Educational qualifications are of course the indispensable necessity for entering the labour market whereas skills finally determine one's employability strength. Young people frantically search for entry-level jobs while employers, paradoxically, are unable to find people with the right skills.

India becomes the youngest country in the world by 2020 with an average age of 29 years. If the youth are not skilled and face unemployment challenges, it might turn out to be a liability rather than an asset. India faces a huge skill development challenge. It is estimated that around 50 to 70 million jobs will be created in India over the next five years and about 75 to 90 percent of these will require some vocational training. The youth will need to acquire necessary knowledge and skills to contribute towards nation-building. Skill development is generally considered a universal remedy for unemployment in developing countries like India. Among all the skills that are required for a job, the fluency in English language is considered to be the most prominent which brings many dividends.

The Role of English in India

Effective communication is the key to success in any profession. Language plays a vital role in communication and English is undoubtedly the most popular language across the world. English is an International Language. It is the mother-tongue of 300 million people in the world. English is a second language for 400 million people. Thus about 700 million people speak and understand English all over the world. It is the

first language in the U.K, U.S.A, Canada, Australia and the second language in all Commonwealth countries. English happens to be the language of international politics, trade, commerce and industry. One out of ten persons knows English.

The attempts to make Hindi as communicative language link failed since English is the only language accepted by one and all in India. Nehru opines that English is the window on the world. English is the only way through which we can see Most of the development taking place in political, social, economic, scientific, technical, literary, commercial and agricultural fields all over the world is only through English. According to F. G. French, "A traveller who can speak English will find somebody who can understand him wherever he may go; anyone who can read English can keep in touch with the whole world without leaving his own house."

The Official Language Commission remarked that English is the key to the store house of knowledge. Books in different branches of Science are not available in Indian languages. The Kothari Commission remarked that "English would be continued as library language. This is the only way through which you can get scientific knowledge. Nearly eighty percent of the books are in English. No student should be considered for a degree unless he has acquired reasonable proficiency in English."

English is the gate-way of higher education because most of the standard books in science, medicine, engineering etc., are available in English only. So it becomes an absolute necessity for us to have knowledge in

English. It keeps the reader in touch with the new trends, new innovations, new methods etc.

English is the only language for inter-state relationship and communication since Hindi is not acceptable in many southern states. English helps national integration because it acts as a unifying factor and. Similarly English is the only language, through which we can voice our opinion in the international affairs. Most business transactions within the country and between the countries are conducted in English. In trade, industry and administration, correspondence is done mainly in English. It has a great expressive power. English with its great stock of words and idioms makes it capable of expressing all shades of human thought and behaviour in an economic way.

When it comes to the question of Indians learning a foreign language, it is better to learn English than any other. Because it is the most important foreign language and it has already been familiar to the Indians for more than two centuries. English can be really called the language of opportunity. Knowledge of English is successful passport for employment. A person with good knowledge of English is considered an asset for many jobs not only in India but also in other countries.

Problems of teaching / learning English:

The pressure of population and the craze for English has resulted in the commercialization of English teaching in India and it is market driven, and not welfare driven. Although some estimates say that there are about 300 languages and dialects in India, the English Schedule of the constitution of India recognizes 22 languages as official languages. That is why the problem of a compulsory

official language in India continues to be a puzzle. The colonial legacy is still existent in the field of education. The colonial mindset has made the nation dependent on other countries and agencies for all innovative ideas even in the field of education.

All the committees and commissions have only tried to adopt and adapt the colonial model, though Indians could evolve their own strategies of instruction. Language, particularly the English language, has become not only a means for power and exploitation; but has also become a site for struggle. As a result, there is no proper planning or political will or coordination among various agencies, the central government, state governments, and universities in the implementation of suitable policies.

Many teachers who teach English in schools lack the technique of foreign language teaching. They remain largely ignorant of the changes taking place in English teaching and learning across the globe. Many teaching methods that are used in India are still imported. Most of the methods advocated were developed in monolingual countries like the United Kingdom or the United States of America. They are mostly futile in a multilingual context.

The textbooks, which are prescribed for the students are not suitable and attractive. The text books mostly do not contain tasks where learners can draw samples from the local, every day experiences. The examination oriented teaching pattern does not produce any practical impact upon the learners for various reasons. Memorization and reproduction are the two tenets on which the present day examination system is largely based. It does not test the competence of learners in English.

Even the physical condition of the classrooms is a great misery. Accommodating a huge number of students in a small room does not in any way motivate the students to learn. The infrastructure of the classrooms is inadequate. Some schools do not have enough pieces of furniture to accommodate all learners. Majority of the schools, Primary and Secondary, are all ill-equipped so far as teaching aids are concerned. Those who have the necessary resources and the money send their children to the best Convents, best English medium schools and Public Schools in the country and those who do not have the means are forced to be satisfied with what they get in the name of English. The English curriculum varies from State to State; from one school system to another. The variation in syllabus brings variation in achievement.

How to Master English Skills?

Most of the Indian students suffer from English phobia. Though some are good at writing skills in English they fail to repeat the same magic when it comes to speaking. One of the most prominent reasons is the fear that someone will find fault with their English. The native speakers never bother about their mistakes and so they can speak fluently.

In learning English, listening plays an important role. If we want to communicate properly, meaningfully and naturally, we need to hear various types of English repeatedly and continuously. Listening to radio for news in English is immensely helpful because the focus will be only on pronunciation and accent unlike television where our attention gets diverted by the visuals. Two of the most easily found English language broadcasters are the BBC and Voice of America. Today, we can even access them by

internet. We find many useful links for listening to the radio by internet, including "News in Easy English"

Reading voraciously is the key to acquire proficiency in English vocabulary. The more you read, the more you learn new words. Reading newspapers, novels, blogs, articles etc. make us familiar with more number of words. The newly learned words must be used in our conversation to convert our passive vocabulary into active vocabulary. Reading a book or a poem aloud helps us elevate our confidence levels in obtaining fluency in English. There are some texts and poems available on internet which are read with perfect the intonation, pronunciation, and diction. Native English speakers pronounce the words in a particular style. One has to encapsulate the particular style in which the native speakers pronounce certain words.

Many people hesitate to speak in English because they are apprehensive that people find mistakes in their speech. So we should find time and occasion to speak to those who are much younger to us. It helps us to get rid of our fear. We can also choose a best friend of us with whom we can share our ideas freely without any inhibitions. The conversation can also be recorded and it can be crosschecked to know where the mistakes have been made. Watching movies with English subtitles also help us to get acquainted with the way native speakers speak. This will be very helpful to improve one's English speaking abilities. We can also know how American or British actors pronounce commonly used words and phrases and it makes us familiar with different dialects, accents, slangs, and colloquialisms.

Writing is a powerful means of conveying our ideas and feelings to another person. It demands a discipline of mind and regimentation of thoughts which focuses on certain features; the people involved, the subject matter and the language required, where and when communication takes place and our purpose in communication. The hallmarks of good writing are also the hallmarks of good communication. With the advent of mobile phones, the habit of writing letters to kith and kin has almost disappeared. The pleasures of writing and receiving a letter should be renewed. Even your views on the recently watched film can be the subject. The writing habit enables us to make use of all the new vocabulary. While typing on system we can try different synonyms to avoid monotony in our expression.

Since learning English communication skills assure us a good employment, it is always advisable for the students to adapt some of the informal methods of acquiring proficiency discussed above besides the regular formal methods of learning English.

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Eco-consciousness in Ruskin Bond's Short Stories

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Abstract

The spirit of eco-consciousness is often found in the short stories of Ruskin Bond, who can be called the *Indian Wordsworth* for his passionate love for nature. Having spent most his life in places like Shimla, Dehradun and Mussoorie, Ruskin Bond enjoys a close relationship with natural surroundings of Himalayan foothills. He has celebrated the spectacle and gorgeousness of nature even in its tiniest form. His ardent love for nature is reflected in his writings especially short stories which provide insight into universal themes such as the apprehension between past and present, city life versus rural life, the splendour of ordinary folk, protection of the environment and living in harmony with nature. He has an exceptional flair of translating the imagery of nature, ambience and the deeply relatable characters unique to the foothills of the Indian Himalayas into visions through the words he pens down. Many of Ruskin Bond's short stories deal with different aspects of this region – from natural beauty to recent environmental degradation. The paper attempts to analyse Ruskin Bond's profound adoration for nature as well as concern for people with special reference to his short stories *The Cherry Tree*, *How Far Is the River* and *The Meeting Pool*.

Key Words and Phrases: Indian Wordsworth, eco-consciousness, environmental degradation, protection of the environment

Ruskin Bond can be called the Indian Wordsworth for his passionate love for nature. Having lived mostly in places like Shimla, Dehradun and Mussoorie, Ruskin Bond writes with an authenticity and emotional engagement about the land and the people of the Himalayas and small-town India. His fervent love for nature is reflected in his short stories which deal with different aspects of this region – from natural beauty to recent environmental degradation. The highly deteriorating condition of the Himalayan

region is not a welcome change for a nature lover like Bond who can't stop to talk of it in his writings especially stories. Excessive grazing and brutal attack on herbs causes damage to the green pastures. The nonexistence of forests will finally lead to less or no rainfall. Thus, dryness will harm the essence of humans. Ruskin Bond's short stories give a vivid picture of the Himalayas and deal with different aspects of this region – from natural beauty to recent environmental degradation. Many of his short stories are part of the school curriculum in India.



Man and nature are interdependent in their co-existence. The protection of nature and the ecological balance are important for human beings as well as other living things to lead a healthy life on earth. In the 21st century, human life has been made complicated by man himself. The modern lifestyle is full of stress. The present day man thinks that he is too busy to enjoy the bounties of the earth that are beautiful and soothing. We have to spend some considerable time should to enjoy the beauties of nature. Nature and literature always have a close relationship. One should not destroy the nature for any reason. Literature can bring awareness among people about the necessity of having eco-consciousness. Ruskin Bond stands tall among the writers who have been trying their best in protecting environment through their writings. I have selected three of Ruskin Bond's short stories for the eco-critical analysis in this paper; *The Cherry Tree*, *How Far Is the River* and *The Meeting Pool* to study Ruskin Bond's profound adoration for nature as well as concern for people. All these three stories are prescribed for Intermediate and Degree students of Andhra Pradesh during various periods. While teaching these stories to students, I have found one common factor in all the stories i.e. Ruskin Bond's boundless love towards Mother Nature.

The Cherry Tree is one of Ruskin Bond's short stories that reveal man's special relation with nature. The story revolves around Rakesh, a six year old boy. He lives with his grandfather in Mussorie. He reads newspaper for his grandfather. In return, his grandfather tells him interesting stories. One day, while returning from school, he buys some cherries. He eats them all the way.

On his grandfather's advice, he plants a cherry seed in the shady corner of the garden. Later he forgets all about it. One spring morning, Rakesh finds a well rooted cherry plant. He is very pleased. He shows very much interest in the plant. One day, a goat eats all the leaves. Rakesh is very upset. His grandfather assures him that it will grow. Later a grass cutting woman cuts the cherry plant into two. He gives up all the hopes. But the cherry tree has no intention of dying. Rakesh grows with the tree. When he is eight, the cherry tree has grown up to his chest. He finds some visitors to the tree. They are small insects, bees and birds. His grandfather shows him blossoms too. A year later, the tree becomes taller than Rakesh and even his grandfather. Rakesh plays happily climbing the tree and eating the cherry fruits. His grandfather takes rest under the shade of the tree. Rakesh and his grandfather enjoy the very presence of the tree.

'There are so many trees in the forest,' said Rakesh. 'What's so special about this tree? Why do we like it so much?'

'We planted it ourselves,' said grandfather. 'That's why it's special.'

'Just one small seed,' said Rakesh, and he touched the smooth bark of the tree that had grown. He ran his hand along the trunk of the tree and put his finger to the tip of a leaf. 'I wonder,' he whispered. 'Is this what it feels to be God?'

Rakesh is puzzled how a small seed can grow into such a big tree. He wonders at the ways of god. Thus Ruskin Bond tells us how a small boy nurtures a tree, grows



with it and develops a special bond with it.

In *The Cherry Tree* we have the theme of struggle, resilience, dedication, conflict, growth, responsibility and pride. It is an extract from his *Collected Short Stories*, the story is narrated in the third person by an unnamed narrator. After reading the story, the reader realizes that Bond may be exploring the theme of struggle. The seed that Rakesh plants incurs many difficulties before it grows to become a cherry tree. Just as an individual struggles in life so too does the cherry tree. The most interesting thing is the buoyancy that the cherry tree shows. It is as if the cherry tree declines to be overpowered by life. The story teaches the young minds the necessity of protecting ecosystems which brings benefits to society. Ecosystems are indispensable to our well-being and prosperity as they provide us with food, fresh air and water. Ecosystems also offer us an excellent outdoor recreation. Children love to read or listen to stories. Stories give them an opportunity to explore their own cultural roots, traditions and values. Rather than teaching them directly the advantages of planting trees, it's better to tell them stories like *The Cherry Tree* which will have an indirect impact upon them and they will unconsciously learn the message.

How Far Is the River is another popular story by Ruskin Bond in which the exploration of nature is highlighted. It portrays the psychology of a 12-year-old boy who longs to go out and discover nature. The boy is young and the river is small but the mountain is high. The mountain conceals the river and so the boy has never seen the river but has heard a great deal about it, of the fish in

its waters, of its rocks and currents and waterfalls. The boy feels a great desire to touch the water of the river and 'know it personally'. One day his parents go out and he is sure that they will not come back home till late in the evening. So he decides to go and see the river. He takes a loaf of bread from his house and starts his journey to the river. He takes the steep path which goes round the mountain and which is frequently used by the wood cutters, milkmen, mule drivers etc. On his way, he meets a woodcutter, who is concerned about the boy when he expresses his desire to walk 7 miles to reach the river. Then he enters a beautiful valley, where he meets a grass cutting girl with no clear idea about the distance to the river. Later he sees a shepherd boy with whom he walks for a while. Afterwards he is left alone again with no river in the sight. Far away from home, he begins to feel disappointed somehow. However, he does not give up as he walks more than half of the destination and if he fails to trace the river now, he will be ashamed of his experience. He walks alone on the hard, dusty and snowy path. Suddenly the silence is broken by the roaring sound of the river. The boy is delighted by the sight of the river, which he has longed to see and he runs into it till he is ankle deep in water and enjoys the feel of the cold, blue, white and wonderful water. Thus with great determination, the adventurous boy fulfils his desire of seeing and feeling the river.

Thus *How Far Is the River* describes the irresistible desire of the young boy to explore nature. It teaches children to discover the beauty of nature and learn to explore it, instead of becoming addicts of TV, computers, and electronic gadgets. The dwindling patches



of greenery around them deprive them of the opportunity to connect with nature. The close association with nature helps children to develop an awareness and curiosity about things around them, while at the same time it increases their attention span and ability to learn. Children must be told about the need to love and conserve nature as it helps them to become responsible citizens and better custodians of the Earth.

The Meeting Pool is another beautiful short story written by Ruskin Bond. It is about three friends who take a pledge to return to their favourite pool after ten years. The best part of their childhood revolves around a pool, which is a discovery by Rusty, the narrator of the story and thus came to be known as Rusty's pool. Ruskin Bond never misses a chance to describe the intricacies of nature.

Sliding down a rock-face into a small ravine, I found the stream running over a bed of shingle. Water trickled down from the hillside, from amongst ferns and grasses and wild primroses. The rocks beside the stream were smooth, and some of them were grey and some yellow. A small waterfall came down the rocks and formed a deep, round pool of apple-green water

As soon as Rusty discovers the pool near the ravine, he is excited to convey the news to his two friends. The secret pool becomes their meeting point. They involve in activities like fishing, swimming, wrestling and buffalo rides. The pool not only symbolizes the bond of

friendship between them but also becomes a part of their consciousness. They decide to return on the fifth of April 1964 at midday, i.e. ten years later to the pool again. Rusty is the only one who visits the pool on the scheduled day. He is disappointed that his friends do not keep up their promise. However, there is no animosity or resentment as he understands that with the passage of time, their needs and priorities might have changed. To his astonishment, he discovers another pool and another group of friends who are playing in it. He imagines himself and his friends in their place. The story thus passes on the message that life goes on, come what may.

Though *The Meeting Pool* describes the ravages of time and how the requirements and necessities of an individual changes by the passage of time, it also gives a glimpse of Ruskin's fondness for the nature's beauty and instils in learners a love for nature and develops in them a mindset to explore and conserve it. Anil one of Rusty's friends has a sense of fun and an instinct for adventure. In fact Ruskin Bond himself has the instinct. While commenting on his urge to write about nature, Ruskin Bond says;

"I love to write on nature and animals, though I have been bitten sometimes and attacked by monkeys."

Bond accepts the ultimate truth of nature with humility. Such sensuousness with which Bond loves life in various forms and loves nature in myriad configurations is evident in all his



writings. He enjoys the sight of pebbles in the clear stream and portrays his joy in the writings. Such scenes have a perfect harmony, though temporary, yet lasting; though sensory, yet spiritual.

From the above illustrations and discussions it becomes obviously clear that Bond is a committed ecologist taking bio-diverse themes with love for nature and the passion for conservation of ecology which is innate and instinctive. He admits that there has been a tremendous decrease in forest cover, but says:

"There's still much of it (forest cover) left that can be written about and needs to be preserved for future generations."

Ruskin's stories reflect his great love and sincere concern for nature. Hence, we need to prove sincere, selfless, honest and loyal towards nature by infusing in us a true sense of environmental ethics which is the crux of any eco-critical study. Ruskin Bond's writings closely place us to nature and his narrative and writing style help us imagine the story emotionally. In one of his interviews, while reacting on his promoting 'Environmentalism', Ruskin Bond says:

....it was only when I came to live up here in the mountains that nature began to play a greater part in my stories and writing. To begin with, I wasn't environmentally conscious, in those days, I don't think the very word existed, so it was just it had the touches the

way I felt and thought, and now of course now there are so many people who are at least conscious of the environment, what's going wrong with it and what should be right with it.

The writers across the world should bring ecological and environmental awareness among the readers regarding the environmental limits and the consequences of human actions damaging the planet's basic life support system. They should take a leaf out of Ruskin's short stories. Ruskin Bond shows his serious apprehension for reduction of the natural resources. His works reflect his ardent conviction in the healing powers of nature. His major concern is his worry for the inconsiderate actions of man towards nature. Through his short stories for children he has tried to emphasize the significance of nature in our life. In his *The Cherry Tree* Ruskin emphasizes the importance of the deep bond that grows between man and tree. Similarly, *The Meeting Pool* and *How Far Is the River* teach children the necessity of exploring nature. Many of his stories are the depictions of the chain which binds man and nature, like the chain of ecosystem, showing their interdependence. Ruskin's basic mission in his stories is to emphasize the friendly relationship between man and nature and spread eco-consciousness among his readers.

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