

The Marxist Approach to the Presentation of Marginalised in 'The Shroud'

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Abstract – This paper aims to scrutinize the portrayal of subaltern entities in Indian regional literature with special reference to the short story 'The Shroud' by Munsu Premchand. This research focuses to contemplate this particular piece of writing from Marxist project and will unmask the socio-political and socio-economic conditions where unprivileged group of society are trapped to exploitations and oppessions. The present article also investigates the identity crisis and the formation of false consciousness of downtrodden by the exploitative forces especially during the early twentieth century in India.

Key Words: Subaltern, Marxist Perspective, Exploitation, False Consciousness.

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MAIN PAPER:

By contemplating the socio- structure nearly, it is crystal clear that is it formed up on a constant clash between various classes of society,. At the same time, these classes have disparity each other as far as the distributions of goods and power are concerned. In the other words, modes of productions forms the society. Thus introducing "the notion of 'dialectical materialism', the means of production controls the society's institutions and belief" (P-80) explained Dobie(2011), and extends the view that this separates people into two categories one who reigns and governs the model of production- the bourgeoisie, and those who are under their command-the working class or marginalised.

'The shroud' by Munsu Premchand mirrors the above expressions. The leading characters, Ghisu and Madhav, who are the untouchable,are struggling to get things settled after Budhiya's death. They went to beg money for shroud and to perform last rites of dead Budhiya. Initially after all pinching insults, get money but then spent it in eating and drinking.

The story affirms the ideology of class-clash between upper and lower class. Due to the control over the superstructure, the privileged groups are destined to govern the subordinates, where this clash of classes gets born, specially by the way, how and who benefits the economy.

Marxist literary theory throws light on the disparity in social classes, the inappropriate distribution of power and subsequently the constitution of classes. In other words, how this clash among the classes triggers the various social classes and identities of the character

according to their socio-economic conditions. By digging up the Marxist theory, it's clear that this scenario develops the consciousness of unprivileged people. They tend to internalize the things or action which are not in their favour. It is, to such an extend that these downtrodden don't even articulate against exploitative agencies. This is called the false consciousness.

The unprivileged are forced to place in a mould where they develops the false consciousness. And even worst is that, this kind of realization invades their identity. About Ghisu and Madhav, Premchand exclaimed. "Their lives were free of all wordly cares... people heaped abuse on them, even beat them, but they were without a care in the world' Ghisu on the other hand was smart than those of farmers in the village but he choose to sit back comfortably and carefully . Was he that slothful ? No ! He was forced to stand at the margin so that he could not participate in the production and subsequently make money or enhance financial conditions.

The subaltern study of 'The Shroud' is quite interesting as well as thought –provoking. The subaltern is rather condition where the big-shots possess the 'centre' and consequently, margined are pushed away to the corners, where their actions, thoughts, expressions, or ideas got manipulated and unheard by the rulling agencies. Whatever they enact, becomes acceptable and example for the subordinates. After getting money from zamindar, Ghisu is quite firm about the fact that now on, nobody will deny landing money that's why, spivak raised a question, "can the subaltern speak ?" It implies that it is almost next to

impossible for marginalised to articulate. But in the context of the 'shroud', the scene is totally different, as Ghisu and Madhav not only make aware of socio-political devastation but made counterattack by exploiting the rich class; not once but twice. Ghisu shouts, " what makes you think she won't get shroud ?..... she will get a shroud and a very nice too." Both of them enjoyed supper and liquor out of the money they had begged for shroud. Here the idea that peeps in is, both these fellows collected money sympathetically from the ones who make money out of them. So exploitation becomes two-way process. The only major difference is, the Havenotes succeed to exploit the rich at the cost of one life, that of Budhiya.

The picture on other side is very in resting that the Haves are conscious too to sustain their power and status in the game of socio-economic and socio-political cycle. It is always fixed and static agenda behind their moves. Zamindar landed money not out of sympathy but to get immune to stay at top.

CONCLUSION

Thus this observation of Munsi Premchand's story revealed this socio-economic condition often triggers subordinate to voice out their exploitations.

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