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# **VASANT SAHASTRADHARA:**

***An Interdisciplinary Journal***

**(Bi-annual & Bi-lingual)**

**Volume: 5, No. 1 (February, 2021)**

**Editor**  
**Prof. Alka Singh**  
**Principal**



अप्य दीपो भव

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## *Editor's Note*

It gives us immense pleasure to bring out the Vol. 5 No. 1 (February 2021) issue of *Vasant Sahastradhara: An Interdisciplinary Journal (Peer Reviewed)* of Vasanta College for Women, Rajghat, Varanasi. The present volume is a scholarly collection of ten articles from different disciplines of Humanities and Social Sciences. The first article aims to assess some ethnomedicinal plants which are used as analgesic in Ayurveda. The traditional Indian medicinal system remains the most ancient yet living traditions with sound philosophical and experimental basis and it also unfolds the therapeutical uses specifically analgesic effect of certain drugs as per Ayurveda. The second article dwells on the art of writing self-narrative or life narrative that has been in practice long time. An autobiography is literature of personal revelation and its main interest lies in conscious or unconscious self-portrayal by the author. The article is an attempt to analyse selected theater artists' lives challenges and role-playing through their life-narratives such as DurgaKhote and ShaukatKaifi. The third article presents the Indian concept of pilgrimage both as a physical and spiritual journey and it tries to connect the holiness of the Indian rivers with all their mystic powers. It also tries to understand how they assist human civilization and culture to grow on the riverbanks and finally guide people towards the path of salvation. The fourth article endeavours to identify the political nature of Valluvanad connecting to several aspects like geographical features, which become necessary to evaluate the political boundaries of this area and these features at the same time strengthen the political entity of Valluvanad in the medieval period. The fifth article is written in the backdrop of Covid-19 when all the educational institutions have faced the common challenge of teaching students. It ponders on the role of virtual education, which has become the only mode to hold classrooms in present circumstances and at same time brings out its positive and negative sides. The sixth article would try to analyze the effectiveness of BRICS as a multilateral group in the present process of globalization. The article will also talk about how BRICs nations are trying to improve cooperation in the area of mutual interest and that has brought them closer. The seventh article aims to study the reasons for the proliferation of violence in the twentieth century America and further would uncover how the collective memories of violence cause dent upon the psyche of the blacks in the plays of August Wilson of Black Theatre. The eighth article attempts a comparative survey on the common theme of 'harvest' running through the works of Romantic poets belonging to two different cultures and zones –William Wordsworth the English poet and Laxmi Prasad Devkota the Nepali poet in their poems *TheSolitary Reaper* and *Gain TinleGhasiyaGeet* respectively. Both of them pioneered ways of perceiving and responding to the natural world and sought a perennial relationship between humankind and natural world in their immortal poems. The ninth article discusses the Indian perspective of multiculturalism with special reference to Swami Vivekananda's ideas on cultural harmony. It argues that the Indian model of 'university in diversity' is unique, it

does not suffer from ‘difference – anxiety’ but rather celebrates diversity. The tenth article is about concept of *Moksha* or salvation in *Advait Vedanta* and it can be attained only an intellectual churning of holy texts and true devotion in the Omnipotent. Vasant Sahastradhara has tended to form an interdisciplinary collaboration through the volume. It would be appropriate to state that everything is subjective in the human mind; nevertheless, our emotions, our opinions and our objectives are all relative. We look forward to the continued support of our readers and are hopeful to receive their responses.

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## A Review Study of Herbs Used in Ethnomedicines as Analgesic

Anamika Choudhary\*

Bhavna Singh\*\*

Mohit Singh\*\*\*

### ABSTRACT

*Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are among the most widely used medications due to their efficacy for a wide range of pain and inflammatory conditions. However, the long-term administration of NSAID may induce gastro-intestinal ulcers, bleeding, and renal disorders. Therefore, new anti-inflammatory and analgesic are the need as alternatives to NSAIDs and opiates. Medicinal plants might be an important source of new chemical substances with potential therapeutic effects. There are various herbs used traditionally for relieving pain and inflammation might be proved new analgesic and anti-inflammatory drugs. The aim of this study is to assess the some ethnomedicinal plants which are used as analgesic like Vidari (*Pueraria tuberosa*), Prishanparni (*Uraria picta*), Brihati (*Solanum indicum*), Kateri (*Solanum surattense*), Errand (*Ricinus communis*), Kakoli (*Roscoea procera*), Safed chandan (*Santalum album*), Khas (*Vetiveria zizanioides*), Mulithi (*glycyrrhiza glabra*), and Choti elaichi (*Elettaria cardamomum*). Ayurveda the traditional Indian medicinal system remains the most ancient yet living traditions with sound philosophical and experimental basis. One of the major treatises of Ayurveda, Charak samhita is a very scientific text book talks about the various aspects of herbal medicine in treating disease and in preventing them. In Charak samhita, all these ten drugs are classified under the Angmardaprashamana Mahakashaya (Analgesic extractive). Modern researches also prove the analgesic effect of these plants on the basis of their phytochemicals. Flavonoids and tannins are the common phytoconstitute in all these 10 herbs, responsible for their analgesic effect. The objective of this paper is to unfold the therapeutical uses specifically analgesic effect of these drugs as per Ayurveda and as ethnomedicine. It might be helpful to the researchers and pharmaceuticals to discover new analgesic drugs.*

**Keywords-** Analgesic, NSAID, Phytochemical, Ayurveda, Charak samhita, Ethnomedicine.

### 1. Introduction

Human beings have been used medicinal plants in curing various disorders and ailments because these plants are easily available and usually have no significant side

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effects. Usage of natural plants or any part of plants and particularly certain herbs in the remedy of specific disorders by various ethnic groups is come under the category of ethno medicines. According to World Health Organization (WHO) still about 80% of the world population rely mainly on plant based drugs (Kumara, 2001).

Non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are among the most widely used medications due to their efficacy for a wide range of pain and inflammatory conditions, but as we know that these NSAIDs have various severe adverse side effects, like gastric lesions, peptic ulcer etc. On the other side opiates analgesic agents induced dependence, the use of these drugs is as not very satisfactory. Therefore, analgesic drugs lacking those side effects are being searched all over the world as alternatives to NSAIDs and opiates. During this seeking process, the investigation of the efficacy of plant-based drugs used in the traditional medicine are proving to be very useful as they are cost effective, have no side effects. Traditional medicine, including Ayurveda, contributes significantly to the health status of many communities, and uses of these are increasing day by day in developed countries as well. Traditional medicine has a long history of use in health maintenance and in disease prevention and treatment, particularly for chronic diseases. In Ayurveda there are a lot of herbs described as analgesic and anti-inflammatory. *Charaka Samhita* is the oldest and the most authentic treatise on Ayurveda mentioned ten drugs under the class of *Angmardaprashamana Mahakashaya* (Anti-bodyach/restorative) i.e. *Vidari* (*Pueraria tuberosa*), *Prishanparni* (*Uraria picta*), *Brihati* (*Solanum indicum*), *Kateri* (*Solanum surattense*), *Errand* (*Ricinus communis*), *Kakoli* (*Roscoca procera*), *Safed chandan* (*Santallum album*), *Khas* (*Vetiveria zizanioides*), *Mulethi* (*glycyrrhiza glabra*), and *Choti elaichi* (*Elettaria cardamomum*). All these ten drugs are also used very commonly in ethno-medicine for their analgesic effect. Modern researches have proved the analgesic effect of all these ten plants as well. Flavonoids and tannins are the common phyto constitute in all the ten herbs, responsible for their analgesic effect. The objective of this study is to unfold the therapeutically uses specifically analgesic effect of these drugs as per Ayurveda and as ethno medicine. It might be helpful to the researchers and pharmaceuticals to discover new analgesic drugs.

## **2. Material and Methods**

The text books of Ayurveda along with its respective commentaries have reviewed thoroughly. The text book of modern medicine, various research studies published in indexed journal which is collected from portal of Ayush research, journals on web, Pub med along with various other websites have also been referred.

## **3. Discussion**

Pain is chief symptom of various disorders. It is an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage. Pain can be explained in terms of a symptom underlying another disease or complication of the other disease. In Ayurvedic texts, various terms such as, *Ruk*,

*Ruja*, *Vedana* & *Shool* are commonly used for pain, however, ‘*Shool*’ is more appropriate term amongst all which means, a condition with state of discomfort to body & mind. According to Ayurveda root cause of any type of pain is vitiated *Vata dosha*, *Dhatukshaya* (catabolic process of metabolic pathway) leads to *vataprakopa* (aggravation of *Vata dosha*) and *margaavrodh* (obstruction of channels) leading to accumulation of metabolite toxins within the cell and leading to inflammation. Furthermore, the ‘*Ruksha*’ (Dryness) and ‘*Chala*’ (Vibrations/ movement) *Gun*as (characters) of *Vata* are mainly involved in the manifestation of pain. *Acharya Charak* specifically described the ten drugs which are useful for pacifying pain under the group *Angmardprashamn mahakashaya*, (group of ten restoratives drugs). These drugs are also used in ethno medicine to treat the pain. Flavonoids, coumarins and tannins are the common phyto constitute in all the ten herbs, responsible for their analgesic effect. It is most likely that these components might induce analgesia like NSAIDs, by inhibiting the production and release of prostaglandins or blocking their receptors. It is often combined with NSAIDs and opioids for the management of moderate to severe pain. In this study an effort made to justify the analgesic and anti-inflammatory effect of all these ten drugs in light of modern researches.

### **3.1 Prishanparni (*Uraria Picta*)**

*Charak* classified it under the group of *Angmardprashman* (Anti-bodyach) & *Shothhara mahakashaya* (anti-inflammatory), and *Madhur skandha* (Group of the drugs having sweet taste). *Prishanparni* is mentioned in the group of *Dasamulas* (Group of ten drugs which part used are roots). *Prishanparni* is one of the popular drugs of *Ayurveda* and other traditional Indian system of medicine. It is used as analgesic, anti inflammatory, and union promoter. In ethno medicine it is mainly used for the treatment of urinary disease, tumour, oedema, burning sensation and difficulty in breathing. Its paste mixed with water is used as an antidote for snake bite in *Bastar (bihar)*. Its analgesic and anti inflammatory activity is proved through modern studies as well. Alcoholic and aqueous extract of aerial part of *Uraria picta* was investigated for anti-inflammatory and analgesic activity using rat paw edema test, both the extracts at a dose of 100mg/kg body weight significantly ( $P < 0.01$ ) inhibited the edema compared with indomethacin and showed marked analgesic activity ( $P < 0.01$ ) compared with acetylsalicylic acid.

### **3.2 Ella (*Elettaria Cardamomum*)**

It's commonly named as “*Elaichi*”, Queen of spices and small cardamom. In *Charak samhita* it is mentioned under *Shirovirechan dravya* (head evacuation drugs). In *Sushrut samhita* it is classified under the group of *Piplyadi* and *Eladi*. Anti-spasmodic and anti-inflammatory properties in cardamom make it a good for pains. The ethanolic extract of *Elettaria cardamomum* seeds have found significant anticonvulsant and analgesic during the experimental trial in Wistar albino rats at the dose of 400 mg/kg body weight.

### 3.3 Mulethi (*Glycyrrhiza Glabra*)

*Madhyashti* or *Mulethi* has been recognized since ancient times for its ethno pharmacological values, according to *Ayurvedic* text it is described as *shothhara* (reduces edema), *vednasthapak* (analgesic), *balya* (promotes physical strength), *brimhana* (nutritious), *chakshushya* (improves vision), *vrishya* (aphrodisiac), *jeevaneeya* (promotes healthy life), *sandhaneeya* (reconstructive), *rasayana* (rejuvenator), *vishaghna* (antitoxic), *shoshahara* (cures cachexia), *kshayahara* (cures pthisis), *shirashoolahara* (cures headache), and *Jwarashamak* (antipyretic). This plant contains different phyto compounds, such as glycyrrhizin, 18 $\beta$ -glycyrrhetic acid, glabrin A and B, and isoflavones. *Mulethi* exhibits a broad range of biological activities such as antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antiviral, antioxidant, and anti-diabetic. Isoliquiritigenin (flavonoids) is responsible for analgesic and uterine relaxant activity.

### 3.4 Erand (*Ricinus Communis*)

*Ricinus communis* or castor oil is traditionally used as a laxative. *Acharya Charaka* considered its root as best *Vrishya* (aphrodisiac) and *Vatahara dravya* (alleviate vaat dosha). In ethno medicine its warm leaves or oil is applied in back ache, chest pain, sciatica, cardiac pain, neuralgia, mastitis etc. In Ayurveda it is chiefly used in the treatment of gout, arthritis, neuralgia, paralysis, facial palsy, tremors, headache and body ache; *Erandapaka*, *Erandamuladi kwath*, *Erandasaptaka kwath* are the some famous Ayurvedic formulations. Main phytochemical constituents are flavonoids, saponins, glycosides, alkaloids and steroids etc. Root decoction of *Eranda* (*Ricinus communis* Linn.) shows highly significant and moderate analgesic effect respectively in radiant heat tail flick model in rats. The plant is reported to possess antioxidant, anti-implantation, anti-inflammatory, anti-diabetic, central analgesic, anti-tumour, larvicidal & adult emergence inhibition, anti-nociceptive and anti-asthmatic activity. The major phyto constituent reported in this plant are rutin, gentistic acid, quercetin, gallic acid, kaempferol-3-O-beta-d-rutinoside, kaempferol-3-O-beta-d-xylopyranoid, tannins, Ricin A, B & C, ricinus agglutinin, Indole-3-acetic acid and an alkaloid ricinine.

### 3.5 Kateri (*Solanum Surattense*)

It is mentioned as *vedana sthapak* (analgesic) in Ayurvedic text. In *Sushrut samhita* it is described under *Laghu panch mula*. It is very useful in the treatment of cough, bronchitis, asthma, laryngitis, hiccups. Its fruit powder with honey is indicated in pediatric chronic cough. It is also used in rheumatism, dysurea, calculi, skin diseases and fever. *Solanum surattense* has been reported to have a number of alkaloids, sterols saponins, flavonoids and their glycosides tannins, gums. Crude extract of the leaves of *S. surattense* was found to have significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) analgesic activity at the dose of 250 and 500 mg/kg.

### 3.6 Chandan (*Santalum Album*)

The plant has a very long history of use, being highly valued for its sweet fragrance and used as a medicine, perfume and incense. In Ayurveda sandalwood is regarded as antiseptic, antipyretic, diuretic, expectorant, stimulant and prescribed for the treatment of bronchitis, dysuria, urinary infection and gonorrhoea owing to its antibacterial and antifungal properties. In the Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), sandalwood finds its mention as treatment of skin diseases, acne, dysentery, gonorrhea, anxiety, cystitis, fatigue, frigidity, impotence, nervous tension, immune-booster, eczema, stomachache, vomiting and stress. According to Chinese medicine, sandalwood acts in case of any type of chest pains, originating either from lungs or heart. The essential oil, emulsion, or paste of sandalwood is used in the treatment of inflammatory and eruptive skin diseases. The main constituents of volatile oil of Sandalwood are santalol, isovaleric aldehyde, santanone, santalone and tannic acid. The methanolic wood extract was found for antioxidant and free radical scavenging. The methanolic extract of wood was reported for analgesic and anti-inflammatory activities at various doses (100, 250 & 500 mg/kg) and compared with Diclofenac sodium (7 mg/kg) taken as standard.

### 3.7 Khasa (*Vetiveria Zizanioidis*)

In ayurvedic text it is known as *Ushir*. *Acharya Charak* has mentioned *Ushir* under various group i.e. *shukra-shodhan* (semen purifier), *varnya* (complexion promoters), *chardi-nigrahan* (anti-emetic), *daha-prashmana* (pacifies burning sensation), *angamarda-prashmana* (restorative), and *stanya-janana* (galactagogue). It is described as *nadi balya* (nervine tonic), and *hridya* (cardiac tonic). In *Madhya Pradesh* and *Maharashtra*, the plant is used as anthelmintic for children. The plant is used as a tonic for weakness; the *Lodhas* of West Bengal use the root paste for headache, rheumatism and sprain, and a stem decoction for urinary tract infection; the *Mandla* and *Bastar* tribes of Madhya Pradesh use the leaf juice as anthelmintic; the tribes of the Varanasi district inhale the root vapour for malarial fever. The root ash is given to patients for acidity by the Oraon tribe. The chemical constituents present in the plant are vetiverol, vetivone, khusimone, khusimol, vetivene, khositone, terpenes, benzoic acid, tripene-4-ol, vetivazulene. *Vetiveria zizanioidis* significantly showed anti-inflammatory and analgesic effect through its anti-oxidant potential. The ethanolic extract of *V. zizanioidis* exhibits analgesic and anti-inflammatory activities.

### 3.8 Vidari (*Pueraria Tuberosa*)

*Vidari* is one of the most important drugs which has broadly described in Ayurveda. *Acharya Charak* mentioned the *Vidarikand* in *Madhur skandh*, *Kanthyā* (improve voice), and *Snehopaga Mahakashaya*. It is also described under *shaka varga* (group of vegetables) which have the property of *Jeevaniya* (improving age), *vriahnaniya* (Nourishing), *vrishya* (aphrodisiac), *kanthya* (improve voice), *rasayan* (rejuvenation), *balya* (strengthen), and diuretic. It has been used in various ayurvedic formulations as restorative tonic, anti-aging, spermatogenic and immune booster and has been

recommended for the treatment of cardiovascular diseases, hepatosplenomegaly, fertility disorders, menopausal syndrome, sexual debility and spermatorrhoea. Numerous bioactive phytochemicals, mostly flavonoids such as puerarin, genistein, daidzein, tuberosin etc. have been identified in the tuber. In a study *Pueraria tuberosa* extracts were screened for wound-healing activity by excision and incision wound model and Anti inflammatory activity by rat paw edema method

### 3.9 *Kakoli (Roscoea Procera)*

It is an ancient Indian medicinal plant belonging to family Zingiberaceae. *Kakoli* and *kshira-kakoli* comes under “*Brhmaniya*” (the drug which promote the formation of *mansa dhatu* i.e. flesh). They are employed as a ‘*Rasayana*’ and also are the constituent of ‘*Chyawanprash*’ an outstanding rejuvenator. Traditionally it is used for rheumatism, asthma, tuberculosis and as a tonic. Tubers of *Kakoli* are found to contain alkaloid, glycoside, flavonoid, tannin, saponins and active phenolic compounds and are reported to exhibit immune modulatory and anti-diabetic activities. Kaempferol is the major metabolite followed by vanillic acid, protocatechuic acid, syringic and ferulic acid. HPTLC results of *kakoli* (ethanol and chloroform extracts) revealed the presence of alkaloids, glycosides and flavonoids

### 3.10 *Brahati (Solanum Indicum)*

It is commonly known as poison berry in English. It is described in *Charak samhita* under group of *shothhar* (anti-inflammtory) and *angmardprashman* (restoratives) *mahakashaya*. This important medicinal plant is widely used in folk and traditional Indian systems of medicine for skin diseases, ulcers difficult breathing, abdominal pain, cough and dyspepsia. It is an important ingredient of *Dasamoola* i.e. group of plants having anti inflammatory activity. Phytochemical screening revealed the presence of flavonoids, steroid, tannin, glycosides and saponins etc. MeOH (methyl alcohol) extract of the dried fruits of *Solanum indicum* showed the analgesic, antipyretic, and CNS depressant activity on the established animal models.

**Table-1: Rasa, guna, virya, viapaka of all ten plants**

Herbs	<i>rasa</i>	<i>Guna</i>	<i>virya</i>	<i>Vipaka</i>	<i>Karma</i>
<i>Vidari</i>	<i>madhur</i>	<i>Guru, snigdha</i>	<i>sheet</i>	<i>madhur</i>	<i>Balya</i>
<i>Prishnaparni</i>	<i>Madhur, tikta</i>	<i>Laghu, snigdha</i>	<i>ushna</i>	<i>madhur</i>	<i>Shothhar, angmardprashaman</i>
<i>Brihati</i>	<i>Katu, tikta</i>	<i>Laghu, ruksha, tikshna</i>	<i>ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Vedanasthapan</i>
<i>Kateri</i>	<i>Tikta, katu</i>	<i>Laghu, ruksha,</i>	<i>ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Vednasthapan</i>

		<i>tikshna</i>			
<b>Errand</b>	<i>madhur</i>	<i>snigdha, sukshma, tikshan</i>	<i>ushana</i>	<i>madhur</i>	<i>Vednasthapan, sothahar</i>
<b>Kakoli</b>	<i>madhur</i>	<i>Snigdha</i>	<i>sheet</i>	<i>Madhur</i>	<i>Shoshnashak, jawarhar, dhaatu vardhak</i>
<b>Chandan</b>	<i>Tikta, madhur</i>	<i>Laghu ruksha</i>	<i>Sheet</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Angmard prashman</i>
<b>Khas</b>	<i>Tikta, madhur</i>	<i>Ruksh, laghu</i>	<i>Sheet</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Nadi sansthan dosh shamak</i>
<b>Mulaithi</b>	<i>Madhur</i>	<i>Guru, snigdha</i>	<i>Sheet</i>	<i>madhur</i>	<i>Vednasthpak, shothhar</i>
<b>Elaichi</b>	<i>Madhur, katu</i>	<i>Laghu, ruksha</i>	<i>Sheet</i>	<i>madhur</i>	<i>Tridosh har</i>

#### 4. Conclusion

In a nutshell, this article is an attempt to explore the some ethno medicinal analgesic drugs in light of modern science. Pain is an associate symptom of all disease. That's why uses of analgesic medicine increase day by day and patients can't prevent them self by its side effects. Medicinal plants are being used tremendously throughout the entire world since they are on the lower price, more efficacy and minor side effects. *Charak Samhita*, the foundational text of *Ayurveda* described all the ten drugs under the *Angamarda-prashaman* (Anti-bodyache) *mahakashaya*. According to *Ayurveda* root cause of any type of pain is vitiated *vata dosha*, *Dhatukshaya* and *Margavroadh* are the leading factor to aggravation of *Vata dosha*. These herbs treat *Dhatukshaya* and *Margavroadh* through its *sheet* and *ushna virya* respectively and pacify the vitiated *vata dosha*. Thus, analgesic effect of these drugs has been reported since ages and now has proved through various modern researches as well.

*Solanum surattense* has been reported to have a number of alkaloids, sterols, saponins, avonoids and their glycoside tannins, gums. It is most likely that the components of the extract might induce analgesia like NSAIDs, by inhibiting the production and release of prostaglandins or blocking their receptors.

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## Artists on Work, Art and Society: Durga Khote's *I, Durga Khote* and Shaukat Kaifi's *Kaifi and I* in context

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Rachana Pandey\*\*

### ABSTRACT

*Antonina Harbus defines 'autobiographical memory' as "the recollection of one's own prior experiences, a reconstructive act that is always culturally situated, context-sensitive and susceptible to narrative configuration" (207). The present paper explores how autobiographical narratives reconstruct an artist's self and identity and also helps to understand the performative practices, societal roles and socio-political scenario of the time from an artist's viewpoint. In life narratives, memory plays the role of an agent to bring a personal account to public knowledge. A memoir/life narrative becomes a tool not only to know a performer's (theatrical and societal) roles but a perceptible mindscape, an extensive space to understand and study the changes in power equation within the existing society, as represented in the works of female performers of late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century in India. Durga Khote, through her inspiring memoir *I, Durga Khote: An Autobiography* (OUP, 2006) and Shaukat Kaifi's *Kaifi and I: A Memoir* (Zubaan, 2010) chose to shift their position as they become an authoritative voice, the speaker/narrator of their life/Self/Character and the audience/public/society turned to be the reader/listener of the muted or unheard voices. Durga Khote's autobiography was originally published in Marathi titled *Mee, Durga Khote* (1982) and Shaukat Kaifi's memoir in Urdu titled *Yaad K Rehguzar* (2006). The present research paper is an attempt to analyse female theatre artists' lives, challenges and role playing through their life narratives. The study is textual and descriptive. It involves theoretical approaches such as Life Narratives studies, Performance and Gender studies.*

**Keywords:** Performance, Art, Self, Life narratives.

The art of writing self-narrative or life narrative has been in practice for a long time. An autobiography is literature of personal revelation and its main interest lies in conscious or unconscious self-portrayal by the author. Self can be defined, portrayed and represented in different ways and each life narrative constructs a unique meaning of the self and its subjective reality. According to Andre Maurois,

“Autobiography is a prolonged speech for the defense and is of two types; one is where the writing is as interesting as novels and as true as the finest life. It has truth tone and a

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fidelity and impartiality in portraiture of a very high quality indeed. Best autobiographies are those, which expose the inner journey of the self and depict the inner struggles of the person. It establishes a coherent and individual identity of the person.”

On the art of narrative and constructing self and world through autobiographies, Jerome Bruner writes, narrative is a constructivist one, and “world making” is the principal function of the human mind and further argues, “Does that mean that our autobiographies are constructed, that they had better be viewed not as a record of what happened (which is in any case nonexistent record) but rather as a continuing interpretation and reinterpretation of our experiences?”. The present paper explores how autobiographical narratives reconstruct and archive particularly an artist’s self which further helps to understand performative practices, theatrical history, oral history and performances and socio-political scenario of the contemporary time at large form artists’ standpoint. The study is textual and analytical in its approach and as part of the methodology, it involves Life Narrative Studies, Theatre, Performance and Gender studies as the theoretical approaches.

The present research paper is an attempt to analyse selected female theatre artists’ lives challenges and role playing through their life narratives – life narratives of Durga Khote and Shaukat Kaifi. Elaine Showalter talks about ‘female’ phase of ‘self-discovery’ and life narratives written by female artists truly discover themselves and present their actual lived and performed life that becomes a discovery for the readers to make them see and understand these artists’ life closely who could know them through mediated channels and through their social representations only. However, such life narratives written by the artists are few in numbers and not very well received/known to the public and it is rare in the case of female artists. Shaukat Kaifi rightly remarks on the fundamental reason behind it in the context of paucity of materials on IPTA and Prithvi theatres, as she writes, “This is a weakness I have noticed in us artists; we do not know how to document our art”. There is an impulse in the artists (female artists in the context) to construct self autobiographically and to be heard by the society (due to the social-hierarchical division and structural invisibility) by breaking silence, to be accepted, remembered, to bring their own existence into being and correctly acknowledged for their contribution in art and any field to choose to be in.

Through their inspiring narratives, Durga Khote (*I, Durga Khote*) and Shaukat Kaifi (*Kaifi and I*) chose to shift their position as they become an authoritative voice, the speaker/narrator/protagonist of their life/Self/Character and the audience/reader/public/society turned to be the reader/listen of the muted or unheard histories. Tharu and Lalita, in *Women Writing in India: 600 B.C. to the Present Vol. I*, wrote on the act of writing by a woman that, “In fact, for the writing woman, the act of writing itself reconstitutes her subjectivity in radically new ways” (qtd. in Khote xxvi). In the context, the first selected text selected for the analysis is *I, Durga Khote* in which Durga Khote is introduced by Gayatri Chatterjee as the ““first actress from a respectable

family to act in films.’ Advertisements for her debut film had announced, ‘Introducing the daughter of the famous solicitor Mr Laud’ (xvii). She was a true professional – treating acting as one of the ways women could earn a living (xix). About her punctuality at work, people would say, ‘Bai’s car is at the gate. It’s eight-thirty. Set your watches’. As an artist, she gave equal importance to her personal and professional lives and throughout her life she worked hard to maintain a balance between them. She travelled alone extensively as it was the requirement of her profession but also played her familial responsibility very well. But her path was not easy as she started working in films, there was a perception which was difficult to break that the woman who is seen alone in public and who works in theatre and film is “bad” or “available” woman. Moreover, the famous theatre personality of the time Bal Gandharva who was a family friend of Laud family and he used to visit Mr. Laud’s house for play-readings did not support women from ‘respectable’ families to enter in the profession of theatre (xxvii). But the persona of Durga Khote was so powerful and strong individual that she made people respect her and inspired filmmakers to create new women, like Saudamini in film *Amarjyoti*, Rani Taramati in *Ayodhyecha Raja*, a queen in *Maya Machhindra* who are portrayed as “free-willed, intelligent, and dignified”. In many ways, she was much ahead of her time, a woman of future who does not hesitate to choose her own path and make her own decision independently in a patriarchal society that does not appreciate it. Being a professional and sensitive artist, she was much concerned about the pathetic condition of artists in the country. As she got a chance to visit Russia on being invited as a member of Indian film delegation in 1951, she compares the state of Indian artists with Russian artists. She mentions that in Russia, “Art and artists are looked upon as national treasures. That is why they are honoured. The government is responsible for ensuring that this national wealth does not go waste, but is preserved (Khote 145)” but the condition of Indian artists is disappointing as she wrote that the artist who could successfully accumulate wealth and turned art and talent into business to earn is visible, recognized and successful only otherwise the artist gets disappeared and unacknowledged in the absence of any support “however great he may be” (Khote 145). Her observation and social involvement suggest Khote’s sensitivity and concern for the art and talent of the country.

Durga Khote also marks the general perception of public and their sense of curiosity for the film actors and their lives and relationships which appears very attractive outwardly but the reality is different – competitive, uncertain, unstable, irregular, full of rivalry and hatred, as she mentioned, “It is difficult for people to understand that what they see on the screen is mechanical, a calculated use of technique”. It is a challenging profession where the actor is always expected to wear “a permanent smile, a mask” and be conscious of one’s image constantly to maintain it (Khote 179). So the actor always has to handle carefully and balance between her/his screen image, public image as an actor and personal life and undoubtedly, it is more challenging and delicate with female actors since they are also burdened with social taboos attached with their body and

being working women and prone to fall into the structural trap. However, the change in the attitude of the society in the context of the Indian scenario is also noteworthy, particularly in the field of cinema as she emphasized,

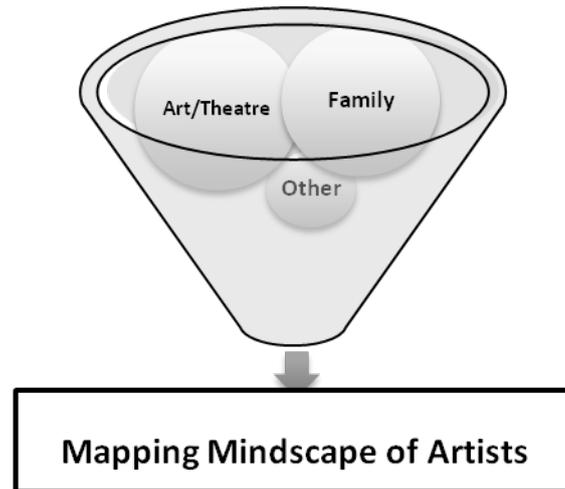
“The real problem for women had existed two decades earlier when they had not been allowed to practice music, dance, theatre, or cinema. But those days were gone. Now women in these arts were admired. Perhaps it was the money that women were earning in the business that had prompted this change in attitude.” (Khote 156)

Durga Khote shares her memory when she was seventeen years old and her name was ‘Banu’. Since Lauds and Khotes were old friends, her marriage was fixed in Khote family and “Banu became Mrs. Durgabai Khote” (Khote 26). Durga Khote writes, “I remained Banu for many years. Then marriage turned me into Durga (26).” The transformation did not remain limited to her name only as she pointed out but a transformation on various levels in her personality, as well as she, experiences life independently where her father’s role gets minimal after her marriage and her husband’s negligence. Her journey and growth from Banu, living in a lavish doll’s house as a member of famous Laud family to Durga Khote, an independent woman, is inspiring not only in empowering women but also to inspire the artists who are struggling to establish their identity and survive in the profession. Of course, the elite class consciousness can be marked in her writing from the very beginning of her autobiography but the growth as a human being, her journey, rejections and acceptance in life are remarkable and exemplary.

The second life narrative selected for the analysis is *Kaifi and I: A Memoir* which is written by Shaukat Kaifi, a well-known artist, who had a long career on stage and in cinema from 1944 to 1988. Her life narrative gives a detailed account of the daily life of a theatre company from an artist’s perspective. Being a strong woman and confident artist, when she sets off for work at Prithvi Theatre with baby Shabana strapped to her back, she shares her sense of pride to be able to contribute to her family financially. She was aware of the public perception towards theatre as a profession, especially during the 1950s and “in particular on the women who worked in it”. Being a theatre artist, she too faced social criticism initially on which she addressed to one as “Whatever you do in your homes I too can do that, but can you stand on stage and deliver long dialogue? I can therefore I am superior to you” (Kaifi 10). When she was working with Prithvi Theatre, her salary was a hundred rupees a month and from tuition also, she used to earn some additional amount to support her family (Kaifi 75).

In Shaukat Kaifi’s career, Kaifi Azmi plays a very important role who was a constant support to her in her training and career. His importance in Shaukat’s life can be marked by the title of her life narrative which starts with ‘Kaifi’ and ‘I’ comes later and throughout her memoir, Kaifi Azmi has visibly a parallel existence. She particularly recalls one incident in her life when her daughter Shabana was ten years old who was horrified finding her mother Shaukat behaving eccentrically who was preparing for a

role of a mad woman, practicing it at home. Then Kaifi Azmi calmed Shabana and made her understand the situation by saying, ‘Your mother is not mad, she is preparing for a play. You should feel proud not embarrassed, that she takes her work so seriously. In fact you should help her learn her lines and win the Best Actor Award’ (Kaifi 95). That play was very successful and she in fact won Best Actress Award in the All Maharashtra Drama Competition. She was a committed artist and as she shares her experience to perform a role with greater perfection, she emphasized on the actor’s honesty and complete engrossment in playing the character which is to be portrayed on the stage.



In both the life narratives, there is a desire to construct the ‘Self’ in relational terms and share one’s story and experiences as an artist. Unlike some other contemporary autobiographies where personal agony has received larger space than insights into the profession itself and experience in the public spaces, in *I, Durga Khote*, Durga Khote is not just a suffering woman, a victim who was suppressed and exploited by the patriarchal society. Rather she explores the world with a fresh approach, zest and made her own assessments based on her experiences. As performers, Durga and Shaukat, both move easily and assertively across the given gendered social boundaries and interrogate with the normative structures by constantly pushing the social, moral and spatial boundaries of body and negotiating with the idea of “woman-ness” and consequently, reinventing and redefining life for them. Besides, these two theatrical life narratives not only give insights of the daily lives and work of the artists and inside picture of theatre companies but also discuss in detail the techniques of theatre and acting along with the reference to the nature and expectations of the audience and the public gaze. In this sense, theatrical life narratives are rare accounts on Indian regional theatres which add larger perspectives to the history of Indian theatres and hence, should be archived and valued to understand the nature of theatre as an art form and its socio-cultural contexts. Furthermore, these written testimonies of the theatre artists contribute a lot to make visible the memory of unsettling gendered socio-spatial experiences.

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## Connecting the Holiness of the River with the idea of Pilgrimage in India: A Critical Study of *The Guide* and *A River Sutra*

Mahua Bhattacharya\*

### ABSTRACT

*This article presents the Indian concept of pilgrimage both as a physical and spiritual journey and tries to establish the holiness of the Indian rivers with all their mystic powers. It also tries to understand how they assist human civilization and culture to grow on the river banks and finally guide people towards the path of spirituality. A critical reading of R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* and Gita Mehta's *A River Sutra* will help us to understand the significance of Indian holy rivers like Sarayu and Narmada in the lives of common people. The guide Raju's journey ends in *The Guide* while standing in the holy waters of the river Sarayu which has witnessed the changed state of Raju as a spiritual guru who was earlier a con-man. In *A River Sutra*, each character of the novel gets assistance, accompaniment or salvation in the holy water of Narmada. In this novel, Narmada has been presented by the author as more than a river because she has associated the symbolization of goddess with it. Thus, the cultural meaning of the holiness of the rivers has long been imprinted in the minds of Indians.*

**Keywords:** *Pilgrimage, Spiritual journey, Holiness, Indian rivers, Purification of the soul, Goddess.*

The idea of pilgrimage includes the outer journey in the geographical space as well as the inner journey for the purification of the soul. Hinduism has a long tradition of pilgrimage generally known as *tirthayatra*. The pilgrimage is a journey that people attempt to understand the inner soul and its relation with the outer world. According to *Skanda Purana*, "truth, forgiveness, control of senses, kindness to all living beings and simplicity are also *tirthas*." (*Skanda Purana*, 23) In *Ramayana*, the routes traversed and the places visited by Lord Rama during his exile have been later developed as geographical sites of the pilgrimage. For instance, there are Ayodhya, Prayag, Chitrakut, Panchavati, Kishkindha and Rameshvaram etc. Most of the pilgrimage sites including Prayaga (Allahabad), Kashi (Varanasi) and Gaya are situated on the bank of the important rivers of India. In the particular occasion like Kumbha Mela, more than a crore people gather in Prayaga each year. Prayaga, the place where the three holy rivers Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati meet; is also referred as Triveni Sangam.

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The spiritual journey is the only thing that differentiates between the pilgrimage and the touring for leisure or pleasure. Indian culture has always emphasized the significance of the pilgrimage for spiritual progress. The sages generally remain free from this worldly pleasure but the householders have to first detach themselves from the caressed worries of the daily life for participating in the pilgrimage. Pilgrimage is a spiritual quest – a guiding force unifying divinity and humanity. Hindu culture is extremely absorbed with the participation of men in Hindu rituals like bathing in the sacred rivers (*snana*), the construction of temples, pilgrimages towards holy places, having sight of the deity (*darshana*), listening to the dialogues of holy men etc. All these are so much associated with each other that it is almost impossible to separate the spiritual journey from these physical activities.

The pilgrimage to the sacred places is also regarded as a practice to earn religious merit (*punya*) within a life lived according to dharma. The devotee even sometimes attempts a pilgrimage for a particular wish to be fulfilled. For instance, Maharshi Kanva has started a journey to the Somatirtha, a holy place near Yamuna river, with the wish of having a suitable groom for her daughter (*manaskanya*) Shakuntala. In Act IV of *Abhijnanashakuntalam*, Kanva's wish is fulfilled even before his returning from Somatirtha as Shakuntala gets married with King Dushyanta.

To understand the pilgrimage as a spiritual journey, the best-known example is of the robber Ratnakar turned into the sage Valmiki, the writer of the great epic *Ramayana*. Another famous tale is that of the tyrannical and arrogant Kshatriya king Vishwamitra, the tormentor of the sages like Vashistha, turning into a 'rishi' as a result of penance and spiritual reclamation. R. K. Narayan in his novel *The Guide* has used the rogue-turned-saint paradigm of Hindu mythology as a hybridized structure by the concurrent use of the western picaresque structure. From the very beginning of the novel, Raju, the central protagonist is established as a pretty fraud and con-man. Weaned from the parental profession as a sweet-seller with the advent of railways, Raju discovers his ability to smart-talk his way and becomes recognized by the gullible tourists as an authentic guide. He has an uncanny knack of sizing up his customers according to their different need. He has instinctive cunning, confidence and nonchalance which are clearly visible in his attitude as he himself admits that he has classified all his patrons for better treatment. It is this confidence that helps him to draw into his net an archaeologist Marco and his wife Rosie as his life-long customers. He quickly assesses Marco as a man from whom every penny can be squeezed out, so long as one can produce a voucher for it. He quickly understands the unhappy marital relationship between Marco and Rosie and proceeds to take advantage of that. Though his primary

motivating force is lust, he carefully and shrewdly cloaks it under the garb of artistic appreciation of Rosie's skills as a danseuse.

Raju takes all the chances of caressing and touching Rosie under the pretext of sympathizing with her and grabs the first opportunity to sleep with her, taking advantage of her emotional confusion and her husband's absence. When Marco abandons Rosie and she comes to live with Raju, he detects another way to become a successful and rich man. Introducing Rosie as a cousin, Raju mesmerizes the young men of Albert Mission College by a tantalizing display of Rosie's casual glamour and a concocted account of her importance as an artiste. Thus, Raju convinces them to allow Rosie to dance for their variety show programme and establishes himself as her stage manager for making a sizeable income from organizing her stage shows. Not only does Raju shamelessly exploit Rosie under the stage name of Nalini, but he is so puffed up by money and success that he thinks himself responsible for Rosie's success. Like all rogues and con-men, however, Raju overreaches himself when he forges Rosie's signature, is mired in legal battles and is finally convicted and imprisoned.

From the time of the imprisonment Raju's spiritual journey towards the ultimate truth of life has been started. During his stay in prison, Raju has time to contemplate his past life and realize the transitory nature of fame, money and physical pleasures. After being released from prison Raju comes to the village Mangal where he finds himself pushed into a situation in which he has to go on a fast as an expiatory gesture for the salvation of the village community. In the process of keeping up appearances, a change comes over him. Previously, he used to think of himself only and his own advancement. Now, he becomes more community-minded. However, the arbitrary events like Raju being mistaken for a sadhu or being forced to fast against his wish shape his life to become a spiritually empowered man. Raju's little acts of goodness such as teaching children, or acting as councillor to the doubt-ridden villagers in his role as a Swami, prepare him, however inadvertently, for his final act of sacrifice, his final union with the community at large. Physically Raju has never attempted a journey to any of the sacred places but he has transcended his previous obsession with his own self and thus started a spiritual journey to get united with the larger community. Raju's final words of self-realisation, uttered when he resolves to undertake the fast, are significant:

“If by avoiding food I could help the trees bloom and the grass grow, why not do it thoroughly?” (Narayan, 246)

He felt a new strength from the core of his heart ‘to go through with the ordeal.’ (Narayan, 246)

At the end of the novel, Raju is found in his eleventh day of the fast he has been undergoing to bring rain to the drought-afflicted village of Mangala. Here, Raju's spiritual journey ends with the holy water of the Sarayu river. It is with difficulty that he is carried to the place in the Sarayu river where he has to stand in knee-deep water. Sarayu is regarded as one of the sacred rivers in India like Ganges, Yamuna, Godavari etc. Raju here performs few rituals like entering into the holy water of Sarayu, shutting his eyes and muttering his prayers. At last, he opens his eyes, looks towards the distant mountains and says to a villager called Velan: "Velan, it's raining in the hills. I can feel it coming up under my feet, up my legs - ." (Narayan, 256) Raju's martyrdom can be thought as a form of salvation, the final stage to be aspired in a pilgrimage.

Raju's penances to put an end to the drought reminds the reader of the sage-king Bhagiratha who undertook rigorous penances to bring the goddess Ganga to the earth – a story found in both the *Ramayana* and the *Matsyapurana*. The argument is not based on whether Raju may or may not have succeeded to bring about a miraculous rainfall. The importance lies in the fact that he has at last transcended his selfishness to embrace the good of his fellow human beings with an open heart, thereby reintegrating the self and the community. Raju redeems himself by this free decision to conquer the weakness of his spirit. The story of Raju's transformation from a tour-guide to a spiritual guide is a complete pilgrimage in itself and this cannot be limited in finding the evidence of miracle brought about by Raju. R K Narayan has made his novel open-ended perhaps for this reason. The definition of 'tirtha' given in *Skandapurana* is attained here in this novel.

The famous diasporic writer Gita Mehta situates her novel *A River Sutra* on the banks of the river Narmada. The river is associated with the religious faiths and beliefs of Indian people. People worship the river and get salvation in her company. The river is a motherly figure for them. Therefore, frustrated and nervous people come on the banks of the river for getting solace of mind. At the beginning of the novel, the nameless narrator enters with the details about his life and career from the first person point of view. He is a retired bureaucrat and joins the post of a manager of the Narmada rest house. He is trying to get this job because he wants to escape from the humdrum of bustling city life and live a peaceful life. Hence, he comes to the banks of the Narmada, at a rest house near Rudra town 'situated halfway up a hill of the Vindhya Range.' (Mehta, 2) Among the four stages (ashramas) of life, i.e., Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa, he has completed the first two. Now, he is a 'Vanprasthi, someone who has retired to the forest to reflect.' (Mehta, 1) On his morning walks he often meets tribal women from Vano village and learns about deity who cures snakebites, madness, and 'liberates those who are possessed.' (Mehta, 6) People come

to pilgrimage over there, but it's not spiritual one, as the narrator reminds himself that 'the purpose of the pilgrimage is endurance.' (Mehta, 8) The villagers even believe that the Narmada River has the magical power to suppress the effect of a snake bite. Thus, they recite the invocation of the Narmada,

"Salutations in the morning and at night to thee, O Narmada! Defend me from the serpent's poison". (Mehta, 6)

Following the tradition of *Mahabharata*, the novel *A River Sutra* is made of different short stories that give moral lessons to the people. In 'The Monk's Story', there is a discourse between the old Jain monk and Ashok, who renounced the world at an early age. The conversation between them reveals the unmistakable philosophical outlook of our great saints. The old monk clarifies his doubts when he asks him about mortals and suspects some upheaval awaits him. He says,

"Mortals long to be free. Many men die before they learn the desire for freedom lies deep within them, like dammed river waiting to be released. But once a man has had that momentary glimpse of freedom, he needs to be instructed further". (Mehta, 31)

In the above lines, the human being's life-long journey or pilgrimage to get freedom from the worldly bondage has been compared with dammed river.

The holiness or the magical powers of the river remain generally associated with the myth or ritual celebrated in the nearby place. In 'The Courtesan's Story', the Nawab of Shahbag was a Muslim but he has honoured the river's holiness. The courtesan recollects the echoing sound of the words of their Nawab of Shahbag saying,

"Bathing in the waters of the Jamuna purifies a man in seven days, in the waters of the Saraswati in three, in the waters of Ganges in one, but the Narmada purifies with a single sight of her waters. Salutations to thee, O Narmada." (Mehta, 163)

In 'The Executive's Story', the executive wants to meet the lady Rima and he goes in pursuit of her. But he falls to the ground when he tries to catch her. She escapes and disappears. Next day, the guard finds him in woods lying in the mud. So, he is taken to the doctor and later to the priest. The priest advises him,

"Worship the goddess at any shrine that overlooks the Narmada River. Only that river has been given the power to cure him." (Mehta, 137)

The Vano village people explain the cause by saying that the young man has denied the power of desire. When the village people take the idol of the goddess in procession along with the young man, the bureaucrat gets confused. His clerk Mr. Chagla explains him the ritual the village people follow is, the young man has to immerse the idol in the Narmada River and then only the young man will be cured. The writer's intention is to

emphasize on the point that rituals have become an integral part of Indian's lifelong journey. The rivers like Narmada are important part of performing those rituals. Chagla explains,

“Desire is the origin of life. The serpent in question is desire. Its venom is the harm a man does when he is ignoring the power of desire.” (Mehta, 143)

So, desire has to be fulfilled. But, one should deserve it before desiring for something. According to Hindu religion, a person must undergo all the four stages or ashramas without fail. Our ancient scriptures define the duties and responsibilities of a person which should be fulfilled.

*A River Sutra* attracts everybody's attention across the globe as it sketches a clear view of the river's principle and man's dependence on nature. Indian culture considers pilgrimage as everyman's journey which can be physically performed in the contact of the sanctity of the holy rivers. In each story, the writer deals with the impermanence of life and how the Narmada rescues all the characters. In 'The Musician's Story', the musician's daughter is deprived of physical beauty and she is disappointed as her bridegroom is betrothed in marriage to someone else's daughter. She explains the bureaucrat her father's wish. The narrator says,

“I must understand that I am the bride of music, not of a musician but it is an impossible penance that he demands of me, to express desire in my music when I am dead inside. Do you think it can be done? Do you think this river has such power?” (Mehta, 225-6)

The musician's daughter is on a pilgrimage to the Narmada River as she has to meditate on the waters of the Narmada, the Shiva's penance, until she has cured herself of her attachment to what has passed and can become again the *ragini* to every *raga*. Almost all the characters seek the refuge of the Narmada River. The courtesan's daughter jumps into the river in order to purify herself of the sins. The Executive, the Jain Monk and the Naga Baba too are rescued by the holy river. The river's importance is not written into the traditions of the religions but locally its role in society is clear. The river plays a role of cleaning, purifying and providing a place for suicide, a place for rebirth and a place for extreme piety. The river itself is a goddess and people respect it as such.

The use of Goddess imagery is invoked in the novel as a tonal theme, by personifying the river Narmada with *Sakti*, the primordial feminine power. If Narmada is the goddess then everyone else in the novel is on the pilgrimage to purify their soul in a close proximity to Narmada. When Naga baba, the temple priest, first sees the child Uma then he has gripped her arms and lowers her into the water. He says,

“The Narmada claims all girls as hers. Tonight you become a daughter of the Narmada.” (Mehta, 254)

Toward the end of the story the reader discovers the Goddess imagery has woven itself together to symbolize the characteristics of Uma and the Narmada. It had been said that the Narmada has been created as an act of God Shiva’s penance. Both Uma and the Narmada are intertwined, due to Uma’s religious connection to the river. She becomes the embodiment of the Goddess for her faith and her dedication to the river and its traditions. Her songs and religious reverence of the river begin to symbolize the nature of the river to those who worship the Narmada. Mehta uses Uma and the Narmada as symbolism for each other. They are both given attributes of the Goddess, through names, stories and the amount of worship that they engendered. Thus, Uma is a personification of the Goddess and the Goddess is always a living force within the novel as the Narmada.

The holiness of the rivers Sarayu in R. K. Narayan’s *The Guide* and Narmada in Gita Mehta’s *A River Sutra* is intimately connected with the Indian tradition which believes in man’s attaining four goals in life, i.e., *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and the ultimate *Moksha*. *Moksha* or the salvation can be achieved by a person if he follows the path of sacrifice of worldly pleasures and endurance. The sacrifice and endurance are also the key elements of pilgrimage or journey towards the purification of the soul. The protagonist Raju has left all his worldly desires along with the basic need like food and water to attain the salvation and make his life meaningful while performing the ritual on the bank of Sarayu. There are many such instances of endurance, patience and sacrifice while performing rituals on the bank of Narmada by many characters to satisfy their religious beliefs. Thus, along with Ganges or Yamuna the other rivers like Narmada and Sarayu have become a part of the lives of the common people in India.

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## Medieval Polity of Valluvanad

Ummul Hasna K\*

### ABSTRACT

*Geography is the most important one in the study of a region. The geographical features assess the socio-economic, political and cultural system that particular region. In the case of Valluvanad it sees directly as the historical aspect of Nadu, and the form of 'Little kingdom' concept.*

*Valluvanad is an important nadu among the others in south Indian medieval polity, so that it maintains the political system through the Kurvazhcha and the presence of suicide squads and the ritual practices performed by the rulers. It is very clear from Valluvaraja's right to conduct the great festival of Mamankam. These were the main strategies of their political legitimacy. When these were lost from the Valluvanadu then they lost power and prosperities. The historical and descriptive methodology and the analytical study confirmed the strength and power of the strategies. It is widely discussed and analyzed in the article.*

**Keywords:** Kurvazhcha, Mamankam, Nadu, Chaver, Swarupam.

### Introduction

The Valluvanad was the independent chiefdom in Kerala, it is specifically located in southern Malabar, in the present context Valluvanad including Perintalmanna, Ponnani, Ottapalam and Mannarkkad taluks.

The disintegration of Chera kingdom, the kingdom fragmented into more parts in 12<sup>th</sup> century, then grew up the Valluvanad and Ernadu kingdoms. But the more powerful kingdom was Valluvanad. The article determined the political set-up of Valluvanad connecting with suicide squads, geography and religious rituals, as new with the adopted little kingdom theory in the context of particularly.

It discusses the geography of Valluvanadu, and how it is connected with the political structure of there. Valluvanadu had the strong political system in the medieval period. Some historians opined, that medieval south Indian politics was the little kingdom and Nadu system. The most important to the little kingdom concept is how relating to the Valluvanadu political background. Political strategies including Geographical features, presence of suicide squads, ritual practices and performance, it focused the Mamankam

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festival. It considered as the back bone of the political legitimacy. Which kingdom conducted the Mamankam festival they became the powerful kingdom in Kerala, it exist from 12<sup>th</sup> century to 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In the colonial period these are totally changed but never they stopped Mamankam festival and presence of suicide squads and the symbol of power, even today conducted the Mamankam festival but the not the part of political as the part of cultural. In the article deeply discussed how, when and why maintained the political system of Valluvanad through the strategies.

### **Materials and Methods**

In the study used primary, secondary sources and unpublished works.

The primary materials are used to this study observation, Interview, Archival sources, Maps etc.

The secondary sources including books, newspaper, articles, journals, songs and the unpublished work Ph.D. thesis also used this study.

Gazatters, Maps, Taluk revenue reports, British settlement study reports, Unnichiruthevi charitam, Kokasandesham are main sources and Valluvanadu Grantavari and Tirumannamkунnu Grantavari are sources of the study.

Mainly used the two methods for the study that is analytical method and historical method, it enlighten the content.

### **Discussion and Result**

This paper tried to focus the political structure of Valluvanad in medieval period. Traditionally Valluvanad considered be the strongest political entity during the medieval period. It trace to back many features connected with the political background of Valluvanad, particularly the geographical features, presence of suicide squads and ritual practices etc. it strengthen different sources like Valluvanad and Tirumannamkунnu Grantavaries, *Unnichirudevi charitham* and *Kokasandesham* etc.

According to the British settlement registers, during the medieval period Valluvanad was the largest geographical division of Malabar. On the topographical position Valluvanad northern part it was bounded by Ernad Taluk for 69 miles, by the crest of the Koondahs ( Nilgiris) to the North East by the Coimbeture province, and the Nilagiris for 69 miles, to the South by Nedunganad for 56 miles, to the South West and West by Bettadanad and Shernad for 13 miles. Most of the Parts Mountains, rivers and forests directly bounded by Valluvanad, so that it resisted the neighbouring attacks.

Political structure of Valluvanad, inter connecting the collapse of 2<sup>nd</sup> Cheras in 12<sup>th</sup> century. The emergence of nadus or different small political units, like as Eralnadu, Valluvanadu etc. The political fragmentation also changed in medieval polity. *Swarupams* was the power centers of nadu, like Nediirippu swarupam- Eralnadu, Arangottu swarupam- Valluvanadu etc. Political authority of nadu system maintained *Kurvazhcha* or *stanam*. It implies to privileges and rights each one in ruling family. It decided to their kurs and position among the royal members, known as the pyramidal structure of king, chiefs and land lords. *Kurvazhcha* linked with taravadu in matrilineal joint family. The Tavazhi and Taravadu ensured the political judicial authority in the medieval polity.

As mentioned above, after the decline of *Chera* Empire the polity stratified into small political units with different names. Among them the *swarupams* were considered to be the powerful unit during that time. *Swarupams* was the power centers and they have special power on *nadus*. Such as Eralnadu ruled by Nediirupu swarupam, Valluvanadu ruled by Arangottu swarupam. Generally, the term *swarupam* appear in medieval documents, particularly Grantavaris. The Arangottu swarupam mentioned Valluvanad Grantavari, Thirumandamkundu Grantavari and Arangottu swarupam Grantavari. Analysis of these documents show that the name of regions related to *swarupam*. *Swarupam* name related to geographical location of the particular ruling house. Even different opinions are existed among the scholars about the nature of *swarupams*, most of them accepted the existence of such political structure in medieval Kerala. The *swarupam* as political authority in medieval Kerala, which was based on the organization of a large number of small territory units over which a powerful matrilineal joint family exercising their political and judicial authority, the *swarupam*, which was peculiar to Kerala was understand by early scholars in different ways as a royal house hold a feudatory or even as dynasty ruling over in empire. K.V. Krishna Ayyar, differentiating between a feudatory and a *naduvazhi*, maintain that the former was a *swarupam* and held his land by virtue of Cheraman Perumal's grant.

The Valluvanad raja was also known as Arangottu *Udayavar*. K.P.Padmanabha Menon translated as the chieftain who holds the country on the other side of the river. His dominion lay to the north of the Ponnani river. According to the *Keralolpathy* when Cheraman Perumal made his partition of Kerala he gave Tirunavaye sand bank and country and privilege of conducting *Mamakam* festival with 10,000 Nairs to with *Valluvakonathiri*. There are several titles used by the head of the *swarupam* of Valluvanadu, such as *Valluvaraja*, *Vellattiri*, *Valluvakonathiri*, *Arangottu Udayar*, *Arangodan*, *Chatan Kotha*, *Rayiran Chatan*, *Vallabhan*, *Valluvanattu Udayavar*. Name

*Vallabhan* from the Pallava race. According to M.G.S. Narayanan, Irinjalakkuda inscription reveals the strength and status of hereditary governor as well as southern extension of his district into the neighbourhood of Makothi. The chaver song *Chengazhinambiyar pattu* contain reference to the seeking of the grace of Pazhayannur Bhagavati, which may indicate the Connection of Valluvanad, with Pazhayannur. In the same way, the existence of hills by name *Vellattiri mala* at Vandazhi, Palakkad, may also suggest connection with *Vellattiri*. The rise and growth of the kingdom Valluvanad's capital transformed from Arangottukara to Angadippuram. The *swarupam* initially held a small territory which was considered as the original place from where rulers and chiefs moved or expanded to a larger territory. In fact, in the case of the *swarupams* in medieval Kerala they were known after their original village as in the case of Arangattu swarupam.

In the case of Valluvanadu, location of Arangottukara, a small village is at near the Makkaraparamba, hence it was referred to as Arangottu swarupam. The name of the *swarupam* linked to the geographical location of the house. The territorial authority indicated far more than location of the house. Because *swarupam* maintained several powerful lands owning houses who acquired political – judicial authority over particular territories. Valluvanadu raja, he acquired territorial control of Arangottu Swarupam. *Swarupam* had the composition of an extended joint family resided in *Kovilakam*. The succession of all *swarupams* inherited to determine by matrilineal joint family system. The Male members of the house had to assume *Muppu* on the basis of their direct kinship relation with the women of the houses, as uncle, brothers or sons. The segmentation of the houses based on the mother –figure, segments were called *Tavazhis*. Which were distributed in the regions of political authority. Four *kovilakams* under the Arangattu swarupam, was the *Kadannamanna Kovilakam*, *Mankada Kovilakam* known as *cherukatta Tavazhi*, *Ariptra Kovilakam* and *Azhiranazhi Kovilakam*. *Valluvanadu udayavar* belonged to these four *Kovilakams*. Political authority over the nadus followed the form of *Kurvazhcha*, which can be rendered as paracellised authority. *Kurvazhcha* implies a gradation of rights and privileges within the ruling houses, with the *Muthakur*, Also implies a seniority order with the *Ilamkur* having claims to succeed the *Muthakur*. The system *Mupumura* Connecting the *kuru*, all members female and male had *kuru*. *Kurvazhcha* mentioned in the *swarupams* with male and female members occupying separate *kur* having land and privileges.

### **Kurvazhcha in Valluvanad**

- Valluvakonathiri was *Muthakur*, known as *Kothaikadungonaya Kovil Karumikal*.
- Second *Vellalpad* or *Valluvanathukara* Nambiyathiri Tirumulpad or *Vellat Ilamkur* Nambiyathiri
- Third *Thacharpad* or *Tachanathukara* Moonamkur Nambiyathiri.
- Fourth *Edathralpad* or *Edathunattu* Nambiyathiri Tirumulpad

These were main *kur* of Valluvanad and fifth Kolathur Mutha vallodi Thirumulpad. Kolathur Thamburatti Muthakur and secondly Kadannom Mutha Thamburatti in women seniority order. Kolathur Thamburatti called Vedapuratti. Sometimes the *kur* right would result in the formation of separate ruling houses, was *kovilakams* with *kur* right would also result in certain *kovikams* establishing authority through actual territorial control. Already mention above. Other dignitaries consisted of sixteen chiefs or land lords, including Valluvakonathiri and his four kurs. Two Nairs, two Nambutiris, two persons of the royal houses, four *Panikkars*, *Elampulakatachan*, *Kulathur Varier*, *Uppamkalathil* Pisharody, Kakoot Nair, Mannumala Nair and Cherukara Pisharody, they helped to Valluvanad raja. Valluvakonathiri known as Vellodi or Velappanattu Nambidi, this name linked with his caste, his joint family including five families, these were Kadambot, Mulath, Nemmini, Kuttikattil and Pathiramanna.

The presence of Suicide squads or *Chaver*, it is the most attracted one in Valluvanad. It changed the political structure of Valluvanad connecting with rituals, particularly the *Mamakam* festival. Traditional history proves that the Valluvanadu had got the privilege to conduct *Mamakam* festival from *Chera* Empire after their decline. From the known history *Mamakam* was considered to a religious ritual practice but gradually it acquired a political character and it became the symbol of political supremacy. Consequently, continuous warfare took place among the neighbor *swarupams* of Valluvanadu for claiming the Rakshapurusha power of the *Mamankam* festival. Finally, the Zamorin of Calicut was able to capture the above stated position and automatically he became the supreme king of Malabar region. Obviously, it was a bitter experience to the ruler of Valluvanad and he thought to regain the status of Rakshapurusha from Zamorin. It results the origin of suicide squads in Kerala, especially Valluvanad suicide squads. Suicide squads or *chavers* are the special forces of medieval kings and they were considered as a property of territory. Thus the Suicide squads of Valluvanad were decided to fight up to their death for returning Rakshapurush power from the Zamorins.

Another one is the political legitimacy through the ritual practices performed by the rulers. It is very clear from Valluvaraja's right to conduct the great festival of *Mamankam*. One of the best examples was that he conducted the *Mamakam* festival till twelve or thirteen century A. D. Then he was conducted Tirumannamkunnu *pooram* festival. The main ceremonies like *Kottichira ezhunallippu*, *Kudipooja* and *Thekkottirakkam*. *Kottichira ezhunallip* was the day when the king arrive the temple after *Ariyittuvazhcha*. *Kudipooja* was the special ceremony of king, it headed by Kuttaloor Nambuthiri at the northern side of Thirumannamkunnu temple. *Kudipooja* functioned after the Raja's *ariyittuvazhchza* for blessing of king. The *thekkottirakkam* ritual was Valluvakonathiri procession to meet *pooraparambu* with royal guard and this was the ceremonial event of the king's heart to meet the *Malayakutti* (the elder member of Malaya community) and the Panar mooppan (the elder member of Panar) in the presence of the people. It point out the intimate relation to Valluvaraja and his people, it helped to ensure his political legitimacy trough the rituals. Valluvakonathiri legitimized his rule symbolically through political and ritual action. The *ariyittuvazhcha* and the eleven day *pooram* festival in reverence of the goddess Bhagavati blessed to empower the king, Attaches importance of not only the *pooram* but also to the religious festivals and ceremonies. Because king's observances imperative for his sacral legitimation. Valluvanadraja helped to construction of *Tirumannamkunnu* temple and other shrines like modified the Tali Shiva temple.

Another notable feature of this political structure is that the Valluvakonathiri couldn't make any decisions under his own opinion. So that he arranged the *nattukuttam* at his kovilakam. This opinion strengthening with Grantavari, in the problem of Indianoor desham, *deshavazhi* Karuvayoor Moosath and Chandrottil Panikkar conflicted case of Indianoor, in this situation Raja discussed with fourteen chiefs of Valluvanad, including Parakkattil Ittunniyama, Aaru Panikkar, Vayyankara Chata Panikkar, Unnikothangocha Vellodi, Unni Raricha Eraldi, Thalachola Chatara Menon, Pulikkott Itti Chatar, Ittichirama Pisharody, Naduvilappatt Komacha Panikkar, Ittikotha Warriar, Konnan Pisharody, Nechikkattil Komacha Pnikkar, Ukkandan Pothuwal and Arangottu Unnikannan. He forbidden the Indianoor desham, and after one year he resolved the problems of Indianoor with the opinions of chiefs. Valluvakonathiri gave a conch and ghungroo to informing *nattukoottam* for solving their problem with help of chiefs and ghungroo used to disperse the *nattukootam*. It was the evidence of *nattukootam*.

## Conclusion

This paper tried to identify the political nature of Valluvanad connecting to several aspects like geographical features are necessary to evaluate the political boundaries of this area. The *Swarupams* were very common in medieval Kerala history and most of them played a seminal role in the politics of that society. In the part of it political power maintained pyramidal structure like *Muthakur*, *Vellalpad*, *Thacharpad* and *Edatharpad* in Valluvanad. The ritual practices and legitimizing rule through the *Thandettam* ceremony and *Kudipooja*, *Kottichira ezhunallip* and *Thekkottirakkam* were including Valluvanad polity. Presence of suicide squads inter connecting with *Mamakam* a special ritual practice carried out by Valluvakonathiri was a symbol of political hegemony in that time. These features strengthen the political entity in medieval period of Valluvanad.

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## Role of Virtual Education in COVID-19 Era

Malabika Borah\*

### ABSTRACT

*Most of us grew up with face-to-face learning in a traditional classroom. It is a well known fact that Covid-19 is presenting to all educational institutions including universities and colleges a challenge to teach students, as infections are known to increase in crowded places. Education of this population, if social distancing requirement is needed, therefore, will be tough. In this context, virtual education plays a crucial role and this is the only way to hold classrooms in the present situation. During this prevailing situation of pandemic, students are forced to engage in online learning, coming out of their usual routine.*

*Virtual education has both positive and negative aspects. Though it gives the learner more control over when they can learn and allows learners to progress at their own pace; but these aspects are true only for a small portion of students. These are in no way valid for school going students as well as students below 21. Contrary to the positive aspects, virtual education requires less commitment and most importantly, comes with plenty of distractions. Virtual education may be fruitful for higher studies, but cannot fulfill the requirements at the lower basic level for society as well as for the nation.*

**Keywords:** *Virtual education, Pandemic, Online teaching.*

### 1. Introduction

The new corona virus Covid-19, first identified in the Chinese city of Wuhan, appears to cause severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and there is evidence that it is originated in bats, leading to more than one crore deaths across the world till date, making WHO to declare it as a pandemic. To regulate the spread of this disease, most of the countries have declared lockdown due to which during this period, global air traffic has dropped by 60%. These emission reductions have led to a temporary dip in carbon-di-oxide emissions, encouraging some to hope that our global society may indeed be able to reduce greenhouse gas emissions substantially over the long term to mitigate impending climate change. So long as the corona virus crisis keeps economic activities reduced, emissions will remain relatively low. However, it would be short-sighted to conclude this is a durable environmental improvement as emissions will most likely rise to previous levels when economic activity picks up as the crisis resolves.

But not all the environmental consequences of the crisis have been positive. Volumes of unrecyclable waste have risen, severe cuts in agricultural and fishery export levels have led to the generation of large quantities of organic waste, maintenance and monitoring

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of natural ecosystems have been temporarily halted and tourism activity to natural areas has ceased.

Covid-19 is creating a challenge to all educational institutions including schools, colleges and universities. Therefore, online teaching plays the most important role for holding classrooms in the current pandemic situation. Though there are both positive and negative perspectives in this virtual education system, in the present scenario, despite of all the negative impacts it may create, it left no way to continue the education of the present youth this way to help them achieving their future goals. It becomes necessary till the present situation persists and the terror of corona completely disappears or till any remedy for the problem is identified.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

The paper involves a detailed study of the present online scenario through a range of survey done with the students, teachers as well as retired professors from schools, colleges and universities in the form of questionnaires covering several dimensions in this area. The questions included the effects of online education on physical and mental health, the art of self-questioning, practicing their secrets, strategies to unlock and unleashing it as well as the need for the inner power in the prevailing situation.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **3.1 Readiness for Online Education Mode**

In a country like India, where the percentage of poverty is very high, it is a matter of great concern to deal with the upcoming situation of virtual or online education to every nook and corner of the country. Though the government was planning to implement virtual education system just before the Covid-19 outbreak, it becomes the need of the hour suddenly due to this situation. It is well known that across all over India, only about 52% of students have household internet facility including smart phones and about 28.5% of students have a computer, though urban areas are in a better condition with about 64% having internet and 41% having computer. Thus, to a certain extent only, it may be feasible, at least in the urban areas to impart education through online education system.

Now the government is implementing several schemes through opening of different radio and television channels like specially to incorporate the virtual education in every region of our country so that all the students get benefitted. Offcourse, these schemes are creating a high positive impact on the present need, but for the better benefit of the students, they should also be provided with the required equipments in need as well as internet facilities if possible.

### **3.2 Virtual over Conventional**

Most of us grew up with face-to-face learning in a traditional classroom. But during this prevailing situation of Covid-19 pandemic, students are forced to engage in online

learning, coming out of their usual routine. Otherwise, earlier, if they want to learn something that is not as available in college, then only they need to explore alternative means like an online course where they are teaching themselves using the provided materials.

Face-to-face education means a live, two-way interaction whereas online education- especially asynchronous, mean anything that doesn't include a live instructor. So, online education is where a student sits down and learns through a self-paced system, completely on their own. There might be content delivered through video, but it is a one-way interaction. Though it gives the learner more control over when they can learn, allows learners to progress at their own pace and does not subject learners to distractions from others; but these aspects are true only for a small portion of students excluding the school students. In addition, for the subjects where field works as well as lab works are required, virtual education cannot really fulfill the needs.

In a face-to-face education system, at least one knows whether the learners are expecting to learn or not. So we are able to get an idea about their advancement. But in online education system, it becomes difficult to note down exactly the status of the learners. Contrary to the positive aspects, virtual education requires less commitment, might lead learners to falsely think they are ready to progress and comes with plenty of distractions through various sites available on the internet.

To rectify the possible negative aspects, one has to develop certain restrictive means in internet through which distractions can be completely removed. Secondly, prior to the online learning, the students would require an offline mentor that will continuously keep an eye to the overall progress of the students. The mentor may be a teacher or a family member especially in case of school-going students. Thus, not only for the present situation, virtual education system may become a fruitful one if maintained in a proper way erasing out all the possible negative aspects.

### **3.3 E-resources**

E-resources can be defined as a group of informations disseminated in electronic or digital format, which is produced, published and distributed electronically. It comes from the use of the internet and related technologies for its development, distribution and enhancement. To access electronic resources, networked computers are necessary ingredients that any university or college should strive to have. It is established that about 75% of the respondents depend on the university or college to access networked computers, only about 18% believe these resources provided easier access to information. This might be attributed to the lack of available personal computers because of which, though e-resources can be read in both online and offline mode, the full utilization of it becomes limited.

But even though, open access initiative has made it easier to reach in the hands of an individual information seeker. These e-resources cover entire universe of knowledge

which includes arts, humanities, commerce, law, social sciences, physical sciences, chemical sciences, life sciences, computer sciences, engineering, mathematical sciences, medical sciences etc. So there are no areas left untouched. The fruitful utilization of e-resources would be possible only by motivating the students for its maximum utilization.

Further, 100% of the respondents propose that more networked computers should be purchased by the university or colleges to help students to access e-resources. It is also significant that about 33% of the students do not consider that access to quality information via e-resources can lead to improved academic performance. Therefore, to popularize the use of e-resources, some awareness measures may be developed so that the students can be able to understand the wide utility and benefits of e-resources available through open access which will really help our government to achieve the required goals of taking such initiatives.

### **3.4 Internet access**

Internet can be described as a tremendous source of information now-a-days. Access to the Internet is fundamental to achieving this vision for the future. It can be regarded as a world of information and access to the internet is essential for the purpose. However, lack of access is first and foremost problem arisen in this context. Lack of connectivity is preventing widespread use of internet in education in many countries including India.

Our survey concludes that online education can be established only if somehow the problem of connectivity is resolved, yet the internet can be used both in a positive and negative manner. This may act as a useful tool for students by giving them opportunity to acquire knowledge in whatever field they want. As a result the students are capable to achieve their goal as per their desire. But at the same time, they have a wide range of distractions also. There are several sites available which are of no use at any angle. The students may be distracted and they may lose their concentration in achieving their goal. In that case, internet may be a dangerous threat to the upcoming youth to shape their future in a good way.

### **3.5 Effect on Health**

In the present scenario of Covid-19 pandemic, every institution is trying to reach out to the maximum number of students through online mode conducting online classes as well as keeping them busy with several other programmes so that they can adopt this unusual situation. While doing so, the students are compelled to spend several hours a day on mobile or computer. As no one has the idea about the maximum hours that a student should spend in these activities, the institutions are conducting classes without any time limit.

As a result of this, most of the students are suffering from health problems such as headache, gastric as well as spondylitis. Continuation of such activities for a longer time may lead to major health problems. Therefore, this should find an important concern in

conducting virtual education system for a long duration specially in the present situation. There should be some time limitation of online classes for smooth running of the system.

In addition, due to poor network connectivity in most of the rural area in our country as well as due to some natural calamity, the smooth continuation of the online activities is also got hampered some time. This also creates anxiety and tension as well as depression among the students affecting their mental health also.

### **3.6 Lack of physical activities**

We know that physical activities play a vital role in maintaining both our physical and mental health. Because of the lockdown the students are forced to remain inside their homes and as a result, they are not able to do their routine physical tasks. Therefore, at this phase of corona pandemic, they should be encouraged to continue any type of physical activities which not only will create a positive health effect, but also will boost up immunity to fight against this situation. This will also increase their interest for the ongoing virtual education system simultaneously.

### **3.7 Innovation through virtual mode**

As the online teaching and learning is the only way left in the prevailing scenario, the teachers need more to innovate new ideas and techniques to make teaching learning process more engaging and participative. For example, they may try to implement new softwares and applications such as Gimkit, Socrative, nearpod etc. which may build interest of the students in a particular topic through gamification of education.

### **3.8 Introduction to extra-curricular activities**

In addition to the regular curriculum, some extra-curricular activities may be introduced to the students which may be related to their individual hobbies such as singing, playing with different instruments, creative writings in the form of poems, stories etc. This type of practice will not only help the students to discover their individual hidden talents but also will act as a vitamin to their physical as well as their mental health.

## **4. Conclusion**

Though in the present situation of Covid-19 pandemic, virtual education gives a new direction to our existing conventional education system, it can be implemented successfully in future days also. Though it cannot just replace the conventional system, but it can prove to be a highly beneficial support to the existing education system. Exposure to the benefits of virtual education is necessary in today's world but its potential can only be utilized well through a proper systematic way with limitation in timeline.

Virtual education may be fruitful for higher studies, giving the students a wide variety of choices that would not have been possible to achieve conventional mode on education. At a time, virtual education system gives the students a great opportunity to

fulfill their expected destinations. However, it cannot fulfill the requirements at the lower basic level in any way. But it can be stated that conventional with additional virtual education system will really help the students to achieve their desired goals if they are highly determined.

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## The Effectiveness of BRICS as A Multilateral Organization in the World Politics

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### ABSTRACT

*The globalization process has challenged the concept of absolute sovereignty of the states in present international society. Nowadays the states are interdependent and the demarcation between the internal and external sovereignty has been declined gradually. This situation encouraged the development of multilateralism. BRICS is one such multilateral platform. Five emerging economies from different continents formed this group. The member-states are Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. BRICS developed a variety of mechanisms for economic and social development. With the changing needs of the time, it has extended its activities to multiple areas of global significance. The economic and political situations of these member-states are different from one another. There are several economic, political, and territorial contentions between the member-states, especially between China and India. Notwithstanding, these states are playing the role of rational and significant actors in international economic and political spheres. This heterogeneous group with one shared interest of opposing the western domination in a global economy has shown signs of cooperation in many spheres and also at the time of a Covid- 19 pandemic outbreak. This paper will try to analyze the effectiveness of BRICS as a multilateral group in the present international society.*

**Keywords:** BRICS, Multilateralism, Summit, Pandemic

### Introduction

Robert O Keohane defined multilateralism as “the practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad hoc arrangements or by means of institutions.” (731) Multilateralism works as a method of cooperation and also as a form of organization. (“About Multilateralism”) Multilateralism has become a fundamental process of the contemporary world order. Since the end of World War II, the western countries had established several multilateral organizations at the international level, like United Nations, International Monetary Fund, and others. Such multilateral organizations had also been created at the regional level, like the Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and others. (Hisahiro, 4) Nowadays, we are observing shifting relations of power, cumulative actions of multiple actors in global politics, and coalescing of national economies. In the era of globalization, it is almost impossible for any state to survive in the international society as an individual and

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separate entity. The states are interconnected and their domestic policies are highly influenced by their foreign policies and vice-versa. This situation encouraged the development of multilateralism, and BRICS is one such multilateral platform.

The term “BRIC” was first coined by economist Jim O’Neill in 2001, in his report “Building Better Global Economic BRICs”. (1-16) This report predicted that the economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China would have a far greater economic space and would be amongst the world’s largest economies in the future. (Neill 1-16) Brazil, Russia, India, and China- these four countries began informal diplomatic coordination in 2006. The Foreign Ministers of these countries met on the sideline of the General Debate of United Nations General Assembly. This dialogue led to more annual meetings of heads of state and government, beginning in 2009. In 2010 South Africa was invited to join the group and in 2011, South Africa joined the group. (“What is BRICS?”) Thus, BRIC transformed into BRICS.

BRICS has the goals to encourage peace, security, development, and cooperation. Also, it has a significant contribution to the development of humanity and for establishing a more equitable and fairer world. (“Fifth BRICS Summit - general background”) BRICS emerged from the long-term common economic interests of its member-states. (Shisana et al. 3-4) It is going through a constant process of transformation and now its activities have been expanded more beyond its original objectives of financial reforms. Now, it appears as a political-diplomatic entity with its varied purposes. (Gogoi 10721)

BRICS is based on mainly three pillars: Economic and Financial Cooperation, Cultural Cooperation, and Political and Security Cooperation. Under the category of Economic and Financial Cooperation. (“About BRICS, Three Pillars of BRICS”) BRICS encourages economic growth and development for mutual prosperity among the BRICS nations. Economic and Financial cooperation primarily focuses on the sectors of agriculture, trade, banking, finance, and so on. This pillar aimed to foster collaborative approaches and advanced methods for the attainment of sustainable and equitable development. (“About BRICS, BRICS India 2021”)

The goal of the Cultural Cooperation is to form a stage for information sharing and exchange among the BRICS nation-states and encouraging people-to-people intercourse in the field of culture, education, business, etc. (“About BRICS, BRICS India 2021”)

BRICS promotes global peace and security as well as regional security for a safer world. It aims to reform the existing multilateral system to make it a more pertinent option for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (“About BRICS, BRICS India 2021”) It encourages the counter-terrorism strategy for intensifying the security of the member-states. (“About BRICS, BRICS India 2021”)

For a long time, the developing nations of the world, especially the emerging economies were trying to make a strong position on a regional as well as a global basis to counterweigh the West-dominated Bretton wood system. The countries like India, China,

Brazil, and Russia (emerging and potential economic powers in their regions) came forward to form a multilateral group with several economic and social goals. Later, another emerging economy, South Africa joined the group from the Southern African region.

In 2008, the world witnessed a severe economic and financial crisis, which first took place in the United States of America, and soon led to a worldwide recession. The Western world confronted a devastating situation during that time. The events in the developed world instantly hit the developing countries, including the BRIC economies. However, when the western countries suffered the worst crisis since the Great Depression, the BRIC economies appeared more resilient to a certain extent. (Khadkiwala)

The large trade surpluses and foreign exchange reserves of the BRIC nations had made them more resilient to the financial meltdown. ("BRIC economies withstand global financial crisis) As a result, institutional cooperation was made among the BRIC economies at that time. (Stuenkel 611)

### **Materials and Methods**

This work is mainly based on secondary sources, like commentaries, criticisms, journal articles, magazine and newspaper articles, web site. Primary sources have also been consulted. This work is primarily descriptive in nature. It has also made use of qualitative data.

### **Results**

The BRICS was formed as a multilateral group to counterweigh the western dominated, especially the USA, global economic order. The BRICS nations are differed from each other in numerous aspects, like culturally, geographically, economically, and politically. Member-states like India and China have long-standing border disputes. The heterogeneous features of this group raised questions on their effectiveness as an effective multilateral forum in the present world order. Even after a decade of its existence, BRICS is unable to compete American hegemony in international organizations, like UNO or IMF.

Notwithstanding, the emerging economies of the BRICS nations and their growing importance in the geopolitical issues, have placed them in such a position that it is impossible to ignore their existence in the sphere of global governance. Despite several constraints, the BRICS is playing a significant role in this contemporary world politics.

### **Discussion**

BRICS has been functioning as a forum since 2009, and since then its summits are held annually. Until now, we have witnessed twelve BRICS summits. The first BRICS summit (2009) was held in the city of Yekaterinburg, Russia. Brazil, Russia, India, and China took part in this meeting. The objective of this meeting was to strengthen the

unity of the four countries to reform the global governance order, particularly in the economic- financial field. They made an effort to increase the role of emerging economies in international financial institutions. The second summit (2010) was held in Brasilia, Brazil. Four member-states agreed on some issues related to global governance. They stood up for a “multipolar, equitable and democratic world order, based on international law, equality, mutual respect, cooperation, coordinated action and collective decision-making of all states.” (“BRIC Summit - Joint Statement”, April 16, 2010) The third summit (2011) took place in Sanya, China. South Africa joined BRICS in this summit. After the inclusion of South Africa, the name BRIC has changed to BRICS. In this summit, the BRICS members asked for all-inclusive reform of the United Nations, including its Security Council. (Samanta) India hosted the fourth summit (2012) in New Delhi. The leaders agreed to consider the prospect of establishing a new Development Bank. It was decided that the funding for the proposed bank would be provided by the BRICS countries and other developing economies. (“Brics summit of emerging nations to explore bank plan”) The Bank would emphasize in resource mobilization to support the BRICS infrastructure and sustainable development projects, and at the same time, it would provide support for other emerging economies. (“The BRICS Development Bank: Why the world’s newest global bank must adopt a pro-poor agenda” 12-13) The fifth summit (2013) was taken place in Durban, South Africa. This summit focused on the development of Africa with the help of other BRICS nations. At the end of this summit, the member-states unanimously adopted the “e Thekwini Declaration.” (“5th BRICS Summit - eThekwini Declaration and Action Plan” March 27, 2013) The sixth summit (2014) was held in the city of Fortaleza, Brazil. The official foundation of the New Development Bank resulted from this summit. It was decided that the Bank would be Shanghai- based, and its main aim was to support infrastructure projects in developing economies. (“Sixth BRICS Summit – Fortaleza Declaration”, July 15, 2014) Russia hosted the seventh summit (2015) in Ufa. The leaders discussed the common interest in respect of the international agenda as well as further strengthening the intra-BRICS cooperation. At the same time, the member-states tried to make the New Development Bank and Contingent Reserves Arrangement (CRA) operational as soon as possible. (“VII BRICS Summit”, Ufa Declaration, Ufa, the Russian Federation, 9 July 2015)

India hosted the eighth BRICS summit (2016). It was held in Goa. Despite several differences among some of the member states regarding border security and international terrorism, the summit was ended on a positive note with a strong emphasis on trade, business, and energy relationships. (Cyrill) The ninth BRICS summit (2017) took place in Xiamen, China. The Xiamen Declaration condemned the terrorist activities in the region and worldwide as well. The Declaration called for strengthening “the spirit of mutual respect and understanding, equality, solidarity, openness, inclusiveness, and mutually beneficial cooperation” among the BRICS nations. (Pandey) South Africa hosted the tenth BRICS summit (2018). The Johannesburg

Declaration committed to intensifying the strategic partnership among the BRICS nations for the interest of their people through fostering peace, sustainable development, a fairer international order, and inclusive growth. (“10th BRICS Summit Johannesburg Declaration”, July 26, 2018)

The eleventh annual BRICS summit (2019) was held in Brasilia, Brazil. The leaders of the BRICS countries emphasized the crucial issues such as strengthening and reforming the multilateral system, economic and financial cooperation, and regional situations. They focused on the establishment of an intense shared future for the international community. Hence, issues like peace and security, human rights protection, promotion of fundamental freedoms had been emphasized in the Declaration. This summit restated the need to reform the international organizations, like the UN, WTO, and IMF. The Declaration condemned all forms and manifestations of terrorism, At the same time, it emphasized the counter-terrorism cooperation initiative among the BRICS states. They made a point of strengthening global economic growth by maintaining the multilateral trading system. They focused on the importance of the role of the World Trade Organization in this regard. (“Brasília Declaration” 2019)

The twelfth BRICS summit (2020) was scheduled to take place in Russia, but due to the pandemic outbreak, it was held virtually among the five member states. This summit discussed important global issues like “reforming the multilateral system, measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, counter-terrorism cooperation, trade, health, and energy.” (“BRICS Summit” 2020) This summit needs a special mention as it had been held in a pandemic situation when the socio-political and economic challenges had been growing all over the world. This is the prime time when the BRICS might prove itself as a competent multilateral organization, which could effectively confront this turbulent situation.

### **The effectiveness of the group**

BRICS promotes economic, cultural, and political cooperation among the member states. Although it has emerged as an economic bloc, now it has geo-political importance as well. While we are going to analyze the efficiency and credibility of BRICS, it should be kept in mind that these member countries are different from each other in many aspects whether it may their political scenario or the economic condition. So, therefore, it is important to discuss their correlation and the hardships arising from time to time between some of the member states.

Since the establishment of the BRICS, the member states have built up a strong position in the world economy. As Financial Express (November 13, 2020) says, “...the total BRICS GDP amounted to 25% of global GDP (US\$21 trillion) and BRICS share in international trade stood at almost 20% (US\$6.7 trillion) in 2020.” (Vazquez) Although BRICS was formed mainly with economic aims and objectives, especially to create an equitable and democratic world order, but with the need of time, it attained an active geopolitical role in world politics. Together, all BRICS member countries account for

almost 41 percent of the world population. They have 24 percent of the world GDP and also have approximately 17 percent of the share in global trade. (“Brics in numbers: What it is and what it could be”)

By discussing the achievements and challenges forced by the BRICS, we can assess its effectiveness as a multilateral forum in the international society. In the recent past, the inadequacy of the post-war world order has been revealed and that led to various changes in the global economic and political spheres. The new state of affairs in the last two decades shows that there is a steady growth in the developing economies of the world. These economies include countries like China from East Asia, India from South Asia, Brazil from South America, South Africa from Southern Africa. With their growing importance in the global GDP, these regional powers demanded more importance in the process of global governance.

Although the BRICS nations have the potential to make a difference in the existing world order, there are some challenges in their path to becoming a counterweight to the west. There are several discrepancies among them. The political systems and economic outputs are largely different from one member state to another. The socio-political situation of Brazil, India, and South Africa is different from China and Russia. The former three have democracies with the substantial issue of ethnic conflicts and corruption. On the other hand, China’s political system is based on a one-party system, and Russia has highly centralized governance. (Gogoi 10722) They have a different status in the contemporary world order also. For instance, Russia and China are permanent members of the UN Security Council; on the other hand, India, Brazil, and South Africa are only regional powers and seek to influence the existing world order. (Rej) China and India are having border disputes for a long time. In recent times, both, India and China have largely increased their infrastructure along the LAC (Line of Actual Control) and that led to tensions between them.

In terms of economic performance, there is a significant discrepancy among the BRICS member-states. In the first half of the 2000s, the economic performance of these BRICS nations was impressive, but gradually their economic growth had been decreased. However, countries like India and China maintained their economic growth. (Willy) China is the biggest member of this group and other members could not able to match its unparalleled economic growth. (“Brics in numbers: What it is and what it could be”) This heterogeneous group has a driving force that helps them to maintain a bonding among themselves, i.e., the opposition to the Western- dominated global economy. (Willy)

Although many factors affect the image of BRICS as a multilateral group and representative of the developing world, their continuous effort to strengthen the bonding cannot be ignored. The BRICS has taken numerous initiatives to counterweigh the Western domination in the contemporary world order. They have strengthened their politico-economic relationships among themselves to repudiate the western hegemony.

For a long time, the BRICS members have demanded restructuring the institutions like IMF and World Bank, they have claimed increased representation and voting shares in those institutions for the interest of emerging economies, but their appeal was in vain. The BRICS members have taken initiatives to organize sustainable development projects and to mobilize resources for infrastructure in BRICS, along with other developing economies; and signed an agreement on establishing New Development Bank (NDB) in the sixth BRICS summit (2014). (“Sixth BRICS Summit – Fortaleza Declaration” 15 July, 2014) The Contingent Reserve Agreement was also signed with an initial size of \$100 billion in the same summit. (“Sixth BRICS Summit – Fortaleza Declaration” 15 July, 2014) In its agenda, NDB has recognized environmental and social sustainability that are important to mark the infrastructure gaps. It shows NDB’s political commitment to pursue sustainable development worldwide. (“Environment and Social Sustainability”)

As the core participators of the G-20, the BRICS nations have used it as an institutional platform and influence the shaping of developmental economic norms. (Duggan et al. 9) BRICS financial and economic cooperation has regenerated the South-South cooperation (SSC). The growing powers of the BRICS nations paved the way for SSC to increase its influence within multilateral organizations. (“South-South and Triangular Cooperation- A Key to Development” 1) In this context, Jorge Chediek, (director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (SSC) and the secretary-general’s envoy on that cooperation) said that “As a powerful bloc of developing economies, the BRICS nations have committed to deepening cooperation not only among themselves but also across the global south.” (“UN Envoy: BRICS Can Take Lead on Development”) They have formed a dialogue pattern of BRICS + N, i.e., whenever a BRICS summit takes place, they initiate dialogue with the leaders of regional developing countries and/or with the regional forums. For example, during the seventh BRICS summit in Russia, the BRICS leaders hold a dialogue with EEU (Eurasian Economic Union) and SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) members and observer states. (Mengjie) Thus BRICS has made its significance evident not only among the developing nations but also makes friends around the world.

### **Pandemic and the Role of BRICS**

In the era of globalization, every country in the international society is interconnected and interdependent. The outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic has proved it once again. The Covid 19 pandemic has changed the world and redefined the relationship between state-market and society. Governments all over the world are facing severe challenges in policymaking. The BRICS countries have been weakened by the pandemic socially and economically. They have faced an economic downturn and now it has been a challenge for them to come out from this economic crisis resulted from the Covid -19 pandemic. (Pham) The BRICS countries have almost half of the world population and the Covid- 19 infections in these countries has reached 39.77 million as of April 30, 2021. (Zhu et al. 2) From this data, the severity of the Covid situation in the BRICS

nations can be understood. The Covid pandemic arises several disputes in the international sphere regarding the vaccine. The vaccine producer countries were not willing to reject the international property protection for Covid vaccines. (Staff) At the World Trade Organization in October 2020, India and South Africa proposed a waiver to ‘suspend rules of intellectual property rights for Covid-19 vaccines and treatments to boost global vaccination rates.’ (Staff) This proposal has been supported by a large number of countries. This move can remove the unequal distribution of Covid- 19 vaccines, where the developed world gets the major portion and the developing world is suffering from the unavailability of the required amount of it. On May 5, 2021, the US administration declared that it would support the WTO proposal for temporarily waive intellectual property right on Covid- 19 vaccines. (Correa 3) The BRICS foreign ministers’ meeting was held in June 2021. They focused on the pandemic situation and reiterated ‘the need for sharing vaccines, transfer of technology, development of local production capacities and supply chains.’ (Staff) To resist the pandemic, the BRICS nations have made some collective efforts: agreed to allocate \$ 15 billion to the New Development Bank (NDB), and at the same time, underlined that for handling the pandemic it is necessary to enhance NDB’s emergency facility. (Pham)

Under this circumstance, the first virtual summit of the BRICS was held among the member states from July 21-July 23. In this meeting, the BRICS nations put special focus on how to control the impact of the pandemic. Apart from enhancing cooperation in trade, energy, and counter-terrorism, the summit emphasized the cross-country efforts to resist Covid 19 and confirm a swift economic recovery. (Cao) They have taken collective initiatives to resist the pandemic and extended their assistance and service not only for the member states but for the countries all over the world.

### **Conclusion**

The US-dominated international order deprived the developing countries for a long time. The international and regional organizations have not been able to neglect the influence of western, particularly US hegemony in their policymaking process. This scenario gradually awakens the developing nations and they have taken initiatives to resist such western dominance in the existing world order. Although the financial crisis of 2008 has played the role of a catalyst in the formation of this multilateral group - BRICS, the background preparation was already there. Several criticisms have appeared against the effectiveness and relevance of the existence of BRICS. However, the BRICS nations proved their competence and ability to protect the interest of the developing nations against western dominance. It is true that, despite the decline in the role of America in the world economy, and the emergence of the developing economies at the international level, the BRICS nations cannot take the position of US supremacy soon. The BRICS nations are trying to improve cooperation in the area of mutual interest. They have differences in several issues, but their objective to challenge the western domination in the present world order has brought them closer.

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## The Hieroglyphics of Violence in Black Theatre: A Study of August Wilson's Plays

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### ABSTRACT

*The world is surrounded by practices which are common to every culture and society. Violence is one such practice which has been in currency since eternity. Literature, arts, theatre and history have enumerated different tales of violence. The history of African Americans reflects the most treacherous episodes of violence in the history of humankind. It began with the Middle Passage, the journey through which the Africans made their way to America. This journey was the embodiment of violence. It stripped naked the blacks both literally and metaphorically. They suffered every possible form of violence, such as, hunger, murder, castration, rape, disparagement of the culture and the languages, exposure to different climate zones and what not. The chattel slavery continued for more than 250 years. The freedom brought with it new forms of violence, such as, forced labour, kidnapping, low wages, segregation, lynching, and so on.*

*August Wilson, the most celebrated black playwright of America, deals with each decade of the twentieth century independently in a cycle of ten plays. The plays enumerate how the consciousness of black folks are structured and framed by the violence inflicted upon them and by them. Each play deals with violence in different guises. Wilson incorporates the elements of magical realism and religious mistrust as performance tools to bring out the imbued violence of the American society. The present paper aims to show how violence is responsible for the physical, psychological, spiritual and emotional retardation of the blacks through a study of all the ten plays. The paper tries to weave together the different concepts of violence that are operative in the marginalization of the minority groups over a period of hundred years. It aims to study the reasons for the proliferation of violence in the twentieth century America. It further tries to uncover how the collective memories of violence cause dent upon the psyche of the blacks.*

**Keywords:** *Violence, Racial memory, Oppression, Black consciousness, Racism.*

The world is divided by the concept of binaries- man/woman, black/ white, rich/poor, moral/ immoral and so on. Human beings are prone to look at things from this dualistic lens. In the binary system there is the prevalence of a dominant and a submissive category and an implied assumption of positive and negative polarities. The society draws its radar on the assumed weaker polarities such as- women, blacks, poor, etc. The

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rift between the two binaries causes friction leading to anarchy, violence, disillusionment, and perpetual tussle. This causes restlessness in society which is engaged in resorting to violence in different forms. Thus, violence is a persistent aspect of societies across the globe because these binaries are operative in every society since the early days.

Violence is a phenomenon which has been defined by numerous sociologists, philosophers and psychologists. Elizabeth Kandel Englander writes, "In general, violence is aggressive behavior with the intent to cause harm (physical or psychological). The word intent is central; physical or psychological harm that occurs by accident, in the absence of intent, is not violence." (*Understanding Violence* 2). Thus violence is any intentional behavior or action which causes either physical, psychological, emotional or spiritual pain to another individual or community.

The lens of violence can be used to study the cycle of plays that August Wilson wrote to chronicle the different decades of the twentieth century. The epic cycle is dominated by the violent strives between the black and white Americans. The dominant white culture tries to curtail the enhancement of blacks by levying unjust laws and taboos against them. In the larger scheme of things the picture of racial violence in America can also be seen as a strife between workers and capitalists, between black women and patriarchy, between people of the same community, self – infliction, and so on. Violence takes on different guises in the American racial scenario. These are the different hieroglyphics of black consciousness in the plays of Wilson. Thus, the paper aims to study how violence suffered by and inflicted upon forms the consciousness of black folks. The paper aims to draw the contours of violence by incorporating the signs and symbols (hieroglyphics) of violence prevalent in the plays of Wilson.

C.A.J. Coady in *Morality and Political Violence* (2008) discusses different theories of violence operative in the common parlance. He discusses three broad categories of violence, namely, wide, restricted, and legitimate. The wide definition of violence includes "social injustices" referred to as structural violence; the violence inflicted by the state and political institutions. Restricted violence usually involves interpersonal violence. It is the "normal or ordinary understanding of violence". Legitimist violence involves "an illegal or illegitimate use of force". With these broad definitions of violence the plays of August Wilson can be studied to uncover the implicit and explicit forms of violence.

### **Structural Violence or Violence by Whites**

Structural violence is a kind of institutional violence which is perpetuated to enforce the political motives of the dominant culture or the law enforcing body. It remains ubiquitous throughout America; only the degree of its infliction varies from one century to the other. Violence on blacks ushered the moment the innocent Africans were driven as bonded laborers from Africa. The laws and other governmental institutions perpetuated slavery because it catered to their economic well being. The feudal lords

treated blacks as properties. After the Emancipation Proclamation the whites could not come to terms with the freedom of blacks. General Schurz concludes, "...although the freedman is no longer considered the property of the individual master, he is considered the slave of the society....To kill a Negro, they do not deem murder; to debauch a Negro woman, they do not think fornication; to take property away from a Negro, they do not consider robbery." (qtd. Lerone Bennet Jr. 193)

Since all the different political and social structures of America are dominated by the whites, they are prone to use them in oppressive manners. Sometimes the structural violence is manifested through physical infliction while at other times it is manifested through different structures of society. Wilson has broadly dealt with two kinds of violence – violence by whites and violence by blacks. The present section aims to discuss the violence perpetuated by whites against blacks.

Lerone Bennett, Jr. asserts that the dominant American political structures reduce the blacks to impotence by stealth and murder, by economic intimidation and political assassinations, by whippings and maimings, cuttings and shootings, by the knife,.....By the political use of terror, by the brainwashing of the baby in its mother's arms, by slaying the husband at his wife's feet, by the raping of the wife before her husband's eyes. *By Fear.*"

All these cultural, political, juridical, psychological and economic ways of blasting the peace of blacks are persistently presented by Wilson in his plays. The hieroglyphics of fear imprinted in terms such as whippings, lynching, castration, rape, etc. were socially known signs which were sufficient to elicit the subservience of blacks for centuries.

The first decade of the twentieth century is enumerated by Wilson in the play *Gem of the Ocean* (2003) set in the year 1904. The play recounts the horrors of the Middle Passage enacted by the black characters through the ritual performance of going through the City of Bones. Harry J. Elam, Jr. opines,

The City of Bones actively remembers the loss of those that did not make it across the water. In a proactive act of reconstructing history at the bottom of the sea, those seemingly forgotten black travellers- those who were infirm for the journey, those who mounted unsuccessful insurgencies those who jumped into the cold, uncertain water rather than face the cold uncertainties ahead- have built a city.

The city, thus, stands as the hieroglyphic of all the physical, psychological and emotional inflictions that the Africans suffered while journeying through the Atlantic Ocean.

Citizen Barlow makes through the City by sailing on a boat crafted out of Aunt Ester's Bill of Sale "which identifies her as a slave." (Elam, Jr. 81). During this ritual performance the other characters wear, "...European masks. They grab Citizen by the arms and symbolically chain him to the boat." Barlow also encounters other people like him who are chained to the boats. The brutality of slavery is further performed by "Masked Solly and masked Eli...They symbolically brand and symbolically whip

Citizen, then throw him into the hull of the boat.” These performances awaken the consciousness of Citizen and he “begins to sing an African lullaby to himself...” (*Gem* 66-67). This performative and symbolic journey reenacts the violence that was the persistent element of chattel slavery.

The twentieth century witnesses a new form of slavery which is operated through kidnapping the blacks when they are either in vulnerable positions or through force. The play, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (1984), centers on Herald Loomis who is forced to work in the cotton fields of Joe Turner, the brother of the Governor of Tennessee. Loomis's coercion into slavery points out the different layers of white violence upon blacks in the twentieth century. It shows that whites are centered upon prospering their own tribe by thwarting the liberty of blacks. Secondly, forced labour connotes the capitalistic regime which is modified into no wage policy by the whites. They are meagerly surviving on the little that they get as ration.

In the play, Loomis is ripped apart from his family and an infant daughter. It leads to intense psychic damage of Loomis and he forgets the ways of responding, communicating and feeling. It is both psychic and spiritual death because his connection with God is also broken. He disparagingly curses and abuses God for all the hardships that he has undergone.

Bennett, Jr. mentions how the whites played with the psyche of blacks during slavery since power alone could not provide complete submission of slaves, “More was needed; the slave, if the slavery were to be successful, had to believe he was a slave. Anticipating the devious tactics of the modern police state, masters laid hands on the minds of their human chattel.” The same techniques are employed by the police and the powerful people like Joe Turner who mar the individuality of blacks and try to silence them forever.

In the same play, Wilson subtly draws the background of slave catchers through the presence of Rutherford Selig, the only white character of the entire play cycle. Selig's great grandfather “used to bring Nigras across the ocean on the ships”. This impinges on the ruthless slave hunters who beguiled the innocent Africans to take up the arduous journey. Selig and his father were also members of the slave finding group. “Me and my daddy have found plenty Nigras. My daddy used to find runaway slaves for the plantation bosses.” (*Joe* 41). Wilson does not advertently replicate the violence that the slave overseers and finders inflicted upon the blacks but their reference itself is suggestive of the long history of violence that these agents of slavery committed. In line with the slave hunters there was the pervading presence of fear caused by slave overseers who reeked “the greatest amount of cruelty and brutality....The owners demanded that the overseers get work out of the slaves and produce superior crops. With such a mandate the overseers were ruthless and excessively cruel in their treatment of slaves.” (John Hope Franklin 194).

Wilson employs the technique of storytelling in most of his plays to travel through the different periods of time instantly. In most of the plays Wilson expresses the angst of

his characters against slavery by allowing the older characters to share their experiences by narrating the past. Every character has a story or has heard a similar story of pain and violence. Toledo in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (1982) reasserts the above proposition, "I know the facts of it. I done heard the same story a hundred times. It happened to me too. Same thing." His response is a reply to the story of how a black deacon with the Bible and a cross in his hand was forced to dance by a gang of white hooligans. In the same play, Levee revisits his childhood to narrate the story of his mother's rape. It impinges on the horrors through which most of the black women underwent. The rape has various repercussions: firstly, it sabotages the peace of a healthy and happy black family which was living decently well within its four walls. It hampers the mental constitution of an eight year old boy who has been reduced to witness violence being inflicted upon his mother with his own bare eyes. It, lastly, drove a rather peaceful black man to pick up arms and murder a few handfuls of the miscreants and in turn die. Thus violence only begets violence and loss of peace.

The technique of storytelling is further used by Wilson in *The Piano Lesson* (1987). Doaker, one of the eldest members of the family, narrates the cultural value and nostalgia associated with the piano. The narrative switches to the slavery time. He recounts how his grandmother and father were bartered in exchange of a piano. Felicia Hardison Londre writes that the "...piano stood as an objective correlative of a family history marked by blood and tears." Doaker's grandfather immortalized his family by carving out the images "...out of memory. Only thing...he didn't stop there. He carved ....a picture of his mama...Mama Ester...and his daddy, Boy Charles..." Then he carved the images of his marriage, "They called it jumping the broom. That's how you got married in them days." He draws a trajectory of violent events that were a part of the slave lives. The piano is not only an artistic manifestation of the painful lives of blacks but also a claimant of human sacrifices. Doaker's brother was burnt alive after he stole away the piano to restore his cultural heritage. Thus the piano is a hieroglyphic of racial memory and black consciousness. It contains the images of slavery which were common during that time and secondly it inspires older Boy Charles to take pride in his cultural heritage and fight for it. It is a record of not only a family history but the black history in America.

Wilson uses supernatural devices to further show the dominance of white feudalism when the ghost of Sutter attacks Boy Willie. This attack has cultural importance because it breaks "...the cycle of violence" in the play (Craig Werner 45). Bernice calls upon her ancestors by playing the piano to save her brother. Michael Morales writes, "The ghost of Sutter becomes the disembodied embodiment of the slaveholder's historical perspective (and perhaps even the dominant culture's control of history)". A reconciliation between the past and the present is established when Willie is physically abused by the ghost and Bernice invokes the erstwhile neglected ancestors to restore black life in America.

The demolition of old buildings which house blacks or support their trade are dealt in the plays such as *Jitney* (1977), *Two Trains Running* (1990), *King Hedley II* (1999) and *Radio Golf* (2005). All mention how the demolition is an act of distortion and disparagement of black heritage in Pittsburgh. This incessant rampage of black culture and heritage leads to the death of Aunt Ester, the near supernatural or magical creature, in *King Hedley II*. *Radio Golf*, the culminating play of the cycle, regenerates a ray of hope for the blacks by saving Aunt Ester's house from demolition. The demolition of the house would have meant a final death of black culture and heritage but the play ends on a hopeful note where the community comes together to restore the lost and decaying heritage.

### **Violence by Blacks: An Uprising**

The reasons for the proliferation of black violence are directly linked with the age old violence by whites. Most of the times the blacks retort to the violence inflicted upon them by the whites. Bennet asserts that, "...the Negro was a dangerous man because he was a wronged man" (100). Thus the discussion about the white violence lays the roots for black violence, i.e, a retort to the white violence. In the plays of Wilson, it can be divided into three broad categories – violence against whites, black-on-black or intra group violence and self- infliction. All the ten plays have either one or all the forms of black violence engrained in them.

Blacks resort to violence against whites for various reasons, such as, revenge, reaction against unjust laws, to restore self-esteem, to assert their presence in the world, to prove their innocence and at times to counter their impotence against the white regime and so on. In the play, *Gem*, Solly burns down the mill because it stands as an emblem of white capitalistic regime. He brings down the pride and unjust structural system of the mill to shambles. Solly's burning down of the mill provokes two sets of arguments. First, his action can be justified as a reaction to the white capitalistic regime. Secondly, it can also be seen as violence against blacks because it took away from them the opportunities to earn their livelihood. The mill is no doubt an emblem of capitalistic regime; however, it is one of the most labour absorbing industries which provide menial subsistence to the blacks. Thus his reaction can be both justified and condemned.

Englander explains the reasons of violent behavior of minorities, "It seems most likely that minority individuals and communities are under social pressures and stresses that increase their vulnerability to violence in general. They are more likely to live in violent neighborhoods, to have larger families, without social support, to have fewer financial resources, fewer job opportunities, and so on."

In both *Ma Rainey* and *The Piano Lesson* the violence against whites is pursued as revenge. Levee's father kills the white rapists to provide justice to his wife who was tortured without any apparent crime. It is a fight to seek justice which the American legal system would have failed to provide. In the other play the elder Boy Charles sets

fire to the Sutter household because his cultural heritage was being locked up and denied.

In *Fences* (1985) Troy's killing of a white man is structured around the oppressive policies of the state which "...couldn't ...get (you)...a job...you couldn't find a place to live." He hits back at the white man because he had fired a shot at him. He was imprisoned for fifteen years. In the similar strain *Booster*, in *Jitney*, kills his white girlfriend who accuses him of rape to save her own repute. *Booster* sees himself as, "...a warrior. For dealing with the world in the ways you (his father) didn't or couldn't or wouldn't." He kills the girl to assert his innocence but in doing so he ruins his twenty potentially fruitful years. His rage is not uncalled for but it is extreme because he does not believe in the legal system of America which could prove his innocence. He commits a real crime against the charge of a false crime. During the resolution of the play he realizes that his reaction was a selfish move on his part because his father had vested immense hopes in his future. At the end of the play his consciousness is awakened when he rises like a phoenix from the ashes of his dead past and steps into his father's shoes and takes the responsibility of saving the jitney station from demolition by the authorities. The station symbolizes the centre of black self-employment and the autonomy of African Americans.

The second category of black violence is black-on-black violence. The violence that *Caesar*, in *Gem*, wreaks upon the innocent and newly arrived blacks from South is the example which sets the ball rolling for the other plays of the cycle. He stands for the dominant culture, "...the white legal system" (Elam Jr. 82) which is unjust and oppressive. His actions are based on the tenets of white philosophy which aim to usher fear in the blacks.

In the same line falls *Levee* who stabs *Toledo*, a black counterpart, because his aims are thwarted by white capitalistic music industry. *Levee* is denied a chance to produce his own music album by the white capitalists who wish to buy his compositions in exchange for some money. His thwarted ambition is further disparaged when *Toledo* accidentally steps on his brand new shoes. His aggression seems unjustified but as *Englander* mentions that, "...in cases of violence that appear to have no motive, internal or individual factors may be critical in understanding the cause of such behavior." This explains that *Levee's* action is not motiveless, it has symbolic connotations; "An assault on his property is an attack on himself". *Levee's* frustration is vented out against his community which is described by *Wilson* as a "disservice to blacks...because he's killing the only one who can read, he's killing the intellectual in the group." (Alan Nadel 109).

The black-on-violence is furthered in *Seven Guitars* where *Hedley*, an eccentric old man, kills the ambitious *Floyd Barton*. *Hedley* dreams that his father has sent *Buddy Bolden* with money so that "...the white man not going to tell me what to do no more". "It is in connection between *Bolden* and his father that dominates *Hedley's* imagination, however, and that finally results in *Floyd's* death" (Brenda Murphy 129). *Floyd* earns

that money by robbing a white man. Wilson opines, "Floyd has to assume the responsibility for his own death, his own murder. Had he not been standing in the yard with the money, then Hedley never could have assumed that he was Buddy Bolden....whatever events conspired to have him standing in that yard at that precise time, he has to himself bear the responsibility for that." Wilson believes that circumstantial reasons were responsible for Floyd's death. The other reasons that spring out from the circumstances are the past of Hedley, the endless waiting to mend his life and to fulfill his father's endless wait. It sprang from his desires to be financially independent from the dictates of white capitalistic regime. Elam, Jr. takes a different peep into the action of Hedley considering him, "...the representative of black militancy...and it is he who kills the misguided bluesman, Floyd. Thus the tragic action is reverted." (qtd. Brenda Murphy 128).

In the past also Hedley had murdered a black man who "...would not call me King. He laughed to think a black man could be King." Hedley killed that man because he "...did not want to lose my name." Hedley is not repentant of either his past or the present crime; he deems it as a restoration of self-esteem and the reclamation of debt, respectively.

Hedley's surrogate child King Hedley II furthers his father's traditions in the titular play. He kills a man who called him "champ". Unlike his surrogate father, Hedley ultimately realizes the impotence of violence and laments his actions. He says, "Pernell stepped on me and I pulled his life out by the root. What does that make me? It don't make me no big man....Pernell put that scar on my face, but I put the bigger mark here...." Finally this sense of futility that he derives from his past is put to a closure by the accidental shooting of King by his own mother "...seemingly epitomizing the agonizing cycle of violence that defines this generation" (Joan Herrington 171). The play is replete with crime and perpetual harking of doom. The characters appear doomed to suffer an incorrigible end only because they have tempers along with arms which are used at wrong times to extract revenge. Wilson himself writes, "...everyone's walking around with 9 mms under their belts. It looks like a war zone - like someone dropped a bomb there." ( qtd. Herrington 169).

The final category of black violence is self infliction which is performed in *Two Trains Running*. Hambone in the play is denied the legit remuneration of a ham which was promised to him by the white butcher Lutz if he did a good job. Like a satyagrahi he insists non violently upon his demands, "I want my ham...He gonna give me my ham". These are the only words that he can possibly utter for the past ten years. He is a true Gandhian in his protest mechanism where he stands up every day to Lutz and utters the same two lines to assert his unwillingness "...to accept whatever the white man throw at him". Stephen Bottoms, sees his action of "...simply asking for justice, instead of demanding or even taking what he believes is his, reads in part as an assimilationist acceptance of the white authority- an authority which is never going to grant him his due." The Gandhian paradigm and the precedents of non violence will vouch for the

relentless strives of Hambone who is finally redeemed by his community after his death. Sterling's consciousness is raised the moment when he gravitates away from the self towards the community and finally provides justice to a wronged man. Bottom writes, "Here is a man who really has found his spirit, and in doing so has committed a criminal act- smashing and grabbing from Lutz's window- which leaves him 'bleeding from his face and hands'.

In the same play Risa goes a step ahead of Hambone by literally slashing and wounding her own legs which symbolize an end to the external attribution of female sexuality. She nips away any advances of men by making herself undesirable. Bottoms asserts that, "...she has found herself so objectified in terms of sexuality by the men around her that she has taken the drastic action of scarring her legs to try to repel their lustful stares. She is now treated by most of the men in the play simply as a functionary - a person whose role in life is to be ordered about..." Thus she brings an end to sexual and emotional violence by making herself undesirable.

### **Conclusion**

August Wilson incorporates the technique of realism to portray the inner quarters of black life. One of the most pervasive elements of black life is violence which they have both suffered and wreaked upon others. The plays show the trajectory of violence practiced in America from the Middle Passage to the twentieth century. Wilson voices the painful past of the African Americans and finally ends the epic cycle on an optimistic note where people of the black community come together to restore the past by resorting to non violent protest mechanisms. Thus, the cycle culminates with a ray hope that the African Americans will march ahead in the new century with a renewed consciousness and understanding. The tragic and gruesome death of George Floyd in the year 2020 is a testimony to the structural violence prevalent against blacks in America even in the twenty first century. Floyd breathed his last in police custody owing to the cruel manhandling of the convict who was charged of counterfeiting a bill at the store where he worked as a clerk. Thus the cycle of violence against blacks in America is still a cause of concern among the black community who seek justice by resorting to violence in return. Floyd's death enraged his community to wreak havoc to register their angst to the dominant culture. For the peaceful functioning of the world every individual needs to embrace the Gandhian philosophy that an eye for an eye will leave the world blind. Wilson's plays present the true picture of black ghettos and the cycle ends on a note of hope wherein the black people of America can live as equal and free citizens.

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## The Reaper, the Song and the Listener

[A Comparative Study of Wordsworth's *The Solitary Reaper* and Laxmi Prasad Devkota's *Gain Tinle Ghasiya Geet (She Sang a Grass-Cutter's Song)*]

Sumnima Parajuli\*

### ABSTRACT

*In an increasingly globally connected world, the study of comparative literature places important literature in its necessary cultural context, thus allowing us to see between societies and the literature they produce to engage in thorough real-world analysis of cross-cultural interaction across borders. We learn the cultural history of the societies whose literature we analyse, often including learning many languages along the way. This article provides the insight into the depth of romantic sentiments rooted in the two romantic poets belonging to different language and chronological era respectively, but how the romantic emotion in their poetry reflects their never-ending love for nature.*

**Keywords:** Comparative literature, Romanticism, Sublime, Culture, Imagination, Nature.

*“Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run”*

- *To Autumn*, John Keats

The word ‘harvest’ has its root in the Old English word “*hærf-est*” which means autumn. Autumn, which marks the transition from summer to winter, witnesses the harvesting of fruits, vegetables and grains along with the shedding of leaves. ‘Harvest’ can also symbolize the literary accomplishments of writers. The poets employ rhetorical devices to signify agricultural harvest as the golden harvest of lifelong labour while autumn is looked upon as a fall that comes with the realisation of the inevitable truth of old age and death. Thus, the elements of both gladness and melancholy are found blended in the beautiful poems that unravel the mystery of autumn and the symbolism of harvest. Some poems dealing with the theme of autumn and harvest are Wordsworth’s *The Solitary Reaper*, South-East Asian writer Laxmi Prasad Devkota’s *Gain Tinle Ghasiya Geet*, Shakespeare’s *Sonnet 73*, Keats’ *To Autumn*, *October* by Robert Frost, P.B. Shelly’s *Ode to the West Wind* and *To Autumn* by William Blake.

I would like to attempt a comparative survey on the common theme of ‘harvest’ running through the work of two romantic poets belonging to different cultures and ages- English romantic poet William Wordsworth’s *The Solitary Reaper* and Nepali Romantic poet Laxmi Prasad Devkota’s *Gain Tinle Ghasiya Geet*. William Wordsworth is a major

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English Romantic poet, born on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1770 at Cockermouth, Cumberland in England. His childhood days were spent amidst the mountains of Cumberland alongside the river Derwent. Having grown up in a rustic society, Wordsworth spent a great deal of time playing outdoors which allowed him to have a pure communion with nature. He published *The Lyrical Ballads* 1798 in collaboration with Coleridge which marked the onset of Romantic Movement in English Literature. Wordsworth is known among the representative writers of an age that proclaimed triumph over Romanticism. *The Prelude* is considered as Wordsworth's magnum opus. Some of his major works are *Lyrical Ballads*, *Simon Lee*, *We are Seven*, *Lines written in Early Spring*, *Expostulation and Reply*, *Daffodils*, *Tinturn Abbey*, *The Excursion*.

Laxmi Prasad Devkota is one of the most celebrated poets in Nepali literature. Born on the day of Dipavali in 1909 (139 years after Wordsworth's birth), Devkota completed his primary education in Kathmandu and obtained his higher degrees from Patna College. Under the influence of Wordsworth and the Romantic Movement in English poetry, Devkota made a bold new departure in Nepali verse, heralding the advent of Romanticism (स्वच्छन्दतावाद) as a literary movement in Nepali culture. His major works include *Muna Madan*, *Kunjini*, *Basanti*, *Raj Kumar Prabhar*, *Looni*, *Shakuntala* (epic), *Sulochana* (epic), *Maharana Pratap*, *Bankusum*, *Gaine Geet*, *Putali*, *Bhikhari*, *Sunako Bihar*, and so on. *Muna Mandan* is regarded as his magnum opus.

Wordsworth's definition of poetry as "*The spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquillity*" has been perfectly justified by Devkota for he could compose poems naturally and spontaneously. His ideas and emotions blended into words and gushed out in brilliant sparkles. He is popularly known as *Aasukavi* because poems came to him as "the leaves of a tree would come out". What Wordsworth is to English, Devkota is to Nepali literature. In the broad spectrum of romantic poetry, Wordsworth's *The Solitary Reaper* (published in 1807) and Devkota's *Gain Tinle Ghasiya Geet* (She Sang a Grass-cutter's Song) published in 1934 deal with the theme of harvest along with the theme of relationship between the natural world and mankind. Devkota's poems has been inspired by Wordsworth's *The Solitary Reaper*. The setting of the poem *The Solitary Reaper* is a rural 'Highland' area away from the din of the madding crowd. Some critics opine that the setting could be inspired by Wordsworth's tour to Scotland in 1803 with his sister Dorothy and their good friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Similarly, the backdrop of Devkota's poem is not very different from that of Wordsworth's, Devkota employs the rural pastoral setting to give a glimpse of Nepali culture. Devkota writes:

“मखमल कोमल घास फुलेका

*Velvety soft grass grows*

गिरिको रसिलो सुन्दर काख

*In the tender nurturing lap of the hill*

पातहरूको हरियो छतमा  
In the green canopy of leaves  
चिरबिर चिरबिर चिड़िया लाख ।  
Lakhs of twittering birds' dwell."

The poet gives a resplendent description of the tender grass blooming in the lap of the beautiful landscape of mountains, green leaves unfurling and flock of birds twittering and chirping around. Autumn is at its best in the rural landscape where the flowers bloom, golden leaves adorn the tress and yellow crops sway unaffected by the whip of industrialization and urbanization. Both Wordsworth and Devkota have succeeded in portraying the colourful side of autumn in *The Solitary Reaper* and *Gain Tinle Ghasiya Geet* (She Sang a Grass-cutter's Song).

The subject of Wordsworth's *The Solitary Reaper* is a solitary 'Highland Lass' who is lost in singing a song that is incomprehensible to the poet. Devkota also has a similar young girl who is reaping the harvest in the field. The reaper in both the poems suggests that she is a young farmer. Throughout the poem, the speaker describes the kind of work the women does i.e.

"Behold her, single in the field,  
Yon solitary Highland lass!  
...Alone she cuts and binds the grain,  
And sings a melancholy strain."

The reaping of the harvest takes place in autumn; hence both the poets successfully denote the impact of the season in their poems. While Wordsworth talks about the Celtic woman working in the field, Devkota brings forth the picture of a Nepalese lady who is reaping the harvest and singing in serenity, undisturbed by other people. Wordsworth's and Devkota's woman are exposed to the autumnal heat of the sun that reflects the plight of the Celtic and Nepalese woman respectively and their equal involvement in farming as their male counterparts. In both the poems, the readers encounter the issue of gender equality where the poets only talk about women being in the field while men are missing from the canvas of the poem. Devkota has done justice to the identity of the solitary reaper in his poem by giving detailed description of her beauty while Wordsworth has overlooked it. It could be said that Devkota has filled the blank spaces left by Wordsworth. Devkota writes about her beauty:

"एक अकेलो, नयन उज्यालो  
A solitary lass with twinkling eyes,  
बदन हँसिलो, गाला लाल  
A smiling face and rosy cheeks  
हलुका घुँघर घना मनमोहन  
The tinkling of her anklets please

चुबित सरस, सुभाल ।  
*Kissing her feet happily*  
चाल सवतंतर अकेलापनको  
*A free detached gait*  
खुला उज्यालो बेयाद  
*Of carefree sublime forgetfulness*  
फुल्दो योवन हाँसिरहेको  
*Her vibrant youth smiles*  
पूर्णकलामा, यस्तो चाँद ।  
*Like a bright full moon.”*

The poet describes the maiden's beautiful eyes, her healthy body, rosy cheeks and her vibrant youth. He also draws a comparison between the maiden and the magnificent moon on the lunar night. The common element in both the poems is the song sung by Wordsworth's and Devkota's solitary reapers. Since both the women are present as farmers of their respective societies, both women seem to be masters of their own songs. Both the poets have associated harvesting with a song but their treatment is different. While Devkota's song implies a kind of excitement and happiness brought about by the ripening and harvesting of crops. Wordsworth's song consists of 'melancholic strain'. Reaping and singing goes parallelly in the poems of Wordsworth and Devkota:

*“Alone she cuts and binds the grains  
And she sings a melancholy strain;  
O listen! For the vale profound  
Is overflowing with the sound.”*  
“छमछम चुरीहरू करोडा गर्छन्,  
*Bangles jingles as she works*  
चमचम हँसिया चल्छ छरती  
*Slashing and reaping the grasses green*  
सुन्दरजलमा, शीतल थलमा  
*While working in the pleasant dale*  
गाइन तिनले घँसिया गीत ।  
*She sang a Grass-cutter's song.”*

The poet describes the rhythmic clinking of the bangles against each other and bending of sickle as the maiden sings the Grass-cutter's song in the beautiful locale. Onomatopoeic words like छमछम (jingling), चमचम (glittering) abounds in here. The song of Wordsworth's solitary reaper is more thrilling than a cuckoo's song in the Hebrides

and different from the song of nightingale. The speaker of the poem gets attracted by the ambiguity of the song but he fails to comprehend it. It is so because the solitary reaper belongs to another community, i.e., Celtic. He wonders if she is singing about the old battles and some story “of natural sorrow, loss or pain”. Whatever the theme of the maiden’s song, the speaker presumes that the song has no ending:

“Whatever the theme, the Maiden sang  
As if her song could have no ending;  
I saw her singing at her work,  
And o’er the sickle bending”

The song of Devkota’s maiden, on the other hand, tells a tale different from that of Wordsworth. The title of his poem, *Gain Tinkle Ghasiya Geet* itself states the nature of the song the maiden is singing. The poet is able to identify the song because she is singing the ghasiya geet or Grass-cutter’s song. Here, one can notice the poet’s attempt to highlight the important social issue of class conflict by referring to the Ghasiya geet (Grass-cutter’s song).

“सम्झँदामा पुग्दछु अहिले  
I cherish the sweet reminiscence  
स्वरहरू सब ती व्यँझन्छन्  
Voices that awake the senses  
चल्छ समय पछिल्लिर फेरि  
Time paces backward again  
चिडिया कलरव सम्झिन्छन्।  
Surmising of birds’ and rejoices.”

In the above lines, Devkota is amazed by the soothing effect of the song which takes him down the memory lane and creates a chaos in his mind like birds in the sky. While Wordsworth appreciated the melody of the ‘melancholy strain’, Devkota had the added advantage of appreciating even the words of the song. The listener in Wordsworth’s *The Solitary Reaper* is an onlooker who happens to pass by when the maiden is reaping the harvest and singing the song. The entire poem has been narrated from the perspective of the listener who has the commanding tone in the poem. The listener may or may not be the poet himself. Towards the end, the presence of the listener is established when the listener speaks in the first person:

“I saw her singing at her work,  
And o’er the sickle bending; -  
I listened, motionless and still;  
And as I mounted up the hill,

*The music in my heart I bore,  
Long after it was heard no more.”*

The maiden’s song has a remarkable imprint on the listener’s mind and soul. At the end he quietly walks away, replaying the woman’s music in his heart for a long time after. However, in Devkota’s poem the presence of the listener has not been enlisted anywhere in the poem. One can identify the poet as the listener of the maiden’s song or can place himself/herself in the shoes of the listener. Devkota has succeeded in portraying the omniscient listener whose presence is not seen in the poem but is felt through the narration of the poem. The Solitary Reaper is made up of four octaves, primarily written in iambic tetrameter. Devkota’s *Gain Tinle Ghasiya Geet*, according to distinguished writer, critic and historian Dr. Kumar Pradhan, is “*remarkable for the alliteration and the deft but sparing use of onomatopoeic adverbs in which Nepali language abounds*”. The poem has been written in rhythmic four stanzas and it has an evocative impact on the poet and the reader alike. Devkota’s works are highly criticized for retaining themes of English poems and his works: *Charu* poems have been compared to Wordsworth’s *Lucy Gray* poems, *Sundarijal* with Robert Southey’s *Cataract of Lodore*. Despite the shades of criticisms, one cannot ignore the exceptional creativity he was bestowed with. Dr. Kumar Pradhan asserts, “*Devkota could have derived inspiration from many sources, but undoubtedly he created his own*”.

Indian scholar Rahul Sanskritayan paid a tribute to the poet saying, “*Devkota was the sum total of Patna, Prasad and Nirala*” three Indian poets of eminence. The poetry of Wordsworth according to Matthew Arnold, offers a sound criticism of life but to understand it, one must disengage the grain in its poetry from the chaff that somehow forms the major portion of his poetic work. Both the poets, Wordsworth and Devkota pioneered ways of perceiving and responding to the natural world through their poetic works. Wordsworth and Devkota through their poetry seek to reflect a perennial relationship between humankind and natural world by portraying Nature and Autumn as more than just a passive backdrop.

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## Indian Perspective of Multiculturalism: Revisiting Vivekananda's Ideas on Cultural Harmony

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### ABSTRACT

*Indian society has been known for its unique ability to accommodate vast range of diversities- cultural, linguistic, religious and so on- in a very smooth manner with its policy of 'unity in diversity'. After independence, the Indian State attempted to give this policy a concrete form by incorporating the ideal of fraternity and safeguards for minority rights in the constitution. It would not be wrong to argue that (cultural, linguistic and religious) diversities have never been a source of anxiety for Indian society. But amid the recent debates on increasing intolerance in the Indian society, it seems imperative to rethink and reanalyze Indian policy to cope with the question of difference. This rethinking and reanalysis may be done in the backdrop of Indian Philosophical Tradition which contains a rich discourse on the question of difference and thereby may suggest novel ways to cope with religious and cultural diversity.*

*This paper is divided into two sections: first section discusses the concept of multiculturalism which is emerged out of the experiences of Western societies in dealing with plurality, and, further, focuses on the model of 'unity in diversity' which can be called the Indian way of dealing with cultural and religious differences. The second section discusses views of Vivekananda on religious harmony, tolerance and universal religion and tries to inquire and argue contemporary relevance of Vivekananda's ideas.*

**Keywords:** Multiculturalism, Plurality, Advait Philosophy, Dharmashastric Perspective, Culture of Dialogue.

### **Multiculturalism: Strategies of Coping with Diversities**

Concept of multiculturalism searches for right way to respond to cultural and religious diversities. It argues in favour of permitting multiplicity of contesting cultural voices articulating different viewpoints, value systems and life styles. It is based on the assumption that mere toleration of group differences is falling short of treating members of minority groups as equal citizens; recognition and positive accommodation of group differences are required through recognizing "group-differentiated rights" (Kymlicka). The concept of multiculturalism rests on the argument that no political doctrine or ideology- liberalism, socialism or communism- can represent the complete truth. Each of them presents a particular vision of the good life but that cannot be the only vision of the good life. To illustrate, values like human dignity, autonomy, liberty and equality

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are advocated by liberalism but it has to be accepted that the liberal way of defining them are one of the ways and not the only way (Parekh).

Multiculturalism basically searches for a plan to give recognition to plural ways of living. It wants to find out the ways to accommodate diverse groups in one society which neither squeezes diverse identities nor disintegrates the society. Multiculturalism may be defined as “reaching out both the native-born and newcomers, in developing lasting relationships among ethnic and religious communities. It encourages these communities to participate fully in society by enhancing their level of economic, social and cultural integration into the host cultures” (Lima, pp.56-57). Rejecting the idea of exclusion, it aims at creating an equal inclusive space for all. It denies the dominance of one culture over the other and advocates the idea of equal opportunity and rights for minority and weak cultures.

Though no society, however homogenous it claims to be, can deny existence of plurality, their response to existing diversity differs from each- other depending on their way of looking at and dealing with it- a quality to be strengthened, a problem to be eliminated or a compulsion to be endured. In other words, all multicultural societies essentially do not believe in multiculturalism. They may respond to multicultural reality in diverse ways which may be classified as follows:

- Destruction of the cultural and religious differences through violence or forced conversion.
- Segregation of different religious and cultural groups and isolation of the minority groups from the mainstream society.
- Assimilation of the ‘other’ into the mainstream culture where the minority culture/ cultures get assimilated into majority culture, and sometimes, the majority culture may adopt certain elements from the minority culture/cultures, it has absorbed. In this model, the minority groups are allowed to live but their distinct identities are compromised. This model is also known as ‘melting pot model’ (McDonald, p.50).
- Integration of diverse groups by allowing them to keep their distinct identities intact and to contribute to the enrichment of the social fabric. This integrationist model conceives difference as a strength not a challenge. This model is also known as ‘Salad Bowl’ (Edinburgh, p.4) and ‘Cultural Mosaic’ (Kalman, p.4).

### **Unity in Diversity: Indian Way of Accommodating Diversities**

However, the above classification is mainly based on the experiences of western societies. When one looks at the Indian society- a land of enormous diversity, the question arises how Indian society has responded to cultural and religious differences? Does India, which may be described as ‘a nation of nations, a land of many Indias,

variously imagined by these communities/collectivities through various cultural forms and expressions' (Bahera,118), provide any model of multiculturalism? Though the concept of multiculturalism is a contribution of western philosophy but looking at the Indian treatment to diversity, it appears that spirit of multiculturalism is not alien to Indian society. The Indian way of dealing with difference question may be labelled as 'unity in diversity'. Roots of this model of 'unity in diversity' can be traced in the Hindu philosophy which believes that all differences which appear at surface emerged out of the same source and are not antagonistic to each-other but rather are complementary. The entire world has been viewed as one's own under the philosophy of '*Vasudhava Kutumbakam*'. Advait philosophy proposes that the same reality which is one at the ultimate level is plural at the phenomenal level. In this way it 'combines the idea of unity (non-dualism) at one level with plurality at a relative level of being where contradictory (better, opposite) characteristics can appear and equally claim to be true, relative to different viewpoints' (Bowes, p.6). This recognition to plurality is, further, continued in Dharmashastric tradition. To illustrate, though Dharmashastras search for a good society and thereby engage with the questions of ideal social arrangements and way of life, but, at the same time, recognition has been given to *samudayachar* i.e, practices of community. Most of the Dharmashastrakars have considered *samudayachar* as one of the sources of law which differ from place to place. To quote Yajnavalkya: "When a country is conquered, its usage and customs and family traditions should be followed as they were followed before" (Yajnavalkya Smriti, II.343). Dharmashastras agree that the same act can be treated as a sin in one place and as a norm in another place e.g., marriage with maternal uncle is prohibited in Northern India, but it is a well-known practice in Southern India. Arthshastra tradition, which is concerned with making of a strong state, also accepts this view and suggests that recognition to local community practice would lead to trust building in newly concurred territory and hence, would result in consolidation of empire. While suggesting the measures for restoring peace in a conquered territory, Kautilya considers respect for local customs, practices and language of the conquered territory as essential to win support of the conquered. He suggests: 'Having acquired a new territory.... He [the King] should adopt the same mode of life, the same dress, language, and customs as those of the people. He should follow the people in their faith with which they celebrate their national, religious and congregational festivals or amusements' (Kautilya Arthshastra, Book XIII, Chapter V)

Thus, Indian thought tradition has given due recognition to varying practice and are not concerned only with the ideal way of life. To quote Kapoor: "What the Smritikaras do is to establish, so to say, a cline of acceptability a valence among the competing practices. Then, guided by a wider worldview and philosophy, a *niyama*, the preferred mode, is propounded. *Niyama* is just one of the many ways of doing something, the preferred way no doubt but not a rigid norm, for it will vary from place to place, from time to time and from one community to another" (Kapoor, p.43).

From the above discussion it is very clear that Indian tradition does not suffer from 'difference anxiety'. It 'embodies the approach of difference with mutual respect based on the radical idea that differences are not a problem to be solved. Differences are merely characteristics of the way things naturally are, and comfort with them is built into dharmic world views- views which encompass 'chaos', doubt and numerous other complexities' (Malhotra, p.26). This dharmic world-view encourages celebration of differences and diversities without any fear of disintegration, therefore, there is a need to relook at the Indian thought tradition to find out the Indian way/ways of coping with (cultural, religious and other types of) diversities. There is no dearth of such voices in the Indian thought tradition, one of the strongest voices supporting the cause of cultural and religious diversities is of Swami Vivekananda. Vivekananda eloquently spoke on the question of difference and stressed upon the significance of inter-cultural dialogue.

### **Vivekananda's Perspective on Cultural and Religious Diversities**

Vivekananda's ideas on religious and cultural harmony and universal religion is shaped by the Indian dharmic world-view. Vivekananda was very clear in his vision that what makes India unique is its plurality and so the cultural and religious difference should not be seen as a problem to be solved but as the strength of the Indian society to be celebrated. Going beyond the western debates of tolerance and intolerance, Vivekananda argued that what is needed is not an approach of toleration towards cultural, religious, ideological and other forms of diversities but rather an approach of celebrating the differences and diversities.

The eastern saint has given a scientific treatment to the issue of coping with plurality. Like a social scientist, he firstly tries to trace the root cause of the problem and then suggests the solution. He explains why there is mental uneasiness in coping with difference? Why do we disagree? We suffer from 'difference-anxiety' because different socio-religious and cultural groups have only partial vision of truth, but they consider their own narrow vision as absolute and complete, hence consider themselves as right, perfect and pure while 'the other' as wrong, imperfect and impure. In his speech at the Parliament of Religions, he illustrated the reason for 'difference anxiety' through a story. He explained:

*"A frog lived in a well. It had lived there for a long time. It was born there and brought up there, and yet was a little, small frog.... One day another frog that lived in the sea came and fell into the well. [The frog living in the well asked the new comer]*

*"Where are you from?"*

*"I am from the sea."*

*"The sea! How big is that? Is it as big as my well?"*

*"My friend" said the frog of the sea "how do you compare the sea with your little well?"*

Then the frog took another leap and asked “Is your sea so big?”

[The frog from sea got agitated and said]

“What nonsense you speak, to compare the sea with your well!”

[The frog of well got angry and said]

“Nothing can be bigger than my well; ...this fellow is a liar, so turn him out”

(Swami Vivekananda, Vol.I, p.5).

Through this story, Vivekananda explained that the root cause of ‘difference-anxiety’ is this narrow mindset based on ignorance and non- acceptance of other’s perspective. He explained that the very reason for relation of animosity between followers of different religions that they all (Hindu, Christian and Muslims) are sitting in their little well ‘and think that is the whole world’ (Swami Vivekananda, Vol I, p.5).

This non-recognition for other’s perspective results in widespread religious clashes and fanaticism. Vivekananda asserts that this difference anxiety emanating from rigidity of perspective is alien to the Indian soil which ‘has sheltered the persecuted and refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth’ (Swami Vivekananda I, p.3). He asserts that Hindu dharma is inclusive in its approach, and does not consider difference as a threat. He cites immensely from Hindu Texts to explain the Indian philosophy that gives basis to the model of unity in diversity.

“As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, o Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they may appear, crooked or straight, all lead to thee” (Swami Vivekananda, Vol I, p.4).

Through this hymn Vivekananda tries to prove that there is not a single religious way but many, and all have the freedom to choose their own way because ultimately all path will take them to same destination and hence ‘all religions are true’ (Vivekananda, Vol I, p.5). He, further, quotes from *Gita* where Lord Krishna gives recognition to plural paths of reaching Him:

“Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me” (Swami Vivekananda, Vol I, p.5).

At another place, Vivekananda cites from *Mahimnah Strota* which says:

“As the different rivers, taking their start from different mountains, running straight or crooked, at last come unto the ocean, so, O Shiva, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though appear, crooked or straight, all lead unto Thee” (Swami Vivekananda, Vol III, p.114).

Through the above excerpts, Vivekananda attempts to establish that a true religious mind must accept different religious paths as true because sectarianism, bigotry and

fanaticism are products of only an unreligious mind. A true devotee of God is one who is able to see and accept that every worship is given to the Almighty 'whatever may be the name or form; that all knees bending towards the Caaba, or kneeling in a Christian church, or in a Buddhist temple are kneeling to Him whether they know it or not, whether they are conscious of it or not' [Swami Vivekananda, Vol III,p.115]. Therefore, mocking each-others religion and condemning each-others religious practices as superstitious, backward and untrue in the name of religion is unreligious.

Vivekananda suggests that plurality is the scheme of nature and any attempt to crush it in the name of unity is unnatural. Here, Vivekananda sounds like an advocate of integrationist model of multiculturalism. He argues that the strength of the Hindu dharma is its ability to integrate the differences and hence unlike dogmatic religions, it is free from assimilationist desires. To quote him:

"Unity in variety is the plan of nature, and the Hindu has recognized it. Every other religion lays down certain fixed dogmas, and tries to force society to adopt them. It places before society only one coat which must fit Jack and John and Henry all alike. If it does not fit John or Henry, he must go without a coat to cover his body. The Hindus have discovered that the absolute can only be realized, or thought of, or stated, through the relative, and the images, crosses, and crescents are simply so many symbols- so many pegs to hang the spiritual ideas on...It is the same light coming through glasses of different colours. And these little variations are necessary for purposes of adaptation. But in the heart of everything the same truth reigns..." (Swami Vivekananda, Vol I, pp.17-18).

To cope with differences, there is a need for culture of dialogue in place of culture of debate. While the former wants to know 'what is true?', the latter wants to prove that 'I am true'. Vivekananda argues that two different opinions can be true at the same time; therefore, non-recognition to different opinions will distance one from knowing the truth. He says that 'we must learn that truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways, and that each of these ways is true as far as it goes. We must learn that the same thing can be viewed from a different standpoint, and yet be the same thing (Swami Vivekananda, Vol II, p.383]. Responding to the Western allegation that the Eastern way of thinking is other-worldly and impractical, Vivekananda emphasizes the need for accepting different worldviews:

"I do not say your view is wrong, you are welcome to it. Great good and blessing come out of it, but do not therefore, condemn my view. Mine also is practical in its own way. Let us all work on our plans" (Swami Vivekananda, Vol II, p.187).

Vivekananda exclaims that unfortunately votaries of different religions fail to understand that no one has exclusive claim over truth. Therefore, though all religions talk about the values like love, peace, charity, equality and so on but still we are not able to build a society based on these values. The paradox is that "the most intense love

that humanity has ever known has come from religion, and the most diabolical hatred that humanity has known has also come from religion. The noblest word of peace that the world has ever heard has come from men on the religious plane, and the bitterest denunciation that the world has ever known has been uttered by religious men” (Swami Vivekananda, Vol II, p.375). This clash in the name of religion results from the narrow vision of followers of different sects who assert that they are on the right side while the other is on the wrong side. Under this fanaticism they expect others should either conform to their beliefs or perish. They believe that a society would be perfect if governed by same set of doctrines, rituals and cultural practices and so a uniform society would be the perfect one. Vivekananda asserts that this kind of uniformity would lead to the death of society because ‘unity in variety is the plan of the universe’ (Vivekananda II, p.381). He said:

“Such a state of things can never come into existence; if it ever did, the world would be destroyed, because variety is the first principle of life. What makes us formed beings? Differentiation. Perfect balance would be our destruction...The unity of sameness can come only when this universe is destroyed, otherwise such a thing is impossible...We must not wish that all of us should think alike. There would then be no thought to think. We should be all alike, as the Egyptian mummies in a museum, looking at each-other without a thought to think. It is this difference, this differentiation, this loosing of the balance between us, which is the very soul of our progress, the soul of our thought” (Swami Vivekananda II, p.382).

He further said:

“It is impossible that all difference can cease; it must exist; without variation life must cease. It is this clash, the differentiation of thought that makes for light, for motion, for everything. Differentiation, infinitely contradictory, must remain, but it is not necessary that we should hate each-other therefore; it is not necessary therefore that we should fight each-other” (Swami Vivekananda III, p.115).

Hence, existence of plurality is not a challenge to be eliminated or to be tolerated out of compulsion but a source of energy essential for freeing the society from monotony and making it vibrant. Vivekananda moves far ahead of the method of tolerating differences and advocates the method of accepting and respecting the differences. Vivekananda challenges idealization of the value of tolerance as essential for religious harmony and stresses upon the need for mutual respect. In fact, tolerance, according to him, is a hidden exclusion while mutual respect is inclusive in nature.

He said, ‘Our watchword, then, will be acceptance, and not exclusion. Not only toleration, for so-called toleration is often blasphemy, and I do not believe in it. I

believe in acceptance. Why should I tolerate? Toleration means that I think that you are wrong and I am just allowing you to live. Is it not a blasphemy to think that you and I are allowing others to live' (Swami Vivekananda, Vol III, pp.373-74)?

Here, it is essential to understand the context in which the concept of tolerance emerged in Western Europe. Malhotra argues that tolerance was advocated in Europe not as a tool for religious harmony but to control tyranny of Church. 'In many European countries, churches functioned as religious monopolies according to which the mere practice of the 'Wrong' religion was a criminal offence. "Tolerance" was a positive attempt to quell the violence that had plagued Christianity for centuries in Europe, but it did not provide a genuine basis for real unity and cooperation, and so it often broke down' Malhotra, p.26).

Vivekananda suggests that instead of imitating European ideal of tolerance, India must remember its own strength in the realm of religion i.e. mutual love and sympathy. India needs to teach the world 'the idea not only of toleration, but of sympathy' (Swami Vivekananda; Vol III, p.114). Vivekananda also suggests an action plan to accommodate differences based on mutual respect and acceptance:

"I have also my little plan...In the first place I would ask mankind to recognize the maxim "Do not destroy" ...Break not, pull not anything down, but build. Help, if you can; if you cannot render help, say not a word against any man's convictions so far as they are sincere. Secondly, take man where he stands, and from there give him a lift. If it be true that God is the centre of all religions, and that each of us is moving toward Him along one of these radii, then it is certain that all of us must reach that centre. And at the centre where all the radii meet, all our differences will cease; but until we reach there, differences there must be...Each of us is naturally growing and developing according to his own nature; each will in time come to know his highest truth, for after all, men must teach themselves" (Swami Vivekananda, Vol III, pp-384-55).

The above suggested plan of Vivekananda rejects all the arguments which had been used in the past or which may be used in future to justify any attempt of eliminating or assimilating the 'other' in the name of civilizing, spiritualizing or democratizing mission. Thus, the dharmic approach of Vivekananda moves far ahead of the contemporary theories of multiculturalism. Vivekananda's plan of accepting differences as natural and of seeing an order in contradictions and clashes is of great relevance for contemporary times.

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## अद्वैत वेदान्त में 'मोक्ष' की अवधारणा

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### सारांशिका

भारती मुच् धातु से उत्पन्न 'मोक्ष' उस परमलक्ष्य का द्योतक है जिसका अन्वेषण भारतीय दर्शन ने सदैव किया है, अपवादस्वरूप चार्वाक को छोड़कर एवं अद्वैतवेदांत में तो आत्मा अथवा ब्रह्म के स्वरूप की अनुभूति ही है— मोक्ष।

वस्तुतः, अद्वैतवेदांत मोक्ष को द्विविध रूप से स्वीकार करता है— जीवनमुक्ति एवं विदेहमुक्ति एवं विषयद्वय की प्राप्ति के संबंध को अनेको उदाहरणों द्वारा स्पष्ट करते हुए ब्रह्मभाव अथवा ब्रह्मसाक्षात्कार की उपलब्धि किस प्रकार प्राप्त की जा सकती है, इसपर विशद विवेचन करता है तथा प्रस्तुत शोधलेख इसी प्रतिपाद्य विषय को लेकर विवेचना करता हुए स्वयं को सम्पूर्ण करता है।

**कुंजीशब्द**—अद्वैत वेदांत, मोक्ष, ब्रह्मसाक्षात्कार, जीवनमुक्ति, विदेहमुक्ति ।

भारतीय दार्शनिक चिन्तन की एक मुख्य विशेषता यह रही है कि यहाँ चिन्तन, बौद्धिक चिन्तन के लिए नहीं वरन्, ऐसे तत्त्व के साक्षात्कार के लिये किया गया है, जो मनुष्य को सभी प्रकार के दुःख, भय, सन्देह, मोह आदि से छुटकारा दिलाए, जो मनुष्य को आवागमन के बन्धन से मुक्त कराये। यही मोक्ष है। पुनः, अद्वैत वेदान्त तो भारतीय दर्शन के शिखर पर स्थित है। यह मोक्ष की व्याख्या अत्यन्त मौलिक ढंग से करता है। इसकी मोक्ष-मीमांसा के मूल में अद्वैत तत्त्वमीमांसा का वह सिद्धान्त निहित है जिसमें आत्मा का ब्रह्म से और ब्रह्म का मोक्ष से तादात्म्य प्राप्त होता है। अद्वैत वेदान्त के साथ-साथ मोक्ष का विचार सम्पूर्ण भारतीय दर्शन की (केवल चार्वाक दर्शन को छोड़कर) आधारशिला है। मोक्ष के सर्वाधिक महत्त्व के कारण ही भारतीय दर्शन को 'मोक्षशास्त्र' भी कहते हैं। सभी आस्तिक और नास्तिक दार्शनिक (केवल चार्वाक को छोड़कर) मोक्ष को ही परमसाध्य, परमप्राप्य, निःश्रेयस रूप में स्वीकार करते हैं। 'मोक्ष' शब्द 'मुच्' धातु से बना है जिसका अर्थ है—सभी प्रकार के दुःखों (बन्धनों) से छुटकारा। अतः मोक्ष बन्धन का विनाश है। बन्धन जन्म और मरण का अनवरत चक्र है। इस चक्र में पड़कर ही मनुष्य संसार में सर्वदा दुःख भोगता रहता है। इन दुःखों का सर्वथा समाप्त हो जाना ही 'मोक्ष' या 'मुक्ति' है। इस मान्यता को प्रायः सभी भारतीय दार्शनिक सम्प्रदाय स्वीकार करते हैं।

अद्वैत वेदान्त दर्शन में मोक्ष आत्मा या ब्रह्म के स्वरूप की अनुभूति है। आत्मा या ब्रह्म नित्य, शुद्ध, चैतन्य एवं अखण्ड आनन्द स्वरूप है। आत्मा ज्ञान स्वरूप है और मोक्ष आत्मा का स्वरूप—ज्ञान है। जिस प्रकार भगवान बुद्ध के अनुसार अद्वैत परमतत्त्व और निर्वाण एक ही है, उसी प्रकार अद्वैत वेदान्त (शंकराचार्य) के अनुसार ब्रह्म और मोक्ष एक ही है। 'जो ब्रह्म को जानता है वह स्वयं ब्रह्म हो जाता है।' इस श्रुतिवाक्य के अनुसार ब्रह्म—ज्ञान और ब्रह्म भाव एक है। वस्तुतः जीव ब्रह्म 'होता' या 'बनता' नहीं है; ब्रह्म—ज्ञान में कोई क्रिया नहीं है, क्योंकि जीव सदैव ब्रह्म है। वह परमार्थतः ब्रह्म से अभिन्न है। किन्तु अज्ञान या अविद्या के कारण ही आत्मा (जीव) में अनात्मा का अध्यास होता है तथा आत्मा में दुःखी, कर्ता, भोक्ता आदि व्यवहार होता है। अर्थात् जीव अनादि

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अविद्या के कारण ब्रह्म से अपने पार्थक्य का अनुभव करता है और अनेक प्रकार के दुःखों को भोगता है। अज्ञान के कारण ही 'मैं शरीर हूँ', 'यह मेरे प्राण हैं', 'मैं दुःखी हूँ', 'मैं संसारी हूँ' इत्यादि प्रत्ययों का अनुभव होता है। अविद्यारूप ग्रन्थि के नष्ट होने पर सभी कामनायें नष्ट हो जाती हैं और मर्त्य (मरणधर्मा) जीव अमर हो जाता है। अविद्या के दूर होते ही और ज्ञानोदय के साथ ही आत्मा अपने नित्यस्वरूप का साक्षात्कार करके मुक्त हो जाता है। जब अविद्या का लोप होता है तब यथार्थ आत्मा वैसे ही स्वतः प्रकाशित होती है जैसे प्रभावी मलिनताओं के छूट जाने पर सुवर्ण में चमक आ जाती है अथवा दिन के छिप जाने पर मेघशून्य रात्रि में तारे प्रकाश देने लगते हैं। तात्पर्य यह है कि आत्मा सभी उपाधियों के निवृत्त होने पर आकाश के समान अनन्त, अक्षय, अज, अमर, अमृत, अभय, अपूर्व, अनन्य, अबाह्य, अद्वय और शान्त ब्रह्म में एकरूप हो जाता है, जैसे-घटादि के निवृत्त होने पर घटाकाशादि महाकाश में और जलादि के आधार के हट जाने पर सूर्य का प्रतिबिम्ब सूर्य में मिल जाता है। इस प्रकार मोक्ष मिथ्या दृष्टिकोण का मिट जाना मात्र है। शंकर बार-बार इस बात पर बल देते हैं कि जैसे रस्सी का ज्ञान होने पर सर्पज्ञान दूर हो जाता है तथा जाग जाने पर स्वप्नावस्था की रचनाएं स्वतः नष्ट हो जाती हैं वैसे ही ब्रह्मज्ञान होने पर बन्धन एवं तज्जन्य दुःख समाप्त हो जाते हैं। अद्वैत वेदान्त में कतिपय अन्य उपमाओं द्वारा भी इस तथ्य को समझाया गया है। जैसे, एक राजकुमार, जिसका पालन एक शबर करता है, बड़े होने पर अपने को शबर समझता है। कालान्तर में बताये जाने पर वह अपने को राजपुत्र समझ लेता है। इसी प्रकार अनादि अविद्या के कारण जीव का नित्यस्वरूप मोक्ष उसे वैसे नहीं प्रतीत होता। पुनः जैसे कोई व्यक्ति अपने कंठ में हार के रहते हुए भी विस्मृति के कारण उसे यत्र-तत्र ढूँढता है, किन्तु विस्मृति समाप्त होने पर उसे गले में ही पाता है। शंकर 'दशमस्त्वमसि' की उपमा द्वारा भी इसी तथ्य को रेखांकित करते हैं। वैसे ही नित्य आनन्दस्वरूप मोक्ष जीव को नित्य प्राप्त होते हुए भी अविद्या से आवृत्त होने के कारण उसे अप्राप्त-सा प्रतीत होता है। अतः जब आत्मज्ञान द्वारा अविद्या निवृत्त हो जाती है तो जीव नित्य शुद्ध-बुद्ध मुक्त ब्रह्मभाव को प्राप्त कर लेता है। किन्तु आत्म-ज्ञान मोक्ष को फल या कार्य के रूप में उत्पन्न नहीं करता, वरन् मोक्ष प्रतिबन्धरूप अविद्या की निवृत्ति मात्र ही आत्म-ज्ञान का फल है। ज्ञान वस्तुतन्त्र और प्रकाशक या ज्ञापक होता है, कारक नहीं; क्योंकि ज्ञान क्रिया नहीं है, अतः ज्ञान का फल अज्ञान की निवृत्तिमात्र है जो ज्ञान के प्रकाश से स्वतः हो जाता है, जैसे प्रकाश से अन्धकार की निवृत्ति होती है। मोक्ष नित्य सच्चिदानन्द स्वरूप आत्मा या ब्रह्म की अपरोक्षानुभूति है। मोक्ष या ब्रह्म हेय और उपादेय रहित है, मोक्ष में न कुछ खोना है न पाना है। मोक्ष किसी अप्राप्य वस्तु की प्राप्ति नहीं है, वरन् मोक्ष आत्मभाव है जो सदा प्राप्य है। इस प्रकार अविद्यानिवृत्तिमात्र या आत्मबोधमात्र अथवा ब्रह्मात्मभाव की प्राप्ति ही मोक्ष है।

मोक्ष नित्य-प्राप्त की ही प्राप्ति है। मोक्ष-प्राप्ति जीव का केवल अपने नित्य स्वरूप का ज्ञान है जिसे वह कुछ समय के लिए भूल चुका होता है। तात्पर्य यह है कि शंकर के दर्शन में मोक्ष ऐसा कोई आदर्श नहीं है जो हमसे पृथक् है और जो निकट या सुदूर भविष्य में प्राप्त होने वाला है। मोक्ष या मुक्ति आत्मा को किसी नवीन अवस्था की प्राप्ति नहीं है। यह आत्मा के नित्यस्वरूप का ही साक्षात्कार है। इस प्रकार मोक्ष न तो परमार्थतः उत्पन्न होती है और न पहले से अप्राप्त है। यह प्राप्त की ही प्राप्ति है। यह शाश्वत सत्य का अनुभव है।

मोक्ष ब्रह्मभाव या ब्रह्मसाक्षात्कार है। यह जीव द्वारा अपनी ही आत्मा का साक्षात्कार है। मोक्ष की स्थिति में जीव अपने यथार्थ स्वरूप को धारण करता है। पुनः, मोक्ष दुःखनिवृत्तिमात्र नहीं है, अपितु आनन्दानुभूति भी है। चित्सुखाचार्य का कथन है कि आनन्दमय का साक्षात्कार ही मोक्ष है।

शंकराचार्य मोक्ष का स्वरूप बताते हुए कहते हैं कि 'यह पारमार्थिक सत्, कूटस्थ नित्य, आकाश के समान सर्वव्यापी, सभी क्रियाओं से रहित, नित्यतृप्त, निरवयव, कालात्रयातीत, अशरीरत्व एवं स्वयंज्योतिस्वभाव है। मोक्ष की अवस्था में धर्म एवं अधर्म अपने कार्य सुख एवं दुःख के साथ तीनों कालों में सम्बन्ध नहीं रखते। यह शरीररहित अवस्था ही मोक्ष है।' अद्वैत वेदान्त की मुक्ति आनन्दरूप है। वह न्याय दर्शन की तरह शुष्क नहीं है। अतः मोक्ष की अवस्था में आत्मा को समस्त बन्धनों एवं दुःखों से मुक्ति प्राप्त होने के साथ ही अखण्ड आनन्द की प्राप्ति होती है।

अद्वैत वेदान्त में मोक्ष के दो भेद प्राप्त होते हैं—जीवन्मुक्ति और विदेहमुक्ति। अद्वैत वेदान्त के अनुसार मोक्ष की प्राप्ति जीवित रहते हुए भी सम्भव है। इसी जीवन में ही मोक्ष प्राप्त होना जीवन्मुक्ति है। शंकर के अनुसार इस जीवन में सदेह रहते हुए भी जीव मुक्त हो सकता है। जीवब्रह्मैकत्व की अपरोक्षानुभूति होने पर जीव इसी जीवन में मुक्त हो जाता है। मोक्ष का अर्थ शरीर का अन्त नहीं है। शरीर तो प्रारब्ध कर्मों का फल है। जब तक इनका फल समाप्त नहीं हो जाता, शरीर विद्यमान रहता है। जिस प्रकार कुम्हार का चाक, कुम्हार के द्वारा घुमाना बन्द कर देने के बाद भी कुछ काल तक चलता रहता है, उसी प्रकार मोक्ष प्राप्त कर लेने के पश्चात् पूर्व जन्म के कर्मों के अनुसार शरीर कुछ काल तक जीवित रहता है। जीवित रहते मोक्ष प्राप्त करने वाले को जीवन्मुक्त की संज्ञा दी गई है तथा उसी मुक्ति को जीवन्मुक्ति कहा जाता है। जीवन्मुक्त के जीवन की दो अवस्थाएं होती हैं। एक, 'समाधि की अवस्था'। इसमें वह अन्तर्मुखी होता है और स्वयं को ब्रह्म में लीन कर लेता है। उसका स्वतंत्र व्यक्तित्व समाप्त होकर ब्रह्म में लीन हो जाता है। द्वितीय, 'व्युत्थान-अवस्था'। इसमें संसार का मिथ्या प्रपंच उसके सामने होता है, किन्तु वह उससे प्रभावित नहीं होता। वह संसार में रहते हुए भी उससे निर्लिप्त रहता है और सारे क्रियाकलापों को करते हुए भी उनसे दूर रहता है। तात्पर्य है कि जीवन्मुक्त अनासक्त भाव से संसार के कर्मों में भाग लेता है किन्तु उससे कर्मफल संचित नहीं होते, क्योंकि अनासक्त भाव से किए गए कर्म भुने हुए चनों के समान हैं जो अंकुरित नहीं होते। शंकर का कर्मरत जीवन इसका स्पष्ट प्रमाण है। जीवन्मुक्त न तो स्वार्थ से प्रेरित होकर कोई कर्म करता है और न अन्यों के प्रति कर्तव्य-भावना से प्रेरित होकर। उसके लिये सामाजिक आचार के सामान्य नियम और यज्ञानुष्ठान व्यर्थ हो जाते हैं। जीवन्मुक्त संघर्ष एवं द्वन्द्व की अवस्था से परे होता है। उसके जीवन में आवेग एवं इच्छा का कोई स्थान नहीं होता, परिणामस्वरूप उसके कर्म अनायास होते रहते हैं। सुरेश्वर का कथन है कि 'जीवन्मुक्त को दया आदि का आचरण करने के लिये जान-बूझकर प्रयास करने की आवश्यकता नहीं होती। सदाचरण तो उसका दूसरा स्वभाव बन जाता है।' जिस प्रकार सर्प का अपनी छोड़ी गई केंचुली में 'यह मैं हूँ' ऐसा अभिमान नहीं रहता, उसी प्रकार जीवन्मुक्त दशा में विद्वान का शरीर में अभिमान नहीं रहता। त्वचा से मुक्त सर्प के समान विद्वान देहस्थ होने पर भी अशरीर है। 'अहं ब्रह्मास्मि' अनुभूति की स्थितिदशा ही जीवन्मुक्ति है। इस दशा में अभिमान 'मैं देही हूँ, संसारी हूँ' इत्यादि जैसा नहीं रहता अपितु 'मैं ब्रह्म हूँ' ऐसा आत्मब्रह्मैक्य का ही अभिमान रहता है।

जीवन्मुक्त जब भौतिक उपाधियों (शरीर आदि) से अलग हो जाता है तो उसकी अवस्था को विदेहमुक्ति कहते हैं। अर्थात् शरीर-पात के अनन्तर प्राप्त होने वाली मुक्ति विदेहमुक्ति है। अथवा जब जीवन्मुक्त प्राणी का प्रारब्ध कर्मों का भोग समाप्त हो जाता है, तो उसके सूक्ष्म और स्थूल शरीर का अन्त हो जाता है और वह विदेहकैवल्य की उपलब्धि प्राप्त करता है। अर्थात् विदेहमुक्ति मृत्यु के उपरान्त प्राप्त होती है। शंकराचार्य का कथन है कि ब्रह्मज्ञान हो जाने पर संचित कर्म का क्षय हो जाता है तथा क्रियमाण कर्म बन्धनकारी नहीं होते। किन्तु प्रारब्ध कर्मों का निवारण इससे

नहीं होता। उनका निवारण केवल उनके भोग से होता है। अतः प्रारब्ध कर्मों के भोग के लिए किंचित् काल-पर्यन्त उसका शरीर बना रहता है। यह जीवन्मुक्ति की स्थिति है। जब जीवन्मुक्त के प्रारब्ध कर्मों का भोग समाप्त हो जाता है तब उसका शरीर नहीं रहता, क्योंकि यह शरीर प्रारब्ध कर्मों का फल है। इस प्रकार स्थूल एवं सूक्ष्म शरीरों के अन्त के परिणामस्वरूप जीवन्मुक्त की अवस्था को विदेहमुक्ति कहते हैं। इस अवस्था में आत्मा ब्रह्म में उसी प्रकार विलीन हो जाती है, जैसे सागर में बूँद गिरकर विलीन हो जाती है और इस अवस्था में आत्मा को ब्रह्मानन्द की प्राप्ति होती है।

इस प्रकार जीवन्मुक्ति में प्रारब्ध कर्म का भोग समाप्त होने तक जीवन्मुक्त प्राणी को शरीर धारण करना पड़ता है और विदेहमुक्ति में प्राणी कर्मभोग समाप्त करके शरीर बन्धन से सदा के लिये मुक्त हो जाता है, यही जीवन्मुक्ति और विदेहमुक्ति का प्रधान भेद है।

मोक्ष, सद्यः मुक्ति या क्रममुक्ति – शंकर सद्यःमुक्ति का प्रतिपादन करते हैं। उन्हें क्रममुक्ति अस्वीकार है। ज्ञान होते ही मुक्ति सद्यःमुक्ति है। इसके विपरीत, क्रममुक्ति शनैः-शनैः प्राप्त होती है। शंकर के विपरीत रामानुज क्रम-मुक्ति में विश्वास करते हैं। क्रम-मुक्ति में जीव देवयान मार्ग से ब्रह्म तक पहुँचने में अनेक आर्य स्थान, हर मंजिल मुक्ति तक जाते हैं। शंकर ऐसी मुक्ति को अस्वीकार करते हैं, क्योंकि यह नित्य मुक्ति नहीं है। क्रम-मुक्ति समय की अवधि में पड़ी हुई मुक्ति है, अर्थात् यह केवल प्रलयपर्यन्त रहती है। यह सापेक्षिक मुक्ति है। वास्तव में यह यथार्थ मुक्ति नहीं है, वरन् एक प्रकार का लम्बा बन्धन है। वास्तविक मुक्ति सद्यःमुक्ति है जो ज्ञानोदय के साथ ही हो जाती है। शंकर की जीवन्मुक्ति की अवधारणा के साथ सद्यःमुक्ति की ही संगति है। उसको प्राप्त करने वाला पुनः भवचक्र में नहीं पड़ता।

#### मोक्ष का साधन—

अद्वैत वेदान्त के अनुसार मोक्ष या ब्रह्म के उपर्युक्त स्वरूप को जान लेने के पश्चात् यह प्रश्न उत्पन्न होता है कि इस मोक्ष या ब्रह्मभाव का साधन क्या है? शंकराचार्य का स्पष्ट मत है कि ज्ञानमार्ग का अनुसरण करके ही मोक्षलाभ सम्भव है, क्योंकि ज्ञान से ही अज्ञान, जो बन्धन का हेतु है, का निवारण सम्भव है। बिना ज्ञान के मोक्ष की प्राप्ति नहीं हो सकती। अतः एकमात्र ज्ञान ही मोक्ष का साधन है और उसी (ज्ञान) से ही मोक्ष की प्राप्ति हो सकती है। इसलिये अद्वैत वेदान्त में मोक्ष की प्राप्ति के लिए ज्ञान को आवश्यक माना गया है तथा कर्म एवं भक्ति के द्वारा इसे असम्भव बताया गया है, क्योंकि कर्म का फल तो अनित्य होता है, मोक्ष तो नित्य अवस्था है। यद्यपि आचार्य शंकर कर्म एवं भक्ति को मोक्ष-प्राप्ति में अपर्याप्त सिद्ध करते हैं, किन्तु वे उनकी सीमित उपयोगिता को स्वीकार करते हैं। उनके अनुसार कर्म और उपासना चित्त को शुद्ध और एकाग्र बनाने के साधन हैं जिससे शुद्ध और एकाग्र चित्त ज्ञान की ज्योति ग्रहण कर सके। अतः मोक्ष केवल ज्ञान का कार्य है, इसलिए इसे ज्ञान-मार्ग की संज्ञा दी जाती है। शंकर का ज्ञानमार्ग सांख्य-योग दर्शन के ज्ञानमार्ग से भिन्न है। शंकराचार्य सांख्य के ज्ञानमार्ग को अवैदिक मार्ग कहते हैं। श्रवण, मनन और निदिध्यासन ज्ञान-मार्ग के तीन सोपान हैं। उल्लेखनीय है कि अद्वैत वेदान्त में सभी लोग ज्ञानमार्ग के अधिकारी नहीं हैं। ज्ञानमार्ग का अधिकारी केवल वही है जो 'साधन-चतुष्टय' से युक्त है। साधन-चतुष्टय व्यक्ति के चित्त को शुद्ध करके उसे ज्ञानमार्ग के योग्य बनाता है। इससे वैराग्य-भाव उत्पन्न होता है जो ज्ञानमार्ग के लिए आवश्यक है। अर्थात् आत्मा का ब्रह्म रूप में साक्षात्कार करने से पूर्व ज्ञानी को निम्नलिखित साधन-चतुष्टय से सम्पन्न होना आवश्यक है—

### 1. नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेक—

नित्य अर्थात् 'ब्रह्म' और अनित्य अर्थात् 'जगत्'। अतः साधक में नित्य और अनित्य पदार्थों के बीच का विवेक या भेद ज्ञान होना चाहिए। जब तक साधक के मन में नित्य वस्तु एवं अनित्य वस्तु के बीच अन्तर का ज्ञान नहीं होगा, वह अनित्य वस्तु का परित्याग करके नित्य वस्तु को प्राप्त करने के लिए उद्यत नहीं हो सकता।

### 2. इहामुत्रार्थभोगविराग—

'इह' से यहाँ तात्पर्य 'लौकिक' (सांसारिक) तथा 'अमुत्र' से तात्पर्य 'पारलौकिक' से है। इस प्रकार, 'इहार्थ' एवं 'अमुत्रार्थ' विराग का अर्थ हुआ— सांसारिक सुखभोग एवं पारलौकिक सुखभोग दोनों के प्रति वैराग्य। अर्थात् मोक्षार्थी को लौकिक एवं पारलौकिक भोगों में अनासक्त होना चाहिए। उसे ऐहिक और अलौकिक सुख-भोग की कामना छोड़ देनी चाहिए।

### 3. शमदमादिसाधनसंपत्—

शमदमादिसाधनसंपत् से यहाँ तात्पर्य षट्क सम्पत्ति से है। यहाँ भाष्यकार (शंकराचार्य) ने छः सम्पत्तियों का वर्णन किया है। उनका कहना है कि मोक्षार्थी को शम, दम, उपरति, तितिक्षा, श्रद्धा और समाधान इन छः गुणों से युक्त होना चाहिए। जो इस प्रकार है—

- क. प्रथम, 'शम' है जिसका अर्थ मन के निग्रह से है। अर्थात् श्रवण, मनन और निदिध्यासन आदि के अतिरिक्त सांसारिक विषयों से मन को रोकने वाली वृत्ति शम है।
- ख. दूसरा, 'दम' है जिसका अर्थ बाह्य इन्द्रियों के निग्रह से है।
- ग. तीसरा, 'उपरति' है जिसका अर्थ सांसारिक व्यापारों से विरक्त होना है। अथवा विषय वासना से दूर हटना उपरति है।
- घ. चौथा, 'तितिक्षा' है जिसका तात्पर्य विभिन्न द्वन्द्वों की सहिष्णुता से है। हमारे जीवन में भूख-प्यास, शीत-उष्ण, सुख-दुःख इत्यादि कई प्रकार के द्वन्द्व आते रहते हैं, उनसे विचलित न होना तितिक्षा है। अर्थात् विपरीत परिस्थितियों में समभाव रहना ही तितिक्षा है।
- ङ. पाचवाँ, 'श्रद्धा' है जिसका अर्थ शास्त्रों तथा गुरु के उपदेशों के प्रति विश्वास की भावना है।
- च. अन्तिम सम्पत्ति 'समाधान' है जिसका तात्पर्य समाधि या मन की एकाग्रता है। अर्थात् चित्त को ज्ञान के साधन में लगाना तथा तर्क द्वारा शंकाओं का निवारण करना समाधान है।

इस प्रकार शम, दम, उपरति, तितिक्षा, श्रद्धा और समाधान ये छः सम्पत्तियाँ हैं जिनसे संयुक्त रहने पर ही कोई साधक ब्रह्म जिज्ञासा कर सकता है।

### 4. मुमुक्षुत्व—

मुमुक्षुत्व से तात्पर्य मोक्ष प्राप्त करने की इच्छा से है। यदि किसी साधक के मन में मोक्ष प्राप्त करने की दृढ़ इच्छा शक्ति विद्यमान है तो वह धर्म-जिज्ञासा के पहले भी और बाद में भी ब्रह्म जिज्ञासा कर सकता है।

इस प्रकार अद्वैत वेदान्त के अनुसार इन चारों योग्यताओं से युक्त साधक ही ज्ञानमार्ग का अधिकारी होता है। और तत्पश्चात् साधक को गुरु के पास जाकर ब्रह्म ज्ञान की प्राप्ति के लिए श्रवण, मनन और निदिध्यासन का अभ्यास करना चाहिए। अद्वैत वेदान्त का ज्ञानमार्ग श्रवण, मनन और निदिध्यासन का मार्ग है। यह आत्म लाभ-हेतु वेदान्त का अभ्यास है। उपनिषद् ऋषि याज्ञवल्क्य का कथन है कि 'आत्मा के श्रवण, मनन एवं निदिध्यासन से सब कुछ ज्ञात हो जाता

है। शंकर के पूर्ववर्ती अद्वैत वेदान्ती भर्तृप्रपंच की मान्यता है कि श्रवण, मनन एवं निदिध्यासन क्रमिक प्रक्रियाएं हैं। किन्तु शंकर का कथन है कि ये तीनों प्रक्रियाएं एक साथ चलती हैं।

श्रवण— किसी योग्य गुरु से उपनिषदों की शिक्षाओं को ध्यान पूर्वक सुनना श्रवण है। यहाँ इस बात पर बल है कि श्रुति ही अन्तिम सत्य की जानकारी का आधार है। श्रवण के बाद मनन का स्थान आता है। श्रवण आवश्यक होते हुए भी पर्याप्त नहीं है। उसके बाद मनन आवश्यक है।

मनन— गुरु के सुने गए उपदेशों पर युक्तिपूर्वक विचार करना मनन है। अर्थात् श्रवण से प्राप्त ज्ञान पर तर्कपूर्वक चिन्तन करना चाहिए जिससे श्रद्धा से प्राप्त ज्ञान व्यक्तिगत आस्था या बौद्धिक आस्था में परिणत हो सके। मनन आत्मज्ञान में संभाव्य संशय के निवारण के लिए आवश्यक है। मनन के लिए अद्वैत वेदान्त में अनेक विधियों का वर्णन किया गया है जिसमें अध्यारोप और अपवाद विधि प्रमुख है। इन विधियों के द्वारा ही हमें प्रपंचरहित ब्रह्म का ज्ञान होता है। मनन से बौद्धिक आस्था उत्पन्न होने के बाद निदिध्यासन या ध्यान करना चाहिए।

निदिध्यासन— निदिध्यासन से तात्पर्य ब्रह्मात्म के स्वरूप का सतत् ध्यान करना है। ध्यान ज्यों-ज्यों दीर्घकाल तक अभ्यास पूर्वक किया जायेगा, त्यों-त्यों आत्मज्ञान का प्रकटीकरण होगा। अर्थात् जीव और ब्रह्म के तादात्म्य का ध्यान करते रहना निदिध्यासन है। निदिध्यासन का अभ्यास तब तक जारी रहना चाहिए जब तक ब्रह्मात्मैकत्व की अपरोक्ष अनुभूति न हो जाए। इस ऐक्य की अपरोक्षानुभूति होने पर मुमुक्षु जीवन्मुक्त हो जाता है। इसी पद्धति से अज्ञान की निवृत्ति तथा ज्ञान की प्राप्ति होती है। वाचस्पति मिश्र तत्त्वज्ञान के लिए श्रवण, मनन और निदिध्यासन तीनों का प्रतिपादन करते हैं।

निष्कर्ष रूप में यह कहा जा सकता है कि उपर्युक्त वर्णित विधियों को अपनाने के बाद व्यक्ति (साधक) के पूर्व संचित संस्कार नष्ट हो जाते हैं तथा उसे ब्रह्म की सत्यता में अटूट विश्वास हो जाता है और तब वह 'तत्त्वमसि' की शिक्षा ग्रहण करने के योग्य हो जाता है। इस सत्य की अनुभूति होने पर साधक को ब्रह्म साक्षात्कार हो जाता है तथा वह साधक कह उठता है— 'अहं ब्रह्मास्मि'। अर्थात् 'मैं ब्रह्म हूँ।' इस अवस्था में जीव एवं ब्रह्म का अन्तर समाप्त हो जाता है, सारे बन्धन समाप्त हो जाते हैं और मोक्ष की प्राप्ति होती है। जीव एवं ब्रह्म एकाकार हो जाते हैं। मोक्षावस्था में जीव ब्रह्म में उसी प्रकार विलीन हो जाता है जिस प्रकार सागर में गिरकर बूँद विलीन हो जाता है। इसी स्थिति को अद्वैत वेदान्त में 'मोक्ष' की संज्ञा दी गयी है।

### सन्दर्भ

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- मोक्षप्रतिबन्धनिवृत्तिमात्रमेव आत्मज्ञानस्य फलम् । — ब्रह्मसूत्रभाष्य ।
- हेयोपादेयशून्यब्रह्मात्मतावगमात् । — ब्रह्मसूत्रभाष्य ।
- नित्यप्राप्तस्य प्राप्तिः मोक्षः । — ब्रह्मसूत्रभाष्य ।
- ब्रह्मभावश्च मोक्षः । — ब्रह्मसूत्रभाष्य ।
- स्वात्मन्यवस्थानम् । — ब्रह्मसूत्रभाष्य ।
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- इदं तु पारमार्थिकं, कूटस्थनित्यं, व्योमवत्सर्वव्यापि सर्वविक्रियारहितं, नित्यतृप्तं निरवयवं स्वयंज्योतिः स्वभावम्। यत्र धर्माधर्मौ सहकार्येण कालत्रयं च नोपावर्तते। तदेतदशरीरत्वं मोक्षाख्यम्। – ब्रह्मसूत्रभाष्य।
- नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिः।
- बृहदारण्यक उपनिषद्।
- ज्ञानावेद मुक्तिः। – ब्रह्मसूत्रभाष्य।
- नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः इहामुत्रार्थभोगविरागः।  
शमादि-षट्क-सम्पत्तिः मुमुक्षुत्वं चेति। – तत्त्वबोध.3 (शंकराचार्यकृत)।



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