



Contemporary Issues in Mulk Raj Anand's *Lajwanti and Other Stories*

Dr. Manoj Kumar, Asst. Professor, Department of English & Foreign Languages, Central University of Haryana, Mahendergarh

Ms. Minakshi, Research Scholar, Department of English & Foreign Languages, Central University of Haryana, Mahendergarh

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 25th June 2018

Accepted 10th August 2018

Available online 31 December 2018

Keywords:

Social Issues

Contemporary Issues

Mulk Raj Anand

Short Story

ABSTRACT

Mulk Raj Anand shows the society and the various activities through his characters in the novels and short stories. The low caste people in the short stories of Mulk Raj Anand have been seen struggling for honor, self-respect, equality and identity in their life. He shows the females characters of the upper-class houses who do not hesitate in insulting, torturing, humiliating the poor, honest, sincere and meek woman from low caste families.

The superiority complex of honour among the higher powerful and rich class people forced the poor and the downtrodden class to struggle for their identity in the democratic structure of India. Mulk Raj Anand showed the painful life of a village girl who has been harassed by the social relations. The writer shows that woman's condition and struggle to find her identity for herself. The story "Lajwanti" shows no support from her father and mother-in-laws. Lajwanti only hope is her caged Maina. She wants to die and escapes from this cruel society and religious bigotry. Many types of problems and disappointments had been faced by the woman after marriage. The writer shows that the newly married couple was teased by their in-laws for the child. All these desires of in laws harassed the married couple and make their life insecure and full off.



The story 'The Silver Bangles' is based on the life of a lower-class female who had to work in the rich people's home and had to face many types of problems. In this story a young girl works in the house of Shrimati Gopi Goel as a sweeper and always misbehaves by the landlady. The landlady was frying sweet bread to please her husband on the first day of the welcome month of rains, Shravan. She saw the silver bangles on the wrist of the sweeper girl, Sajni. She was totally jealous to that sweeper girl and wanted to see what effect Sajni silver bangles would have on the owner on the house Mr. Ram Gopal Goel. She got angry when she saw her husband going a pleasant smile on the arrival on Sajni.

'Ao ji, Ao come Sajni'
You are late this morning.
He said with a hearty frank
Poster on seeing the girl.

Listening all these words Smt. Gopi Goel's heart was beating quickly showing so great to the sweeper girl by her husband. Gopi Goel tried to spoil the young women smiling face. "Bibiji, I am unworthy, said Sajni apologetically; master is kind to the poor...." Gopi was threatened that there was a love connection between her husband and the sweeper girl Sajni. She every time noticed her husband and the sweeper girl and talking. On her question for going to office her husband answered her in a poetic manner.

I hate the outline of that prison.
This answer makes her angry she said
poetry will not give us,

She believed that her husband had given a loving sight every time to Sajni. He had come near her, and she cannot tolerate any body taking the attention of her husband. She became angry with her husband's poetry. "You have burnt every second poor for the one you had made –any how they are cold, Shrimati Gopi said to the servant body Mundu. She started to fry poor for husband by on hands. She asked her husband. Did you notice the Silver Bangles on the low woman's wrist? She asked in very jealous manner and said I wish her mother would come to do our house and not this film star. At this she saw her husband's innocence and poetry to the fool's paradise. Now she had believed that she was his only love, the better half.

After going her husband to office, she blamed the sweeper girl for that silver bangles. 'Bibiji, we survive by your grace. Sajani said. She again blamed her that her husband had stolen these bangles from her box and give to you. She said her note to see her face again and never came back to the house and called her a theft."

By this story we came to know how many problems and insults had been bearing by the lower division persons for their livings. This is a very big issue for Indian society to grow up the nation and make all the people capable of earning their living without an insult and spoilation.

The story 'The Tamarind Tree' is based on the hopes of the in laws to their newly married son and his wife. The newly married couple was teased by the in laws

for the child. All these desires of in laws harassed the married couple and make their life insecure.

This newly married couple enjoy their life freely and with full of joy. There was a tamarind tree in front of their house in Aunt Kesaro's courtyard. The bride continuously desired her husband to eat that tamarind fruit that has been tempered her again and again.

One day Roopa had tried to pick up a clove of tamarind from the courtyard, but the old woman had let go a torrent of abuse. She had run home to avoid being caught. When her husband came back home, she again desired him for that tamarind fruits. Aunt Kesara came to her home. Her father-in-law welcome aunt Kesara. He called Roopa and tell her that the wife of my son. Roopa came with the hookah. At that moment, however she heard Kesara shouting. "That is you? Daughter-in-law of Rekha?" (44) She asked in incredibly angry voice that you have not even produced the child you have been carrying in your belly all these months and inspite of all tamarind you have stolen and eaten from my tree.

Her mother-in-law at once reinforced her that these girls sit about longing for the husband. They do not want to bear children. Suddenly Roopa felt that she might have pain. She rushed to her room and lay down on her bed. Now she felt that she had born the aggravated state of her pregnancy followed in to shooting start of pain. She had started shouting by pain. Now she thought that she had not taken proper nourishment that make the newborn baby's bones strong.

Now the pain gripped her, and she shouted badly. Her mother-in-law came to her and wiped the sweat from her face and went to call Kesaro who had been mid wife at the birth of Roopa's husband. Many neighboring women came to greet the newly born Roopa always desired the tamarind fruits but never tasted a clove of this fruit. All these things and thoughts of old women shows the harassment faced by the newly married bride after a few months of marriage.

Contemporary issues are pointed in the story of Lajwanti. This story is based on the village life. In this story, the writer describes the painful life of a village girl who has been harassed by the social relations. In the story the writer focuses on a woman's condition and struggle to find her identity for herself. Disappointed by strict behavior of social relationship, gender predisposition, religious bigotry and her own petty human foibles her shameful condition serves as a metaphor for sacrifice and servility which forms the thematic heart of the woman.

Lajwanti is a heart tearing portrait of a woman who tries to flee to her father's home to escape the cruel and sexual advance of her brother-in-law in her husband's house. She is caught midway by Jaswant, her brother-in-law who forces her to return back to her husband's house. Jaswant shouted, "stop, madwoman, or I shall kill you;" 'Why did you run away? He asked 'have you no shame? look folks. Lajwanti continued her way to her father's house. Let me go---I want to go to my father's house."

However, she is briefly rescued by a woman passing by a jeep who helps her go to her father's house. Cowards get aside looking on as through this is a funfair. Leaving her alone Smt. Dayal ordered Lajwanti's only moment delivers a resounding slap on Jaswant's face. On arriving at her childhood home Lajwanti quickly realized that she is not welcome here too. Her father was surprised and asked himself what he saw his daughter or her ghost.

Lajwanti's father refused to accept her as a member of family. I will do all that Bapu, Lajwanti said, "Daughter, it does not matter her father answered. Her father tells her that she must returned to her husband's house." Let him punish her if he thinks she had done wrong. Lajwanti's father says to Lajwanti's mother-in-law. "Maina, my Maina, Lajwanti muttered under her breath." With absolutely no support from her father or her in laws. Lajwanti's only hope is her caged Maina.

By all this frustration Lajwanti had feed up with life. She wants to die and religious bigotry. Many types of problems and disappointments had been faced by the woman after marriage. She must adjust in her in laws home tolerate all the problems and make herself obedient and dedicated to her in laws family.

The story "Mother" is based on the faith of village people for the cow. They treat cow as their own mother and want no one to hurt the cow. They thought that beating the cow is a sin. All men and women worship the cow as the holy mother. In this story, there is a cow in front of the temple. All the woman retuning from the temple take her blessings. At that time a little boy came near the cow, and he started beating the cow with a fuel stick. The man shouted. "Don't beat the holy mother." The man greeted the cow by touching her head and puts a garland on to her right horn. The girl gave the bread to the boy and the man go inside the hut after worshiping the cow not to nibble at the hut.

In the evening, the women came from the work, and they also greet the cow to touch on her forehead. When she saw to her hut, she finds that one end of the thatch on her roof nibbled away. She takes a fuel stick and stares beating the cow badly. But while beating the cow she also feels sorry to the cow. By the beating, the cow collapses on to the earth. She has no time and lies down to rest. There is a bleeding in the cow nostrils. The women had killed the cow. Now she had blamed herself for this cruel sin. All these aspects shows that there is a holy place of cow in the Hindu religion. All the people of Hindu religion treat the cow as mother as worship her. Punishing the cow is a sin.

The story "The Priest and the Pigeons" as based on the love affairs and shameless behavior of the young generation. In this story, there is a pigeon couple lived in the temple and always used to love when the priest started praying the god in the morning. The priest started praying in the morning. At the same time, the priest heard the whispering. The priest persisted in frightening him out of the temple. The priest got angry by the noise of pigeons and their shameless animality. But they continue to love. And another pigeon made the priest congaed and hardened into the defense is face the priest made all the possible things to flew away the couple but they don't get away.

Now the priest was disturbed by a woman crying for the thief. But the priest ignores that women and take his gun to shoot the couple of pigeons. When he takes the gun and pointed the trigger to the target. Suddenly there was a mechanical sound that disturbed the pigeons and make them flew away from the temple. All these aspects show that in the Hindu religion there is no place of love. The priest of the temple also refused the love in the animals. There is no place for love and attention in the modern society.

The story 'The Hiccup' is based on an allergic problem occurred by the fried parantha of ghee. In this story there is a girl who has been married in village and given the fried food by her mother-in-law. That food made her hiccup continuously. But her mother-in-law always got angry on her.

In this story, a city girl got married in a village. Arti's mother-in-law always gave her fried parantha in the evening. That fried parantha makes an allergy and she started hiccup. Arti did not know any household work like making chapatti, cleaning of utensils and fetching of water from the handpump.

Sukhi brought the ghee from the Kalka Devi village on very risky way. She always taunted her husband. Her father-in-law always make Arti happy and brought sweets and other things for her. But at every evening there is the hiccup of Arti by seeing the fried parantha made by her mother-in-law.

In the evening, Arti's husband came from the technical school Bombay. His mother was incredibly happy on the arrival of Gopal. "My moon has come now; I do not want him to disappear Said Sukhi. His father makes him satisfied that only six months after he will be settled by getting a job at Bhakra. At the evening mean when Sukhi made the fried patantha there was awful sound from Arti's mouth. Arti tried to muffle the sound by duppatta but cannot stop it. By hearing continue hiccup of Arti, Gopal got angry and said her to stop and it the parantha. She was feared by the words of her family and teer a churl from the parantha and put it in her mouth. She chewed at the moment then hiccupped, but she swallowed the chunk unchewed.

The chunk was not in the throat, and she put her duppatta to her mouth and tried to control her breath. She had died by the uncontrollable sound of hiccup which ended all her modesty, shame, pain, fear and bitterness. Her father-in-law felt her dying pulse that she died of hiccup. All these aspects shows that the allergic diseases are very dangerous to health Arti have the allergy of fried parantha and started hiccup. If her in-laws will not force her to eat, she will not die.

The story Lady Bountiful depends on the behavior of the political party and the members of that party towards the society. All the politicians use their power only for their reputation. This is a big issue now a days that spoiled the poor communities and the servants. In this story, the main character is Sarojini Sharma who has joined the party and the president of several societies in Jalandhar and now she is the member of parliament. She never talked her servant politely and said them donkey. But they cannot say against her abusing words because they do not have any source of earning.

Last night she inaugurated a multi-purpose hall in the slum area of North Delhi. And she wanted that the speech given by her will be published in the front page of newspaper. But there was not a single line of her inauguration on the first page. But at the eight page of newspaper the paragraph intuited. Smt. Sarojni Sharma M.P. inaugurates multi-purpose hall. She always got angry on her servants and said then thief to steal the chunks of ghee from the kitchen.

She felt that she was near her ideal of becoming a Deputy-Minister because she was assured that the Prime Minister and Home Minister no noticed her. Her son is studying in Banaras. Mr. Sharma secured a job by his approach in Supreme Court. Mr. Balen thought that he was first class M.A. from Maharaja College, Kerala yet gets only two hundred fifty after that Mr. Sharma said Mr. Balen, "I will not pay you today overtime because you came late today."

Mrs. Sarojni Sharma went to the bedroom and was decorating her forehead. The meeting with the Punjabi Refuses was an excusal one. It will support her ruling party or go over to the opposition party. There was a phone call of Smt. Rajmati the wife of

Lala Inderdas. She is very serious and called her for help. But she refused her to help that Lady in trouble and cut of the phone and go away.

All these aspects shows that the political parties and the members of that parties use their power only for their benefit. All the members of political parties serve their duty only for their benefit. They secure the job for their children and use their approach for their future. This is a very big issue now a day. This can suffers the lower division community people because they have to tolerate the punishment and abuses of the rich parties because they do not any source of earning.

The story “Torrents of Wrath” depends on the storm of flood that destroys the village’s greenery as well as pleasure. Many peoples and the priest said it the wish of the angry God for the faithless peoples. That flood destroys the old lady’s house and blows away her son and daughter-in-law. This is the main aspect of the story that the flood destroys everything, but some greedy people refuse the old lady to help. In this story, the main character is the old woman who had lost her son and daughter in law in the flood.

The old woman had escaped her pet dog. Two sparrows and a rat slept on the top attic of the house in the flooded night. Her son and daughter in law was sleeping in the house and the storm of flood came incidentally and blown them away. The dead bodies of both were not found yet the policeman also searching for them. The priest of the temple had said that the God Indra got angry with the faithless peoples so the flood had come. The old woman begged to Mamchand for some grains for the sparrows and the rat, but he refused her to give anything and said, “I do not want to see your ugly face firstly in the morning.” She regrates to give her work in his house as a maid but he refused that also.

As Mamchand shouted on the old woman, the dog at once started barking and spreading the involuntary fear of dog bite in Mamchand’s body. The old woman was very disappointed on the condition of their pets were fainted by the anxiety, fear and anger. “I shall pollute your baskets by lifting the gram.If you will not give my little ones.” Mamchand refused her again to give anything and through the iron weight towards her let her to go. It wounded the old woman knee. The dog jumped towards Mamchand and started barking. Fluttering and flaming disturbance the sparrow caught her soul and she bought some grain in her floods of head cloths.

The policeman injured the old woman on the order of Mamchand. Mamchand dilated in horror and blinded by the stream of flood that gushed from the old woman’s head. The dog licking the blood on the woman’s face, but the cruel policeman again hit the dog horror and blinded by the stream of flood that gushed from the old woman’s head. The dog licking the blood on the woman’s face, but the cruel policeman again hit the dog. The villager on the bus stop were turned back by the policeman but they had seen all the scene of the cause of murder. The dead body of the woman was blown in the flooded water by the policeman. All these aspects show the humanity of an old woman who had died for escaping her pets from danger. The cruel Mamchand and the policeman shows anger and put her to the death. All that shows that there is a lack of kindness in the society yet in the modern days.

The story “Brothers” depend on the behavior and nature of the businessman joined in same business. The work makes the man greedy and forced to think his bad future. The partner though he is his real brother. According to this greed and insecured

feelings make the elder brother about to die. In the story the main characters are two twin brothers who are the partner of jewelry business. Both the brothers are alike in appearance but were different in the thoughts and nature. The elder brother Hansraj is very kind, but the other hand Lekhraj is very clever and greedy.

He always thinks about his business and his investments of gold to earn much money. Hansraj was injured in an accident and had the problem of heart attack. One year ago, he took all the treatment from many hospitals, but not cured by anyone. At last Lala Lekhraj take him to the ayurvedic doctor pandit Parkash Shastri. Lala Lekhraj started admiring the doctor that we have heard about you from many film stars who came to our shop for buying jewelry. You take high fees from them, but we cannot pay so much fees. We can offer you a Mughal necklace for Hansraj treatment. Dr. cannot speak anything before knowing about his illness.

After that Lekhraj became impatient and talk to Hansraj for partition of business yet he cannot sit on the shop a long time or have to get retired. Dr. Parkash Shastri started the check up with his stethoscope and proceed the treatment. After the checkup he write the prescription and said to Hansraj to pay cash rather than necklace for the treatment. At this Lekhraj got angry to the doctor and said nonsense things to him. But doctor cannot tolerate all this and stormed. "Lala Lekhraj you have shame but your soul will be extremely painful if you go on talking like thatGo and look after your brother."

All this conversation harassed lala Hansraj think seriously, and he never came back for treatment. After some days, Lekhraj came to the clinic and offered a necklace for his brother's treatment who has expired in that night after checkup. Shastri feels sorry to hear this, but he refused to take the necklace and asked to give it to his sister in law because his greed will overcome his mind and he had not given her nothing from the property.

All these aspects and the incidents indicates that in the modern society there is no value of peoples in anyone's life. But the wealth takes much importance in everyone's life. No single one look after his relations and family but cares about only for reputation and wealth. This greed lost the love and togetherness of families and make the society selfish. Many people think that real freedom is to give up things of the world and stay free to do anything but ones like. This story represents the thinking of peoples about other who believe in togetherness and freedom of living of life.

In this story the main character sardar Tara Singh faiths in freedom and also advise all the people to live freely. He advised the people that today there is only the value of freedom. That you can do what you want to do. He said that only the soft talking can impress the people across the world. A tea staller told the drives that sardar Tara Singh has the capacity to let his soul ray out and show that he come into touch with gods. When Tara Singh meets to the barber, he praised him that "I agree one must have a home and children, in spite of freedom, the house holder's life is good life."

After all this conversation, sardar Tara Singh offered him to search for a bridegroom for his widow daughter. Barber asked him for the dowry for her. Sardar ji offered only 500/- for that and also said that he does not believe in caste. He can marry his daughter in any caste but own the behalf of his daughter's happiness. The barber down his head against sardar ji and asked to accept his daughter as his wife and promise

him to keep his daughter happy. Sardar Tara Singh accepted his proposal and said him to come with five people for marriage.

All these aspects represent the thought of modern people. In the modern society people do not believe in caste system but only believe in freedom and happiness. People find the way to keep themselves happy and free to do anything.

The story “Anjali Hasta” depends on the lifestyle of the rich families of India enriched by Western culture. The hobbies of the rich families to go to parties and for dance shows of the famous classical culture. But they also infilled with Indian culture so that rich families try to keep away their children from western culture. In this story the writer talks about the lifestyle and hobbies of the rich families adopting the western culture. In this story the main character Sunder Lal born in a rich family and uplifted by the western culture but after all that he is very shy in nature.

He went to a party with his parents. But he felt uncomfortable in that party because there is a lot of women in the party, and he do not like to talk to them. His mother has talked for arranging the marriage of Sunder Lal to polish ambassador’s wife. Sunder Lal did not like that lady and not support her talking for arranging his marriage.

Sunder Lal is fond of the cultural dance “Bharat Natyam” of a famous dancer Geeta. There is a dance show of Geeta at Sapru House. Sunder Lal wants to go to see the dance performance with his parents. He said to his father to go to Sapru House but his father said to ask to his mother. They all are agreed to go to see the dance. They went to the dance show getting three invitations and inter the dark hall. Sunder Lal blushed to see the culture dancer Geeta at the dance stage. The dancer performs the mixed dance Bharatnatyam, Kathakali Mohini posture, the enchanting incarnation of the superior God Vishnu. She again came to her dance posture and moved her head from the side to assert the beauty and then thrust her torso forward again with the joined hands of Anjali Hasta.

Sunder Lal’s mother cannot understand her dance theme and the moments and the flickers of her eyes and wrist. “What is she doing ?” his mother asked loudly as the dancer retraced her steps. Sunder Lal explained the dance performance of the famous dancer Geeta that the Pattern of Geeta’s moments were repeated. With more variegated and intricate interplay of the arms, the curve of torso and the heart beats of feet.

The dance performance has finished and followed by unequal applause from the different parts of the hall. How nicely she joins her hands in our Hindu manner his mother conceded as Geeta appeared. Sunder Lal wanted to meet Geeta at backstage, but his mother conceded as Geeta. His mother stopped him by saying that it will against our culture and “what will people think about you to see you going see a devdasi.”

All the aspects show that many of the rich families adopt the western culture and life style and hobbies of western society but they are likely joined to the Hindu culture and hopped to filled up the Hindu culture in their children. Hindu culture had an excellent value in the society as well as in foreign people. It represents that we are developing our nation by developing the Indian culture in our children.

The story “The Man Who Was Too Honest For His Job” delicates the honesty of the officers posted on the high posts. They are pretended by the approaches of the big parties and the relatives of the rich businessman to pass their tender for their duty honestly and refused to pass the tender of big personalities and do their duty. Mr.

Captain Vatsayan had posted as an officer in M.E.S. office. He believed to do his duty honestly. He passed many tenders without any money.

Mr. Karam Chand came to the officer for a tender of contraction of road with the approach of an Esmond. Amrit Rai assured many approaches for the tender, but the officer listens silently. After that Mr. Karam Chand take out the duplicate copy of tender along with a wade of notes. "But mine is the lowest tender, sir! The contractor put in quickly changing his approach. How do you know that yours is that lowest tender captain Vatsayan probed." Mr. Karam Chand told about Mr. Boota Singh who had given him the idea to came to the officer for tender.

After that, the officer described the rules and methods to pass the tender of any type. Mr. Karam Chand said about his work and asked to get believe on his work and said to get a chance. The officer was listening all these silently but not reacting at all. When the contractor takes out the wade of notes the officer got angry and said to the contractor to lay out the application from the table and take out all the things of his from the table and go out. The contractor again asked the officer to accept the money, but the officer got angry and said the contractor that he will send his application to the office with another tender. All this shows that there is honesty in the officers' heart for their duty. The officers want to do their job honestly.

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