

PEACE AND SOCIAL SYSTEM IN INDIA: EXPLORING THROUGH LITERARY TEXTS**Dr. Bijender Singh**Associate Professor, Department of English, Indira Gandhi University, Meerpur, Rewari, Haryana-123401
E-mail: bijendersingh8t@yahoo.com**ABSTRACT**

Mahatma Gandhi says that an eye for an eye will make the whole world blind. To make the world fit for human habitation where all can be happy, peace is necessary. But, in the current scenario, everyone is hostile towards others, which is the result of nothing but human actions. Human actions are governed by the ego, which is why every society is infested with many evils, and out of these social evils, there is one. India, being a land of diversity, comes across many social issues. The Hindu social system is one of them, as it is based on castes or graded hierarchies. Therefore, this paper attempts to investigate if the unequal social system, as the Hindu social system is, is helpful in the establishment of peace at the personal and national levels. Further, it tries to explore the relationship between peace and the social system. Besides, it also attempts to discover how we can achieve the aim of a peaceful society in modern times. For this purpose, some Dalit literary texts and some spiritual texts are under scrutiny from postcolonial and psychoanalytic perspectives. The study proves that the ego, greed, failed education system, physical worldview, etc. are the reasons for an unequal and violent environment. While spirituality, scientific attitude, and religiosity, not rituals, can help in the establishment and sustenance of peace in the world.

Keywords: Peace, Violence, Religion, Caste system, Science, Education system, Natural, Spiritual.**INTRODUCTION****“When things change inside you, things change around you.” —Unknown**

The inner being infects the outer being. The behaviour of the person is the reflection of one's inner state—be it peace, violence or a state of confusion. This is true that peace is the very nature of human beings but these are the worldviews and atmosphere that affect one's being even if one is in the mother's lap. Thus, the world is perceived in binaries. Regarding binary thinking, Rosling argues that “Human beings have a strong dramatic instinct toward binary thinking, a basic urge to divide things into two distinct groups, with nothing but an empty gap in between. We love to dichotomize. Good versus bad.” He continues further that “Dividing the world into two distinct sides is simple and intuitive, and also dramatic because it implies conflict, and we do it without thinking, all the time.”

Owing to dichotomic intuition, the world is full of binaries—Black and White; day and night; good and bad; god and demon; high and low so on and so forth. India is no exception as it being a land of diversity has multiple binaries which exist conspicuously as well as inconspicuously. One of them is the caste system which has binaries of low and high caste. This system affects the being of the

persons and social environment which results in disharmony, conflict, domination, violence etc.

AIM AND OBJECTIVE

Taking into account the caste system and its repercussions, this paper aims to study if the unequal social system i.e. caste system helps to establish peace. Further, it attempts to investigate the relationship between the social system and peace. Moreover, it tries to discover how peace can be attained at the personal as well as national levels.

METHODOLOGY

To this purpose, the study is based on some literary texts such as Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life*, Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outcaste*, Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke*, Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* etc. besides the reported incidents. In addition to these, some spiritual gurus and their teachings are also under scrutiny. To scrutinize the texts postcolonial theory and psychoanalysis will be used as lenses.

DISCUSSION

Peace is a contentious phenomenon. Some adjudge it on an outer basis and others on an inner basis. Though outer and inner seem different both are complementary to each other—the two facets of the same coin. It may be said that outer is inner or vice versa. Therefore, to understand the inner self of the

person, the outer is the key. On the basis of this thesis, the outer behaviour, occurrences, and incidents may be a lighthouse to map the level of peace in society. All societies across the world are facing conflicts and Indian society which is full of conflicts and disputes on the axis of caste is no exception. These conflicts vividly surface in Dalit writings, in autobiography especially.

In *Joothan*, Valmiki (2007) graphically presents the domination of the Tyagi community over Dalit communities i.e. Valmiki's. They are forced to do menial tasks and offered only the leftovers in exchange for the services they rendered even on the occasions such as marriage. This is why Valmiki's mother throws the joothan in protest. The cooperation between these communities, particularly of the dominant ones, is beyond imagination. It is visible in the comment, one fellow of Valmiki's father makes when his father sends him to school, "What is the point of sending him to school? When has a crow become a swan" (Valmiki, 2007, p. 6)? Likewise, in *Weave of My Life*, Pawar (2008) suffers discrimination, hunger and starvation resulting from caste domination only. It continued even after she had a job. It continues till death.

Kamble (2008) discloses how Dalits have to face problems if they don't bow before the upper caste on the way. It is pertinent to mention here that Dalits have to get down the road if an upper-caste person happens to pass through that road. If one doesn't bow the defiant had to face the wrath. The upper caste would shout in Dalits colony, "Who, just tell me, who the hell is that new girl? Doesn't she know that she has to bow down to the master? Shameless bitch! How dare she pass me without showing due respect?" (Kamble, 2008, p. 53).

Similarly, Bama (2012) highlights how upper-caste communities do not let go of any opportunity to exploit, demean and perpetrate violence on Dalits for the simple reason that they belong to the low caste. Even police rather than dispensing justice stand by the side of the privileged and harass the victims. Bama (2012) evidences the unconstitutional behaviour of the police towards Dalit women after an attack by the upper caste community on them. Police said, "be ready to entertain the police at night, winked at them, and shoved their guns against their bodies" (Bama, 2012, p. 40). It is not a single case of the police's failure in dispensing justice but history is replete with such examples.

Arulraja (1996) describes a documented instance of police brutality at Ponnur, On November 8, 1992, over three hundred police officers encircled and attacked a hamlet belonging to several Dalits while they were getting ready to work in the fields. Individuals were beaten brutally after being hauled from their homes. "Not even pregnant women were spared. They were stamped upon with booted legs. The policemen thrust their cudgels into their vaginas. Looting, rape and destruction followed" (Arulraja, 1996, p. 7). About fifteen people had brain injuries and about forty had bone fractures. Numerous females sustained numerous injuries. This is the Indian police's visage, and it represents their promise to save lives. But when they encounter the impoverished areas, it turns into the devil. Further, the institutional murder of Rohit Vemula in the premier institution of India (Sabrangindia, 2021) and Pranay Perumalla Kumar's honour killing (TNN, 2018) are testimonies of anti-peace occurrences in the society on diverse axes. Additionally, women are still paraded naked, gang-raped by orders of caste/Khap Panchayats and murdered in broad daylight (Desk, 2022).

The people who defy the social casteist codes in India are killed in the name of honour. Bhardwaj (2014) reports that Bhavna Yadav was killed by her parents in Delhi and likewise are killed the lower caste boys who married high caste girls by dominant caste people. Further, those who defy the social hierarchical codes are killed in broad daylight even for petty reasons. In this regard, Kateshiya (2018) reports that in Gujrat a Dalit man was killed for riding a horse for his marriage procession. In another instance, PTI (2018) reports that a Dalit man's head's skin was peeled off for the reason that he had worn a turban like upper caste people. These everyday incidents in India question the role of educational institutions; educationists and education itself. The available statistical data pertaining to development may reveal a mind-blowing glossy picture but the experiences of underprivileged people speak the truth. The educational institutions in India have played a different role than these are meant for. Singh (2019, 2022) argues that the whole education system has been failed in terms of pedagogy, syllabus and practices to instil human value based on love and compassion.

All these incidents manifest the conflicts in society on the axis of caste. The caste issue is not a new

one but centuries-old practices of discrimination and violence. This is why there is a long list of ashramas and gurus that people visit in search of peace. So, peace is the very nature of human beings but worldly possessions and ideologies corrupt the human mind. This corruption creates tension within and outside. That is why India has a great tradition of peace-seeking people and their success. Buddha, Kabir, Nanak, Mahavir Jain, Sandilaya, Narad, Meera and many more achieved a state of peace and they spread the message of peace and harmony. The journey of all these incredible human beings indicates that peace is an internal phenomenon.

Nanak, Meera and Kabir searched for the truth living with their families life while Buddha and Mahavir left the world in search of truth. Both these examples prove that the worldly life or the world itself does not affect the very being of humans but the attachment. Buddha left home and so was the case of Mahavir. Mahavir asked his father to allow him to leave the home. But his father scolded him and ordered him to stay until his death. So, did the mother when he sought permission. After the death of his mother, Mahavir asked the brothers but his brother taunted him that he wanted to leave him alone. So Mahavir stayed yet not stayed. Lastly, the brother discussed that whoever had to go had already gone so let him go. This way Mahavir was allowed. Other sages stayed in their ashrams with families.

So, peace is neither in woods, mountains or deserted places nor in the world. It is within one's self. The only way to achieve a state of peace is to be indifferent towards the world. The forced detachment will not help but from within. In this regard, Kabir and Nanak are perfect examples of detachment from within. It is evident as Fielding (1977) says that suppression is more dangerous than free play. So, suppression of desires will result in distortion and disorientation in the path of truth. The more we stick to worldly affairs; the more will we be in tension. The ego originates all tensions and discriminatory worldviews. Since people and popular ideologies have been teaching human

beings to fulfil themselves; every human being continues to strive throughout life to get more: power, prestige, money etc. Every moment one is dominated by "I, My and Me." For the fulfilment of self, one goes to the extent of mass killings. All ideological proponents attempt to prove that they and their ideology are/is the best. Religion is also one of them which has been and still is being used as a tool to disturb peace in the world. Anything which is not universal is false. Anything that is personal is also false. Only that which is universal or scientific is true. So, only a universal and scientific approach to ideologies—religious or social—can help restore peace in the world.

CONCLUSION

The discussion proves that the conflicts we see and face in the world are the results the worldly affairs i.e. greed and narrow ideologies. Human beings since one's childhood are trained to be what society wants them to be. Anyone who is not social is a threat to society which is why every society across the world does its best to distort one's being so as to make them one of them. This is the first step of an egoist. A human being remains egocentric and, in that attempt, one goes on to fulfil one's ego with the help of ascientific and personal tools. That which is personal, regional, or limited is false; and only that which is universal is true. Only scientific and universal attitudes can make the world a peaceful place and human beings at peace. Further, human beings must utilize worldly things but in a way as Rama Krishan Pramahansa says "It is fine if the boat (human being) stays in water but it is absolutely wrong if water (world) stays in the boat. If water stays in the boat it is certain that the boat will drown. Likewise, if the world (self or ego) overtake human being conflicts will prevail and contrary to it if only the universal (truth) prevails undoubtedly there will be peace. So, only the scientific approach which in itself is universal towards life and its affairs can help establish peace, not the social approach or the society.

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