



Articulating Marginalized Identities: A Study of Select Works of Hindi and English litterateurs

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Abstract:

Literature, music and art are forms of expression through which a litterateur attempts to write about the social, religious, political and economic events that occur from time to time. Various writers have made numerous attempts to draw the attention of the government authorities to the faults and bigotry that exist in society through writing. Every country's literature plays a vital role in nation - building.

Many litterateurs have attempted to write about Uttarakhand's peculiar geographical location, simple life, verdant hills, pure rivers, women's plight, people's faith in God and their belief on witchcraft and economic inequality between rich and poor etc. Through stories, novels and poetry, these authors have depicted the realities of marginalized people's lives. Shailesh Matiyani, Vidya Sagar Nautiyal, Himanshu Joshi, Manohar Shyam Joshi, Shekhar Joshi, Shivani, Mrinal Pande, Namita Gokhale, Jaiwanti Dimri, Diwa Bhatt and others are among the numerous prominent writers in Uttarakhand who have raised the challenges of disadvantaged people in their writings. This paper titled "Articulating Marginalized Identities: A Study of Select Works of Hindi and English litterateurs" highlights the condition of marginalized people in various sections through the works of Hindi and English litterateurs, and attempts to unravel the circumstances of these marginalized people.

Keywords: Articulate, Marginalization, Geographical, Witchcraft, Panorama.

Many writers are born in Uttarakhand and its impact may be seen in their works. They have depicted the miserable plight of women, the anguish and grief of untouchables, the hopeless condition of labourers and oppressed people, the society's attitude towards women, disabled persons and elderly in their writings. Discrimination on the basis of caste, colour and race is experienced by marginalized individuals from various areas of society and it is one of the world's most serious problems. People from a certain social group are subjected to inhumane treatment. In society, a person who belongs to the upper class is respected, while a person who belongs to the lower class is not.

The writers have given a conscious voice to the suffering of marginalized people. In Indian society, untouchables and women are discriminated against, and they are deprived from equivalent opportunities. Through the medium of literature, especially through novels and short story writers express the pain of these marginalized sections. These novels deal with the harsh experiences of the poor people and the inner voices of marginalized people. Shailesh Matiyani, Vidya Sagar Nautiyal, Himanshu Joshi, Manohar Shyam Joshi, Shekhar Joshi, Shivani, Jaiwanti Dimri, Diwa Bhatt, Mrinal Pande, etc. are some of the writers who write about marginalized people.

Shailesh Matiyani was born on October 14th, 1931 in a lower middle-class family in Barechhina, a small village in Almora district of Uttarakhand. His full name was Ramesh Chandra Singh Matiyani, Earlier, there was a tradition of adding surnames. He was called Ramesh Matiyani Shailesh initially, but from 1956 he changed his name to Shailesh Matiyani.

Matiyani's novel *Kabutarkhana* to be discussed in this paper, was published in 1960. In the beginning of this novel, Shailesh Matiyani has written a picture of a broken wing pigeon's inner yearning and outer guttural under the title "Two Words". This is a mouth spoken story of Ganpat Rama, a pigeon like servant of mistresses of Mumbai. This story is a phenomenon that compels the mind to think". This story revolves around its protagonist Ganpat whose mother is dead and he himself is ill with cholera. His sister moves to Mumbai to earn money for his treatment because there is no one in the village who is ready to help them. She sends 10 to 15 rupees every month to her brother. One day, when her brother recovers and comes to meet her in Mumbai. He reaches the address where Ganga lives in Mumbai at "Kabutarkhana", a famous locality in Bhuleshwar where he gets to know that his sister is a prostitute in a brothel. Ganpat thinks: "Why did God make a woman so great that man could not pay off her love? When a woman falls, she becomes a goddess. When a man falls, he becomes a Chandaal" (21). Ganga sees her brother through the

window and commits suicide before her brother reaches the second floor. “Ganga does not want to face her brother in this form and commits suicide” (22). This novel shows the sacrifice of a girl and how she sells her own body for the treatment of her brother.

After Ganga’s death, when Ganpat starts working for a rich man, the rich man's wife wants to have physical relations with him. Therefore, he runs away from this job and further explains the condition of Ramas or servants in this statement: “Sethaniya makes relation with the Rama (servants)...the condition of Rama people for Sethani is similar to the dog of English Mam” (23). These lines show the physical exploitation of servants. Ganpat observes during his job how rich, so called elite people have sex with prostitutes and their wives have physical relations with their servants whom are addressed as Rama in this novel. The bad face and cruel reality of the elite class is shown in this novel. Ganpat while sitting in the park after leaving his job at Seth’s house meets a masseuse who during their conversation tell Ganpat “Is there any life for poor boys? Stones have been put in the way of those who want to earn money by honesty. We don’t even get dry bread after working hard...” (25). These lines show how minds of poor people and brings out the pain felt by them all the time.

Ganpat starts a new job in which his work is to carry wine boxes in the car. He starts to earn good money and one day he goes to the brothel with a friend. He is infatuated with a dancer named Kamla, who is a prostitute. A lot of time passes since this incident, then one day he finds the same prostitute who is suffering from the disease ‘garmi’ and she asks him for her help. He then remembers his sister Ganga and the sacrifices she made for him and with this motivated mind helps her. The situation of this prostitute is also the same as Ganga because she was also forced to accept prostitution as a profession because of her father’s illness. Ganpat sends her to her village after her recovery. In the words of Mariyani: “Economic inequality is the main reason for the exploitation of women. Due to this economic inequality women are sold in the market like toys, then they break and get mixed in the soil at last” (67). Women’s exploitation is a serious problem and one of the root causes for this is economic inequality, due to which they are neglected in society.

In his edited book titled *Bhartiya Sahitya Ka Antarrashtriya Pariprekshya*, Dr Sadashiv Pawar published a chapter under the title “Mahanagariya Shwet- Shyam Paksha Ko Darshata Upanyas *Kabutarkhana*” in which he explains “ It is necessary to have a sexual relationship between a man and a

woman but when they are the victims of insatiable lust than their destruction is definite. He exposed the reality of white – collar people through this novel” (102).

Matiyani’s novels have a strong and dignified presence of women. He has presented a multifaceted picture of women in front of us and shown various types of atrocities committed against women through his novel in a poignant manner. Matiyani says at the end of this novel: “...those who have more money do not want to give high positions to women. Thus, the condition of women in both situations is pathetic” (68).

A famous litterateur and MLA, Vidya Sagar Nautiyal was born on September 20th, 1933 in village Maalideval of Tehri district. Nautiyal wandered every corner of Garhwal, only then did he understand the pain of the inhabitants, poor laborers, deprived people, common citizens, nomadic and Gujjars. Nautiyal’s novel is considered as a regional novel. It is written on the incident of Tiladi Kand in the 1930s and describes the exploitation of Rawai (people of Yamuna ghati) by Britishers. *Yamuna Ke Bagi Bete* has been divided into three parts. The first part of the book highlights the struggle of Rawalte against Tehri Rajshahi as a live description. Narendra Shah, the then king of Tehri did not like Tehri as his capital and ordered “to shift his capital to Narendranagar” (33). He was most of times away on foreign trips, so he built cement houses in Narendranagar and declared that there is no use of soil in Narendranagar. The same message was conveyed to the public by the Patwari on behalf of Tehri Durbar:

“Badri Vishal is preparing to move the capital of Tehri to Narendranagar

Narendranagar? Where is Narendranagar?

It is being settled in odhathali. Now it will be called Narendranagar or else a fine will be imposed.

A motor road will be built from Rishikesh to Narendranagar, where every male of the village has to reach on the day of Vijayadashmi with 15day ration, if anyone is not present, he will be fined”.

(33)

These lines clearly show the exploitation of poor Rawai people by the king. After hearing the king's order “all the people of this princely state were ready to serve the King. The King is the Lord. The King’s service has to be done free of cost” (34). The King had shifted his capital at the end of the princely state (35) because of which the king shifted far from the reach of villagers and he was helped by Police Superintendent Chakradhar Juyal in this act, who was later promoted by the king to Home

Member. “The King entrusted the task of suppressing the rising discontent against the policies of the princely state to the flamboyant dreaded prince of the Imperial Police” (39).

Chakradhar Juyal planned with DFO Padamadutt Raturi that the Rawai people would not have any right over the reserve forest. The King made him Diwan after hearing his plan for a reserve forest. He gave a suggestion to the King to invite the Governor of UP, to come visit their capital Narendranagar. King invited Helli and when the British Governor Helli was called to Narendranagar, at that time Rawalte of Yamuna Ghat were also called to Narendranagar to welcome him. They reached there on foot as Rawalte considered the king’s darshan equal to Badrinath’s darshan. However, Rawalte were neither given food nor allowed to sit on the roadside so that the governor could not see them. Dayal Singh, a police man tells them: “Not here Rawalto, move away from here and you will go so far away that the Governor doesn't see you by his car. All our hard work will be wasted when the Governor sees you sleeping like this” (59). They moved to the mountain side to escape the rain where two of their companions lost their lives due to hunger and thirst. It rained continuously and it became difficult for the people to save themselves from heavy rain. There was no shelter facility for them, still many older people hoped that some government servant would definitely come tomorrow (61) but the government had nothing to do with their lives or deaths. When Rawalte wanted to take permission, the Patwari told them:

Diwan Sahib has ordered that till the time the governor’s cars do not go back from Narendranagar till then you people sitting here, do not come on road. If the Governor sees you with a corpse then the state will be defamed...order of Diwan Sahib is the order of King. We were imprisoned without handcuffs. (61)

All the Rawalte were deeply saddened by this and all wanted to go back to their homes. Many more companions died before they could reach home and they expressed their hatred towards Narendra Nagar upon reaching thier homes.

The second part of the novel is the story of Rawalto's struggle against the exploitation of forest officers. According to Vijay Gaur in his article titled “Likho Yaha Vahan Samajik, Sahityik aur Sanskritik Halchalo ke sath” on Yamuna ke bagi bete writes:

According to the forest rule for Tehri state in 1927-28, the benefits of the villagers were deliberately disregarded while setting the boundaries of the forests. The way of the

villagers, the animal farms and fields also come into the reserve forest. Due to this, the rights of the villagers to cut wood and grass were stopped. (Vijay Gaur)

It was announced by the DFO, Padmadutt Raturi, that no place can be given to the villagers in the reserved fields. Forests were counted among the personal property of the king under the forest rules of the state. The pastures were closed, due to which the people who were dependent on agriculture were dissatisfied because their farming tools, ploughs etc., which were made from trees of a particular species became rare. Bamboo, grass and malu leaves were no longer available to be put on the roof of the house and when the villagers asked Padmadutt Raturi where the animals would graze, he said: “Cow...Cow ... throw your cow from the hill” (66). This statement is mainly responsible for this movement.

The third part of this novel is about protests against the British Government. People were breaking the rules of the British government on the call of Gandhi Ji. Newspapers used to come to Lala Ram Prasad's shop in Rajtar on the route from Chakrata to Rawai. The people of Rawai eagerly heard and read the news of Satyagrah in the newspaper and they started a movement for their rights towards forests. It was led by Hira Singh of Nagar village, Daya Ram of Kasru, Baij Ram of Khumai Godar, and Lala Ram Prasad, who was the one arranging newspaper for them.

The residents of Rawai established their own Azad Panchayat and rejected the new boundaries of forests. Orders were sent to the government on behalf of Azad Panchayat, using the stamp of the round pot as a seal. The former vizir, Harikrishna Raturi, was sent by the government for compromise with the Rawai people, but he too returned, justifying the demand of the people of Rawai (88). The angered Chakradhar Juyal sent Padmadutt Raturi to punish the leaders of the movement on the name of compromise. While there was a talk of compromise, on the other hand, a campaign was going on in the court of SDM Surendra Dutt against the prominent leaders of the movement.

DFO Padmadutt Raturi prosecuted on behalf of the state and SDM found the leaders of the movement, Daya Ram, Rudra Singh, Ramprasad, and Jaman Singh, guilty and sentenced them to imprisonment. When the SDM along with the Patwari and the Police was leaving for Tehri, the Rawai people attacked them when they reached near the village of Dandiyal. Guns were fired from both the sides in which Gyan Singh, Juna Singh and Ajit Singh were killed. The DFO and the Policemen fled, and the injured SDM was taken into custody by the Rawai people and was taken to Rajtar alongwith his companions.

Chakradhar Juyal fled to Nainital to save his life, but he was agitated with this incident. He again planned to take revenge with the Rawai people, but this time the king was on a trip to Europe. Colonel Surendra Singh was ordered by Chakradhar Juyal to shoot the Rawai people but on his refusal, Nathu Singh Sajwan was made the highest officer of the army and sent to suppress the movement of the Rawai people. The whole plan of the Rawai people to stop the army failed and discussions on public agreement started in the field of Tiladi. The British army surrounded the agitators from three sides. A soldier, Agam Singh, tried to alert the agitators, but the deewan immediately blew the whistle, and as soon as the whistle sounded, a barrage of bullets started. Some Rawai were killed, some got injured and some jumped into the Yamuna. This is how the Rawai people got to a sad ending, and this is how this novel narrates the painful story of the Rawai people.

The plight of a women and Marginalization in women's perspective is depicted well in work of a women writer. Shivani is a sensitive writer who has given a new perspective on the study of social reality of crucial issues related to women. She analyses these issues of class, caste and gender in her novels. Admittedly, one gets realistic glimpses of the lives of women through the writings of Shivani, particularly through her novels such as *Apradhini*, *Bhairavi: The Runaway*, *Lal Haveli*, etc. These novels highlight the myriad facets of society.

Shivani's *Bhairavi: The Runaway* (a translation from the original Hindi text, *Bhairavi*, rendered in English by Priyanka Sarkar) is one of her early works. Shivani aka Gaura Pant was a very prolific and voluminous writer. She has many novels, short stories and essays to her credit. She was born on October 17, 1924, on Vijaya Dashmi in Rajkot, Gujarat. The English translation of her works gives an insight into the deeper psychological and understanding of women. Shivani's purpose was to give voice to the marginalized women in the society and to explore the discrimination orders of caste, gender and class. According to Mrinal Pande in forward of this novel:

In *Bhairavi*, the young protagonist Chandan becomes a prism through whom Shivani the writer observes, watches, recognizes, listens to all this. What happens to an innocent fatherless young girl when fate suddenly catapults her into a landscape totally exterior to her, not just once but again and again... (x).

This novel is all about the struggles of a voiceless marginalized named Chandan who is the protagonist of this novel. Chandan is the daughter of Rajrajeshwari and a wealthy businessman. The novel

highlights the past of Chandan's mother, who is solely responsible for Chandan's present. The boy whom her mother (Rajrajeshwari) loved was from a lower caste, so Rajrajeshwari's father forced his daughter to marry a fifty-year-old man to maintain their reputation in society. Rajrajeshwari's husband was a businessman as well as an alcoholic person. When her husband came to know about her past, he imposed strict restrictions on her.

She never laughed or dressed up or applied make-up. She didn't even go to the veranda or the terrace, leave alone stepping outside the house. She never stood before the mirror. For his part, the jealous husband thought it prudent to fortify his fortress. He locked his wife in when he left for the shop (64).

Chandan was born after a year in her father's captivity, but his father did not believe his wife that Chandan was his daughter. He always kept asking her: 'Is she really my child? You haven't diluted the milk, have you?' (65) When Chandan was only two years old, her father died. Rajrajeshwari always tried to keep an eye on Chandan as she desired a better future for Chandan which is far better than her past. Chandan's mother started looking for a worthy and suitable groom for her daughter because Chandan was extremely beautiful. According to Ruth Dhanraj: "Bhairavi touches on the prevailing social norms of the time – marriage as a necessary duty for parents of daughters to fulfil, especially if their child is uncommonly beautiful; the confines of caste and community and the inescapable clutches of one's fate" (The Hindu). These lines show parents' concern for their daughters' marriage as Rajrajeshwari worries for Chandan's marriage. She goes through Almora to Dharchula in search of the groom. Suddenly, one day a group of mountaineers came to Dharchula where they saw Chandan, and one of them, named Vikram, fell in love with Chandan at first sight. Chandan and Vikram get married but fate takes a turn. When Chandan was going to Calcutta with her husband, an incident occurs which changes Chandan's entire fate. During the journey, the train stopped in the small station and four army officers get in to ruin their isolation. They start drinking and keep staring at Chandan, all of which scared her. Afterwards, they start beating Vikram, who tried to protect his wife and tie him to a berth with a sheet.

She could hear her helpless, restrained husband groaning- had they gagged him too? Will they take his life? Even if they don't take his life, will she ever be able to show her besmirched face to him. The other human lion had just started pulling her towards himself when she leapt like thunder. If nothing else, she could try and find the door of the train in the dark. She didn't delay a

second when she found the door of the speeding train. She deceived the eight hands trying to grab her and jumped (150).

Chandan was saved by an Aghori, who brings her to his Aghori ashram, where the Guru names her Bairavi. The ashram becomes a place for Chandan's transformation, where she acquires a rather carefree companion, Charan and a fearsome mentor, Maya didi. She was troubled by the factors of her beauty here too, there was no Sanyashin who wanted to take her with them. Every guru would get attracted to her and give importance to her, because of her beauty. So, her beauty itself became a curse for her, and it became the only reason for her suffering. The psychological trauma that a girl undergoes after physical assault and the social reaction to such incidents is genuinely expressed by the author.

Jaiwanti Dimri is one of the prominent writers of Uttarakhand. She is a bilingual writer, critic and translator. She retired from H P University Shimla as a Professor of English in 2010. A recipient of Arya Smriti Samman (2002) in the genre of Hindi short story, her short stories have been published in national journals, anthologies and translated into English, Telugu and Marathi. Her novel *To Surju With Love* deals with the displacement of marginalization.

To Surju, With Love is all about the sufferings of Sukurmani with her four-year-old son named Surju. This novel is expressed through a dialogue between two women: Sukurmani and her Memsaab. It is about a poor widow who had to leave her country in search of employment. She is an illegal migrant in Bhutan and her husband also becomes a victim of this "himsa".

This novel deals with a lot of problems: loss of identity, hard lives of migrants, being a single mother, and many more. Sukurmani works as a domestic help for Memsaab. One common thing between them is that they are both in Bhutan for employment, so they share a sisterhood bond. Sukurmani gave her own father's name to her son for his sake in a foreign land. When memsaab asks her about her father's name to write a letter to him. She replied 'Surju Tutu' memsaab again asks to confirm its 'Surju'. "Your father's name is Surju Tutu. And your son's name is Surju Tutu" (8) for then she replies "Memsaab, I will give my father's name to my child. Now that he has no father, how can I give him his father's name? If anything happens to us in this foreign land, where will the child go? (8) These lines show her fear for her son and her strong will to keep her son safe from every problem.

One more truth she reveals before Memsaab is that her actual name is Hujunmoi. She works here under the name of her sister, Sukurmani, who also died in himsa. Her sister worked here under Gref (General Reserve Engineer Force) but after her death, she started working under her name. Hujunmoi also lost her identity in search of employment. She borrowed the identity of her dead sister and gave her fatherless son the shelter of her own father's name. She lost her daughter also, who was killed in himsa by her own brother after he drank raasi.

She became helpless in this foreign land. Every Bihari and Muslim labour want to take advantage of her poverty and sometimes she faces physical harassment. "Their physical needs had to be fulfilled and in the absence of their wives, co-women workers like Sukurmani became the soft target" (24) It is believed that the hope of her son's better education helps her to face all challenges.

Conclusion: Literature is the mirror of society, and litterateur gives a new direction to literature and society through his writings. An attempt has been made by the litterateurs through their creations to break the superstitions prevailing in society due to ignorance and caste discrimination. Many litterateurs have taken birth in the state of Uttarakhand and its social system, geographical location and economic condition have been described in their writings. Many efforts have been made by the writers to highlight the sufferings of the marginalized people in their writings.

The exploitation and oppression of poor people is the main theme of these novels and the condition of marginalized people is similar in every novel, although their names are different but their struggle in life is the same. They suffered neglect and humiliation for being weak and helpless. The exploitation of poor people and the atrocities to hide their crime has been shown by the writers.

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