



HASNSADA SOWVENDRA SHEKHAR'S *THE ADIVASI WILL NOT DANCE: A CRY OF MARGINALITY*

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Abstract

Displacement of villagers under the label of development has become the tradition in the modern literature. He so called displacement of rural resulted into various problems like homelessness, suppression, loss of identity, deforestation, excess industrialization leading towards environmental imbalance. Construction of mega projects in the country not only disturbs a village but also the whole community of the village. Though the local societies oppose the projects, it is found that the most of the hands of the political leaders and environmental activists do not co-operate poor in the evidence. The present paper tries to highlight the cry of displacement of marginal and their plight. It is also an attempt to find out the trauma of a tribal community which first was promised to be inhabited but later on was neglected in all matters. The paper also tries to highlight the plight of tribal community in Jharkhand which failed to raise their voice against their injustice in the form of Mangal Murmu, a veteran adivasi, a central character in the series of novella. The central character of the novella exposes how kind hearted adivasi community is cheated by the Jolha community. The plight of the adivasi community is portrayed in the sketching of Murmu who reveals the agony of their community after denying dancing in a programme. The action of the denial of dance of adivasi community shows their reluctance upon their displacement in a cultural function becomes a matter of fiasco in it. The papers apart from the cries of minorities explore the exploitation of adivasi community in Jharkhand state.

Keywords

Marginality, Exploitation, Displacement, Deforestation, Adivasi Culture, Industrialization, Santhals, etc.

Full Article

Modern Indian English literature reflects the trend of the displacement of people. After independence, India strove to adopt schemes like liberalization, privatization, and globalization, intending to facilitate the growth of a powerful economy and elevate the living standards of minorities. The authorities are trying to construct the mega projects in remotes areas with the intention of providing the more opportunities to poor community residing in jungles. The dream of India to resolve the problems of minorities remained a question as it created many negative changes in her society. Under the label of industrialization and displacement a large group of society in remote areas has been offered work to their hands. Such projects targeted short term benefits of handful political leaders leaving long term impact on the increasing poverty of adivasi. The displacement of natives in Jharkhand resulted in the search of their identity. The affected society instead of getting benefits is portrayed as how they have been penalized badly from it.

Hansada Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* is a narrative in the form of ten short stories which continuously raises the questions of Santhal community using Mangal Murmu, as a



protagonist. Mangal Murmu, the protagonist, a veteran adivasi had been a former in the past. Now he is a well-trained artist who regularly performs cultural programmes of their tribe. The novella contains the theme of love, affection of their community, and their attachments towards land. The so called title of the novella shows that there is agony in the minds of the Santhals community. They are fed up of with the injustice. Just going in the past of their community and their society, the novelist introduces us with the benevolence of the society. It happens that once Santhals offered accommodation to Jolha families. The community was totally unaware of the hidden truth of Jolha family. With a deep heart Santhals offered them shelter and that shelter turned into a spark for the whole community in uprooting their families and lands because the novelist says that the Jolha families later on become a dominant group. Jolhas conquered the lands of Santhals along with their development. Jolhas gradually grabbed the lands of adivasi and slowly created many issues like bread and butter.

As a result of this, after the deep pains in the heart, adivasi revolted against the Jolha society and targeted to protest the mining companies. At the beginning of the protest, Santhals received the support of a few political leaders and Christian missionaries. But their attempt could not continue much more. The misfortune of adivasi seemed very pitiable when the Santhals were blamed for the death of a Christian sister. The false asperse of killing of a Christian sister brought deep downs in their protest. They were also accused as barbaric and ungrateful community in the region. It leaded them to be neglected by the all political leaders and the social media who were supported to expose their agony before the world. To quote Mangal Murmu:

They reported that the Kristina sister was fighting for the rights and yet our boys killed her. No one bothered to see that our boys had been fighting after our lands and rights even before the Kristina sister came. Why would they kill her? Just because our boys did not have reporter friend, their fight went unseen ... now that our boys are in jail on false charges of murder. Who will fight for us? (Sowvendra, 171)

The above words of Mangal Murmu clearly depict how the pitiable condition of Santhals was during his time. He makes clear how gullible society like Santhal was deceived badly. The accuse made on the adivasi society was unprecedented that uprooted them from their all dreams. The protagonist continues his agony by speaking that nobody was there to save the lives of poor Santhals. The leader of Santhals was threatend and some of them were imprisoned just to press their identity and voice. The new form of penalty that was hampered upon them by Jolhas was that they were shifted in coal mine from farming. To quote Murmu: "After all they already have one land, they are stealing our land" (Sowvendra, 174).

Santhals continued their exploitation in farming and in their living ways. However, Jolhas on the other side continued their cruel eye upon Santhals. They did not stop there. They took away the hidden treasure of Santhals – the jungle for their lust and their basic needs. S. N. Tripathi expresses how pitiable and tyrannical condition of Santhals as: "Jolhas deprived the tribal people from time to time of their fertile lands and went subjected to ruthless exploitation by invading people, resulting in living greater wilderness" (Tripathi).

The remark of S. N. Tripathi shows it clearly that the present novel is an example of mammoth exploitation by Jolha community upon Santhals. The Jolhas not only exploited them physically but also mentally. They even hampered the living standard of santhals. Santhals, a group of kind hearted, a gullible community after having received the shelter form them grabbed Santhals badly. They snatched away the lands of Santhals, displaced their houses and many times they accused the Santhals in inhumane manner.

The novel side by side touches the religious problems of the Santhals. It shows the flow of the episodes of the Santhals. It shows the episodes of the fall of misfortunes upon Santhal community. The Santhals were not only blamed of the killing of the Christian life but also they



experienced a religious prosecution. It showed the possibilities of displacement, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mentality among the Santhals. The novelist says that under the name of the development of Santhals, Joltha community made the encroachment in jungle; they massacred the hundreds of trees to quench their financial lust. The cutting down of the dense jungle in the region of Santhals created the environmental issues like soil erosion, imbalance of Nature and raised questions regarding the existence of animals in it. It moreover led the beasts to enter in the community of the Santhals and made the possibilities of attacks of beasts upon innocents. The novelist, moreover, explained the negative effects of coal-mine upon natives. He says that the continuous discharge and taking of the coal everyday kept the village darker. It created a lot of hygienic issues among natives. It made the villages to turn darker. The novelist quotes it in the words of Murmu as: “Our children – dark skinned as they are forever covered with fine black dust. When they cry, tears streamed down their faces. It seemed as if river is coming across a drought – stricken land” (Sowvendra, 175).

These words of the protagonist show the grief of the Santhals community and the repellent behavior that they received by the Jholha community. The novelist, when speaks of the injustice of adivasi, he explains that the media was never showed its interest in the projection of their problems. Just opposite to it, media showed it extra interest in the murder of the Jolhas. He says that the news of the murder of the Christian sister was wrapped in the newspaper whereas the burning issue of adivasi was flashed in a corner of the newspaper. It means though Jolha was playing the crucial part in the devastation of the Santhals, it was never focused by media. He also adds that neither deforestation nor the issues like landlessness, homelessness, and food security was flashed by media in newspapers. Thus, the novel tried to highlight the plight of Santhals in detail and arised much more questions about the steps taken for the security and future of the Santhal community. Parallel to it, the novelist attacks on the political parties and their effeminate behavior and appeals the existing systems to step towards the efforts to elevate the standard of the Santhal community and environmental balance as well.

The novelist uses the title in metaphoric form which shows the agony of Santhals. Santhals every year are called to perform their culture. But since they have suffered inhumanly by the Jolhas, Murmu, the representative of their community denies performing at the eleventh hour before the arrival of the presidential function. He denies performing by saying that in the past they danced for their bread and butter, for their jobs, but now they lost their lands, their jobs, their houses, they have no room for their lives. He adds his agony by adding that they have been caught in a horrible state. He puts forth the fact of their existing poor condition by saying that they liked polo-some game played with horses and that their horses were for better than all Santhals. He again added that the construction of the power plants will be the end of all their community. His dialogue raised many questions of the horror of minors. He questions that no nation displaces thousands of people from their homes and live-hood to produce electricity for cities and factories except this nation.

Precisely saying the novel highlighted the impact of power project construction on the lives of poor Santhals. Obviously, the construction of plants would light up the mining factories. It also projected how Santhals were thrown away into the darkness without thinking of their future. The novel also cleared how the project in adivasi community in Jharkhand forced out the lives of minorities. Instead of smoothing the life of adivasi community, the project will surely make their lives more challenging. Even it also highlighted that the rehabilitation of minors will make a lifetime threat upon the bread and butter of Santhals.



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