



The execution of writing for the marginalized

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Abstract - Marginality is an experience affecting millions of people throughout the world. Being poor, unemployed, discriminated against, or being disabled by a society that won't work around the problems of impairment. they all bring with them the risk of exclusion. Being excluded from economic, social and political means of promoting one's self-determination can have adverse effects for individuals and communities alike.

Key Word - Marginality, economic, aesthetic value

Introduction –

The Execution In the nineteenth century, there was a tendency to attach a rational or utilitarian motive to art. The rise of Romanticism countered this line of thinking and promoted the view that Art should be appreciated only for its intrinsic aesthetic value. The catch phrase "l'art pour l'art" (art for art's sake) resonated in the French circles Gautier, Flaubert, Mallarme and Baudelaire were its chief supporters. The aesthetic pleasure of a piece of art being the only reason for its existence, it was considered as free from having any other didactic or moral purpose in life. Keats, Eliot, Tennyson, Tagore, Kalidas, Agyeya - were all proponents of this school of thought. While this may hold true of other art forms that can dabble in sheer beauty and Romanticism, Literature has a greater role to perform and cannot be dismissive of a more profound role or alienate itself from a greater service to humanity. It can render itself to the cause of reforming the society, instilling a social and moral value system and presenting a picture of society that is scrupulous and realistic in its depiction.¹

Oscar Wilde said, "**Art is useless because its aim is simply to create a mood. It is not meant to instruct, or to influence action in any way.**" Shaw, Walt Whitman, Dostoevsky, Dickens, Gorky, Kabir, Premchand etc adhered to the concept of art as having a more exalted purpose in life. Thus, we can say that Literature should combine the dual purpose of satisfying the aesthetic craving of humans and serving the society as well, for it is nothing but a reflection of life itself.

In India, specially, the existence of Literature as a separate entity, free of any social and didactic responsibilities, appears to be an abstract construct. Many issues of Existentialism challenge the very concept of an egalitarian society. Many issues of biases, subalternity or marginalization need to be addressed and a reformatory purpose needs to be served. Literature can make its own contributions by sensitizing and educating the society about the sufferings and angst of various disadvantaged segments of society. In other words, it has to give an intellectual voice to the so far unheard cries of those who could not voice their concerns.²

Many writers have been able to conceptualize the sufferings of the so far marginalized groups of society and tried to combat various biases as regards gender, race, caste, ability etc. Many segments of society struggle to place themselves an equal social, economic, political and legal footing with the rest of the world. They have been denied their basic existential rights forcing them to accept the hegemonic rule of the social strata considered superior by even the suppressed. Some of them are doubly marginalized by caste and gender. Some, even more so, by their diasporic identity. They struggle to assert their identity or at times even for recognition. This can prove detrimental for the flourishing of any society as it leaves too many weak links in the social order.

Feministic Discourse

Many Indian writers have managed to drag out many problems out of the metaphorical closet to create an active discourse about issues which the society had turned a blind eye towards in its state of self - complacency. Almost all of the feministic viewpoints have been suggested by female writers. As Anne Elliot says in **Persuasion (Jane Austen, 1818)** "**Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story**". So it's time for women to tell their story. Judith Butler broke



ground with her book ' **Gender Trouble** '. Many contemporary feministic writers in English have given an international platform to the voice of the Indian women. Nayantara Sehgal, Kamala Das, Anita Nair, Jhumpa Lahiri, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Manju Kapur, Chitra Banerjee Devkurni are some of the prominent names. Urvashi Butalia has given expression to the pain of the displaced women during the partition of India and Pakistan. Kamala Markandeya has envisaged the plight of the rural women. Mahasweta Devi, who has been effectively translated into English by Gayatri Spivak, has chosen to write about the plight of these women from the lowest rungs of society at a time when there was a splurge in crimes and atrocities met out to women in the rural areas and lower sections of society.³

Bringing The Third Gender Into The Mainstream

The issues of not only the second (Feminine) gender but the third gender are now being discussed and a general awareness is being developed about this so far ignored segment of society. Many bold writings from writers such as Ruth Vanita, Devdutt Pattanaik, Suparna Bhaskaran, Gayatri Reddy and Mahesh Dattani have forced a discourse on a subject that was the proverbial elephant in the room that no one was willing to address. Laxmi and A Revathy's autobiographies on the of the eunuch or Hijra community are path breaking eye openers that have forced an insight into the lives of these unfortunate souls who have been relegated to a very inferior position in society and whose identity has been suppressed and relegated to a presence that is merely tolerated on auspicious occasions. " **As eunuchs, hijras are man minus man** " (Wendy O'Flaherty, 1980 : 297)

Dalit Literature

Slave has found vociferous narrative expression in the form of Dalit Literature, though most of it has been produced by writers who have emerged from these castes, tribes or classes. Dalit Literature gives expression to the age old anger and resentment felt by the Harijans, landless labourers, Adivasis and the untouchables relegated to living outside the boundaries of the communal setting and forced to tolerate inhuman oppression and suppression. It questions the tyranny, oppression and subjugation of certain tribes or castes, leading to their exploitation. As Arundhati Roy has said, "**..it is as important for Dalits to tell their stories as it has been for colonized peoples to write their own histories.**"⁴

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar has given vignettes in the lives of the adivasis from Jharkhand in his controversial collection of short stories **The Adivasi Will Not Dance** based on the Santhal tribe. He has defended his wonderful account of life on the margins in these words - " **My book isn't political in the electoral sense. I explore themes that are socio-political, you could say** ". The contributions of Phule, Ambedkar, Namdeo Dhasal, Meena Kandasamy, Bama, Daya Pawar, Ajay Nawaria, Omprakash Valmiki and Limbale - among others are an outcry against the caste - discrimination that has prevailed in and plagued the Indian society for centuries. " **Revolt is the stage that follows anguish and rejection. I am human, I must receive all the rights of a human being**". The literary revolution of voicing Dalit concerns has given birth to a separate genre of writing known as Dalit Feminism. Dalit works have found a distinct voice and parallel aesthetics in mainstream literature.⁵

Disability Literature

Though much has been written about the deprived, many disadvantaged groups have so far not found adequate mention in mainstream discourse. This group includes Disability Studies. A substantial degree of attention needs to be given towards sensitizing the people about the problems faced by people who are forced to the dungeons of society on account of some biologically anomalous trait which they have no control over. Societal attitudes have metamorphosed with changing times resulting in a Disability consciousness and psychological as well as sociological dialectics. Disability may cover physical as well as mental impairment inhibiting the active participation of the affected in a society where they are constantly treated as the ' other ', often being ostracized or subjected to extreme sympathy. David Bolt has taken a close look at the relationship between Literature and Disability in his book called ' **Literary Disability Studies** '. More attention needs to be given to this discourse as "**Understanding social constructions of disability and impairment can help to explain why people with disabilities have been marginalized and discriminated against and can draw attention to what needs to be done to eliminate negative attitudes.**"⁶

Firdaus Kanga's has hit this nerve in his novel, **Trying to Grow** (1991), which has its protagonist, Daryus Kotwal, who suffers from a disease that makes his bones brittle. However, he refuses to give in to his impairment and fights at all odds and realizes his goal of self actualization, growing in more ways than one when he discovers the potential inside him. Anita Desai has centered her stories around female characters facing their own psychological demons and emotional traumas in her novels. Rohinton Mistry's protagonist in **Family Matters** is afflicted with Osteoporosis and Parkinson's while Pramila Sundaram has given an insight into the problems faced by someone suffering from Downe's Syndrome.



Many universities have realized that the narratives of the specially abled is a cause for concern and must be included in the mainstream and included it as a part of their curriculum.

Literature and Social Concerns : Juxtaposition or Coalescence ?

If an Equalitarian society needs to be developed, litterateurs will have to voice the concerns of those that have not found a venerable position or mention in any mainstream intellectual discourse. Readers in India , once they are sensitized about a problem , find it easy to empathize with the concerned group and would like to read literature that voices their sufferings . The canons of literary writings need to be adapted to a more reformative method of writing that challenges the paradigms of society and brings about awareness towards the subjugated lot. Litterateurs cannot exist in isolation detached from the ills prevailing in society and ailing their fellow beings. They have to empathize with their disadvantaged fellow beings and take the first step of giving recognition and then expression of these issues. Thus , any kind of discourse or narrative that brings the plight of human sufferings to the notice of the people will find instant and widespread acclaim . Not only will it contribute to its popularity but also serve a social cause, Writers from the same milieu have done a creditable job of amalgamating aesthetics and social awareness of their cause by originating a sympathetic attitude among the readers. This awareness will gradually filter vertically as well as laterally inspiring the people involved in the struggle for asserting their rights and creating a better existential state, free from any injustices and discrimination.⁷

One of the challenges to community psychology is to use a well-known proverb, to ‘think global and act local’. Our analyses of marginalization must take account of the wider global picture , and the onus is on us to share links internationally , not in the grandiose ways of much academic and professional activity via the medium of academic publishing, but via direct links with local projects.

Conclusion

As community psychologists we can work together to help evaluate what works best, what are the barriers to change. And what change projects are all about. We would argue that to work at the margin of psychology, with one foot in and one foot out of the discipline, with those who are marginalized demands particular ways of being. This work requires us to make personal commitments to social justice, not just in our works but in our lives as well.

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