

POETIC JUSTICE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN FAKIRMOHAN SENAPATI'S '*SIX ACRES AND A THIRD*' AND GOPINATH MOHANTY'S '*PARAJA*'

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ABSTRACT

Poetic justice is an ideal form of justice meted out to the characters as per their deeds by Ironic twist of their fate. The exploitation of the rural mass in the hands of the ruling class being stimulated by greed, invites a series of misfortune upon the protagonist which gets reflected in the novels written during the phase of colonial India. The movement of the plot makes the reader perceive that the innocence and simplicity is openly stabbed by the ruling class owing power and wealth. Here comes the necessity of justice, to refrain the beasts from sucking blood and life of the poor peasants. Poetic justice is the deliberate attempt to portray justice at the end. Justice follows crime. It may be delayed for a while but still it meets the punishment to the merciless rulers. The poetic justice remains in the hand of the poet, how he wishes to end the plot, in form of revenge, divine justice or Marxist justice. Poetic Justice makes the audience imagine the way life may become harsh on anyone and to what an extent fortune may become unfavorable upon human beings. The poetic justice at the end fulfils their expectations along with living the silent message that the result of misdoing is always disastrous.

This article mainly focuses upon the Poetic Justice made by Fakirmohan Senapati and Gopinath Mohanty at the end of '*Paraja*' and '*Six Acres and a Third*' which effectively serves several purposes. The justice at the end provides contentment to the readers as well as adds some moral values to the piece of literature. It serves the purpose of adherence to the universal code of Morality i.e- Virtue triumphs vice.

KEYWORDS: Exploitation, Poetic Justice, Marxist Justice

INTRODUCTION

Fakirmohan Senapati and Gopinath Mohanty are the two most honourable novelists of odia literature. Their contribution to the odia literature is remarkable. Fakir Mohan Senapati (1843-1918) is one of the 'PATER FAMILIAS' of Modern Indian Novel. He has outstanding contribution to the odia literature. He could be compared with Charles Dickens as a genial Humorist and social critic and with Thomas Hardy as a great story teller. '*Chhamaanna Aathaguntha*' was one of his famous Novels, published in the year 1912 which was later translated into English as '*Six Acres and a Third*'.

Gopinath Mohanty (1914-1991) was a representative novelist of contemporary oriya literature after Fakir Mohan Senapati during 20th century. He too made remarkable contribution to Indian literature especially to oriya literature. His masterpiece '*PARAJA*' was published in 1946. It is most poignant and lyrical among the other novels of Mohanty. His first-hand knowledge about the social, cultural and economic life of those tribal people is reflected in this novel.

Fakirmohan Senapati and Gopinath Mohanty both in their respective novels *Six Acres and a Third* and *Paraja* concentrated on the life of the rural and the tribal people. Senapati presented the picture of the colonial Indian society during the early decades of 19th century through the tale of poverty, wealth and greed followed by the subsequent consequences of the evil desires. Whereas, Mohanty portrayed the story of a tribal patriarch and the slow decline of his fortune. Both the novelists drew their characters from rural background, low in status. They are represented as simple minded people, living a plain and smooth going life without any complication. With the gradual progress, their tranquil life is ruptured by the intervention of some villainous characters that devastated their world completely and exploited them like anything. The novelists portrayed the life of simple, rural characters that appear convincing and real to us.

A sin or crime once committed never remains unnoticed and unpunished. In Fakirmohan's '*Chhamaana Athaguntha*' and in Gopinath's '*Paraja*' we see poetic justice meted out but in two different ways. Although, we see the innocent and simple people suffer endlessly throughout their life in the hands of the merciless beings that are superior to them. No compensation is given to the victims for suffering or loss but the villain meets out with an appropriate judgment. It takes the plot to its climax making the readers feel sympathetic towards the characters and enraged towards the so-called ruling authority. In '*Paraja*' and '*Six Acre and a Third*', the real protagonist or the poor people, innocent, rustics or tribals suffer in the hands of the aristocratic class. Towards the end, the evil doer is punished accordingly as he deserves, but the 'justice' neither gives back the lost property nor life to the victim. But, the punishment of the villain gives relief to the suffering people and also to the readers... It couldn't give them back their lost happy days but the justice is given to them by freeing them from slavery and suffering. It confers a flash on the face of hapless poor people as found in both the novels. The poetic justice remains in the hand of the poet, how he wishes to end the plot, in form of revenge, divine justice or Marxist justice. Poetic Justice makes the audience imagine the way life may become harsh on anyone and to what an extent fortune may become unfavourable upon human beings. The poetic justice at the end fulfills their expectations along with living the silent message that the result of misdoing is always disastrous.

'Poetic Justice; is very important in order to maintain the social decorum, decency, morality, honesty, to save-guard the life and property of the poor, innocent, backward people, and also to show the victory of virtue over vice, good over evil, justice over injustice.

G.N.MOHANTY'S 'PARAJA'

'*Paraja*' is a prose epic on the trials and tribulations of the uncivilized poor tribals of Orissa. The plot is based on their land based economic struggles and exploitation. The agencies of their exploitation are the govt. Agencies like the forest guard and the court officials and the upper class people like the village trader, Rama Bisoi.

Through their status and influence, they continued to exploit the tribals generation after generation. Sukruani, the poor peasant suffered in the hands of Rama Bisoi. The forest officer, being a man of loose morals wanted Jili for his night's enjoyment but sukru refused. So, the forest officer charged a huge amount on him as fine for stealing wood from forest.

It shows how the people, who were to save those people from exploitation, themselves exploited them physically, mentally, financially(in all ways). Rama Bisoi, the money lender of the area too in a guise of a good mask man, was originally a merciless cruel beast who lent money and grain to those poverty-ridden people and exploited them. His only

intention was grabbing the land and property of the poor people by playing tricks on them. He exploited Sukru and made him and his son slaves by taking the advantage of their miserable condition. He was also a lascivious man who was interested in the tribal women. He too developed an immoral relationship with Jili, the daughter of sukrujani, who surrendered herself to him, out of her helplessness, being forced by circumstances.

He was indifferent to the pain and suffering of the poor rustic people. Bisoi was an unrepentant sinner. He thought he would easily carry out with his exploitation, without any opposition. He never thought even in dreams, which he would have to pay for this one day. Being unaware of his own death knocking at his door, he refused to return the land to Sukru, misbehaved and rebuked him, spoke some evil words for his daughter and dead wife. It was Mandia, the son of Sukru who couldn't tolerate such unpardonable behavior of the sahuakar, lost his patience and in his anger chopped off Bisoi's head with an axe. This was the retributive justice which caused the death of Bisoi. Justice is meted out by violence. The sahuakar got his ultimate award.

A sinner or a criminal should surely meet with the proper punishment he deserves. It was the tribal justice in which the tribals believed. Later on, Mandia confessed his crime at the police station and asked for punishment. But, from humanity point of view, Mandia was neither a criminal nor a sinner. He was the Savior who saved the whole tribe by killing the monster like Rama Bisoi. He made justice with the tribal people so as to the sahuakar. So, he too should get proper justice in the court of law.

FAKIRMOHAN SENAPATI'S 'SIX ACRES AND A THIRD'

The concept of justice in Fakirmohan was little different, as '*Six acres and a Third*', presented the exploitation of the poor peasants in the hands of the autocrat, cruel, heartless Zamindars. It is the story of betrayal, hypocrisy, dishonesty and death as the reward of it. Rama chandra Mangaraj raised himself to the position of a rich moneylender from a pauper by using his cunning and tactful tricks taking birth in his shrewd mind. He possessed the zamindari from Sheik Dildar Mia by outwitting him. He too grabbed the lands of the peasants. He possessed the land of six acres and a third of a weaver couple Bhagia-Saria by playing trick in the name of religion. He also made them homeless and mad ultimately. He got the aid and advice in his evil mechanisms from champa. He even went to the extent of burning the house of the Baghasinha family to take revenge for offending him. In all his evil works, Champa instrumentally played an eminent role. Through exploitation and by applying evil means, he made himself one of the rich men of the area. He was a great miser and did never spend a single penny for food and cleanliness. He was the embodiment of pretence, flattery and hypocrisy.

Rama Mangaraj was the only cause of the madness of Bhagia and death of Saria. After investigation of Saria's death, Mangaraj was arrested and after a long trail in the court, he was sentenced to imprisonment. At jail, he was both beaten mercilessly by the victims and he also repented for the crimes he had committed. He was left to die a miserable and equally pathetic death in a state of delirium uttering ch-ha-ma-an--gu. The richest man of the locality, died like a poor and helpless man having not even a single soul by his side at the time of death. He realizes his own fault at the time of death.

Mangaraj was given the proper judgment by the court of law, by the people who were exploited by him and also by God.

CONCLUSIONS

Both in '*Paraja*' and '*Six Acres and a Third*' Justice is given at the end. Evil characters of both the novels

resemble very much in name, character, behavior, thoughts. In '*Paraja*', it was, Ramachandra Bisoi where as in 'Six Acres and a Third' it was Ramachandra Mangaraj who acted as a villainous Character. They both were rapacious money lenders, fixed their eyes on the land and property of the poor peasants. They exploited the poor people both mentally, physically and financially.

'*Paraja*' was published in 1942 where as '*A Six Acres and Third*' was published in 1912. Both the novels very appropriately reflected the realistic picture of the contemporary society, culture and lifestyle. Instead, of this long gap, between novels, the two villainous characters appear to be same in their attitude and temperament. Both of them lend money and in a very tactful way possessed the money and land of the poor peasants. Both of them being misers, never spent money lavishly, pretended to be helpful and kind towards the needy one but actually were nothing more than Hippocrates. They both differed in one aspect, Rama Bisoi, was a luscious man who was interested in the tribal women to fulfill his lust, where this aspect was not found in Rama Chandra mangaraj. Both of them were punished for their evil deeds, but the poetic justice in these two novels differs. In '*Paraja*' it is '*Marxist justice*', the victim himself out of frustration, being blind in anger not in a condition to tolerate the cruel and unkind rough behaviour of Bisoi, and chopped of his head with his axe, later on surrendered himself to the court of law. He made a permanent solution for their freedom from slavery, suffering and exploitation. But in 'Six Acres and a Third, Senapati Fakirmohan showed the '*DivineJustice*' working and punishing people for their evil deeds. Mangaraj was neither killed nor punished by any of the victims. He was arrested by the police after the investigation of the death of Saria. He was sentenced to hard labour after a long trail. At the jial, he was beaten by the poor people who once fell prey to his evil mechanism. He in a miserable condition died a pathetic death. Here it is god who punished him and made him realize his faults. But in '*Paraja*', Bisoi died a horrible death but all of a sudden, without a self-realization.

A justice is more appropriate and powerful when the victim realizes its own faults for which he is punished. As it is said, self realization is the best punishment. It makes the people aware of the flaws in their own character. The theme of justice rules in both the novels.

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