

The Study Of Savagery in the Novel *The Man Of Chinnamasta*

Jyothi.Gedela^{1*}, Dr. Swati. Bhise²

^{1*}P.hD Scholar, Amity School of Languages, Amity University, Maharashtra-India. Email: jyothivarma78@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor, Research Co-ordinator, Amity School of Languages, Amity University, Maharashtra-India.

Abstract

Indira Goswami, a renowned writer contributed with her high literary skills in the literature world. she belongs to the family who followed lord Vishnu from several gods of Hindus. Since her schooling days, she was fond of writing stories and got the opportunity to release her first set of short stories *Chinaki Morom* at the age of thirteen, later graduated in Asameese literature and later with a Master's degree from Gauhati University. After the death of her husband, she pursued P.hD. Her great contributions are *The Moth Eaten Howdah of a Tusker* (2005), *The Moth Eaten Howdah of a Tusker* (2005) *The Man from Chinnamasta* (2006), and *Pages Stained with Blood* (2010) *The Man from Chinnamasta* (2006) was primarily written in the Asomiya language and later with the contribution of Prashant Goswami translated into English. To highlight the critical information through the novel about the malpractice of the thousand-year-old ritual of animal sacrifice at the Kamakhya temple.

Keywords: Vishnu, Asomiya, malpractice, animal sacrifice, Kamakhya temple.

1. Introduction

In the novel *The Man of Chinnamasta* the author Indira Goswami portrays the ordinary history of the heritage and the practices of the very prominent temple of Kamakhya that has acquired expected attention for transformation. The prime motive is to bring about consciousness regarding the atrocities against animal sacrifices and to introduce the transformation in societal attitudes. The author Indira Goswami takes important steps to bring attention to animal sacrifice practices and to act on preventive measures. The novel is based on the self-disciplined Jatadhari who is a true worshipper of MaChinnamasta and his urge to stop the evil practice of killing to death to animals for the sake of worshipping to which he presses obligations as it has not been written in Puranas for animal sacrifices with their blood or flesh.

2. Literature review

The man eater of Malgudi (1961) R.K. Narayan highlights the cruel behavior with human beings and mute animals. The whole narration is about animals being poached and stuffed by cruel human beings. The Elephant who is named Kumaris tried to be killed by the antagonist Vasu but at the prime time, he is saved by protagonist Nataraj. "*The Gift of Cow*" (1968) written by Munshi Premchand and translated into English by Gordan C. Roadarmel where the whole narration is based on the Cow. The protagonist Hori is very fond of buying the cow and to use its all the products produced by it. Later he purchases the cow and cherishes it by worshipping it as a deity and its prosperity is overwelingly presented in his courtyard which is not digestible by his brother Hira. One night he took the life of a cow by poisoning it and eloped from the village the same night. But the trauma of murdering the cow haunted him for five years and he was there for five years in the Asylum. *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983) by R.K. Narayan is highlighted from the Tiger's point of view of expression. The trauma of losing the entire family Raja the tiger couldn't able to over it. During the death of his family members, he was crying his whole heart out but nobody paid attention to it any hunters. One day he is been captured by the Circus troops and receives training for exhibiting his skills. In the novel '*Joothan*' (1997) Om Prakash Valmiki who is a Dalit writer and poet from India specifically highlighted the issue of killing animals for the sake of practicing Hindu rituals. He was clearly against the concept and raised the concern of great importance to put a stop to these malpractices. The offerings were done as Shakti Pooja to the deity Maa Durga. He states that we talk about animal care and love and on the other hand we kill in the name of rituals to be performed which is truly unacceptable.

In the Research article "*A critical study of indira goswami's novel The man from chinnamasta from the perspective of ecofeminism*" Parul Chauhan stated the study from the patriarchal system's point of view that the oppression in the novel *The Man from chinnamasta* to the women and animals it has occurred in the name of age-old practices of culture and religion in Assam's Kamakhya Temple. The role of Jatadhari and Ratnadhari play a crucial role in stopping the practices of animal killings as an offering to the Goddess. The role of women characters was also shown at a greater impact on the objection to such practices.

In the Research article “Facing the Inhuman Within: A Reading of Indira Goswami's 'The Man From Chinnamasta' based on Animal Sacrifice at Kamakhya” Deepali Awasare and Vivekanand Arjunrao Rankhambe stated the study by highlighting the animal sacrifice at Kamakhya Temple and pointed on the critical topic about co-existence of the other living beings respecting their co-habitation on the earth along with human beings. Suggested to adopt the Gandhian technique of non-violence, urge for truth, hunger strike, and going deep thinking.

3. The Research objective

To study the oppression of the women and animals in the novel To study from an ecofeminism point of view.

To analyze the important elements that reflect from an Ecofeministic angle. To investigate the essence predicted by the author in the novel.

To conduct significance of the exploration of paper.

4. Hypothesis

1. Ecofeminism will act as a medium of societal reformation in the novel *The Man of the Chinnamasta*
2. Ecofeminism is reflected in the novel.
3. Oppression of human beings and animals is taken control of in the select text.

5. Limitations of the study

The limitation of the paper is that it concentrates on a lone novel *The Man of Chinnamasta*

6. Research design

This paper consists of an information accumulation from the novel *The Man of Chinnamasta* and analyzes the retrieved data from an ecofeminism point of view. In this research paper, the descriptive and analytical research methodology will be applied.

7. Plot of the Novel

The ascetic Jatadhari is the central character and wants to stop the ancestral practice of animal killing since ancient days in the Kamakhya temple even if it costs its life. He pronounces the signature campaign to stop the killings and the petitions being signed by the people so that it can be showcased in front of the head priest of the temple, so he can object to the practices of animal sacrifices through the aid of Ratnadhar who is the son of the priest Manmohan. Jatadhari highlights among everyone the evidence visible in the Kalika Purana that the Goddesses never asked for animal sacrifices nor to satisfy their thirst with the blood of human beings. We come across another character Dorothy Brown due to her husband's illicit affair with the tribal women and conceiving a child that caused her great pain so she decides to take shelter under Jatadhari as a disciple to discover peace of mind. Bidhibala the daughter of Singhdatta Sarma sacrifices her life to save the buffalo

8. Feminism

Feminism was first stated by Mary Wollstonecraft in her book “*Vindication of the Rights of Woman*”(1792)

“Wollstonecraft is best known for, ... order founded on reason.” (Wollstonecraft 2019,p.3)

Feminism advocates equal rights for women based on vote, education, equal rights for property, respectable status in society, freedom to dress, freedom of speech, and freedom from patriarchal norms.

“One of the women took off her achal.... in the Kitchen/ cooking”(Goswāmī, 2006,p. 31)

Suppression of women was observed when women expressed their sad stories of being left for hours in the kitchen for cooking purposes, having no room for self-care

“Before Dorothy even knew it, her sensibilities were violated”(Goswāmī, 2006, p. 67)Attack on Lonely Dorothy was to subjugate her from the patriarchal system.

“The woman cried,.....O you blood thirsty goddess, take my head as well.” (Goswāmī, 2006, p. 93)

The little old woman couldn't able to take the shock of losing the mute animal that was involved with her routine in eating grass before being killed is no more alive. In anger even the old woman offers herself to be killed, sacrificed as she agitates against the practices of animal killing, she throws herself on the altar.

“Like a vandalized minaret, Dorothy Brown’s...rolled down the slope. (174)

Dorothy paid a heavy price by losing to death at the hands of unfamiliar faces and gunshots from the crowd. She stood bravely for the rights of the mute animals sacrificed without their knowledge, who are equally important to survive on this earth.

8.1. Ecofeminism

The term Ecofeminism was first coined by French Feminist Francoise D'Eaubonne in her book *Feminism or death* (1974). “The authors then separated themselves from such a timorous new movement and founded an information center: the “Ecology-Feminism Center,” destined to become later, as a part of their project of melding an analysis of and the launching of a new action, ecofeminism. “(Eaubonne Collaboration 2022, p.179)

Francoise D'Eaubonne emphasizes the importance of feminism and ecological matters as the major reason for the achievement of the movement.

“Just then, Ratnadhar screamed, gesticulating at the buffalo they were leading to the ... on Ma’s Earth. Stop I say! Stop!” (Goswāmī, 2006, p.9,10)

Ratnadhar’s concern not to kill the animals as they were preparing to sacrifice them, was visible in the tense situation on their face their mouth filled with foam, and they started urinating and defecating out of fear as they understood the signal of being slaughtered at any moment. He was begging to sense their emotions being reflected in their eyes as they are also equally important to live on the earth.

“ The sound of Buffalo hooves rose over the verbal...Shoving , Yelling, Prodding.(Goswāmī, 2006, p.15)

The buffaloes were scared as they understood that they are about to be killed at the slaughter house, they try hard to break free away from the place . The replica of their deaths was visible in the form of pilgrims present there. They were tied sohard that they were unable to release themselves .

“ Once only the chirping parghumas and mynahs came at dusk..... his huge army had not caused so much of destruction. (Goswāmī, 2006, p.28)

The Officers of the East Bengal Company and the Government of Assam did not spare birds and trees for their rifle practice which had caused huge destruction to the environment.

“Oars splashed through the water.....smeared with his playmate’s blood”(Goswāmī, 2006 , p.32)

Not even a small child’s playmate is spared from the practice of animal sacrifice. The goat was killed and its blood was spread on the forehead of the child and the wife was asked to fill the bowl with the blood.

“The Jatadhari raised his hands heaven wards.”Ma...Mathe third time this has happened.”(Goswāmī, 2006,p.53)

Jatadhari was bringing the revolution in reforming the practices by reminding the people the recitations in Kalika Purana had no reference to animal sacrifice but to offering flowers and fruits to the Mother. All of a sudden Jatadhari experiences the death of the crane when the officers are practicing their rifles, it is so heart-wrenching to witness the horrific death of the birds.

“A tremor ran through Ratnadhar’s heart.....will not take place.(Goswāmī, 2006, p. 99)

Ratnadhar wanted to save Bidhiballa by asking her not to marry the old married man, not to get sacrificed at the hands of that old man at a very tender age.

“It wants to live! She went plummeting down the stairs. (Goswāmī, 2006, p. 100)

Bidhibal receives her surprised at another undisclosed picture of the Buffalo sacrifice and comes to the conclusion that the Buffalo wanted to live, it was so painful to witness such horror of fearful emotions of the mute animal.

“You cannot get buffaloes not marry a man already ...”(Goswāmī, 2006, p. 121)

After great courage, Bhidibala was able to raise her voice against his father’s wishes to kill the animal and to get married to the older married man. Bidhibala was able to feel the pain of the animal that she had taken care since her childhood days and couldn’t able to resist the pain of losing another animal in the name of sacrifice.

“She came to us herself. She just cries My buffalo has been sacrificed.”(Goswāmī, 2006, p. 154)

Bidhibala could not able to take the pressure of losing her poor buffalo from the evil practices at the hands of deodhas, she was looking for some helping hand who could save her buffalo from exploitation but was not receiving any rescue to the mute animals from the rigid practices.

“ “Man is god’s creation.....the world become a paradise. ” ”(Goswāmī, 2006, p. 180)

Jatadhari’s analysis that animals and human beings are equally important to be existed on the earth. He expresses his knowledge that there are several things that one needs to learn from animals to live harmoniously with warmth and love on the earth.

“He raised his powerful arms.....he called,”Ma!Ma!”(Goswāmī, 2006, p. 186)

Finally, to satisfy Ma instead of animal sacrifice so that the age-old practice of killing an animal is stopped Jatadhari harms his own body by slicing one of the parts of flesh below the navel and presenting it with another hand to Ma.

“Student from the tol stepped forward.....the blood of me.” (Goswāmī, 2006, p.186)

The roar of agitation was so high that even students started the objection and showed their uniformity along with their leader’s choice of offering their blood by slicing their flesh from their bodies to put a stop to the horror practice of animal sacrifices.

8.2. Cultural ecofeminism

In the book *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World* (2005) by Carolyn Merchant has mentioned about Cultural ecofeminism.

“cultural ecofeminism celebrates the relationship between women and nature..... are all examples of the re-visioning of nature and women as powerful forces.”

(Merchant 2005, p. 219)

In her book *Radical Ecology*, Carolyn Merchant refers to "cultural ecofeminism" as a state of promoting women and nature through worshipping the age-old practices primarily focusing on the reverence of goddesses, animals, the moon, and the women’s generative arrangement.

“She was followed by an elderly man with grey hair.....around his neck for twelve long years.(Goswāmī, 2006, p. 24)

The devotees have their form of paying respect to the deities and one of them is the old elderly man who had tied a cord around his neck as an obeisance to the goddess as he has previously killed many cows and by begging and tying the knot around his neck.

“There ! A single stroke of the machete. A Spurt of red.”(Goswāmī, 2006, p. 92)

After the period gap of three days, the animal sacrifice begins with the killing of the goat, tantric becomes restless and smears blood on his forehead and even licks too. Tantrik instigates the crowd that whoever snatches the share of mother's blood will be severely punished and expects all the devotees to abolish the man.

“ Then, without warning, the deodha sank his teeth into the goat’s neck. (Goswāmī, 2006, p. 153)

Deodha didn’t pay heed to the screams of the mute animal which turned restless after being caught by his neck as Deodha was holding the neck with the mouth dripping the blood on the altar.

“The goddess was believed to favour kunda, bakul and bel leaves” (Goswāmī, 2006, p.181)

The preparations to present the petition to the Ma were done with the bakul flowers and bel leaves instead of animal sacrifice to showcase that it can be done without any bloodshed of innocent animals. Nature has a great power in healing the sorrows of all kinds in its existence.

The chief priest raised his hand.....devotees should offer their own. Haven’t you.” (Goswāmī, 2006, p. 185)

The chief priest now demanded the blood of the human beings if not of any animal sacrifice, they tried to instigate Jatadhari to spill blood from his own body to quench the thirst of Ma.

9. Discussion

With the above findings, we can understand that the role of women plays a crucial in driving decisions for the betterment of society as the impact of Bidhibal left a great scar on the minds of the people that she was very much concerned with the killings of the mute animal. She was requesting Ratnadhar secretly to release the baby buffalo as she understood from Ratnadhar’s paintings too that the Ma also doesn’t want to kill the innocent animal, so let it live, we have another instance of Dorothy Brown who stood very strong against the cruelty on the animal sacrifices through her support to the signature campaign of Ratnadhar. Next, we can witness the old woman who could not resist the scene of bloodshed of poor animals and starts throwing herself on the altar to get herself killed instead of the mute animal. Ratnadhar’s attempt to stop the killings took another turn finally he offered his flesh and blood to stop such practices and prays to practice in offerings of

flowers and leaves instead of dead animals, even students of Cotton College understand the situation and the need of the campaign and everyone start to cut their flesh and skin to satisfy the thirst of the age-old practices to protect the animals from the atrocities of human beings and provide awareness through the Campaign that for the prevailing of the conducive environment on the earth one needs to understand that both Animals and Human –Beings equally have the right to survive and need to be respected. Ecofeminism advocates for the existence of plants, animals, and human –beings as equal entities on the earth with a conducive environment for well well-being of each other.

10. Conclusion

In the novel, it is showcased that under the pretext of receiving blessings from the mother goddess, many pilgrims sacrifice countless mute domestic animals at the Temple premises at the altar. In the rituals, it has been also given another option to worship by offering flowers and leaves instead of animal blood. People should think before killing and sacrificing live animals. Women feel the pain of innocent animals and they feel more close to their sorrows. One needs to understand that all living beings are equally important and have complete rights to survive on the earth.

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