

Full Paper

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Comparative Analysis of Dowry Problem Revealed in the Stories written by Premchand and Martin Wickramasinghe.

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1. Abstract

The Period of Premchand is 1880-1936 and Martin Wickramasinghe 1890-1976. Premchand is from India and Martin Wickramasinghe from Sri Lanka. Both writers had to struggle and face a lot of hardships in their period. Premchand and Martin Wickramasinghe are identified as phenomenal writers and trend setters of their time. However, many similarities are found in both the writers' short stories. Dowry Problem is one of them.

Dowry Problem is one of the main malpractices in India. In Sri Lanka, it exists as a minor problem. Due to dowry problem the ladies have to get discordant marriages. As a result, the life of a lady can be ruined. The birth of a girl child is a great worry for an Indian couple. The short stories- 'Narak Ka Marg' and 'Kusum' written by Premchand, depict how the dowry problem affects the Indian Society badly. Martin Wickramasinghe's short stories- 'Gahaniyak', 'Magul Gethara' reveal the same problem in Sri Lanka.

2. Introduction and research problem/issue

The main objective of this study is to do a critical analysis of Premchand and Martin Wickramasinghe's short stories to see how dowry problem is depicted in the short stories. Many researchers have already been done on the works of Premchand and Martin Wickramasinghe separately. However, according to my knowledge no comparative research has been done on the depiction of dowry problem in their short stories. However, it is significant that Premchand's work is scientifically analyzed in relation to the field of Hindi study in India, but they have less opportunity to gain knowledge about Martin Wickramasinghe's short stories.

Hindi Language and Hindi Literature are taught as undergraduate subjects in Sri Lankan universities. Premchand's short stories comprise a part of the syllabus.

To disseminate proper knowledge on Premchand and Martin Wickramasinghe, comparative researches done in Sri Lanka or India are insufficient. Thus, another objective of the study is to widen the scope of knowledge on Premchand and Martin Wickramasinghe's literary creations.

3. Research Methodology

The main method of research in this study would be textual analysis of Premchand and Martin Wickramasinghe's short stories, in order to find out how dowry problem is depicted in their short stories. For that purpose, the following steps have been used,

Completing the reading Premchand's short stories deeply, and collecting data related to dowry problem ; Completing the reading of Martin

Wickramasinghe's Short Stories deeply and collecting data related to dowry problem ; Completing the Analysis and categorizing the data obtained; Comparing and making conclusions.

4. Results and findings

Two significant short stories have been found from each writer related to dowry problem. They were 'Narak Ka Marg' (The way to hell) and

'Kusum' (Flower) written by Indian writer Premchand, and 'Gehenyak' (A Woman) and 'Magul Gethara'(The Wedding) written by the Sri Lankan writer Martin Wickramasinghe. In the short story 'Narak ka Marg', a lady is affected by discordant marriage, due to dowry problem. She had to marry an old man. She really did not like him, but she was helpless.¹

In the second short story 'Kusum' written by Premchand, the main character Kusum is worried that her husband does not like her. The reason was that This gentleman marries Kusum because of the dowry. He wanted to go abroad for his studies using this money.²

The main character 'Lisinona' in the short story 'Gehenyak' written by Martin Wickramasinghe, has faced with the same problem. A few marriage proposals come, but without dowry they do not agree. Finally, a rich man promises to marry her and

¹ . Premchand.(2008).*Premchand ki Sampurna Kahaniyan KhandI*, 'Narak Ka Marg' (The way to hell).p.453-455

² kaliya, raveendra.(2012).*Premchand: Stri jeevan sambandhi kahaniyan*, 'Kusum' (Flower).p.147

takes her to his house. She was helpless because of her parents' death. Finally, she finds that the man is already married. She has to be a servant of that rich man's house because of the dowry problem.

The short story 'Magul Gethara' written by Martin Wickramasinghe, the character 'Lamahami' is blamed by villagers because she cannot provide sufficient dowry for her daughter.³

In the Short Story 'Kusum' Written by Premchand, The man wants to commence his studies with the dowry. Woman has to marry a person who does not like her. Thus, we find, both suffering due to dowry problem.

5. Conclusions, implications and significance

The analysis proves that the short stories, 'Narak Ka Marg' written by Premchand, and 'Gehenyak' written by Martin Wickramasinghe have some similarities. Both the ladies are affected by discordant marriage, due to dowry problem. One has to marry an old man, and in the Short Story

'Gehenyak', the main character 'Lisinona' has to marry a man who is already married. Both are helpless because of dowry problem.

The short story 'Magul Gethara' written by Martin Wickramasinghe, shows how dowry problem existed in 20th Century in Sri Lanka.

In the Short Story 'Kusum' Written by Premchand, discloses that man and woman both are affected by dowry problem.

Comparatively Premchand's short stories are more emotional due to Indian society is more affected by Dowry Problem.

³ Wickramasinghe, Martin.(2012).*magul gethara*. .p.95

6. References (Selected)

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