



“Vivid Evocation Of Crippling Affliction In Indra Sinha’s *Animal’s People* – A Voice-Over Sensitivity And Specificity”

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ABSTRACT:

With a difference in expression, mode and medium of connotation and strangled directive intonation language is one of the strongest means of communication between all the organisms in the universe. Progress and progression of language and its artistic horizon expanded with the growth of civilization. The grammatically skilled, scientifically balanced and universally acceptable narrative techniques adopted by the writers of ancient, medieval and modern times played contextually purposive role and influenced the world of knowledge and wisdom since the ages.

The crippling afflicted bodies or ‘bio-psycho-physically: the other’ characters are portrayed in almost all fiction and non-fiction literature with a pre-noted and prejudiced dimension and projected them as a symbol of wickedness, villain, criminals, product of sin, representatives of devils and demons and ugly negative energy. This statement is harsh to digest but it is the ground reality of the ill fated marginalized bodily subalterns.

On the contrary there are many rational thinkers, social reformers, revolutionist, social doctors who have put hard efforts to expose the extremity of the pathetic, miserable and horrible life led by the persons with disabilities.

Indra Sinha, the most creative humanist strived hard to pave the path and throw light on the burning issue and sufferings of disabled persons especially the disaster hit victims and their offspring of post disaster Bhopal gas tragedy.

An epistolary magical novel *Animal’s People* is known for its unique style of narration which indirectly reflects the long term, ghostly aftermath effects of Bhopal gas disaster. The main character in the novel, an unreliable narrator Animal, through his recorded narrations sensibly voiced over the specificity of bio-psycho-physical status of crippled affliction duly evocating the miserable conditions

of the victims of disastrous environmental imbalances and ugly faces of capitalistic attitude of the dominants over the marginalized disables.

Indra Sinha wisely and consciously adopted innovative narrative techniques and strategies to focalize the voices of the voiceless, symbolized the vulnerable state of disabled bodies with reference to contextual scenario of post disaster global socio-economic and political stands.

The author in his eco-critics, plotted the peculiar characters like Animal (Jaanvar), Zafar, Elli Barber, Ma Franci, Nisha, Somraj, Farouq, The Kampani, Chunaram, Anjali and Zahreel Kahn and the strategies adopted to symbolize each character with an intension to expose the human complexities of inter and intra personal relations with corresponding socio-economic-political stimuli.

KEY WORDS:

Evocation, Crippling, Affliction, Voice-over, Sensitivity, Specificity

1.1 Introduction:

An organic compound of Carbon, Hydrogen, Nitrogen and Oxygen with a molecular form of CH_3NCO chemically known as Methyl Isocyanate which is highly inflammable and powerfully toxic in nature has left its darkest images in the chemical industry of the Indian peninsula. Bhopal, the capital city of the middle most Indian state Madhya Pradesh with its population size of nearly 9 lakhs, on 3rd day of December 1984 became the talk of the world and remained as a helpless victimized city of carelessly handled factory mechanism of the United State based pesticide company - Union Carbide. Due to negligently mishandled technical process the world's most disastrous chemical accident took place and approximately 45 tons of extremely poisonous gas leaked and killed tens of hundreds of innocent people immediately and knocked tens of thousands of people towards permanent disability duly affecting their gene-hereditary potential and destructing the entire ecosystem in and around Bhopal city.

The then governments at state and center through their official agencies of disaster management rushed to rescue the public along with the help and involvement of several national and international level non-governmental organizations. Alas! Managing the poor dead bodies and treating the injured and sufferers was a big challenge amidst the un-owned man-made industrial disaster which created a big vacuum across the socio-cultural and economic sphere. This horrible accident has adversely influenced the foreign policies, commerce and industry laws and compelled the honorable judicial system to initiate several suo-motu cases and constrained much non-governmental organizations to jump into the issue to fight for justice and compensation to the survivors of the disaster hit families and persons. As a result, specific acts, statutes, commissions, Commissionerate's and a few statutory bodies were set up and finally the powerful culprit company is forced to agree to pay the remedies to the victims after a long legal battle. Accordingly, 1549 crores of rupees of compensation amount have been disbursed to 5,73,959 claimants till recently which includes the persons with temporary disability, cancer hit, suffering with end stage renal disease and injury of utmost severity etc. In spite of sincere efforts by many, almost more than 600

legal cases are still pending in the law of courts at various levels for want of justice and remedy even after more than four decades of the incident.

Being hurt by unexpected environmental crises and its aftermath dominance of power over forced vulnerable, a lot of socio-political-economic thinkers, activists, writers and sensitive human beings raised their voices and concerns over the pathetic, miserable and pitiable conditions of the victims of the gas tragedy in accordance with their best possible strength, ways and means.

Indian born British citizen, Indra Sinha raised his voice against the massive disaster and its post incident brutal violent side effects and proved his strength through his pen duly contributing a unique document of time immemorial – *Animal's People*. The techniques and strategies used to narrate the incidents, the places and characters so plotted and their symbolism and the theme representing eco-criticism and the form of story which throw light on burning issue and its consequences is beyond the limits of words, and hence it has bagged the world's most prestigious award; Commonwealth Writers' Prize-2008 apart from being short listed for Man Booker Prize-2007.

The present paper is intended to examine the techniques and strategies and their novelty used to narrate the Bhopal incident through fictional but symbolized characters, places and incidents with due focus on the crippled affliction and their voices of sensitivity and specificity.

1.2 Meaning and Definition of Narrative Techniques and Narrative Strategies:

1.2.1 Narrative Techniques;

The narrative technique is a literary instrument that creates fascination among the readers and audience a deep sense of reading, listening or watching a fiction, non-fiction, literature, poetry, film and theatre through an author's mode of convey of message, complexity of artistic ingredient and a point of conclusion or completion.

The emotions, experience, curiosity, perceptions, memory, humor and ability to infer, interpret and anticipate etc. such other human qualities irrespective of literate or illiterates are directly influenced by the writer's mode of issue-based approach. Such approaches can be termed as narrative techniques.

1.2.2 Narrative Strategies;

The deliberate, purposive and continuous act of a writer in a mission mode with an intension to highlight his objectives, viewpoints and purpose of narration in order to attain the expected changes in a particular set up duly adopting visionary tactics in a descriptive and linear manner.

The narrative strategies circumscribe narrative techniques in manifold dimensions and help both the writer and reader to bridge a meaningful bondage through well-judged and value-based understanding and serve the literary purpose.

1.3 Need, Importance and Scope of the study of Narrative Techniques in Literature:

Man is an animal known for his rationality. Brain - the power house, remote controller of human beings is accomplished with enormous set of feelings and emotions which are being controlled, managed and monitored through sensory organs. Literature and literary skills generally

influence the audio-visual ability of the human beings. The tools, techniques and strategies used by a writer will directly influence the total behavior pattern of the human beings and sharpen their soft and smart skills to crack the circumstantial complexities and rise up to the expectations of the situation by making optimum use of innate hidden power.

The narrative strategies circumscribe narrative techniques in manifold dimensions and prompt both of the writer and reader duly enabling their capacity of understanding, motivation, imagery, critical thinking, artistic writing, rhythmic flow of meaningful thoughts-ideas and themes.

1.4 Types of Narrative Techniques:

According to a German novelist and playwright Gustav Freytag the sum total efforts of a writer deposited to give a well-structured shape to his vision, ideas, thoughts, plans and content are intrinsically dependent of the chronological pyramid; Exposition, Inciting Incident, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution or Catastrophe and Denouement.

Following are the categorically distinguished narrative techniques for writers;

Use the setting, Create foreshadowing, Include sensory imagery, Provide a cliffhanger, Change the chronology, Choose a point of view, Incorporate character voice, Use symbolism, Create an unreliable narrator, Involve readers in the story, Record a stream-of-consciousness, Personify an animal character, Include big surprises in a plot, Make a satire or parody, Compose a metaphor, Include a simile, Resolve plot neatly, Write a narrative-within-a-narrative, Start in the middle of a story, Use a hyperbole, Design an author surrogate, Construct an allegory, Use alliteration, Involve a red herring, Try the cut-up method and Add de-familiarization.

1.5 Narrator, Narration and Perspective:

There is a proverb in Kannada language ‘Ravi Kaanaddannu Kavi Kanda’ means – the invisible things beyond the sight of the Sun can be seen by the poet that is the visionary horizon of the poet, novelists and writers is more powerful than the sun. The impression, perception, determination, intuition and concept that are being formed in the mind of a reader are the resultant product of the friction between the narrator and his narration. The magnitude of the friction is directly proportional to the perspective. The intention and a point of concern on which a narrator wish to focus and narrate is closely associated with the contextual perspective and narrator’s personal opinion, experience, bias and even his weakness will summarily affect not only his narration but also the reader’s mindset on forward transmission.

Narration in first person, second person, third person or multi-person are likely to be interchangeable to highlight the importance of the perspective and in turn to enable the reader to interpret the expectations of the writer’s intensions.

Indra Sinha in his Animal’s People used multiple narrative techniques especially the character of Animal (Jaanvar) a 19 year old heroic citizen of deadly city – Khaufpur who lost his parents, childhood and normalcy of physique and became twisted bone hunch backed due to the direct and indirect effects of the chemical disaster is trying to narrate his story in first person,

using flashback in English mixed Hindi language, with the traces of influence of western culture, Kampani's negligence and lethargic attitude, the role of activists and organizations and the path of legal battle for his right to live with dignity and self-identity. Animal went on narrating his story to the unanimous Jarnalist who managed to record the same in almost twenty-three tapes in turn which is being translated without any kind of editing and published same.

The major and minor characters plotted in the novel significantly symbolizes with the victimized persons of Bhopal Gas Tragedy and their merciless fate. The dare stand of the author can be well seen through the open statements of a protagonist Animal regarding his bio-psycho-physical humanly needs and his urge for right to live with pride.

1.6 **Indra Sinha's *Animals' People* a Vibrant Visionary Document:**

Nearly twenty-five years after horrible Bhopal Gas incident Indra Sinha's novel *Animal's People* gained the attention of the sensitive thinkers and eco-critics of the world. Sinha's concern for; mismanaged ecology, minute but delicate layers of integration between human and non-human beings, socio-cultural-political discourses on post disastrous psycho-social conditions of the victims and survivors- and revisit to their perspectives, role-style of functioning-intension of various non-governmental organizations and their open or hidden agenda, religious and economic permutations and combinations by various authorities, quest for self-identity and self-reliability, life of ordinary people and environmental justice, inability of the able, equity based derivatives of socio-environmental implications, human rights-identity-spirit in accordance with the parameters of global democracy etc. are eye opening means for the persons in power and helpless feeble.

Through his rational dialogues, perfectly-visional, practically anticipated livelihood conditions of post disaster population, scientifically calculated; extent of pain, grief, sufferings, severity of long-term effects of toxic environment - respiratory diseases, born disability, life threatening biological disorders, contagious and critically-ill diseases, class clashes, unorganized mass, disparity in bio-political power, uneven distribution of health and wealth, hierarchy based disparity in law and justice etc., Indra Sinha made an effort to stamp the contribution from literary corner and enabled himself to elevate to a global higher rank among his contemporaries.

Animal's People gave a new look and dimension to the environmental concerns from literature's view point.

1.7 **Traces of Voice-over Sensitivity and Specificity in *Animals' People*:**

Animals' People an allegoric novel explored exposed and elaborated the severity of the pain and sufferings of the marginally subaltern factions of toxic hit city of Bhopal with the help of symbolized city of Khaufpur. In Urdu language Khauf=fear in Hindi=dar and Pur=city that means Khaufpur as a city of fear, insecurity, unsafe and violently brutal for the poor, helpless-children-women-aged and patients. The story compels the reader to be sensitive for the animals' behavior as they too experience pleasure, joy, pain, fear and are able to govern their emotions, depict self-defense and skill of problem-solving mechanism driven by self-awareness in an eco-appropriate context.

1.7.1 Characters;

All characters in the novel *Animal's People* are disfigured in one or the other way; physically, psycho-physically, psycho-emotionally, medically, medico-legally, biased power-no power, optimistic entry-pessimistic exit and vice-versa, urge for love-care-concern; inertia-stationary gain and total success, enthusiasm – perturbed, so on and so forth. All most all kinds of subaltern groups and their dynamics can distinctly be identified in the novel.

The narrative techniques like Anthropomorphism, Hamartia and Pathetic fallacy have been employed to portray the characters.

Khaufpur: symbolizes the city of Bhopal where an accident of chemical company take place and the journey of all characters begin and the serial of its fractions is still running.....

The Kampani : symbolizes the American based Pesticide Factory - Union Carbide which is solely responsible for the darkest sufferings of tens of thousands of innocent people. The company's irresponsible, adamant, malafied intention and deliberately shirking behavior and stand indirectly unveil the dominance of super power over developing nation. Attitude of avoiding responsibility of disaster, rejecting legal plea, direct confrontation for decade's together and irresponsible stand for the disaster hit disable subalterns etc. left direct and indirect scars on the foreign policies of equal-ranked tow political powers.

Animal (Jaanvar) 19-year-old protagonist narrator, a disaster hit orphan and hunchback-twisted spine disabled person constrained to walk with the help of two legs and two hands in the form of animal, a unique creation of character to define the misfortune of 'the other' Sinha cautiously portrayed the crippled affliction. Animal is a clever mind reader, sharp grasper of others' thoughts and gestures, ambiguous in his self-belief, dual but definite in expressing his lust and quest for just and urge for self-identity. Animal symbolically represents human introvert and extrovert behavior to express the essence of animalistic complexions in exigencies.

Zafar, Nisha's boyfriend turned husband, an advocate of non-violence, scholarly political activist of the city of fear i.e. Khaufpur and represents the unheard voices of marginalized subalterns' aftermath disaster.

Nisha, college discontinued scholar, daughter of ill-fated singer Somraj, girlfriend turned wife of Zafar and mainly a teacher of Animal is a very vital supportive character to the group of political activists. Teaches Hindi and English language to Animal and discard the Animal's proposal of marriage very politely and continued to be Animal's best friend.

Somraj, a famous singer of the city of Khaufpur and regarded as the 'voice of Khaufpur' but lost his wife, son and melody of voice in toxin disaster and became not only vocal disabled but also a widower and survived with his daughter Nisha.

Farouq, a good hearted, mild natured, an ardent follower of Islam and Islamic propagator tries to convince the Animal for conversion of religion from Hindu to Muslim but in vain. A humorous person always tends to keep the situation with full of joy through his special ability of verbal power.

Ma Franci, the coordinator of an orphanage where Animal spent his cheerful childhood of two years and enjoyed a lot of care and concern from Ma. She was multilingual expert before the disaster but unfortunately, she lost all mental abilities of multifaceted talent due to the chemical crisis and became passive for material life and tends towards spirituality more and more till the end of the story.

Elli Barber, an opponent turned well-wisher of the victims of the dreadful city –Khaufpur. Doctor by profession and talented Hindi speaking life partner of Kampany's lawyer sent from America to induce the victim's soft attitude towards the Kampani through her free medical aid and services. Zafar's farsight and committed loyalty of the victims in Zafar's stand compels Elli Barber to be the true well-wisher of them and joined her hands for their legal fight against the Kampani. Her westernized dress code tempted Animal, and later he understood her properly and accepted her as his teacher and mentor for many issues.

Chunaram, a liaison between Animal and the Jarnalis and played a vital role in recording the narration of Animal in more than 20 tapes serially.

Anjali, a close friend of Animal duly understanding his capabilities but taunting him for his physique. Animal has a very sharp concern for her and wanted her make her free from the practice of prostitute.

Zahreel Kahn, a selfish political leader works for the Kampani at the cost of the interests of the victims.

Pyare Bhai's husband Aftaab, an adult Shambhu and Gargi Shambu's wife are also the victims of poisonous chemical disaster and suffer multiple disabilities due to its wild effect. Their fight and protest against the Kampani for justice and compensation influences the reader to compare and contrast the conditions of the survivors of Bhopal Gas Tragedy and their continued fight for over four decades.

1.7.2 Perspective;

An idealized self-insertion, expression of question and confusing the reader, creating an illusion in the minds of a reader, presenting the familiar as unfamiliar, presentation from the character point of view, expression of facts in terms of magical realism, multiple characters' view point, interior monologue-unedited and omniscient and many other such attributions have been employed to stamp the effectiveness of the perspective of his story Indra Sinha succeeded in achieving it, the prestigious international award is a token of confirmation of the same.

1.7.3 Plot;

The past-background events narrated by the protagonist narrator Jaanvar succeeded in its objective of adding meaning to the present circumstances and hence still the affected people are able to present their grievance before the competent authorities to seek justice and compensation. It seems Sinha's efforts to combine the technique of cliffhanger, eucatastrophe, alteration of time sequence, temporarily jumps the narrative forward, intentional effort to suggest events to be happen, story within a story, specific form of a narrative hook, use hooks to catch the reader's

attention and keep reading the story, little objectivity with more effect, twisted ending, poetic justice to the protagonist character and unreliable narrator etc. are the mixture of character specific techniques employed by the author.

1.7.4 Setting;

Indra Sinha has skillfully acted upon in deciding the setting of his story within the post disaster incident of Bhopal Gas Tragedy perfectly fixing time and geographical location within his fiction and succeeded in conveying his deepest concern and sharper ideas through the painful, half-hearted humor, affected emotions and polluted socio-moral values and finally compels, encourage and knocks the reader to establish connectivity with each and every character of the story and end it with a conclusion to move forward with the ideology of the writer.

1.7.5 Style;

Various type of symbols has been used by Indra Sinha to lay stress upon and revitalize the crisis lead self-identity, polluted human spirit and auctioned human rights and its waited legal justice in respect of subaltern characters.

Symbolic actions and figures of generalized truth and actions, repetition of closely connected words, stress to amplify the innate meaning of certain words, inducing the readers more imaginative with meaningful dialogue, artificial elaboration, serious and ironic effects in texts, descriptive words lead mental images, repeated expression of central theme of the story, emotional appeal, characterization of abstract concept and typical humor etc. are the techniques employed to sharpen the style of the story.

1.7.6 Theme;

Visionary, Indra Sinha advocated in his novelty document *Animal's People* that, inter and intra-natural relations among the same and diverse species are inseparable, mutual dependent and influence the sanctity of a balanced ecosystem directly and inversely.

Disability or 'the other' or 'marginalized – subaltern' is a main theme of *Animal's People*. The severe effect of the industrial toxic environment has affected the body of protagonist narrator and forced him to be vulnerable and hence invite the readers' attention towards the conventional understanding of manhood.

Disability as a means to define the process of human-non-human mutual dependability and its need-based interchangeability in a particular ecological set up vis-à-vis ruination with the biased and mixed societal notions and responses to explore and accept the self-theory of acceptance and actualization gained the attention of the modern world.

Indra Sinha's very wisely weaved the theme of the story by using the appropriate mixture of narrative techniques viz., Irony, Metaphor and Thematic patterning.

1.8 *Animals' People: Strategic Literary Concerns and Contextual Relevance – Then and Now;*

Nature's control prevails over human achievement in the field of modern, innovative science and technology and hence bio-psycho-physically 'no two individuals are alike'. In spite of this natural truth the practice of classification of human beings on the basis of body structure, size, shape, color and skin to decide the superiority or otherwise is still prevailing beyond the geo-socio-cultural frontiers. Due to hereditary irregularities, geo-natural-environmental toxic factors, individual or collective negligence, unexpected accidental incidents etc., will decide the crippled affliction. Unfortunately, the majority of fictional and non-fictional literary works in written and folk form across the cluster of languages having script and no script beyond the geographical boundaries always tries to project the crippled bodies in negative sense purely restricting their entry and exit according to the whims and fancies of the authors. The prominent weightage has always been given to smartness of physic and psyche without anticipating and estimating the scientific reasons thereof.

Due to the intervention of United Nation's Organization and its allied branches set up to safeguard the interests of Human Rights, a series of collective efforts from various branches of academic and non-academic disciplines across the world were put in, as a result globally acceptable rational and uniform norms have been framed, enacted and followed irrespective of caste-creed-color.

The sensitivity of the writers of 20th and 21st century largely influenced by the millennium goals and a lot of literature pleading for the equity and equality of disabled has been published, popularized and praised at every nook and corner. Several disabled persons turned writers have contributed a lot to the literary field duly employing their blended self-experience in form of biography, semi-biography and autographs.

The Bhopal gas tragedy can be compared on par line with that of nuclear holocaust as people of that location still fighting with the chemical complications of the toxic leakage ground water sources, deformed infants, hereditary lung infections, visual impairments and life-threatening acute diseases.

Due to the continuous and consistent intervention and strong protest by the committed activists and publication of dedicated critical writers, the crooked headstrong administrative authorities of the guilty Union Carbide Company finally agreed to pay the irreparable loss, pro-rata compensation and ex-gratia to 5,74,394 estimated claimants of various categories. The Government of India has filed many writ petitions and curative petitions against the erring company and the process of seeking and accepting applications from the cancer hit persons and persons suffering with end stage renal diseases are still continuing.

It is obvious to state that, the literary contributions from the sensitive writers like Indra Sinha have played a vital role in helping, influencing, inducing, guiding and finally compelling the administrative and judiciary wings of the public system.

1.9 Conclusion:

The forced bio-psycho-physical disabilities, abnormalities and handicap disorders faced by the contextually marginalized and generationally hit sufferers of gas tragedy are the worst examples of human greed, selfish and careless attitude, money and power-driven inhuman stand, shrinking and disappearing moral and ethical values etc. have been exposed to the society of haves and have not.

Lord Buddha's principle of non-violence, Lord Basavanna's theory of treating others equal on par line with one's own-self and work-is-worship and Bharat Ratna-Vishwa Bhushan Dr. Babasaheb R. Ambedkar's pleading-advocacy-fight for equity and equality of opportunity and individual dignity and status can be distinctly well seen through Indra Sinha's classic writings especially through symbolically plotted characters-flashbacks-sequenced incidents, inferred themes and unique style of narrating the severity of gas tragedy in the form of vivid perspective employed in his classic document – *Animal's People* which has played a vital role in providing pro-rata compensation and ex-gratia to the victims, sufferers, survivor's, marginalized dependents and subalterns of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy.

Hence, Indra Sinha the author of *Animal's People* deserved to be remembered, appreciated and honored beyond geographical boundaries and irrespective of the generations to come.

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