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Representation Of Social Reality And Suffering In Jayanta Mahapatra's Selected Poems

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Abstract: This research paper presents an integrated analysis of society, poverty, religious beliefs, and human crisis, mainly focusing on the selected poems of Jayanta Mahapatra. Many of his poems were written in different contexts, but there is a deep underlying connection between them, which clearly shows the real tumultuous condition of Indian society. The poem "Dawn at Puri" primarily talks about the poverty, death, and devastating condition of Indian society hidden behind the holy places. Religious faith fails to eliminate human sufferings completely. Another poem, "Hunger," deals with the extreme poverty and the moral degradation where human relationships cannot survive. The term "hunger" has multidimensional meanings portrayed by the writer. On the other hand, the poem "Indian Summer" reflects the feelings of human conflict, fatigue, and emptiness through the scorching heat and stagnant environment of nature. Mahapatra raises deep social, moral, and philosophical questions through his poetic ways and beautiful imagery. In his poems, nature plays a major role as not only just a backdrop but also a symbol of the mental and social condition of humanity. At the same time, he confronts the reader with moral questions by pointing out the limitations of religious beliefs and the brutal reality of poverty. As a result, these three poems together give a complete picture that shows the complexity of modern Indian society and the deep problems in human life.

Keywords: Integrated, Society, Poverty, Reality, Human Life

INTRODUCTION

There are certain similarities and differences between Jayanta Mahapatra's poems, and analyzing all three poems together helps us to understand his poetic vision and social outlook more clearly. The main similarity in these poems is the devastating condition of society. In all three poems, the struggles of human lives, crisis, poverty, neglect, and inequality are the main themes. In "Dawn at Puri," the vivid image of skulls, widows, and beggars even in the middle of holy places shows that even religious places are not free from suffering. This reality becomes more clear in "Hunger," where poverty forces a father to use his own daughter. But there is no direct incident in "Indian Summer"; there is an environmental issue that has created discomfort, fatigue, and emptiness in the environment. That causes stress and mental fatigue in human life. Another big similarity in these poems is the use of symbols and imagery. Mahapatra uses very ordinary things in such a beautiful way to express deep meanings. In "Dawn at Puri," the crow, skull, and leopard symbolize the impermanence of life and poverty. In "Hunger," the sea and silence symbolize the emptiness and hidden suffering within man. In "Indian Summer," the hot and still environment becomes a symbol of mental fatigue and discomfort. Thus, in all three poems, nature is not just a backdrop but an important means of expressing meaning.

Mahapatra's poem "Dawn at Puri" is a deep and thought-provoking poem where the poet portrays a scene of dawn on the seashore of Puri. In this poem, dawn does not just mean the beginning of a new day or new hope but also reflects the deep sorrow, poverty, and reality of human life. The poem starts with the crow's call. This call is not calm, but rather harsh and uncomfortable. Usually, birds sing sweetly at dawn, but here the crow's voice creates a kind of uncomfortable environment. This suggests that this dawn is different and there is more sorrow than joy in it. The poet then sees a human skull on the seashore. This scene is very scary and thought-provoking. The seashore is usually considered a holy place, but the presence of a skull raises the idea of holiness. This skull is not only a symbol of death; it is a sign of poverty, neglect, and degrading conditions of society. It shows that the lives of the people are very problematic and sorrowful. Then the poet sees a group of old widows. They are wearing white clothes and are waiting to go to the temple of Lord Jagannath. Their life is very difficult, and after the death of their husband, society ties them up with many rules. They can no longer wear colorful clothes. Their life seems to have stopped. The poet sees sadness and fatigue in their eyes. It seems that they are living with a lot of suffering. Still, they go to the temple because they believe that God will ease their suffering. The topic of religion is very important in this poem. Puri is a holy place, and many people come here to pray. They believe that if they come here, they will find peace. But the poet shows that in reality many people are suffering here too. Religion cannot solve all their problems. Rather, many times people live only on faith. The poet also shows that there are many beggars and sick people there. They are very poor, and society ignores them. These women live around the temple, but no one gives them any importance. They don't belong to the mainstream of society. This scene helps us understand that there is a lot of inequality in society. Not everyone gets equal opportunities. At one point in the poem, the poet talks about a burning pyre. Smoke is rising from the pyre and spreading into the sky. This scene reminds us of death and the transience of life. Life is very short, and one day everyone has to leave. Seeing this scene, the poet thinks of his mother. His mother wants to be cremated at this holy place after death. It is a common belief that cremation at a holy place gives peace to the soul. The poet ponders over this belief. He is not entirely sure whether this belief is true or not, because the reality he sees is very troublesome. There is poverty, suffering, and neglect. So he doubts whether religious rituals alone can really liberate people. Many symbols are used in this poem. The crow's call symbolizes evil. The skull symbolizes death and poverty. Widows symbolize the suffering of society. The leopard symbolizes the end of life and uncertainty. All these symbols together create a deep meaning. The poet has conveyed a big truth through a very simple scene. In the end, it can be said that "Dawn at Puri" is not just a description of a natural scene. It is a poem written about the harsh reality of human life. The poet has shown that even in holy places there is sorrow and suffering. Religion gives people hope, but it does not solve all problems. This poem teaches us to think and helps us look at real life in a new way.

"Hunger" is a very powerful and uncomfortable poem, where the poet highlights poverty, hunger, exploitation, and the decline of humanity in a very simple yet profound way. In this poem, the word "hunger" refers not only to the hunger of the stomach but also to the hunger of the body, hunger for money, and hunger for power. The poem confronts us with a reality that we often do not want to see but that really happens in society. At the beginning of the poem, we see the poet standing by the sea. There, a fisherman comes to talk to him. The fisherman is very poor and has a lot of trouble in his life. He takes the poet to his house. Although this incident seems very ordinary, there is a terrible truth hidden behind it. The fisherman offers the poet to spend time with his daughter. Here, we understand how poverty can bring a person down. A father is also using his daughter as an object, just for some money. This incident shakes the poet from within, but he does not completely resist it. This is where the depth of the poem increases. The poet himself falls into a kind of conflict. He knows that it is wrong, but he cannot remove himself from that situation. This situation shows that the injustice of society is not limited to the poor only, but educated and conscious people also sometimes become a part of it. The fisherman's daughter is very quiet and indifferent. There is no emotion in her. This shows that she has become accustomed to such incidents. There is no place for love or respect in her life. She is enduring all this just to survive. Here, "hunger" becomes a difficult reality not only for food, but also for money, for survival, and for surviving under the pressure of society. The sea is

an important symbol in the poem. The sea is as vast and unknown as life here. As there is beauty in it, there is also fear. This incident is happening next to the sea, which shows that even in the midst of the beauty of nature, human life can be very difficult. Nature never reduces human suffering but often becomes the backdrop to that suffering. The language of this poem is simple, but it has a profound meaning. The poet has not used any harsh words, yet it leaves a strong impact on the reader. He has described the incident directly, but the harsh truth of society is hidden in that description. The poet does not make us understand but rather forces us to feel. The most important aspect of the poem "Hunger" is its moral question. Here, we see a father selling his daughter, an educated man becoming a part of that situation, and a girl unable to make any decisions about her life. All this raises a question in our minds: who is to blame? Poverty, society, or the person himself?

The poem shows that poverty is not only a lack of money; it also destroys human values. When a person has nothing to live for, they can do anything. In this situation, morality and humanity are often lost. Here, "hunger" is a powerful symbol that breaks all human boundaries. Ultimately, "Hunger" is a poem of harsh truth. It breaks our comfortable thoughts and makes us face reality. The poet has shown that many things happen in society that we do not see or do not want to see. This poem forces us to see that dark side. It is not just a story but a question that stays in our minds and makes us think about society, where people really live.

The poem "Indian Summer" highlights the mental state of people, social reality, and internal conflict through a simple scene of summer. In this poem, we first see an environment of intense heat. The air is hot and heavy. There is a kind of stillness around. Everything seems to have stopped. This heat is not just a description of the weather; it is a symbol of the inner fatigue and discomfort of people. The poem refers to a temple, where the presence of priests and devotees is seen. But this religious atmosphere does not give peace. Rather, a kind of suppressed tension and discomfort is felt here. People are doing religious work, but they do not have real peace inside. This scene shows that religion is often limited to external rituals and cannot solve the problems of the heart of people. The description of nature is very important in this poem. Heat, dust, and air all together create a heavy atmosphere. This environment is associated with the mental state of people. People seem tired, exhausted, and stressed. This heat becomes a symbol of the problems of their lives. Some symbolic images are also seen in the poem. Such as a dry environment, slow pace, and a kind of silence. These express the feeling of emptiness and meaninglessness of life. Although everything seems normal outside, a kind of restlessness is working inside. This restlessness is the main feeling of the poem. The poet has expressed a lot of meaning in very few words. He does not say anything directly, but his description creates a clear picture in the reader's mind. Hidden within this picture are his thoughts about human life. There is no big event in the poem "Indian Summer." There is no dramatic moment here. But still this poem is very powerful. Because it creates a feeling. The reader can feel that heat, that fatigue, and that discomfort. Moreover, it can be said that "Indian Summer" is an environmental poem where the inner state of people is highlighted through the description of nature. This poem shows us that many problems in life cannot be understood from the outside, but they deeply affect the human mind. For this reason, this poem is not just a description of a season but a symbolic picture of human life.

The theme of religion and faith is also present in all these three poems, although its expression is different. In "Dawn at Puri," the religious theme is clearly visible, where people go to the temple and pray for salvation, but in reality their suffering does not decrease. In "Indian Summer," there is religious imagery, but it is not clearly expressed but rather creates a kind of vague discomfort. In "Hunger," the presence of religion is not direct, but the lack of humanity creates a situation where the absence of religious values is understood. From this point of view, it can be seen that a question about religion is raised in all three poems, but it is expressed differently. However, there are also some differences between these poems. "Dawn at Puri" is an imagery poem where the poet is pointing out the images from outside and trying to understand the society through the images. The poet is just observing everything. On the other hand, in the poem "Hunger," the poet himself becomes a part of the event and finds himself in a moral conflict. In this poem, personal experience and feelings are much stronger. "Indian Summer" is different from these two

because here, there is no specific event, but rather there is a description of an environment or feeling, which gradually affects the mind of the reader. The position of women is also presented differently in these poems. In “Dawn at Puri,” widowed women are trapped within the rules of society, and they suffer. In “Hunger,” a girl is a victim of exploitation, and her position is even more painful. In “Indian Summer,” the presence of women is not direct, but an emptiness is felt overall. From this aspect, it can be seen that the issue of women has come up more clearly in the two poems. It can be said that while these three poems stand on the same theme, on the one hand, their expression and perspective, on the other hand, are different. All three poems highlight the harsh truths of society, but each poem expresses that truth in a different way. “Dawn at Puri” shows us the sadness hidden behind religion, “Hunger” shows the extreme form of poverty, and “Indian Summer” shows the fatigue and emptiness within people. These similarities and differences together make Mahapatra’s poetry deeper and more meaningful.

CONCLUSION

At the end of this discussion, it can be said that Jayanta Mahapatra’s poems “Dawn at Puri,” “Hunger,” and “Indian Summer” together portray a deep and realistic picture of our society. Although these three poems have different scenes and experiences, their main theme is one, which is human suffering, poverty, and internal conflict. The poet has presented some scenes of profound significance in simple and direct language, which forces us to think and look at life in a new way. Mahapatra has shown that the problems of society not only affect the outside but also deeply affect people inside. In these poems, the questions of religion, poverty, and morality come together. The poet does not give any easy solutions, but he makes us rethink our positions in society. His poetry opens our eyes and shows us aspects of society that we often want to ignore.

Finally, all these poems of Jayanta Mahapatra are not just literary works; they are a reflection of the reality of society. They make us aware and help us understand the complexities of human life. That is why his poetry is equally relevant and important even today.

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