

DIASPORIC WRITING IN HINDI : A FOCUS ON NIRMAL VERMA

Dr. Rajendra Prasad Pandey

History is not a chronological account of past, it is also not the documentation of events occurred in past. History, infact, is intended to understand and analyse the problems and aspirations of the people. Now, the people are subject to history not the object of it as it was earlier understood and projected. The socioeconomic life of the people make the understanding of historical sense. The historical sense of a histrian and an author may be different but both, the historian and author, would try in their own ways to address the questions and problems of their time. Of course the historian has his own limitations but the poet, as Sanskrit critic and propounder of "Dhwani School" of thought Anand Vardhan suggests, is not bound to accept such norms and to confine himself to any boundry, he is the only creater "the prajapati" of his poetic world. Never the less he will create a world which my be similar to the real or may be different one; in any case a poet or writer creates his world of imagination out of the given and existing world and not an alien one.

To focus on the diasporic writings, it is interesting to note that many prominent writers of Indian origin have chosen the locale of their writings from Indian, be it Neerad C. Chaudhary, Salman Rushdie or Vikram Seth. Same is the case with Hindi writers of Indian origin who are settled in Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Figi, Ghana, Mauritius etc. The writers of Indian origins residing in these countries are nostalgic to India. The fact is also noticeable that most of these Hindi writers were not born in India. In spite of the fact they are concerned about preserving the Indian ethos; values and traditions where as English writers do not pose to have such crisis.

As we know that the diaspora is basically termed for the dispersion of Jews after the Babylolan Exile. (5826 BC)². Diaspora of Hindi writers could be Categorised in to two Categories one of whose ancestors had migrated from India long back and the present generation of writers are the natural citizens of those countries. We can call them people of Indian origin (PIO) and the second category of writers consists of those who have migrated to the other countries and resideing for few years. They are termed as non-resident Indian(NRI). It is interesting to note that the works of PIO Hindi writers do not possess significant literary values. There is a long list of such writers who have had the nineteenth century image of India where theology used to play an important role in the life of the people. Value-system of Vama Suggested by Manu is still relevant in their works. Of course Communal Harmony is a prominant characteristic in their writings. For instance. A Mauritius poet Munshi Rahman Khan says 'Guru Charanan Sir Nai-Ish Guru Nai, Dharam Anusar Acharan Karhi : It will be meaningful to remind here that a large number of laboures were taken out to different countries from India. This act of Migration was under taken by an agreement between the British rule in India and the countries like Mauritius, South Africa, Figi, Triunidad and Tobago. This agreement was result of seven Major famines which occurred in India during 1857-1900. This first ship carrying such Indian Labourers was sailed in 1873. since then number of ships were taken out. These labourers where termed as 'Girmitia'. I must mention here that Hindi novelist Giri Raj Kishore termed Mahatma Gandhi as First Girimitia and wrote bulky biographical novel "Pahala Girimita' on Mahatma Gandhi's South Africa-stay and "Satya grah" related experiments. The successors of these Girimitias occupied even the highest offices like Prime Minister in Mauritius, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname etc. They also constitute a large number of population in their countries. Some important writer of these countries are Chandra Mohan Ranjeet Singh (Mauritius), Amar Singh Raman (Suriname), Bhawani Bhikah Mishra. He wrote his autobiography 'Bharat Yatra' (Suriname) Surjan Parohi, Pt. Bal Ram Patan Deen, Dr. Hans Dev Adhin, Jeet Narayan, Madhu Prasad Sharma, Premanand, Luxmi Prakash Mathu, Raqni Dhan Raj, Dr. Triloki Nath Singh of Lucknow University has had a detailed account of their works. The major concern of the these writers ara religious reforms and social norms. Modern Consciousness and contemporary problems of India are depicted in the works of Abhimanyu Armt, who is a NRI Hindi Writer living in Mauritius. One of the significant contributions of these writers is that they are making lot of efforts for preservation and use of Hindi, Particularly Bhojpuri a major dialect of

Hindi.

Many, Hindi writers make visits to abroad for cultural exchange and strengthening social political relationship amongst of countries. Eminent Hindi writers Sachchidanand Hiranand Vatsyayan 'Agyey', Nirmal Verma, Vidya Niwas Mishra are such writers who spent considerable number of years in western countries. Agyey expresses his experiences of stay in European Countries Holand, Ireland & Switzerland etc. In his travelogue "Ek Boond Sahasa Uchhali", Before I come to focus on Nirmal Verma, I would like to make a reference of an interview of S.H. Vatsyayan Agyey with Johan Yaspers, a famous philosopher. This interview finds place in 'Ek Boond Sahasa Uchhali'. Interviewer Agyey, himself was asked a question by John Yaspers why he had made visit to European country. Agyey's response was interesting. He told that he had two purposes, one to identify the similarities between Indian and European countries and the other to find out dissimilarities between the two world³. The fact is that diasporic writing attempts to either make a cultural hegemony' as suggested by Antanlo Gramshi or It fails in to circle of cultural alienations.

Nirmal Verma is a writer who also spent several years of his life in European countries. 'VE DIN' and 'CHIDON PAR CHANDANI' are two of his works which were written in European countries during his stays. 'VE DIN' (a Novel) was published in 1964. This was written during 1959-1964 when he made his visit to Slovakia (formally known as Czechoslovakia) on having been invited by the oriental learning Institute & Czechoslovak writers Association. This novel is written in a style of an autobiography (first person narrator I). India is depicted as living character Indi. German Tourist Rayan Raman, her Child Mita, T.T, Maria, Franze, Jacson are some other major Characters. The Story is spread in an environment of hostel and the life style of resident students but the focus is on Indi, Rayan & her child Mita. Indi and Rayana (a divorcee); get together and and share their loneliness inspite of their alien culture, language, background and difference of age. Indi is a part time tourist guide. Rayana and Indi i.e. 'I' both incline towards each other- "Mrs. Rayn ----- we should chalkout the programme for tomorrow. "Listen Can't you call me Rayn only" she looked at me. Her face was washed like a spot of water-her worm breaths touched my cheeks.⁴" The relationship between the two takes shape in an uneven way. When they are likely to depart, Rayana tries to sum up the romance and passion with a happy note but Indi seems to be sentimental. One can draw a conclusion that western people are more rational and pragmatic even in case of love- 'I put my hand on her face. She rubbed it'. I never wanted to happen it with you" she whispered. "Do you regret?, I asked "No" if I meet you again..... " I felt for a fraction of second that she was not breathing. Her boob was under my palm There was silance, like a deep in which one searches words which are not there.⁵"

It may be pointed out that Rilke, an Austro-German Poet, is one of his most favourite poet. Nirmal Verma quotes him extensively. Rilke is quoted in both of his preminent diasporic works-'VE DIN' and 'Chidon Par Chandni'. 'VE DIN' deals with his perspective of home sickness, a love and passion for his home land is depicted in 'VE DIN' and 'Chido Par Chandni', both of the works, "Don't you remember your home? I look at him with a sense of surprise, "No..... I feel good here" ⁶. I Think inspite of all good and happiness a diaspora looks back to his home.

Now, 'Chidon Par Chandni', was published in 1972. This a combination- a unique combination of travelogue, memoir and interviews. Nirmal himself expresses his views about these memories. He writes in the introduction of the book, "Regarding my own parts of memories, give me a unique type of emptiness-something like that when we catch a living flying bird for a moment and relieve it - its body departs from us but- its breaths are still there in our palms".⁷ The book is divided into three parts namely 'Uttari Roshaniyon Ki Ore', 'Chhidon Par Chandni' and 'Dehri Ke Bahar'. Nirmal depicts an interesting and live picture of Narve, Iceland and Prag along with Peris. While living in an alien country his nostalgia about his own city Shimla is unforgotten. He gives a detailed account of Shimla. Jakhu Temple. Kali Badi and other places over here. Living in a alien country, the writer remembers his school days, "my school was located besides the Jakhu Hill at 750 ft height. Now, we have come down, very low, that height of childhood is lost.⁸ Here is a unique characteristic of people of Iceland observed by Nirmal Verma "People of Iceland have great inclination towards two things one is wine and the other is language. I haven't seen such attachment towards one's own language as they have except in a Bangalis⁹, another quality of these people is the uncomplexed

and natural relationship among men and women. This may be described in other countries as immoral or voidable but here morality hasn't been imposed, its an invisible part of life. Maternity of women is highly regarded whether one is married or not.¹⁰

Nirmal verma raises many problems in this book relating to literary discourse. He interviewed some literary legends and collected some of their letters like Chckav, Brecht, Lexness, Kafka etc. Lexness expresses his views regarding alienation that this is the problem which is faced and posed by western writers only and not by Indian ones,¹¹ Interestingly he has a categorical answer to the question often asked whether a fundamentalist or reactionary writer can create a good work. His answer is affirmative and he includes T S Eliot and Tagore in his list of such writers. One may not agree with his perception. Similarly he has a clear picture in his mind that literature can not make a revolutionary change in social and political system Checkav has his own answers regarding contemporinity craftsmanship and reality. In a letter he says 'these are irrelevant questions any answer to such questions will be based on baseless and insufficient - arguments if I am asked why I like Shakespeare more than that of Dostvoski, I will have really no answer.¹²

To conclude this I must quote the lines of Rilke to some up Nirmal Verma's diasporic writing which he himself has quoted in 'VE DIN'-

I believe I know
which one
still lasts
and stands like a city while
in the sky at the end of the beam of light.

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3. Ek Boond Sahasa Uchheli, - S.H. Vatsyan Agyey, Bhartiya Gyan Peeth, New Delhi, 1988, P. 39.
4. VE DIN - Nirmal Verma, Rajkamal, Delhi 1967, P. 67
5. Ibid P. 161
6. Ibid P. 72
7. 'Chidon Par Chandani', Introduction, Nirmal Verma, Rajkamal, New Delhi, 1991
8. Ibid, P. 19
9. Ibid, P. 20
10. Ibid, P. 73
11. Ibid, P. 144
12. Ibid, P. 172