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Editor: Dr. Saikat Banerjee

Editor:Dr. Saikat Banerjee
Assistant Professor & Head, Department of English
Assam Don Bosco University



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Demonstration of race snobbery and its influence on modern youths: in Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games*

Dr. Geeta Sharma

Department of English,
Akal College of Art and Social Science,
Eternal University, Baru Sahib, Sirmour, India
Email: gscsum@gmail.com

Abstract: Vikram Chandra has made a pragmatic description of race discrimination through his novel *Sacred Games*. In modern age people are divided on the basis of their caste and religion which has become a great obstacle on the way of country progress. This social evil is prevailing in society for a long and needs to be eradicated from the society, which makes to fight countrymen among themselves on the name of caste and religion. People ostracize their own men calling them lower caste or pariah. This novel of Chandra portrays the drawback of racism and its effect on modern man and society in a realistic way. The effect of racism is still prevalent even in educated society reason behind this is the deep rooted tradition of casteism. The story of Aadil and Dipika in *Sacred Games* presents the attitude and treatment of society towards lower caste belonging youths. Aadil faces a lot of hurdles for getting higher education because he belongs to lower caste so everybody look him with disgust. His lower caste and poverty suppress his talent and compelled him to become a Naxalites. Another story is about Paritosh Shah's daughter Dipika who falls in love with a dalit boy. Dipika request Gaitonde to prepare her father ready to get her married with that dalit boy. Later she is married with another boy in upper caste, but she is unable to bear the separation of her lover and commits suicide. Through these stories the author presents the hollowness of countrymen in curbing this social evil, and gives the real life description of race snobbery prevalent in modern society.

Keywords: Caste discrimination, Prejudice, Obstacles, Social evil, Pariah.

The novel *Sacred Games* is popular as an epic with exceptional power and richness of different interconnected stories. Through it the author has presented the dark side of modern city, violence, friendship, betrayal and criminal underworld. He has demonstrated racial prejudice in a realistic and very beautiful manner. Chandra presents the drawbacks of caste discrimination and its effect on modern youths through the story of Aadil, a poor boy and his struggle for getting education and surviving in society. He



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also gives the example of Gaitonde's friend daughter Dipika affair with a pariah boy to expose the hollowness of modern society. Through these two stories author wants to prove though people call them modern but not ready to leave their traditional thinking. They are still stick to it which is the cause frustration, increasing violence and suicidal attempts in youth. In modern age youth are struggling with older generation to be free from these age old traditions of discrimination. Racial snobbery is deep rooted in society since ancient era, which has become an obstacle still today in progress of our country. According to Pager and Shepherd "racial discrimination refers to unequal treatment of persons or groups on the basis of their race or ethnicity" (2008, P.181-209). In the words of James Stanley & et al that "racism can be understood as an organized system based on the categorization and ranking of racial/ethnic groups into social hierarchies" (2019, P.1-10). Jasmine Rao says "caste system in India forced many people who belongs to lower caste into poverty" (2010, P.97-106). Veemaraja express his views that "caste system is the precursor of communal violence by continuously suppressing a section of people"(2015,P. 91-94). In words of Subedi, "comparative social theorists have generally placed caste systems not as a unique religious ideological or structural category but as a matter of social differentiation and social stratification"(2013, P.1-18). According to Sindhuja & et al, "high caste norms are associated with moral values while the lower caste norms are associated with immortality" (2017). Hardeep Kaur says "the caste system is a predominant aspect of the social and political structure in India" (2018, P. 118-122). According to Thampi "It has been observed that caste and economic status has negative relation because with money especially comes the issue of status money in case of higher caste meant strict adherence to caste based prejudices so that they can boost their egos" (2014, P.4-8). On the other hand Selvin Raj Gnana says "in India, caste system ensures what you are from what you eat" (2018, P. 65-71). Sharma Bhanubhakta expresses his thoughts about caste system that "caste is still the defining feature of social organization in modern society (2014, P. 9-15). Akshat Meharia says that "many people have gained their deserved respect and stand in the society due to the partial elimination of caste system from post independence till today" (2020, P.519-525). Chaudhary says that "there are three important elements in Indian caste system repulsion, hierarchy and hereditary specialization" (2013, P. 56-63).



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Thus we see caste discrimination is deep rooted in society since earlier age. It has become the cause of communal violence and breach in human being relations today. Though government is taking various steps to eradicate this social evil but unable to remove it completely from the society. The reason behind government failure, it is deep rooted somewhere in the minds of people, we won't be able to overcome it until we change our thinking. A country where its people are divided on the basis of caste and religion how it can progress peacefully. The topic of caste discrimination is the subject of deep consideration which should be focused for the betterment of country and its people welfare. Thus we see Rao says "in his novels Chandra seeks to present a reality outside the literature, with the narrator as one of the major connection between life and art"(2015, P. 63-66).

Race snobbery and its influence on youth in *Sacred Games*

In '*Sacred Game*' there is a story of Noor Mohammed and his wife Mumtaz Khatun, they had three children one boy and two girls. Their boy name was Aadil, though some boys in Ansari Tola could read a little and one had studied by the eight standard none of their parent could read and the whole history of settlement that village makes it clear that no member of village had completed high school. Aadil since his childhood was devoted to his study. He used to listen class teachers since starting very attentively that is why other students started call him dibba because he used to listen attentively like dibba. Aadil passed the fifth and then went to the Zila High School his parents were very poor so, get admission into sixth was very hard for him because his parents had no money for buying books slates or pencils. Poverty and race snobbery creates hurdles in his way of career and peaceful well settled life. Aadil's passion was only books he wants nothing but swooning pleasure of learning. In ancient time upper caste people like, Brahmin, Rajput doesn't want to touch the lower caste. They think this is opposite to their culture, Aadil was very good at study but his financial condition was not good. He borrowed books from people and spent night under the flickering light of Sarvajnik Pustkallya. This library was endowed by a renowned local Brahmin landowner, named after his very learned father. The staff of library felt a little discomfort seeing a muslim student who was coming and reading boldly under the garland picture of old man, a person who passed his whole life in bathing and purifying himself. They didn't want that Aadil should study in that library but Aadil continued his study being carefree about such trifles. Library staff also gets habitual of him after



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some time. Aadil locate himself not only in space but also in time. He thought himself part of the twentieth century which claims all are equal and have same rights. He used to work hard in fields also with his parents after studying.

In Aadil's village Ansari Tola babies were taking birth people were getting married, old men and women were dying everything remained the same. In play ground Aadil played with Brahmin, Yadav and Bhumihaar boys but never visited to their home. Those boys who were from upper caste never set a foot in Ansari Tola also, no paswan would ever enter the house of upper caste people. Poor man used to squat on the ground to talk with upper caste, though they used to sit on charpai, but low caste people were allowed to sit down to talk with their high caste patron, because they have no respect, no dignity. Another example of race snobbery we see when Aadil's uncle Salim died from diarrhea they carried him to muslim graveyard to bury but maulvi who lived in mosque don't let them come in, hearing this Sayyids and Pathans came running to protest, burry in your graveyard not in our that is for the upper caste only. They didn't permit them in spite of their making request. His all relatives asked for compassion from Maqbool Khan, landlord and richest man of Ansari Tola. Aadil's all relatives told Maqbool that their own graveyard is full of water due to river changed direction in monsoon so he should have shown mercy on the dead person who was also a muslim and so pious that used to read namaz five times in a day. But upper caste muslims don't show mercy on the dead man and strictly denied to bury the dead man in their graveyard. Maqbool Khan gives five rupees note to the victim family so that they may construct another graveyard. Aadil's family took two days in searching a new place to bury his uncle. This incident arise the feeling of great anger and hate in the heart of Aadil for upper caste. On the hand we see being poor Aadil's parents were not able to afford for his further higher education. Though Aadil wants to do further study and adamant. Aadil has only one option before him for earning money by giving tuition. There was so much race discrimination in those days that no one let a Muslim teach tuition to their children. Besides it the quantity of Muslim was less in his village to pay him sufficiently and Hindu were not in favour that their children should read from a Muslim boy. Race snobbery can be observed though Aadil used to read namaz thrice in spite of this he was not pious for Sayyiads and Pathans. Thus we see poor and downtrodden are treated badly by the rich and upper class. The same thing can be seen in the case of Aadil when his land is



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forcefully taken by other. His poor father Noor Mohammed was a farmer, next to their farm belongs Nandan Prasad Yadav and during harvesting crop it expended six inches to the west and abutted near Mohammed's land, when Aadil protest this his father denied that they are very poor and from low caste but Nandan Prasad is elephant. His father told him that they had one and half bighas. One bigha they took when Noor Mohhamed was a young boy his father borrowed some money from Nandan Prasad and sign papers. Aadil didn't want to sit quiet at this he went to Kurkao Kothi and demanded to see Nandan Prasad Yadav, after waiting for four hours nobody come to meet him then he went to police station to file FIR at this constable start to laughing at him. Nandan Prasad's men came with Lathi and shotguns and starts to struggle with Aadil returning from police station. At last Aadil went to the land record karmchari. Aadil come to know that Nandan Prasad has bribed to all the karamchari so nothing can't be done. After this incident we see Aadil have no water for irrigation that fed his field because water come through Prem Shanker Jha's land from river. This had been from decades, but now Prem Shanker Jha has closed the narrow channel by declaring, that he needs land for cultivation. Though Prem Shanker and Nandan Prasad have no good terms but they become one for Aadil and for their class interest because they are from the same caste. They get Aadil arrested at five in the morning. The FIR was already prepared. The two constables were tied up and blind folded but they had clearly seen the ring leader whom they recognize as the notorious Naxal leader Aadil Ansari. On the basis of this lie and fake case Aadil was remanded to custody for ten days. Police men daily beat him with lathi, straps on the sole of his feet. His father made frantic outcries at Nandan Prasad Yadav's gate and sat whole day outside thana and wept, after ten days Aadil bail was refused on the basis of risk of violence for the society, and was sent to hundred kilometer south to the Hasla Aadarsh kara to await trail, and he spent next two years and three month in jail. Such type of oppression is made to lower class belonging people that is prevailing in our society. Rich men want to suppress the poor and pariah. Nobody listen to the poor they are trapped in fake case in the same way like Aadil. This type of oppression leads violence and crime in our youth. This is the reason Aadil after getting free from jail joins ill company of robbers and step ahead in the world of crime. He mounted his first operation with Faraj and his boys their target was third floor apartment in Bandra near hill road. Shamsul held delivered three times package in that house and have the knowledge about whole family. They all deceived to the watchman telling him electrician on the basis of choppers they robbed the



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jewellery from that house within twenty minutes, and thread them about their daughters. Thus we see crime and violence leads to crime. Aadil was good at study but due to poverty and racial snobbery he could not get education, bad treatment of prosperous land lord and businessman, police and government workers lead him to step in the world of crime.

On the other hand another example of race snobbery can be seen in case of Dipika. In modern age it also has been noticed, children don't care their parent's wishes they want to follow western culture forgetting their own caste and culture. We see after winning election Gaintonde reaches Paritosh Shah's house to participate in his daughter's marriage, where he meets his youngest daughter Dipika, who wants to talk with Gaintonde when Gaintonde was eating the food. She comes to him and tells that she need his favour because her parents want to get her married before her elder sister, though she does not want to get married too early. Gaintonde thought that she is a modern fashionable college going girl so she is against it and wants to make her career first, but later she reveals him that she is in love with a Dalit boy and wants Gaintonde to help her in getting married, because he is the best friend of her father and father can listen and understand only through Gaintonde. He is the only one whom Paritosh Shah gives more value, further she reveals if Gaitonde does not help she will commit suicide. She loves that boy so much that she doesn't care her life for him. Gaintonde is more disturbed hearing her words now because he has no courage to tell this father. One side Dipika who has not sufficient knowledge to understand the reality of society and other side Paritosh Shah his best friend who has great faith in caste discrimination. He knows very well that Paritosh Shah will never give his consent for this marriage because he has sent her to college to study not to marriage or affection. There are two problems also before Gaintonde, first her lover is Dalit second he is poor, if he had been very rich Dalit her father could have been approved. Gaitonde try to make her understand that this is not a film her father will torn her lover into pieces but she is not ready to change her mind and replied that she will commit suicide if anything happens to her lover. Dipika asked Gaitonde in spite of being a Brahmins why he has admitted people in his company from different caste, Marathas, Muslims and dalits, OBCs all working in his company without any distinction. If he can have all people in his gang without making any discrimination then why she has no right to get married with a dalit. Gaitonde reveals her affair with a dalit to Paritosh Shah who gets disturbed hearing this. Paritosh Shah



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says if she gets married with a dalit he will not be able to show his face in society. Nobody will be ready to marry with her other two daughter and two sons. This thought depressed both Paritosh Shah and Gaitonde. It was decided that Dipika should get married on the same day with a known guy in same caste. A family comes from Ahmedabad to marry with Dipika and finally she is married with a businessman in the same caste. Dipika was not happy leaving her lover so after two months of marriage when the couple was sent to honeymoon in Switzerland she committed suicide. These things make it clear that there is no value of life for modern youths. They can't tolerate interference of parents in their lives and wants to lead their lives according to them. Although matter of caste is different in case of marriage and Gaitonde's gang but to make her understand was impossible. She was blind in love which results in her death. In the words of Barai *Sacred Games* "is a successful, non-exoticised and genuinely autochthonous instance of Indian writing in English" which presents Indian contemporary society in a realistic way (2016, P.266-274).

Conclusion

Vikram Chandra has portrayed the reality of caste discrimination in modern society through his novel *Sacred Games*. Indian society in this novel has been depicted with the occurring change in the moods and manners of people. In Indian society people have deep faith in caste snobbery. They don't like that their children should mix up or get married with lower caste belonging youth. Though this tradition is in vogue since earlier days but people in modern age are stick to it till today. We should follow those changes which are for the welfare of society and should shunted out the retrogressive, and which are harmful for our country. Inter-caste marriage is based on love, and this love can be with anyone because love never takes place according to class it is based on qualities. In Our society these types of marriage are considered curse, because people think if their children go for inter-caste marriage they will not be able to show their face in reputed society. In case of inter-caste wedding if children don't listen to their parents and marriage going against them, either they are forced to marry in same caste or they dropped out all relationship with them. Same thing has been observed in the case of Dipika who is the daughter of Gaitonde's friend and money lender Paritosh Shah, a Gujarati Brahmin. She falls in love with a dalit boy Parshant Haaralkar. He is an intelligent boy devoted to study and in government job, but his father was a drunkard and work as sanitation. Parshant mother left him and started to live separately with her children



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and educated them. Paritosh Shah is not ready for his daughter's inter-caste marriage proposal. He decides to marry her same day the day he come to know about her affair, in a known businessman family. Poor Dipika becomes the victim of forceful marriage. She is not happy with this marriage and ends her life by committing suicide. On the other hand in the case of Aadil, we see he is also very good at study but poverty and low caste creates hurdle in the way of success. Aadil is mistreated by the class students and landlord of the village. No one wants that their children should be given tuition by a Muslim guy Aadil so he has no source for earning money to continue his further study. All upper class belonging people treat a Muslim scornfully. At the time when he goes with his father to all the prosper landlord of the village for begging money for his admission in college, they are asked to sit on land and wait for hours to meet the landlord. Their all land is forfeited by the Sayyads and Pathans. They don't give them water for the irrigation of land. Aadil is sent to jail by making a fake case of having connection with naxalites. He is beaten a lot by the police and punished for two years in prison. After getting free from prison Aadil join the group of naxalites to take his revenge. Thus we see ill treatment of society and caste snobbery convert a good and studious student into a naxalites. Through this novel author wants to deliver a message to society, that those conventions, traditions, customs which damages and promotes the division should be eradicated from the country. We need to focus on those principles which are acceptable and justified. According to Pardeep & Priya "the author has delivered us a novel of varied life style, situations, division, thoughts and prevalence of people of different strata in the underworld representing the society of India"(2020, P.173-175).

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