

Portrayal of Adivasi from the Margins of Bengal: A Reading of Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's The Adivasi Will Not Dance

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Abstract:

As is universally acknowledged, literature mirrors society which has been emerging out from the churning owing to multifaceted interactions in a civilization. It does not only reflect the popular and so-called easily-visible factors of a society, but also disclose the unenlightened and down-to-earth matters. This present analysis undertakes to manifest the Scheduled Tribes, one of the popular Dalit groups, who are commonly identified as Adivasi. To strengthen my study, I have taken Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's book entitled *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*. It is a collection of short stories, comprising of ten in total. The background is principally set in a fecund, mineral-rich hinterland and the ever-expanding, squalid towns of Jharkhand in West Bengal. Based on reality, his Dalit perspectives follow no aesthetic pleasure as is the common characteristics of traditional literature. His characterization hinges on distinctive cultural framework and purposeful political experiences which result in severe identity crisis, exploitation, continuous struggle for keeping up existence, superstition and marginalization. The Adivasis confront with deterioration of their indigenous realism day by day under the "hypocrisy of the higher castes" (Bharti 1999), crushing pressure of modernity and capitalism. Providing a rare glimpse of middle-class Santhal life, Hansda has artistically pointed out such inexorable concerns in his short stories that stir our minds to think and feel how the so-called civilized community and modern age take Adivasis into consideration, where they live and into which they are pathetically destined to silently bleed. Carefully avoiding the self-pitying tone, he portrays the lives of Adivasis in general with a view to evoking a fresh and much-needed outlook towards traditional Dalit sentiments and this present study will exhibit those overwhelming issues which are essential and unavoidable manifestation of our own existing society.

Keywords: Adivasis, Capitalism, Dalit literature, Hansda, identity crisis, exploitation and marginalization

Paper:

Introduction:

The word 'Adivasi' means 'original inhabitants' which is officially termed in India as Scheduled Tribes. Being a unique ethnic group of traditional Dalit sections, they generally live in the Indian subcontinent and are considerably regarded to be the original residents of the said soils. Basically, the term 'Adivasi' is meant for a group of people in India and Bangladesh. The Indian Constitution promulgated them in 1959 and accordingly, most of these groups were scheduled as targets for upcoming social and economic

development. Since that historical time, the so-called Adivasi of India has been officially identified as Scheduled Tribes. Till date, no doubt, they are the most disadvantaged socio-economic groups among Dalit in India. During the period of British rule in the Indian subcontinent, they were viewed as the depressed groups. Of Indian population, they comprise of only 8.6 per cent according to the 2011 census. In the early twenty-first century, more than 84 million was the Adivasi population in India. The majority of the groups are to be found residing in the north-eastern states of Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh whereas the smaller groups live in the hills and forests of central and southern part of India as well as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The largest groups are known as the Bhill, the Munda and the Santhal. The Adivasi people have confronted with drastic changes in ways of living and in celebration of traditional bearings since the mid-twentieth century. They have been forced to be uprooted from their homelands as a consequence of population growth, increasing of towns and cities, and encroaching of industrialization and corporate sectors. Lack of social consciousness and political indifference about them cause a direct threat to their age-old entity.

In the modern literary fields, the Schedule Tribes are generally referred to as Dalit. The word 'Dalit' has been derived from Sanskrit which means 'broken' or 'scattered'. For the first time, the word has been historically popularized by B. R. Ambedkar (1891—1956), the renowned social reformer, highly acclaimed chairman of the Constitution assembly of India and a noted Dalit leader. According to the Hindu caste system of society, a group of people who are traditionally considered as Dalit remain untouchable or outcast in societal transactions. Quite pathetically, they are subjugated in every respect of life and destined to undergo emotional and physical sufferings, humiliation, discrimination, exploitation and even violence from the people of higher castes and it is obvious that "The oppressed themselves are not responsible for their disabilities backwardness and vulnerability." (Paswan & Jaideve 142). Traditionally, the higher social classes look down upon them and even do not lag behind in extreme trying to exclude them from the mainstream society particularly in terms of access to socialization, jobs, health, education and marriage partners and the process is still carrying on.

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar, an emerging literary star in the Indian literary firmament, portrays a faithful canvas which is brilliantly suffused with common predicaments of the Adivasi in a society. Each story is associated with its outstanding content and realistic flavor. The character-sketch emanates from his down-to-earth observation. His unique and skillful presentation of the lives of the Adivasis is a tribute to one of the great marginalized sections in Indian social history which is woven with ear-to-the-ground scenario. While dealing with the short stories, he carefully avoids the exotic or self-pitying tone; rather his stories are deft, compassionate, sharp-edged, and deep in symbolic nature. Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar, being one of the India's most promising authors at the present time, is a doctor by profession who is currently based in Jharkhand in West Bengal. So, like a true physician, he possesses a keen watching and a realistic look-out which aid his stories to be molded out of unemotional experiences. His way of viewing the inner parts of the characters is rare and unflinching. He never adopts a didactic method in telling stories; rather his craft is fraught with genuine love for his characters which is familiar and distant, angry and lyrical simultaneously. Consequently, his stories achieve a layered story-telling method at its finest.

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar was born in 1983 in Ranchi. He was brought up in Ghatshila and Chakulia. Ethnically, he is a Santhal, one of India's Adivasi communities. His Santhal background plays a significant role in reflecting Adivasi culture in his artistic plot. His literary output is filled with his own direct experience. His mingling with Adivasi groups and unmixed fine details about them in his fiction

open up before us a great vista which remains deliberately detached from our usual civil society. He exposes their cultural individuality and uniqueness which has been kept aside from mainstream civilization. Hansda establishes himself as a progressive story writer and a champion at depicting the real status of Adivasi identity. He is fascinated not only to pen down the societal, cultural and political blocks Adivasis face but also exhibit the inner-hidden lacunas that Adivasis hold within their roots. Though these ear-to-the-ground stories have been born out of Jharkhand, but the similar tales of identity crisis, cultural loss, severe hardship, migration, exploitation, human trafficking, torture and humiliation—all are true to the all tribal communities in general that extend from West Bengal to Chhattisgarh to Madhya Pradesh and so on.

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar has shown in his eponymous story an area of darkness that resides under the dazzling culture of Indian society. He sheds light on the most neglected and abandoned section of the Dalit cultural party. The book entitled *The Adivasi Will Not Dance: Stories* (2015) by the winner of the Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar, 2015, had been banned on 11 August in 2017 by the government of Jharkhand on the point that through his writing, Shekhar had tainted the Adivasi women and Santhal culture. Not only this, he was suspended from his job. The-then ruling party in Jharkhand named Bharatiya Janata Party, the opposition party called Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and even Jamia Millia Islamia, a central university based in New Delhi raised their voice against the contents of the book, especially against the portrayal of Adivasi women in the story entitled *November Is the Month of Migrations*, the second story of the collection. But the political opposition and the government's action caused a great controversy. Later, owing to wide criticism, the ban on the book was terminated on December 2017 and Shekhar was restored his job and honor. With the passage of time and growing popularity, the book has been translated into many languages including Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi, and Bengali and so on. Now, my present study will reveal the most celebrated issues in the following way against the contents of some selected stories.

They Eat Meat!: The story of identity crisis:

In Hansda's collection of ten short stories, the Santhal life and their cultural creeds have been delineated with its critically-acclaimed dimensions. His stories take us to some thought-provoking issues that lie within a society. The misery of stigmatized Dalit groups is still felt in the modern world and his characters get involved in the conventional predicaments only to test emotional and intellectual wounds. The real stance of Adivasi in the so-called civilized society is remarkably portrayed in the first short story of the book entitled *They Eat Meat!* Which speaks of the life of a Adivasi couple named Biram-Soren and Panmuni-jhi, husband and wife. The story is about identity crisis as faced by them for being only "tribals. Santhal." (Shekhar 6). Biram Soren is a director with the Gramin Vidyut Nigam, a Central Government enterprise and his job involves regular transfer. Accordingly, he comes to know of his recent transfer to Vadodara at the end of 1999 after residing for about two decades in Bhubaneswar. And his wife Panmuni-jhi becomes terrified at the news as her immediate concern for foods strikes her most. She becomes worried about how to maintain their non-vegetarian food habits, especially of their Santhal dishes in the kitchen. Before reaching to their newly transferred place to live in, over telephone, she starts contacting with her acquaintances in Gujarat. Among those, named Jhapan-di, a distant cousin of theirs based in Vadodara makes it clear to her that there "people don't eat meat here. No fish, no chicken, no mutton. Not even eggs." (Shekhar 3) and she warns her that even "People here don't like to mix with those who eat meat and eggs." (Shekhar 4). Ultimately, by the end of 2000, the couple move to

Vadodara and they settle happily in Subhanpura Colony. But, the first congratulation with Mr. Rao, their new landlord becomes an unforgettable moments. In their first casual meeting at the tea-table, after a showy hesitation, he directly charges Biram to know that “Isn’t Soren a tribal surname?”(Shekhar 5). Though Mr. Rao says that his enquiry is just for information’s sake, it has a deep hint. The enquiry signals that being a member of tribal communities; he needs to stop consuming their tribal foods there and stops mixing with other castes as well due to their lower social standard. What shocks him most is not the question itself but at being asked this so directly by the gentle-seeming Mr. Rao, who is a retired employee of a Central Government unit. If this be the consideration of an educated and established man in society, then what would be the common regards about Santhal---- this thought torments his inner-self and causes a deep psychological scar into his being. He hides his pain and keeps up his composure while carrying on formal talking. Further Mr. Rao pokes him by saying that “Vadodara is a strongly Hindu city. People here believe in purity. I am not too sure what this purity is, but all I know is that people here don’t eat non-veg. You know? Meat, fish, chicken, eggs. Nor do they approve of people who eat non-veg.” (Shekhar 6). So, what should be the decorum of maintaining one’s food habit is to be determined by a Hindu city and in the name of bearing up ‘purity’, the practice is imposed upon all irrespective of diverse castes, their creeds, cultural positions and religious beliefs. Even in this dominated Hinduism which belongs to conventional upper caste community, tribals are looked down upon as is clear in the statement of Mr. Rao: “Tribals, even lower-caste Hindus, they are seen as impure.” (Shekhar 6). To say directly on face that tribals are viewed as ‘impure’ is not only the incarnation of civilized audacity reared up in society but also it harms the mutual communication and interpersonal understanding among heterogeneous cultural groups. Lack of sympathy and proper comprehension to each other widen the gaps between traditional higher and lower castes. Social hierarchy goes on. It begets mutual hatred and disguised affinity among different cultural heritage.

Biram Soren feels a great pity at heart for being a Adivasi by birth. His ethnic identity has been disrespect directly or indirectly. He feels himself helpless. All his struggle and establishment in life has been thwarted, better to speak it is discarded. Apart from this, again Mr. Rao, the representative of the upper caste society, advises him not to disclose his tribal identity to others. In this respect, what he suggests Soren to say about himself to others is actually a drastic blow upon his soul resulting in pathetic identity crisis. Mr. Rao opines: “You see Mr. Soren... people may want to know about you. They are always curious. If they ask you where you’re from, please, will you just tell them that you’re from Jharkhand? Just that much, nothing more. Better still, can you tell them that you’ve been transferred from Bhubaneswar? Mentioning a well-known city usually clears the air quicker.” (Shekhar 7).

So, to coexist with other castes, Mr. Soren is almost compelled to hold back his real identity and ethnic habits. Even the twenty-first century is not prepared enough to accept the Scheduled Tribes along with other Dalit groups to allow them merging with mainstream society without any psychological conflicts and intellectual hesitation as is obvious in the behaviour of upper caste Balarama Naidu’s wife Pachaiamma who determines not to invite her colony neighbors like Chokkalingam, Sankaralingam and others belonging to lower castes to the engagement party of her son saying that “Is it enough just to have money? Can it do away with caste? Whatever money they have, low caste is low caste. These people have got money now. This same Chokkalingam’s father was a cobbler in our village. His aunt used to come to our house to clean out cowdung and filth and drink the kanji that we gave her. This same Chokkalingam worked in our fields. Our relatives know all this.” (Bama 54). Whatever social position a Dalit now acquires by his or her struggle and merit, always people of higher castes are ready to belittle

him/her, and are ready to humiliate him/her thoroughly. Pachaiamma's ultimate opinion echoes the harsh mentality of the upper caste society in general when she says that "These people shouldn't expect too much. Let them think of their past. Whatever crores they may have, can they ever be our equals?" (Bama 54).

Till date, almost everywhere the narrow upper caste mentality, pride and arrogance prevail which always bring about humiliation to other lower castes. The past history of their forefathers becomes a weapon in the upper caste hands to always attack on Dalit to such extent that in present time their socialization has been denied. They are rigorously forced to feel that they are destined to undergo rules and regulations determined by higher castes. As seen here in the Mr. Soren, to live happily, the Sorens yield to the 'demands to conform to the society', and they, though 'feel constricted', comply with the assumed social systems and its norms. Shekhar writes: "In Odisha, Panmuni-jhi could be a Santhal, an Odia, a Bengali. In Gujarat, she had to be only a Gujarati." (Shekhar 14). Thus, in a conventional civilized society in India, either a tribal identity has been suppressed or it has been harassed. However, towards the end of the story, picturesque presentation of the affinity and unity in the neighborhood of diverse religions achieves its remarkable stance when the historical Gujarat riots take place in 2002 and the whole colony comes together against the rioters.

November Is the Month of Migrations:

The story of migration and exploitation: The third story of the collection named November Is the Month of Migrations is one of the most stirring and heart-touching tales that deals with utter poverty and outcomes of it. To cope with extreme pecuniary problem, especially in the month of November, Santhal men, women and children are forced to migrate from their homelands and familiar farms "to take the train to Namal, the Bardhaman district of West Bengal and the paddy fields there. In the month that these Santhal families will spend in Bardhaman, they will plant rice and other crops in farms owned by the Zamindars of Bardhaman." (Shekhar 39). What severe poverty can lead to is epitomized through Talamai Kisku, a blooming twenty-year-old Santhal girl. On their journey to their destination, while staying at the railway platform at night, a young jawan of the Railway Protection Force with a bread pakora in hand has signaled her to near him. Talamai is quick at reading that signal because she "knows what work he is talking about. She has done it a few times by the Koyla Road, where many Santhal women and girls steal coal from trucks. She knows many girls who do that work with truck drivers and other men. And she knows that on their way to Namal, Santhal women do this work for food and money at the railway station, too." (Shekhar 40). So is the case with Talamai too, who only for "two pieces of cold bread pakora and a fifty-rupee note", agrees passively to have a sexual transaction with an unknown jawan. This particular short tale causes objections against Shekhar and he was accused of representing the Adivasi women in a distorted manner. But, a close reading enables a serious reader to apprehend the harsh background for which the Adivasi people are compelled to adopt such heinous works. With the fastest growing and changing world, they remain excluded from the mainstream society and thus become marginalized. Day by day a never-ending hardships and poverty become a common lot to them. A struggle for surviving in a so-called civilized society compels them to steal, migrate and have exploited physically and sexually with a "passive, unthinking, unblinking" manner. (Shekhar 41). The male-dominated upper caste mentality which gets epitomized through the characterization of the jawan is reflected in the utterance that "you Santhal women are made for this only" (Shekhar 41), while he is at the peak point of their intercourse. There is no sign of romanticism at their sexual meeting, rather she is

sexuallyoppressed “due to casteism that Dalit women are being dishonoured and molested.” (Joshi 86). Outlook to lower caste women ricochets. In the chapter named Questions of caste, commitment and freedom in Gujarat, India: towards a reading of Praveen Gadhvi's *The City of Dust and Lust*, what Santosh Dash remarks in the edited book entitled *Dalit Literature in India* (2015), is worthy to be quoted: “The sexual exploitation of the lower caste women by the upper caste man is a familiar trope located in the structure of caste.” (Dash 174). Whereas the Santhal women are exploited sexually, the men and children are sucked of their physical labour without giving proper wages for their works what they deserve. Exercising exploitation towards Dalit groups is undoubtedly motivated by traditional social hierarchy. Extreme poverty provokes them to steal or to become a sex object and thus leads them to soil their own reputation. But they are not actually so as are viewed by the rest of the world and this finds its confirmation in the words of Baba, a Santhal old man who in a confessional mood states that “We Adivasi are very bad at stealing. Corruption isn't in our blood.” (Shekhar 32).

Getting Even: The story of sex trafficking and prostitution: Sex trafficking turns out to be a common phenomenon in our modern society. It has been operated on the purpose of executing sexual exploitation. It is a form of human trafficking where a victim is compelled to accomplish sexual service to the customers. The root cause lies in the economic social system and power hierarchies which take utmost advantages of women in poverty and underdeveloped situations. And most of the cases, the Dalit women become the soft target for the traffickers who know it very well that these illiterate and poor women can easily be trapped in false promises of having given them satisfactory jobs by which they can help their helpless families. This dark side of the reality has been reflected in the background of the short story named *Getting Even*. Apparently it is a narrative of revenge where a boy is accused of raping a four-year-old girl, a Santhal by birth. Under medical examinations, it is ascertained clearly that at the age of nine or ten, to rape is impossible for the boy. To medical officer, the accused boy's parents reveal the actual truth that “My son has done nothing wrong. Those people are taking revenge on us because they sold our daughter in Delhi and we rescued her and brought her back” home (Shekhar 54). Further the boy's mother, being a Santhal woman, married a man who belongs to barber-caste Hindus. Already this intercaste marriage has infuriated the Santhal community and the couple's actions against sex racketeeringbackfire. So to take revenge on the couple, the Santhal communityfueledby traffickers imposes a false crime on the boy who is medically proved innocent. Thus, under a falsified accusation, there lies a deep reality where the girl-smugglers “bring Santhal girls from villages on the pretext of giving them education and training and work, and sell them away.” (Shekhar 54). A racket of human trafficking is continuing in secrecy among these uneducated people, especially in Dalit groups. Extreme poverty provokes, especially of their girls child to be ensnared in and ultimately they are sold away to some far-distanced cities where they are bound to work as prostitutes. In some cases, despite knowing what their girls are doing abroad, parents remain silent and in turn unknowingly inspire human trafficking and prostitution. To them, honour has no value. To fill up hungry belly is their first priority. To cope with hunger and poverty, they even “make their money out of selling girls.” (Shekhar 57). No proper and strict administrative steps have been yet to be implemented to stop all these evil businesses and Shekhar rightly fears still that “so many Santhal girls will have been sold” (Shekhar 57) in near future to come too.

Baso-jhi: The story of superstition: Owing to lack ofenlightened education among Dalit groups, some ethnic beliefs and practices prevail from the age-old times to the present with strict foundation. In some cases, they stick to their blind faith to such extent that they don't allow their comprehension to be

purified with scientific knowledge of the day to know the real cause and effect of incidents. Consequently, prejudices crop up from within the circle of illiteracy. This reality has been framed as a background of the story called Baso-jhi which speaks of the miserable life of Basanti, a Santhal woman and her painful experiences with superstition in the Adivasi community. When she was just fourteen or less in age, she was married to a farmer almost-double her age. With her husband, she moves to Salbani and resides there. She bears him two sons. She becomes widowed when the older son is just nine. She tears up both of them with much struggle and hardship. Both her sons grow up into able-bodied young men and get married. But, unlike their father, the sons, keeping busy oiling their own machines, do not display a hint of affection or a modicum of gratitude to their mother. Even her daughters-in-law prove lazy, quarrelsome and short-tempered. Necessary compassion, mutual understanding between husband and wife, the ability to smoothly run the household activities, respect for mother-in-law and womanly flexibility--- all these matters have no value to them in their life. Basanti silently tolerates all their carelessness, ungratefulness, bad-tempered behaviour, and unpredictable moods. But, she often mentions their shortcomings, “especially, when her grandchildren were not properly looked after, for she doted on them.” (Shekhar 126). The pampered children every now and again run to their affectionate grandmother which in turn is disliked by her daughters-in-law. The extreme bitterness and hostility between the sons and mother grow to its severity when her younger son’s child died of diarrhoea owing to utter negligence of their parents. But, all the blame and accusation along with rage is showered upon her. Her daughters-in-law lose “no moment in declaring that their mother-in-law was responsible for the child’s death.” (Shekhar 127). Not only this, even her own sons charge her of having possessed evil design to sacrifice the child before some evil gods. She cannot believe in her own ears that her own sons mean “her a witch” (Shekhar 127).

At this juncture of her life, she feels extremely helpless. The vivid portrayal of her plight is narrated thus: “Desolate, she watched her sons ransack her one-room hut. Her utensils, her clothes, her clay pots, her tin box, everything was thrown out. Not satisfied with all the damage he’d caused to his mother’s hut and heart, the younger son grabbed Basanti by the hair and threw her to the ground. Then he kicked her in the abdomen. The woman screamed in pain and grief.” (Shekhar 127). The inhuman torture upon Basanti highlights the ignorance, illiteracy, unthinking rage arisen out of complete ethnic stupidity and sticking to superstitious beliefs which most of the Adivasis share as “no one stepped forward to speak on behalf of Basanti.” (Shekhar 128). She has been cast away from her land and in her later life too at Sarjomidih, a part of the Chhotanagpur area of Purbi Singhbhum district, while staying at Soren-babu’s house as a protégé, she comes to know how superstition spoils a brilliant girl of that place. Despite having all the desired Santhal characteristics, old Dashrath Murmu’s graduate daughter Bijoya’s prospective marriage has been thwarted out of purely prejudices that Bijoya’s “mother’s death, her brother’s disability, her father’s failed crop, even her degree --- everything was attributed to” sorcery (Shekhar 119). It is a great pity that till date Santhal community itself is not ready enough to accept daughters “as smart and qualified enough as Bijoya.” (Shekhar 119). Here lies the community’s own ruinous basis. At Sarjomidih, Basanti too becomes the victim of superstition. She is charged by Pushpa, the wife of Soren-babu, to be “a dahni –a witch.” (Shekhar 122), after the three consecutive deaths “in this village in two years; that is, after Basanti’s arrival.” (Shekhar 121). Lack of proper knowledge about the real cause of death, adherence to age-old aboriginal faiths and celebrated indifference towards transcending their own limitations--- all involve in possessing a deep-rooted superstition in Adivasi society and these Adivasi cultural creeds lead them to their own downfall and bankruptcy. A pitch-black

darkness arisen out of their nescience overshadows the future to come and they have yet to achieve secured knowledge to shatter the foundations of ethnic prejudices.

The Adivasi Will Not Dance: A story of self-realization and helplessness: The title story of the book is about Mangal Murmu, an old Santhal man who has trained a dance troupe for years. The short story speaks of his refusal to perform a dance for a high profile function and accordingly his and his group's humiliation and suffering they have to undergo. Hansda reveals that the main inspiration to pen down this particular story came to him in 2013 when the-then Indian President Sri Pranab Mukherjee visited Jharkhand in West Bengal to inaugurate a thermal power plant project. The occasion had caused turmoil and agitation especially among the Adivasis on fear that the ambitious project would displace them from their homeland rendering them homeless and the concerned State government's indifference towards preserving their interests made them restless. Shekhar in this story gives voice and words to the untold sentiments and outlooks of the Santhal. His narrative breaks the Stereotyping where generally the depressed and downtrodden remain silent under the tyrannical circumstances. Here, Mangal Murmu, being the epitome of marginalized group, shuns all his fears and on behalf of the all Adivasis, he boldly announces that "We Adivasi will not dance anymore'--- what is wrong with that? We are like toys --- someone presses our 'ON' button, or turns a key in our backsides, and we Santhals start beating rhythms on our tamak and tumdak, or start blowing tunes on our tiriyo while someone snatches away our very dancing grounds. Tell me, am I wrong?" (Shekhar 170).

His self-realization speaks for all the Santhals in general who are obviously tormented by the unanswered questions like "All of us Adivasis are fools. Down the years, down generations, the Diku have taken advantage of our foolishness. Tell me if I am wrong." (Shekhar 170. Over the ages, the uneducated Santhals are hoaxed and outwitted. The political leaders use(mis) them for their own benefits and regard them just as puppets. The ruling government overlooks how the rich sections of the society like merchant, businessman and officerstake advantages of their physical labour. An explicit demarcation prevails between higher class society comprising of affluent all Diku like Marwari, Sindhi, Mandal, Bhagal, Muslim and lower-caste Dalits like Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Shekhar highlights the boundary between these two classes thus: "They have built big houses for themselves in town; they wear nice clothes; they send their children to good schools in far away places; when sick, they get themselves treated by the best doctors in Ranchi, Patna, Bhagalpur, Malda, Bardhaman, Kolkata. What do we Santhals get in return? Tatters to wear. Barely enough food. Such diseases that we can't breathe properly, we cough blood and forever remain bare bones. For education, our children are at the mercy of either those free government schools where teachers come only to cook the midday meal, or those Kiristan missionary schools where our children are constantly asked to stop worshipping our Bonga-Buru and start revering Jisu and Mariam." (Shekhar 172).Owing to want of adequate education, proper knowledge, and having no significant Santhal leaders, they fail to make them united and to make them feel how they are robbed of their vital energy and taken away their identities and distinct cultural formation under the bourgeois social systems. Under industrialization, they are exploited and even no capitalist is interested inprotecting unique cultural heritage of its labour class. Anthony Imoisi Hegbinosa in his article entitled An Analysis of Karl Marx's Theory of Value on the Contemporary Capitalist Economy (2012) points out that "Marx claims that due to economic inequality among these two classes, the purchase of labour cannot occur under 'free conditions'. Since capitalists control the means of production and workers control only their labour, the worker is naturally coerced into allowing their labour to be exploited. He believes that private ownership of the means of production enriches the

capitalists (owner of capital) at the expense of the workers ('the rich get richer and the poor get poorer'). The capitalists place a higher value on the monetary value of man rather than the unique characteristics of each person." (Hegbinosa). Besides the State Government seems callous to the right claims of the aboriginal people as it pathetically comes under the control of the dominant ruling classes, i.e., capitalists. It is rather mindful to defend its political interests than safeguard oppressed classes' necessary rights. A societal system under such political atmosphere strengthens predominance of those ruling classes, inevitably bringing a diplomatic unrest between ruling class and labour class. In the chapter entitled Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy in book *Marxism, Socialism and Religion* (2001), Frederick Engels's comment is worthy to be mentioned here: "The state presents itself to us as the first ideological power over man. Society creates for itself an organ for the safeguarding of its common interests against internal and external attacks. This organ is the state power. Hardly come into being, this organ makes itself independent vis-à-vis society; and indeed, the more so, the more it becomes the organ of a particular class, the more it directly enforces the supremacy of that class. The fight of the oppressed class against the ruling class becomes necessarily a political fight, a fight first of all against the political dominance of this class." (Marx & Engels 78).

In such critical moments of political milieu, Mangal Murmu realizes that they have no remarkable descendants of the great rebels Sido and Kanhu. They are devoid of essential power, valour and encouragement to establish their rights. Rather they passively accept their misfortunes. These self-realization echoes in the words of him: "Yes, there are no shouters, no powerful voice among us Santhals. And we Santhals have no money—though we are born on lands under which are buried riches. We Santhals do not know how to protect our riches. We only know how to escape." (Shekhar 176).

The moving ending of this short story raises several thought-provoking issues validating the flourishing industrialization at the cost of demolishing the tribal community. A contradictory milieu has been grown among the Santhals. They are at a loss. A booming economy of the country puts them in a pendulum-ridden stance, absorbing their simple happiness in life and destroying their peace of minds. No doubt, they barely require economic development but for this, they are not ready to be uprooted from their original soil and not ready to forsake their cultural matrix. The plea becomes a general document for all the tribals and marginalized Dalit people in course of their retaining and growing unique existence in a society. They are forced to yield to civilized snares. They are treated as playthings in the hands of affluent merchant class and high-caste people. This helplessness and self-realization finds its best expression in the final words of Mangal Murmu thus: "We will sing and dance before you but tell us, do we have a reason to sing and dance? Do we have a reason to be happy? You will now start building the power plant, but this plant will be the end of us all, the end of all the Adivasi. These men sitting beside you have told you that this power plant will change our fortunes, but these same men have forced us out of our homes and villages. We have nowhere to go, nowhere to grow our crops. How can this power plant be good for us? And how can we Adivasis dance and be happy? Unless we are given back our homes and land, we will not sing and dance. We Adivasis will not dance. The Adivasis will not ---" (Shekhar 187). Surely his voice is choked with overflowing of sorrow, mortification, insult, humiliation, exploitation and what not that a Dalit experiences being a part of so-called civilized society.

Conclusion:

Thus through the lively characterization of the Dalit figures, Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar has rendered some burning issues which are more or less related to most of the oppressed and downtrodden section of

the society. Apparently, on the surface level of the storyline, *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* hinges on the conflicts between the tribals and state, between the marginalized group and capitalist class, but a close analysis lays bare the manifestation of the hierarchical patterns in a traditional civilized society where the confrontation between the upper-caste and lower-caste, the powerful and powerless, the rich and poor—becomes an inevitable phenomenon where the society is operated by Brahminical (the representative of the Hindu religion) and higher castes who provide “an effective ideology for the suppression of resistance to injustice, having as a central tenet of its propaganda the idea that those in the lower caste are poor and suffering because of their misdeeds in the previous birth. And accordingly, as their sufferings are of their own making, and infact reflect the working out of some inexorable justice, the higher castes are absolved of any responsibility for their condition, and need do nothing to help them even though these ruling castes control the power and resource of the country.” (Sadangi 58-9). Mainly the selected stories deal with the deplorable lives of the Santhals from the Jharkhand areas and depict a constant hardship to retain their marginalized and cultural identity in a mineral-rich land under the corporate encroachment and growing urbanization and industrialization. The characters in these stories may or may not be real, but the issues, the marginalized sufferings, the Dalit experiences, treatment towards them by the capitalists and government--- all are relevant in this present socio-political fabrics of the Indian society. In nutshell, these unique stories help us growing essential insights into the matters and sensitizing the society to reconsider the Dalit entity to have a prosperous and peaceful existence of all alike irrespective of all castes, creeds and cultural diversity and “The creation of Dalit literature is inevitable until the structure of society changes and as long as exploitation exists.” (Dangle 266).

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