

## Torturing and Persecution of Human Spirit through Bullying with Special reference to Sea of Poppies

Dr. Usha Jain<sup>a</sup> and Faroze Ahmad Chopan<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Asst. Professor, S.A.B.V. Govt. Arts and Commerce College Indore, M.P

<sup>b</sup>Ph.D. Scholar, D.A.V.V Indore

Accepted 04 March 2014, Available online 01 April 2014, Vol.2 (March/April 2014 issue)

### Abstract

*Bullying is a psychological stigma persisting in human society with an array of hue and cry. This is one of the emergent problems that need to be discussed. People who are both bullies and victims are seen prone to mental illness. Bullying kills the inner consciousness of a victim, which never allows him to grow normal and target lives in a constant fear of being bullied which hampers his true potential. Literature has made an attempt to display the fact by experimenting with fictional characters. High level of barbarity receive most people's interest, like murder and assault receive media attention, but lower kind of barbarity like bullying is hard to identify. This is where Ghosh has built a window in the wall. Ghosh had made his readers to experience the problems of real beings through his fictional characters, and made them proficient to comprehend the consequences of their individual activities and look for optimistic ways to revolutionize. The aim of the paper is to study the traits of bullying in the Sea of Poppies. Prison persecution and how prisoners are frequently victimised will be explored. The present research is trying to illuminate the victimization of women as well. They are deprived of their due in every field. At home, they are recurrently even worse off, abridged to being slavish drudges, and maltreated in a number of ways. By acclimatizing psychological methods in literature such concerns are more perceptible and distinguishable.*

**Keywords:** Torturing, Persecution, Human Spirit etc.

"Bullying was, and still is in many minds, bracketed with harassment whose roots are in social prejudice." (Rigby, p.2)

Numerous studies have demonstrated that bullying is a pervasive problem in society. It is one of the most frequent types of violence in routine life. Several instances in the world history prove that bullying has been used to derogate and subjugate the human spirit. The severity of the issue has been profoundly dealt in literature with the help of fictional characters. The readers became well versed with the situation, when they draw closer to such characters in literature and they easily identify such issues and characters in real life and try to stop and prevail over them.

There are diverse definitions of bullying, Dan Olweus, founder of the *Olweus Prevention Programme* defines that "... being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and overtime ... (Olweus, p.5-6). Negative acts can hold various forms, which includes verbal aggressions, physical aggression, spreading gossips, or deliberate exclusive from a group. Bullying is the employment of Coercion, strain to exploit, terrorize, or contrive to impose ascendancy over others. Bullying if employed by a group is known as Mobbing. As Eliot

observes that the cause of the mobbing can be any such as:

Someone says the wrong thing at the wrong time. Someone is new.... Someone looks, acts, or talks differently. Someone is very smart or the opposite. Someone brags about his or her family. Someone wears clothes that are different or not the current style. (Elliot, p.9)

The objects of bullying are sometimes called as 'victims' of bullying. Bullying is a kind of skilled manipulation. Psychologists have observed that bullies fail to understand the feeling of victims. Bullying often take place on the differences of gender, religion, class, race, sexuality, appearance, behaviour, strength, size or ability. Bullying is a depressing and frequently belligerent or manipulative act or string of acts by one or more people beside another person or people generally over a period. Bullying is of two types, Direct and Indirect. Direct Bullying means when a target is bullied by the use of physical actions. It contains a great deal of physical aggression like knocking and poking, stretching, pinching, pulling hair and throwing things. Indirect Bullying also known as social aggression can be defined as an attempt to socially isolate the target. The bully makes use of

assorted techniques to achieve the goal; such techniques include refusing to socialize with the target, spreading gossip, threatening other people who wish to socialize with target. In indirect bullying the targets, dressing manner is disparaged and other one criticized like his/her religion, race, sex etc.

By adapting the psychological trends in literature, reader can peep out what is going in the mind and soul of a character. We came across a number of characters in the world of fiction who have been portrayed as victims of bullying. High level of barbarity receive most people's attention, like murder and assault receive media attention, but lower kind of barbarity like bullying is hard to point out. Ghosh's writing in English has stamped its greatness by blending up tradition, modernity, and psychology in the production of art. In literature, the writers like Amitav Ghosh had elucidated the issue in his writing skilfully portraying his fictional characters as 'bullies' and 'victims'. The basic abuses of bullying are emotional, verbal, and physical. In the novel *The Circle of Reason*, Ghosh has portrayed a character of an eight-year old orphan boy named Nachiketa Bose. The boy who has an extraordinary head of a huge size for an eight year old. He was given a lifelong name Alu, which became the part of his identity. "No, it's not like a rock at all. It's an Alu, a potato, a huge, freshly dug, lumpy potato. So Alu he was named and Alu he has to remain" (*The Circle of Reason*, p.3). The experience of humiliation remains with the boy for the rest of his life. His spirit is challenged and he could never come out of the shame of his own existence. This treatment has hurt the core of his being.

In *Sea of Poppies* Ghosh has portrayed the character of Kalua, an ox-cart driver. Kalua is a man of unusual height and powerfully build. Being a man of huge size he could be spotted towering above the crowd. He was black in colour, so it was his colour not his size which earned him the nickname of Kalua – 'Blackie.' Despite being a man of bully size and good strength, he was like an infant because Kalua is so puny as far as his mental power is concerned. After the bereavement of his father, he was easily duped by his brothers and other relatives: "his brother and other relatives had not had the least difficulty in cheating him of the little that was his rightful due; he had raised no objection even when he was evicted from the family dwelling and sent to fend for himself in a cattle-pen" (*Sea of Poppies*, p .54).

Because of his unusual bulk and fewer intellectual powers Kalua became a target or victim of bullying. He is glibly bullied by the three thakurs, who are addicted to gambling. They make the use of menace to aggressively impose domination over Kalua for their profit and enjoyment. They had nothing to do with the sentiment of Kalua, they did it just for fun, because their preferred past time was to gamble on wrestling matches and trials of strength. When the landlords discerned about the strength of Kalua, they make him fight in wrestling matches, Kalua won all local contests, defeating many local pehlwans (strong man) with ease. The landlords

earned a good profit and Kalua was awarded an ox-cart, of which he was ambitious. After once Kalua was defeated at Ramgarh palace, the landlords became furious, in order to conceal their shame they decided to couple Kalua with a woman: "Could a woman be found who would bed this giant of a man, this two-legged beast?" (*Sea of Poppies*, p .55). Later the landlords decided to mate Kalua with a horse. After losing the fight, Kalua became a prey of mobbing again. Ghosh has depicted the proprietors, an apt example of bullies. Kalua was kicked by horse and was left unconscious in the sand, bare and smeared in dung. "It lashed out with its wind legs, hitting Kalua in the chest." (*Sea of Poppies*, p. 57)

Bullies choose their victims on different basis like religion, cast, colour, gender, and disability Kalua depicted as a man belonging to lower cast of leather workers is bullied because of cast. Being an ox-cart driver, he uses to keep his face hidden from passengers, because the high cast people like Rajputs believed that the sight of his face is a bad omen for the day. "Hukum Singh as a high-caste Rajputs believed that the sight of his face would bode ill for the day ahead." (*Sea of Poppies*, p .4) In the core of the novel, one will find how Kalua is bullied verbally when pilot welcomes him: "Now there's a burrasize budzat if ever I saw one" (*Sea of Poppies*, p .283). The gulling of Kalua intensely depicts the agony of the victim and the total loss of his self-esteem. According to Eliot the victim often:

Feels confused, feels anxious, feels physically sick, becomes depressed, doesn't know whom to trust, engages in self- isolation, may develop feelings of persecution or paranoia, may act inappropriately, may engage in destructive behaviour, toward themselves or others, may develop acute anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder, and may suffer permanent physical or emotional damage. (Eliot, p.14)

Prisons are often known for persecution and the prisoners are frequently victimised. Prison victimisation incorporate insults, theft, threats, fights, practical jokes and intimidation. In the novel Ghosh discerningly explored the barbaric milieu of the slammer. He has rendered the poignant condition of Raja Neel in the prison who was imprisoned because of forgery. The vignette of the scene, when Neel was shifted from Labazar Jail to Alipora Jail, is pathetic and crossed the limits of inhumanity. Raja, the word implies the Ruler a royal personality, Raja of Raskhali estate, but after the imprisonment, his life had totally changed from well to worse. In prison, Neel is tormented both physically and verbally. Some half dozen guards, who were cracking inane jokes on Neel, accompanied him.

While ushering Neel, guards were fatuously hoaxing, as they were a marriage party, chaperoning a bridegroom to his in-laws place, on wedding night. Raja has no other option than enduring the things and ignoring their sorties. When they arrived at, guards persisted tyrannizing and intimidating both vocally and mentally. They started to prod and push and uttered that: "your in-laws are

waiting! - they would not yield" (sea of poppies, p. 286). Neel was nastily yanked from the carriage; he was not ready and needed a few minutes. The spiteful scene took place when Neel's dhoti was torn, as in rush he stepped on the edge of his own dhoti, dragging it undone. Neel was embarrassed and hurriedly reorganised his garments. As it has been observed: "It is also physical bullying when a bully deliberately damages the bullied person's clothes" (O' Moore & Minton, p.71). In the affair of bullying, target is always helpless and bully is invariably on a driving seat. Neel was bewildered by their savage behaviour, he was vulnerable stooge, and they were sturdy bullies.

When they were descending from the carriage, one of the malicious guards kneaded Neel and derogatorily told him: "Get moving b'henchod [bastard], its late already..." (Sea of Poppies, p.286). As Olweus has observed that verbal bullying can hurt someone's feelings but here Neel was throbbled in the soul. Neel was not expecting this novel treatment which made him aggrieved and confused. Sometimes he protested and asked them that they can't consider him like this, after he was not an ordinary person, he was a Raja. Neel was now feeling alone, angry, depressed, trampled and vengeful. The torment was at its acute, when somebody gave Neel's dhoti a sharp tow, the garment twirled him around, as it was untangled.

Mostly social backgrounds during the life span restrain ample chance for bullying. Power exchanges are ubiquitously, and effortless to abuse in one means or another. Being bare in the presence of others is the generally taboo, nasty and disgusting. Nudity is unjust, unethical, illogical, and prohibited in society. Neel cannot protest, he is emaciated in the hands of the callous authority, when sergeant ordered to remove his clothes. As touched by sergeant Neel noticed that at home if he would have been touched, he needs to bath and change, but here he was in another life. Neel was now suffering from grievous injuries, and was thinking that he was certainly born to be a plaything of fortune. As Randall has observed: "Bullies do not process social information accurately and seem unable to make realistic judgements about the intentions of other people"(Randall,p.23).

Mortification, nuisance, torture, and mistreatment of women are as mature as is the history of human life. Women have always been an undemanding object of oppression and bullying. They are deprived of their due in every field. At home, they are recurrently even worse off, abridged to being slavish drudges, and maltreated in a number of ways. Persistently mocked, frequently bullied, occasionally battered, and sometimes burnt to demise, they linger victims in every character. To my surprise, female victims of crime and violence have not given much interest in books on societal problems or in literature on unlawful violence. An approach of unresponsiveness and laxity is primarily the outcome of general acceptance of man's dominance over woman because of which brutal acts against women have not been viewed as sadistic acts.

At the opening of the novel, we met Deeti, a simple, virtuous woman, proficient homemaker and a caring mother. She is married to Hukum Singh, a cripple, who works in the opium factory of Ghazipur. On her bridal night, the ill-fated Deeti figures out that her mother-in-law has drugged her, so that her brother-in-law in place of her sterile husband could consummate the marriage. Eventually Deeti had to accept that her husband's injury had made him infertile, Chandan Singh, a slack-jawed brother-in-law is the factual father of Deeti's offspring Kabutri. The social stigma Deeti faces when she came to know of the hoaxing is immense. Deeti undergoes a massive trauma as she lives the harrowing experience every time.

At the time of her husband's infirmity she has to look after her poppy fields, being a mother has to nurse her daughter and being a wife she also has to take care of her husband. Her brother-in-law was always tormenting her and making ill will advancements. Deeti could not stop her brother-in-law, who was advancing on the ploy of visiting his brother. Once he entered the house, he was no more noticing his brother. However, he used to ogle at Deeti with lustful eyes. Deeti felt that the assault is not so far physical but slightly an access and an argument. Chandan Singh reminded Deeti that how her daughter has been conceived, was not having any infamy of the act but was suggesting Deeti to conceive a son of him. After the death of her husband, Deeti was certain to face her doom as she decided to go through with the sati custom (immolation on her husband's funeral pyre). It was then Kalua, who rescued her and they united and flee which was offensive in the society. Therefore, the couple choose the life of indentured labour on the Ibis. So here, victimization changed the entire course of Deeti's life of which she would have never dreamt. She lost her family, culture, native land and everything.

Several acts known as harassment are severe contraventions of a woman's body and decorum; these should not be the focus of a negotiation. It needs to represent clear markers amid arbitration and disciplinary feat and to recognize that some of the transgressions have the bareness of black and white, without intervening shades of grey. However, this is the area where we have to tread thoughtfully, and undoubtedly not rush in. Sexual nuisance cases generally have a marked power imbalance between the victim and the accused, which is hidden in the nature of the sin. This may well shape the negotiation situation, with the victim being powerless to hold her own, and end with a result beneficial to the other side.

By acclimatizing psychological methods in literature such concerns are more perceptible and distinguishable. Therefore, in the conclusion it is felt that bullying is insidious ubiquitously in the so-called sophisticated society. Ghosh has skilfully put insight in to the concern and has artistically conveyed the message to the reader. Hence, intercession is decisively important in averting the development of aggressive and antisocial behaviour patterns. If we do not arbitrate with bullies, we not just

place objects at risk for physical grievance, dejection, anxiety, and low sense of worth. Also drastically increases the possibility that bullies will build up into inconsiderate adults.

## References

- [1]. Elliot, G. P. *School Mobbing and Emotional Abuse: See It-Stop It-Prevent It With Dignity and Respect*. New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2003
- [2]. Ghosh, Amitav. *The Circle of Reason*. London: Himash Hamilton, 1986
- [3]. *Sea of Poppies*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2008.
- [4]. Olweus, D. Peer Harassment: A Critical Analysis and Some Important Issues. In J. Juvonen, and S.Graham (Eds.) *Peer Harassment in School: The Plight of the Vulnerable and Victimized*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2001.
- [5]. O'Moore, M. & Minton, S.J. *Dealing with Bullying in Schools: A Training Manual for Teachers, Parents and Other Professionals*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 2004.
- [6]. Randall, P. *Adult bullying: Perpetrators and victims*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- [7]. Rigby, Ken. *Addressing Bullying in Schools: Theory and Practise*. Trend and Issues in crime and Criminal Justice, 259( 2003) Print.