



## **A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS RELATED TO PROSTITUTES REVEALED IN THE STORIES WRITTEN BY PREMCHAND AND MATIN WICKRAMASINGHE**

**Dr. RKD Nilanthi Kumari Rajapaksha**

Senior Lecturer in Hindi, Department of Languages, Cultural and Performing Arts  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura Gangodawila Nugegoda, Sri Lanka.

### **ABSTRACT**

*Indian Writer Premchand (1880 - 1936), and Sri Lankan Writer Martin Wickramasinghe (1890 - 1976) are from different countries, yet many similarities are found in their stories. The fact that they were contemporaries has an immediate effect on the content of both writers. This Research Analyses the Problems related to prostitutes revealed in the stories written by Premchand and Martin Wickramasinghe. Two significant short stories could be identified from Premchand, related to prostitutes, namely 'Vaishya (prostitute)' and 'aga peecha'.*

*'Paukarayata Gal Gasima' by Martin Wickramasinghe was identified as a significant short story that addresses the same issue.*

*Premchand and Martin Wickramasinghe composed many stories related to prostitutes. Through these stories they have attempted to show that the prostitute is also a woman in the society. Not only the prostitute, her children also suffer its consequences. It may be that the prostitute does not have any other way to run her life or she has become a prostitute for some other reason. The prostitute also does not like this kind of life. She also wants to escape this life. She should be given such respect as the noble women get. But society does not do this. People living in society condemn them irrespective of the fact that they are too human beings with flesh and blood.*

**Keywords:** Comparative Analysis, Martin Wickramasinghe, Premchand, Prostitute's Problems, Short Stories

### **Introduction/ Research problem**

Premchand's Period from 1880 to 1936, and the time of Martin Wickramasinghe was from 1890 to 1976. Both the writers are from different countries, yet many similarities are found in their stories. The fact that they were contemporaries has an immediate effect on the content of both writers.

There are many types of stories related to women written by Premchand and Martin Wickramasinghe. Problems related to widows, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, and problems related to prostitutes are among them. However, on the basis of comparative vision in the field of research, the problem related to prostitutes has been selected, as others have been already discussed in other research papers.

### **Objectives**

The main objective of this study is to carry out a critical analysis of the short stories by the Indian writer Premchand and the Sri Lankan writer, Martin Wickramasinghe to figure out how Problems related to the prostitutes are depicted. Many researchers have been already conducted on the works of Premchand and Martin Wickramasinghe separately. However, no comparative research has been found in the representation of this problem in their short stories.

### **Methodology**

The main method of research in this study was textual analysis of Premchand's and Martin Wickramasinghe's short stories. In order to find out how Problems related to the prostitutes are portrayed in their short stories, the following steps have been followed,

A close-reading of Premchand's selected short stories deeply, collecting data; Reading of Martin Wickramasinghe's Short Stories deeply, to collect data; Completing the Comparative Analysis and making conclusions.

## Results and Discussion

Two significant short stories could be identified from Premchand, related to prostitutes, namely 'Vaishya (prostitute)' and 'aga peecha'.

'Paukarayata Gal Gasima' by Martin Wickramasinghe was identified as a significant short story that addresses the same issue.

Through these stories they have attempted to show that the prostitute is also a woman in the society. Not only the prostitute, her children also suffer its consequences. It may be that the prostitute does not have any other way to run her life or she has become a prostitute for some other reason. The prostitute also does not like this kind of life. She also wants to escape this life. In the short story 'Vaishya (prostitute)' written by Premchand, the protagonist 'Madhuri', writes a letter to 'Singar Singh' expressing her thoughts in this manner:

“Sardar Saheb! I am leaving here for a few days, I don't know when will I return or where am I going. I hate this shameless life where I have become a mere toy for these disgusting people and you are the chief of them. You have been showering gold and silk on me for months; but I ask you, will you allow your sister or wife to sit in the market of this prostitute even with millions of gold ? never.

There is such a thing in those ladies, which you consider valuable to you even more than the wealth of the whole world.”<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, in the story 'aga peecha', the Kokila is also sad with her tired life and wants to be 'free from this life'. She says that “Oh! Why was I born in to this world? She tried to purify her mistakes from charity and fasting but they were all faltering attempts.”<sup>2</sup>

Kokila wants to be free from that life. She does not let her daughter to suffer. She thinks- "Will this pure girl also be a victim of the tremendous trauma of lust? Will my efforts fail? Ahh! Is there any medicine for her, to be free from the curse of being a prostitutes' daughter?"<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> kaliya, raveendra.(2012).*Premchand: Stri jeevan sambandhi kahaniyan* p.82

<sup>2</sup> Premchand.(2008).*Premchand ki Sampurna Kahaniyan Khand 1*. P.723

<sup>3</sup> do

'Shraddha' was a very gentle, naive, peaceful and shy girl. She was also smart at reading, but she was an introvert. In the school, the girls from the respectable families considered that it is an insult to be in the same class with a daughter of a prostitute. Shraddha delivered a speech at a function in the school one day. Listening to this, people started talking different types of things.

"The black young boy became angry and said,

You are shameless to talk about such things out of your mouth.

The other person said - What's the matter of shame, men? She is a daughter of a prostitute.

A young man said in a hateful voice – You are wrong! The girl, who can express such wise ideas, is a goddess, not a prostitute. ”<sup>4</sup>

There is a love relationship between Bhagatram and Shraddha. Bhagatram expresses his desire in front of his parents. Then Chaothari, the father of Bhagatrama, says, "We are villagers, We are disappointed in your behavior. Even if the daughter of a prostitute is the angel of paradise, she is still the daughter of a prostitute. We won't allow your marriage here. You can only marry her, upon our deaths."<sup>5</sup>

As indicated in the above utterance, the immoral life that has to be led by Kokila, has a direct impact on the daughter's life. The sad reality is that people fail realize that prostitutes are a product of their own society.

Martin Wickramasinghe has revealed another reality of society in the story 'Paukarayata Gal Gasima'. It is natural to make a mistake by all people in human society. A person, who does not make mistakes, has not yet been born in to this world. Often people in society do not pay attention to their own mistakes. But they pay attention to the minor mistakes of others and talk about them in a sarcastic way.

Martin Wickramasinghe holds a mirror in the realistic plight of the prostitutes with the inclusion of the true reasons that compel them to involve in the act of immorality. He brings to light that

---

<sup>4</sup> Premchand.(2008).*Premchand ki Sampurna Kahaniyan Khand 1*. P.725

<sup>5</sup> Premchand.(2008).*Premchand ki Sampurna Kahaniyan Khand 1*, 730

there is a sad story behind each involvement. Yet, the society is not to see it, but to criticize them.

"A woman like you is a stigma for the entire female caste.

Get down from the bus, a woman like you destroy the entire Sinhalese race.'"<sup>6</sup>

The above words are said to pregnant prostitute. The insensitive treatment towards a pregnant woman, who needs support, is clearly shown in the dialogue. The woman suffers with labor pains. Even then no one is sympathetic towards her. Because society considers that the woman is a sinner. Everyone starts scolding her as they have never made a single mistake in their life and attempts to make her get down from the bus.

People living in society, look at the prostitute in a wrong way. Some of them go to the prostitutes to satisfy their lust. But later they condemn them. Martin Wickramasinghe wants to give the same message that the prostitute is also a mother; she is also a part of the society.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, both Premchand and Martin Wickramasinghe have reflected the sorrowful plights of the prostitutes. They suggest that prostitutes should too treat in a kind manner as they have a reason to engage in that act without any alternatives to survive.

## **References (Selected)**

### **Hindi**

1. kaliya, raveendra.(2012).*Premchand: Stri jeevan sambandhi kahaniyan*,Bharatiya Gyanpith prakashan, New Delhi.
2. Premchand.(2008).*Premchand ki Sampurna Kahaniyan Khand 1*. Sumitra Prakashan, Ilahabad.
3. Premchand.(2008).*Premchand ki Sampurna Kahaniyan Khand 2*. Sumitra Prakashan, Ilahabad.

---

<sup>6</sup> Wickramasinghe, Martin.(2007).*pavukarayata gal gesima*.p.97

## **Sinhala**

1. Wickramasinghe, Martin.(2007).*pavukarayata gal gesima*. Sarasa Compani,Rajagiriya, Colombo.
2. Wickramasinghe, Martin.(2012).*kata ahura*. Sarasa Compani,Rajagiriya, Colombo.
3. Wickramasinghe, Martin.(2012).*toragath ketikatha*. Sarasa Compani,Rajagiriya, Colombo.