



A CRITICAL STUDY OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN VIKAS SHARMA'S *NEVER TOGETHER NEVER APART*

Dr. Alka Sharma,

Associate Professor, Dept. of English

Govt. P.G. College for Women

Panchkula, Chandigarh

Abstract :

Like Virginia Woolf and Henry James Vikas Sharma analyzes the psychology of his major character and records the 'impressions' that come to their mind on several occasions. He doesn't ignore the negative thoughts that often hurt them. Yet he believes that positive psychology has got to be explored more and more because a lot of research scholars have done enthusiastic works on negative psychology. The terms like hope, courage, self-restraint, faith in bright future, right means, etc. has been mentioned in this research paper on the basis of the book *Positive Psychology* written by C.R. Synder and Shane L. Lpez. One has got to be positive in one's life though the situations may be tense and disgusting. Like Robert Browning and Emily Dickenson, the major characters of Vikas Sharma listen the regular music of the bird of hope and remain cheerful, strong and bold and face all the odd situations in spite of romance. Here love is allied with hope, vigour and zeal in life.

Keywords : Negative psychology, Awakening, Communal harmony, Social realism, Economic Realism, Reality reorganization, Transcendence, Social intelligence, Social construction etc.

Introduction :

Dr. Vikas Sharma follows Henry Fielding's theory of creating probable characters, the people whom he has met in his daily life. Except Youngstein in *Ideas And Events*, Saira, Trishla Vasu, Richa Pandit, Suvidha, Shraddha, Dr. Vindhya, Dr. Sandhya, Tanvi, Sophia, Nanny, Pummy etc. are complex and probable characters and different from each other. Similarly Sabir, Romesh Shrotriya, Abhilash, Pritesh, Captain Surya Pratap Singh, Dr. Goel, Joe Beverley (Jatin), Jay Sharma, Jag Mohan etc. are real in life and the artist relates the people with the events. The result is that no character can be taken out of his novel without affecting the main plot. Secondly, he doesn't paint villains like Cassisu, Edmund, Macbeth, Iago etc. as he blames social, political and economic tendencies of modern life for the evil deeds committed by people.

In *I.A.S. Today* he has portrayed evil doers like Tinny, Kale, Penny, Vallu etc. so as to be true to life. As a matter of fact crime rate has gone up in industrial towns like Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Gurugram, Panipat, Amritsar, Ambala, New Delhi etc. and the author is true to life. He paints society as it is and also wishes to introduce changes for new society based on equality, liberty, fraternity, right conduct, right knowledge, righteousness, fortitude etc. To him fair education seems to be the best tool to improve the situation.

As a minute observer of urban and rural society he does not hide the moral lapses of people as they suffer agonies due to their lust for power, money, status, pride and pseudo image of being great. After 1947 a lot of industries, schools, colleges, banks, universities, hospitals etc. were constructed to bring awakening in the country. Apart from soldiers, a lot of police constables and officers were appointed to take care of law and order. But then the Family Planning Department didn't function well and the result is that India is the largest country from the point of view of population.

More than seventy departments were established such as Railways, Road Transport Corporation, Broadcasting and Communication, Electricity and Power Corporation, Life Insurance Corporation of India etc. to introduce new schemes for public welfare. Most of the characters of Vikas Sharma are part and parcel of these economic schemes i.e. there is God's plenty in his novels.

In *Never Together Never Apart* Vikas Sharma refers to the thoughts of Pt. J.L. Nehru, M.K. Gandhi, S.C. Bose and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as Govindram follows them. He tells his followers that

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar gave the slogan — 'Get educated and united and march ahead.' This the moral of this novel too as the political followers of Bharat Kranti Dal do get united and help the candidates of this party win the M.L.A. seats. Moreover, Govindram takes interest in rural life and farming too. Here Rakesh enjoys pure milk, fresh air and sun light. Urban areas like Mumbai and Moradabad are known for pollution, prostitution and poverty.

In the beginning of this novel the author observes moral situation in Moradabad as Hindus and Muslims live in harmony with all friends and relations. The idols and stone statues of Hindu Gods are prepared and carved by Muslim artisans. This unity is disturbed during election period as politicians demand vote on the caste basis.

Rehmat Mian and Lakshmi Narayan are close friends and enjoy Deepawali and Eid together and share each other's joys and sorrows. As a result Rehmat's son Sabir falls in love with Lakshmi Narayan's eldest daughter Chinta. In spite of financial gap between them, they are above caste, colour and creed considerations. Chinta is prepared to give up Hinduism for the sake of her love for Sabir and similarly Sabir finds no wisdom in adding Zaidi to his name.

But alas! Communal riots spread in Aligarh and then in Moradabad. Communal harmony is fully disturbed and people feel — 'Hindus are only Hindus and Muslims are Muslims' and there can't be permanent harmony between the two sects. Yet Chinta and Sabir request Lakshmi Narayan to permit them to get married but in vain! Lala ji has started using abusive language for Muslims and Sabir meets car accident while coming back from her residence. It is true that Chinta visits injured Sabir in the hospital but ultimately finds herself desolate, heart-broken and nervous. Here the novel is remarkable for social and psychological realism.

Exposition :

Chinta has grown young and has her own passions. She recollects the time when she made physical love with Sabir. Here chance plays a fatal role in the life of Sabir — his two foreign buyers don't pay the bills and his consignment worth five crores sink in water. His Abbu Rehmat Mian sends him to Mumbai to talk to Zaveri Bros. and Khandelwal Co. to negotiate for further business and find out other business possibilities. Sabir meets Saira with Sagar, son of Nafees Ahmad and admires her physical beauty. He asks Sagar to marry her but the latter wants to marry a domestic girl (Later on he marries Farida, the sister of Sahir). Since Sabir does not give final reply to Saira's Abbu, modern Saira feels hurt and wants to explore the inner mind of Sabir. Next day she asks

him to meet in Alpana Restaurant and then she takes him to her Nanney Export House. Now she observes his psychology and finds his interest in her physical beauty.

Sabir feels hypnotized seeing her export trade techniques like collecting the data of buyers, their reputation, their tax policy, demand and payment structure etc. Since his Abbu exported only brass goods, he feels dull when asked to export spices and gold ornaments to other countries. Wise and prudent Saira is prepared to share these two deals of his customers and even secretly signs papers for export of ornaments. But love overpowers both of them and like the heroes and heroines of William Shakespearean comedies, they make love forgetting all worldly matters.

With Champagne and slow dance Sabir forgets Chinta and enjoys three days stay in her arms. When she offers him a gold chain to feel secure in love, he reciprocates and offers a gold chain to her out of love. Sabir is a simple hearted, young and smart guy. Since she is a rich girl, she ignores Sabir's past and finds her life partner in reality. However, she ignores the traditional ethics like Sabir and both decide to wed each other.

Nucleus :

Saira and Sabir are round characters as they develop and change from the beginning till the end. In many seminars organized on the novels of Vikas Sharma, the researchers blame the author for painting many erotic scenes but they forget the human nature of lovers. Apart from making love, they discuss issues of international trade and Sabir makes all possible efforts to repair his sinking export business. Here Saira appears as a mentor of Sabir because the latter is quite ignorant of methods of international trade, a national need today and tomorrow.

Secondly, like Richa, Shraddha and Suvidha, Saira is fully conscious of making regular progress in life — trade as well as personal life. For the sake of love she spends her morning, evening and night but then continues to attend her office duties for more than four hours. She admits that work can't be ignored at any cost. Of course, Sabir stays in Mumbai for a few days on account of a change in his schedule and secondly to arrange Farida's marriage with Sagar.

When contrasted with Sagar, Sabir is more dynamic and can take big risk in trade. Rather he is to be blamed for ignoring his family trade, parents, sister and friends and fails to understand that marriage with Saira will cut him off from Moradabad trade. Since Rehmat Mian is getting old, he finally depends upon Asgar's son Arif to run the trade.

Then Saira is an enigma for Sabir as she arranges a sudden meeting of the exporters of Moradabad to find out possibilities for expansion of trade. So far Sabir never planned such meetings for the promotion of his trade and seek cooperation of other exporters of the town. Exporters like Nemi Singhal, Ajit Singhal, Hement Varshney, Somen Varshney etc. were active exporters at the time. But Saira's vision of trade is wider than that of Sabir. Secondly, she can deal with the export of gold ornaments, not Sabir.

Tahir Hussain wanted to establish a college on his land of Lonawala. But Sabir takes no interest in this affair. The situation changes when the Chief Minister of Maharashtra suggests Govindram and Sabir to Open University. Sabir fails to plan for it as he is not mentally prepared to spend too much money. Then he doesn't want to borrow a lot of money from bank.

Fortunately, the C.M., the Mayor, Mayor's sister from Kolhapur, C.A., Dhanirama etc. are prepared to be trustees of medical college associated with university. Now Sabir sells a part of land for fifty crores and deposits the amount in bank for regular monthly income. He believes in the theory of — Safety first, speed afterwards. Wise and prudent Saira keeps mum on this issue as all this education trade is beyond her reach.

Sabir can be contrasted with Nemi Singhal and his brother Ajit Singhal as both of them decide to establish medical college of their own and need nobody's financial support. Saira is surprised to know that Nemi Singhal can establish a medical college with his own means. Here the novel is remarkable for economic realism.

With the help of Nemi Singhal, Ajit Singhal, Hemant Varshney, Somen Varshney, Uma Desai, Kiran Desai etc. the author wants to assert that Indian merchants have enough money to establish private universities, private medical colleges, private cancer institutes and research centres (Like Tata Cancer Institute, Mumbai). If Indian economic resources are utilized with bank support, we can do a lot in the field of medicine — medical education, jobs in the field of medicine, production of medicines and above all export of medicines to other countries. Here the author's impressions, observations and reasons are positive and practical.

This novel *Never Together Never Apart* is not a mere tale of passionate love episodes of Sabir and Chinta, Sabir and Saira, Kamini and Piyush, Sagar and Farida, Vaishali and Vivek, Nemi Singhal and Neerja, Ajit and Mansi etc. as the author wishes to assert a few complex issues here that Indians are really concerned with socio-economic scenario —

- Intercaste marriage of Piyush and Kamini is no crime.
- Small self-finance jobs can solve the problem of unemployment to some extent as Govindram plans, executes and succeeds.
- Rural education is to be taken care of.
- Gaps between rural life and urban life have got to be bridged to escape from the new problem of villagers' swiftings to towns. Khalida asks Asgar to shift to Moradabad from village Amla.
- Govindram is aptly told by his son Rakesh that the former can enjoy politics in village itself.
- Unemployed volunteers of political parties must be trained for jobs as Govindram does without any axe to grind. And Saira helps him for doing so in garment manufacturing.
- More girls, rural as well as urban, ought to come forward for personal trade and commerce.
- India as a whole needs dedicated volunteers who can manage elections with non-violent means.
- Philanthropic deeds ought to be encouraged.
- Any other pandemic may spread anytime in future and hence the chief minister rightly helps six exporters to establish six medical colleges.
- Decent education ought to be imparted to rural students as planned by Suvidha in *Ashes And Fire*.

In the book *Positive Psychology* C.R. Synder and Shane J. Lopez attach due importance to 'virtues, creativity, hope, good character, good actions, nice talents, wisdom, knowledge, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, perspective, courage, persistence, integrity, humanity, generosity, social intelligence, sense of justice, citizenship, fairness, leadership, temperance, humility, prudence, self-regulation, transcendence, gratitude, vitality and zest for life, feeling of social-construction, reality recognition, positive psychology' etc. (18-22) as signs and characteristics of positive psychology. It is aptly felt all over the world that perfection lies in God and to 'err is human, to forgive is divine'. It means that a person is to be admired for his positive psychology if he possesses most of the above qualities and the question of percentage of one/other quality naturally differs from man to man, between husband and wife, between father and son, leader and his supporters, teachers and their students etc.

When the novel *Never Together Never Apart* is analyzed keeping in mind the above qualities one can admire Sabir, Saira, Tahir Hussain, Rehmat Mian, Nemi Singhal, Ajit Singhal, Chinta, Kamini, Vaishali, Piyush, Sagar, Farida, Govindram etc. as they possess many positive values in their character. Sabir's Abbu and Tahir Hussain contribute regularly for the welfare of orphans, widows and old people. With the active collaboration of Govindram and his supporters a common girl Kamini becomes the Mayor of Moradabad Municipal Corporation and takes active interest in general welfare. Even in Mumbai Saira, Sabir, Nemi Singhal and Ajit Singhal establish medical colleges. Vivek Singhal is forced to control his lust for sex for a day but then searches new opportunities for trade in Mumbai. Mansi is sharp mentally and advises Ajit Singhal to start Cancer Research Institute and then establish factory to produce medicines. Dr. Desai and the chief minister are positive in their approach to society at large. Ajit Singhal's son Siddarth is ready to join new trade in Pune. Regarding the validity and utility of positive values in 21st century C.R. Synder and Shane J. Lopez remark :

'Despite the horror and uncertainty of terrorism and natural disasters, the United States of 21st century is prosperous, stable and poised for peace. At such a positive point in its evolution, a culture can focus on such issues as virtues, creativity and hope ...' (18)

They add :

'Like the gifts emanating from these previous eras, perhaps the contribution of 21st century America lies in adopting and exploring the tenets of positive psychology — the study and application of that which is good in people.' (18)

Same is the case with the policy members of Indian government and the citizens of the country and as a result India is fifth largest economy of the world with a large market for producers and consumers. There are more than 6000 large scale industries and numberless cottage industries in India today that cater the needs of masses and also export a lot of goods to various countries of the world. This feature of Indian economy has been high lighted by Vikas Sharma in almost all his novels.

It is true that Covid-19 hit the national economy badly and due to lockdown industries were closed. Yet the production started with its usual speed after the third wave of Corona. The author, Manju Kapur, Chetan Bhatgat, Shashi Desh Pandey, Arundhati Roy, Shobha De etc. accept India as incredible and 'unstoppable'. Shashi Tharoor admired Indian economic progress in 2006 when his book *The Great Indian Novel* became popular. *From Midnight To The Millennium* also confirms

that in spite of many obstacles, Indian economy has been moving fast and India hopes to be a developed nation like U.S.A., U.K., Australia, Canada, France, Russia, Germany, Italy etc.

Vikas Sharma is a broad-minded critic of Indian Politics, Indian Economic System, Indian Social Structure and Indian Civilization and in spite of exposing the socio-economic defects, admires the progress India has made in various fields. In *I.A.S. Today* he admires the training of I.A.S. trainees and the topics that are rationally discussed and analyzed there. In *498A : Fears And Dreams* he describes the decent results of friendly relations of Jatin and Jay with Sophia and Procne and suggests the importance of harmony between husband and wife.

This novel can be safely admired for feminism as, like Richa, Shraddha and Suvidha, Saira, Vaishali, Chinta, Mansi, Mrs. Desai and Khalida, the author is conscious of their identity as women and wishes them to make progress in every field of life. They are not satisfied as wife for physical pleasures only because of their other ambitions in life. Of course, they have spirit of adventure and Vaishali joins the export office of Vivek Singhal. Then she does not surrender before the sexual passion of Vivek Singhal and tells him bitterly — 'Let there be bloodshed' in case he forces her to surrender. Ultimately Nemi Singhal and his wife reach Mumbai next day and get them married. After the death of Saira, Sabir offers the job of Director of the University to Chinta on salary of one lac fifty thousand rupees. She grudges — Why does he weigh her total self with money and ignore her passion of love? —

Sabir : ' ... Sorry to propose to you the salary? You are coming to your university.'

Chinta : 'Now you are talking (sense). Are you scared to speak the words of love?'

Sabir : 'No. I don't dare to say. The love is repeatedly swaying in my heart, but I am scared.'

Chinta : 'Don't be scared, Sabir. There would be many obstacles in the path of love. Would you have the courage to face them?'

Sabir : 'Yes, definitely. My courage will be coming back if you are with me.'

Chinta : 'Then it's fine. I have accepted your offer. Even though late, but you have accepted my love.' (278)

Here the wisdom and courage are positive terms based on love and understanding. As a widower he accepts a widow as she has been his first love. She returns to him for his love and not for post and salary. But Saira is more witty than Chinta as she has been brought up in Mumbai and educated

in Symbois College. There is no 'satiety' in the love and passion of Saira and Mansi. But Chinta, Vaishali and Kamini are perfect examples of love allied with self-restraint.

Conclusion :

This novel is remarkable for psychological realism (25-26) as Vikas Sharma enters into their conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious mind and records the 'impressions' that come to their mind. Sabir feels disheartened when his consignments worth five crores sink in the sea. He leave for Mumbai with sad heart. Then he aptly feels that Saira is pretty modern and rich and may not adjust in his ordinary house in Moradabad.

The author analyzes the psychology of Saira at every step. It was shocking for her to know that Sabir has ignored her in spite of her beauty and experience as a trader. Then her intuition inspires her to catch him in the trap of her passion and beauty. She feels pleased seeing him her breasts. She feels happy helping him meeting two buyers and proposes to join his deals in case of shortage of money. In the hotel she appears in the grand gown and Sabir is over bowled. Her breath strikes his breath and they ultimately feel each other necessary for life. Then Saira is intelligent to suggest him to plan Farida's marriage with Sagar. She is wise enough to keep silent when great risks are being taken by Sabir in education trade. She breaks the heart of Sabir with her death in child birth. Yet she leads a purposeful life in Mumbai and knows how to manage export trade on a large level.

Here Vikas Sharma illustrates the ethics of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and it is a source of inspiration to all readers even today. (166) Secondly, he refers to fact that time changes and many things change with time. (120) Thirdly, like John Milton, he accepts that everything depends upon our mind — how we accept and reject people, places, situations and fate line. (172)

In the article *The Erotic Sentiments In Love's Not Time's Fool : A Novel By Prof. Vikas Sharma* Dr. Vandana Sharma admires the passion of Richa Pandit and Abhilash as it leads to marriage. Same is the case with Saira's passion for Sabir and they get united as wife and husband within a week. Dr. Vandana Sharma remarks :

'... the author remains an everlasting singer of love and beauty like John Keats till the end of the novel. Like the great romantic poets, his concept also undergoes a gradual development and ultimately the concept of physical love becomes spiritual and therein lies the greatness of the novel and the writer himself.' (175)

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