

UNEMPLOYMENT AND INDIAN MIDDLE CLASS A STUDY OF BADALSIRCAR'S "EVAMINDRAJIT"

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Abstract: This article is a study of "EvamIndrajit", a play written by BadalSircar, a Bengali playwright. BadalSircar writes about the middle class people. India has largest population of middle class. It is the deciding factor in elections also. But the educated youth in India are facing the grave problem of unemployment. Sircar, through the characters of Amal, Vimal, Kamal and Indrajit portrays the degrading condition of the educated youth in India. Though it was written in 1965, it is found very contemporary even now. The fast growing urbanization is the cause for people migrating from rural areas and not all are getting employment. The percent of unemployed growth is increasing year by year in India. Sircar also discusses the effects of unemployment on the youth. Lack of employment is leading people into depression and fear of future. They are not brave enough to get married until they get employment.

Keywords: Unemployment, middle class, corruption, materialism, existentialism, urbanization

Introduction: It is said that India is the fastest growing economy in the world. It is the second highest populated country. The asset and strength to India is its youth. It has largest population between fifteen to thirty five years of age. Government is providing education to all. They are trying to get hindered percent literacy rate also. They are utter failure in proving employment to all the educated youth. It causes unrest in the youth and provokes them to involve in anti social events. Sircar criticizes even the job interview system in India. The interviewers have become corrupted and taking bribes and selecting wrong candidates. In India it is highly impossible to get a job on merit basis without giving bribe. Corrupted educated system, corrupted officers and corrupted politicians are the main problem of India.

Article: BadalSircar uses contemporary situations and social problems to project the life-in-death attitude of modern life. He started his career as an engineer and later turned to theatre writing. His dramatic career started with some comedies and came to the limelight in 1965 with his celebrated work *EvamIndrajit*. Sircar focuses on various aspects of modern life, ranging from man-woman relationship to social and political evils. The chief characteristics of Sircar's plays are choice of the middle class people as characters in the drama, revelation of the hidden social and moral evils, an attempt to remove the complacency of the people and change in the dramatic technique. Sircar has also

portrayed a realistic picture of contemporary society. The problems of population growth, unemployment, poverty and child labour are presented dramatically. He stylized the ills of society.

BadalSircar's *EvamIndrajit* examined the existentialist dilemma of the educated Indians who were trapped between the bourgeois contentment with jobs and a secure future, and the desire to break out of a mundane existence and, make their mark in the world. Sumanta Banerjee observes "It, for the first time, was an attempt to present the existentialist question about the purpose of life." (Banerjee, 1971, 1)¹

The play is contemporaneous as it deals with the people of modern society suffering from a sense of loss. The present day reader finds it very easy to decipher the preoccupation of the playwright as the play echoes the problems of marriage, job security, bondage and rootedness which are the very basis of bourgeois Indian society in contemporary times. *EvamIndrajit* is about the residue that consists of those who have failed to adjust align and ceases to aspire and also those who are enmeshed in the day to day struggle for survival." (Dubey, 1979, vi)²

Sircar has taken four characters Amal, Vimal, Kamal, and Indrajit in his play and exposes the present condition of the educated youth in India. Though the play was written in 1965, it mirrors the present education scenario of India. No definite change has taken place in our country since India's independence. Everything corrupted. Amal, Vimal, Kamal and Indrajit are more types than characters,

contemporaries caught up in the pursuit of middleclass ambitions of educational achievements, career moves, materialism and marriage prospects. According to 1961 census, the population of Calcutta is 2,92,12,891. Of them about two and a half percent are graduates. Calcutta is microcosm of India. There are many young people who are educated and trying to get jobs. They are known by different names. They are all middle income group, although within that group there is enough disparity in income. They are the intellectuals. They are the educated minority, if a degree is needed a mark of education. They are the elite, because they are all well aware of their difference from the rest. They are Amal, Vimal, Kamal and Indrajit who are representatives of Indian educated unemployed youth, suffering and struggling for existence. Unemployment in India is the biggest problems of today's youth. There are different kinds of unemployment. According to 2001 Census, 27.8 per cent population lives in urban areas. People are migrating to cities for the sake education and employment. Indian universities and colleges have been producing lakhs of graduates every year. Education in India is not 'job oriented'. Students have been aimlessly studying different courses. When they come out of college after completing their education, they fail to get suitable jobs. Educated unemployment entails a waste of the country's most valuable resource, the human capital.

Amal, Vimal, Kamal and Indrajit resemble the youth of modern India. They meet daily and talk about cricket, cinema, physics, politics and literature. They think that politics is dirty. And literature should be a naked reflection of life and realistic. The confrontation of Indrajit with the writer exposes the frustration of Indrajit. He says that he is tired of being student. And that he wants to run away but does not know where to go – jungle probably, or desert, or iceberg. He criticizes the system of education. How it has become a failure to provide livelihood to the people. He says there is a world outside the geography that they study in the text book. That world is beyond everything subject that they study and talk.

Amal, Vimal, Kamal and Indrajit complete their school education and college education and now they come into the real world. They have to find jobs as they have problems in their houses. Indrajit reacts to the sufferings of the people. The injustice and inequality in the society make him more angry. Indrajit opposes

the system and negates the rules. When Manasi asks him he says that he wants to fight with the world, the people around him and the society. He hates rules. Because they are applicable to a few selected not to all.

"One can hate rules why should they be there at all?...What's the point of worshipping the rope that binds you?...tear it to shreds. Bring down all the walls that surrounds us" (p.21)³

As an educated and enlightened man Indrajit can't stop himself from opposing the unjust rules imposed on innocent people. This questioning nature is the one of the best qualities of today's educated youth. He can't help revolting against the society. Like any common middle class man Indrajit thinks about marriage. After getting job he wants marry Manasi whom he loves so much.

INDRAJIT (to Manasi): "The day I get a job – I'll marry you" (P.24)⁴

Marriage is one of the most important and happiest thing in everybody's life. Today's youth are not dare enough to marry without getting jobs. Employment has become the primary aim of the youth of middle class. Unless he earns money he can't run his family. That is why the rate of late marriages is increasing in India. Financial stability and economic independence is most important thing of youth both girls and boys. So the problem of unemployment is affecting the peace and beauty of life, because everything in life is linked with money and depends on money. The people of middle class can't imagine the future. They are not dare enough to think and have expectations about their future. They are deprived of the right to have goals or ambitions about life. Because they have to think always of the present life. It is a daily struggle for existence. The corruption that takes place during the interviews and the anguish of the unemployed people during the interviews is clearly exposed in Vimal's words. How intentionally the interviewers select certain candidates already and conduct interviews and later send regret letters to the waiting candidates. Vimal: "This is all a show, after all. They have already chosen their man." (P.26)¹²³

The play says that suffering is an inescapable part of the human condition. The people suffer intensely and incessantly. The writer's words indicate the boredom and triviality of human activities, the lack of significance in life and constant suffering. It also brings out the hollowness and insincerity of most social intercourse. Existentialism believes man is

more important than all rules, regulations, laws, principles or values. Man's existence is essentially miserable, lonely, alienated; the desire for happiness is a myth, and there is no escape of man from suffering. Man is born to suffer, he must suffer ungrudgingly or else should kill himself. Development of man – socially, economically, industrially, philosophically, scientifically- cannot improve man's real condition, cannot satisfy him fully and cannot make him full happy. Hence all efforts to ameliorate man's condition are confusing and in vain. They lessen man's freedom. All reform is futile. No ism, no philosophy, no system, no order, no avatar can reduce or eliminate man's suffering. Man should be free to do what he wills and desires. It also believes that individual is the product of the choices and makes.

BadalSircar describes the plight of the middleclass man after the independence in 1947. We have escaped from the clutches of the British Empire. The responsibility of building a self- sufficient and self - supporting India has fallen on the shoulders of the Indian leaders. Sircar being a member of communist party of India knows which system is needed India to get to development. He says we have to dismantle the capitalist system. Fascism is leading the world to destruction. Communism kills man's sense of himself and his freedom. The democratic process is agonizingly slow. Dictatorship has always been proved an evil. He says that most people have to suffer under any system. And our country has become the home of anarchy and corruption. Power always corrupts. Politics is dirty. We have to concern ourselves with our own work. Kamal says : If I am alive , all is well." The play exposes the frustrating situation of the youth of India. Anushuman comments that:

EvamIndrajit marks a watershed in the theatrical history of India as it shook off the prevalent, imported conventions of the naturalistic drama. The play captured the mood of a whole generation of perspective youth across India who were faced with a sense of purpose and meaning beyond existence. Amalvimalkamal, the three characters picked up from the audience fail to establish their identities distinct from the vast crowd of anonymous individuals. The poet –playwright writer and Indrajit's search for assigning a meaning to the repetitive sameness of

quotidian work ends in a frustrating situation where the search becomes an end in itself. (Anshuman, 27)⁵

The play is a commentary on the society. The problem of unemployment, loneliness, hunger, lack of moral, ethical and social values, cultural degradation, the problem of youth and the institution of marriage, the humdrum existence of Amal, Kamal, Vimal is made theatrically captivating:

Amal:Our country has become the home of anarchy and

Corruption.

Vimal:Our country can't be trusted to do anything.

Kamal :power corrupts

Amal:politics in dirty (p.47)⁶

SutanukaGhose Roy observes that

"All the four characters are ordinary beings belonging to the middle class. EvamIndrajit is about us- you – me- the average educated ordinary middle calss. All mediocre people, with no extraordinariness in them.Full of frustration and discontent, doing absolutely nothing meaningful in life. Most of us accept life with a sense of resignation and compromise and search for stability like Amal, Vimal and Kamal. If one chooses the other path, the path that is different like our indrajit one has to suffer endlessly. Sircar did that precisely." (Sutanuka,2013,208)⁷

Sircar studies and clearly uncovers the unchanging situations and conditions in India since its independence. EvamIndrajit was written second decade after independence. But still the underdevelopment, unemployment and corruption prevail in our society. The play is contemporary in its treatment of subject as it can be applied to the 21st century also.

EvamIndrajit is about us- you and me- the average, educated, ordinary middle class. They are all mediocre people, with no extraordinariness in them. Most of us accept life with a sense of resignation and compromise and search for stability in life like Amal, kamal and Vimal. Sircar once said in an interview that "EvamIndrajit was his only play that I can call a hit , judging by the number of performances that the first production received, which was 250" (AvikGhose, 1971,2)⁸ Thus BadalSircar with his plays continues to be a nodal point⁹ in contemporary Bengali theatre.

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