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**The Theme of Alienation in the Selected Poems of B. S. Mardhekar: A Marxist Perspective**

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**Abstract:**

The literary creations always carry a strong influence of socio-cultural milieu, as it essentially explores the contemporary social tendencies. The undercurrents of the social life, political events and cultural transitions can be evidenced in literature. The poetry has been remained one of the major medium of reflection that gives a chance to introspect and provides an opportunity to rebel. The poetry appears as a history that throws light on the darker sides of society and at the same time it also appears as a slogan or a rebel song that motivate and mobilize the society for a common cause. B. S. Mardhekar's poetry is not an exception to it, as it explores the themes like frustration and alienation which was the social tendencies of the period. His literary corpus can be evaluated with a Marxist perspective which reveals that how his poetry is a serious contemplation on the contemporary socio-cultural problems. The present paper deals with his poetry and try to make a comprehensive statement on Mardhekar's Marxist perspective in the exploration of thematic concerns like alienation and frustration.

**Key words:** Alienation, Marxist Perspective, Mardhekar's poetry, etc.

The poetry of Mardhekar is multi-faceted. In his early poetry we come across the love of Mardhekar during his period of youth. While depicting the aspect of love in the early phase poetry, he also reveals his love frustration in it. In this poetry we experience the outburst of his feelings of love and love frustration. This expression of the feeling is but the very first explosion of the heartfelt feelings of Mardhekar. Afterwards, he experienced the second outburst of his feelings during his period of adolescence. In fact, this explosion was but an effect of the contemporary happenings at the global level. The external social, political, cultural and economic picture of the contemporary modern society stirred the mind of the poet. The huge destruction caused due to the second world war, the destruction of great cities like Hiroshima and

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Nagasaki in bombardments, the aggressive revolts etc. disturbed him inwardly. He found that the very beautiful dream of a new world cherished by man was crushed due to the bombardments, explosions and huge human killings in the second world war. Man looked at this world with a sense of fear and horror in his mind. He got confused by observing the horrible situation of the world. In the second stage of his poetry Mardhekar depicts the sense of fear and horror in the human mind. Even though he composed some poems of love frustration during this period, the manifestation of the contemporary horrible situation reflected in his poetry is more explosive and thought provoking.

The contemporary social, political, economic situation which gave rise to the problems of class conflict, economic and social inequality, exploitation, the imperialistic tendency of the capitalists, the capitalists love for war etc. enabled man to go away from the main social, political, economic currents of the time. Here man witnessed his segregation for the first time from his society. Man's sense of fear and disillusion about the world made him pessimistic. As a result of his pessimism, he tried to keep himself away from the world. The very loss of cultural and moral values during this period disintegrated the soul of man. Emotionally and mentally man thought of himself as someone who is totally cut off from the bigger society. In this world of capitalism where material growth has a higher value, where everybody is selfish and lusty for power, the human being as an individual got separated from (this horrible world) it. Mardhekar's poetry is a manifestation of man's alienation from the whole social system. In a sense, Mardhekar's poetry not only reflects the Marxist aspects of class conflict, exploitation, inequality, revolution and struggle but it also highlights more effectively and impressively the Marxist aspect of alienation of man in his poetry. In his poetry Mardhekar depicts the alienation of man from God, Nature, religion, culture, society and from himself. It is this sense of alienation which has made the life of an individual and society an abused life. Mardhekar has sketched a perfect picture of human alienation in his poetry in the line of Marxist philosophy of alienation. In this regard Mr. V. A. Dahake, a Marathi Marxist critic, in his essay 'Marathitil Marxwadi Kavita' says, 'In Mardhekar's poetry we do not find any thought of revolution expressed by Mardhekar. We also don't find any lines directly referring to man's hope for change, revolution and class conflict. However, in his poetry we see

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the four types of alienation which have already been discussed by Karl Marx in his analysis of capitalism. In this regard Mardhekar's, collection of poems 'Kahi Kavita' is mention worthy here. (Dahake32).

In Mardhekar's poetry man is alienated from himself and his own society. It is but an effect of industrialization and capitalism. In the capitalistic system of society, the means of production are possessed by the factory owner, the capitalists. The worker has no more any claim of ownership of these means of production. The worker works in the factory and he gets wages in return to his work. It means that the workers make a product at the cost of his labour and he sells his labour to the capitalist. After the product is sold to the capitalist, the worker cannot have any concern with the process of production. Here, we see the alienation of the producer (worker) from his product (labours). Secondly, it is but the capitalist who decides what product should be produced and not the worker. The worker produces the product as per the intimation given to him by his owner and not at his own discretion. Here also the worker is alienated from the decision of making a certain type of product. Thirdly, it is the owner who decides what methodology and techniques should be followed in making the product and the worker can no longer decide such a methodology and technique. This is but a separation of the worker from the methodology of producing his product. Fourthly, when the capitalists sell the product in market, he earns profit from the sale of that product. In fact, this profit is but a part of the workers' efforts and the worker is expected to claim the profit. However, in the capitalist society, the worker is no more allowed to share the profit of his work Marx's calls it as surplus value. The worker's relationship with the surplus value is cut off here. It is but a sort of alienation experienced by the worker. In short, the worker becomes a stranger to his own making, his methodology, his decision and to the profit of his making. As a result of this, the worker thinks that he is not concerned with this system of production. He gets alienated from it. He gets confused and unhappy in the society. He experiences a sort of anxiety. He experiences a sort of mental and physical weakness. This helpless situation of man makes him isolated. He gets isolated from society, Nature, culture, art, religion etc. In short, it is an act of going away of man from his social, cultural, religious roots. He experiences several contradictions.

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The picture of man's alienation from humanity is reflected in Mardhekar's poetry. Mardhekar like Marx, believes that it is necessary to overcome this sense of alienation. In order to bring an end to it, the whole social structure must be changed. In respect of this viewpoint Mardhekar's poetry belongs to the category of modern poetry. As a modern poet, Mardhekar analyses the sense of alienation of man in his poetry and also suggests the way out like revolution, struggle etc. to overcome such a malady.

In the poem 'Maza Abhang Mazi Owi' Mardhekar expresses his views of his poetic tradition, his attitude towards life and his attachment with God. While expressing his attitude towards life, he takes a review of the real life around him. In the fourth stanza of the poem, he says that we all human beings are deeply in love with the development of science and knowledge. There is a tremendous materialistic growth all over the world. However, the advantage of this scientific materialistic growth goes to the industrialists. The common man, is deprived of the enjoyment of the benefits of science. The capitalists misuse political power for their own benefit. It is hardly used for the welfare of the ordinary man. In this way, the gap between the capitalists and workers class goes on widening day by day. The exploiters go on exploiting the common man. And this class conflict gives birth to anarchy and disorder in the society.

Mardhekar looks at the realistic life in which the common man's existence is meaningless. The corruptive political power and the rising materialism has neglected the very identity of the common man. This sense of the loss of identity of the common man arouses the feeling of alienation in his mind and he says:

Disha tapat chaufer  
nahi maher-sasar,  
keiche gotra va pravara, anamika. (Mardhekar 23)

Here, the poet says that in this horrible world, the situation of common man is like that of a stranger. In this system, he has no identity of his own. He is someone like an anonymous person, a stranger like a married woman who has lost her parents family and her husband's family and who has left no account of her lineage, kinship and her familial history. In this world both the *maher* (representing spiritual value)

and the *sasar* (higher values) won't come to his help for representing his identity. The old established values would protect the human life, they would guide man properly every moment but in this horrible world system there is a greater loss of these essential values. In this way man is cut off from his rich cultural, social, moral traditions. There is no light or an oil lamp guiding constantly man in this world. Therefore, the ordinary man feels to have been isolated from all these main currents of society. This isolation of him, makes him nervous and disappointed about the world. He develops the sense of negativity about the world. However, like a Marxist, the poet here believes that he has the ability of overcoming this sense of alienation. He knows what he is born for, what he is told and what he has to obtain at personal and social levels. Yet he has a clear attitude towards life. The following lines show both his sense of alienation and the remedy over it:

Nene bijaii va panati  
sthir ahe tari drishti,  
apadme nahi kashti  
bawala mi. (Mardhekar 45)

In respect of the depiction of the feeling of isolation and his determination to overcome this feeling, we see the poet as a Marxist. The sense of alienation expressed in the above two stanzas clearly reflects the Marxist thought of the poet. He shows the isolation of man from the rich culture and religion and morality here.

In Mardhekar's, poetry we see that man is alienated not only from culture and religion but from himself also. Man is alien to his own personality and mind and soul. Thus, Mardhekar has expressed his sense of alienation from himself in the poem. 'Don Kholyanchya Birhadi'. In this poem he reflects his frustration and nervousness experienced by him due to his awareness of alienation, his insensitivity to God and his shocking experience of social inequality.

In the first stanza of this poem Mardhekar has expressed his feeling of alienation as follows:

Don kholyanchi birhadi  
mazya ghari mi varhadi,  
kinwa sasari karhadi,  
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jamat ki. (Kale 31)

These lines show the alienation of man from himself. Mardhekar says that he feels to be an alien in this world. The very feeling of nervousness which is the result of his observation of social inequality makes him to think that he is cut off from himself and his own world. He thinks that he is but a foreigner or an alien who lives in the small two-roomed house. This alienation of him is like the alienation of a guest. He further says that the son-in-law who stays in his miserly father-in-laws' house feels congested and confined. He experiences a sort of alienation. Like the son-in-law, here, the poet also experiences alienation.

In the poem, 'Jagacha Liptaka', Mardhekar expresses his nervousness in his attempt of praying God. He says that he is neither totally indulged in the materialistic life nor is he totally away from it. However, he has not been able to meet God nor has he been able to pray him. He says that it has happened due to the disintegration of his mind. Even though he is integrated bodily, mentally he is disintegrated. This disintegration of his mind arouses a sense of fear and nervousness in his mind. And this sense of fear makes him aware of his isolation from him. The following lines reflect man's alienation from himself:

Ekala asun  
mani don zalon,  
Ata matra bhyalon  
mala meeche. (36)

In his poetry Mardhekar also portrays a man who is cut off from Nature. In fact, man is the creator of Nature. There is a close relationship between man and nature. However, in this age of the development of science the very fabric of relationship between man and nature got cut off. Man thought of his own security and in his attempt of securing himself he tried to put himself away from Nature. This alienation of man from nature can be seen in his poem, 'Kiti Tari Divasaat'. In this poem the poet expresses his sense of alienation from nature. The tremendous growth of industrialization and urbanization developed the sense of alienation between man and Nature. The man who is migrated from rural area to urban one, experiences the sense of alienation from Nature too intensely

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The poet becomes nervous when he remembers that he has not walked happily in the light of the stars for the last so many days nor has he bathed in the river. Now he lives in a city. He feels very sorry for not enjoying any pleasure from Nature.

Even today he has a greater fascination for the stars and the water of the river. However, now he doesn't have the ability of responding to that fascination anymore. On the other hand, when he thinks over such things, which are but aspects of Nature, he experiences a sort of fear. He feels a sense of insecurity. He thinks that the free air of starry night may affect his body adversely. Even his imagination of swimming in the river makes him to be trembling. This sense of fear and insecurity in the mind of the poet about Nature, shows his alienation from Nature. Mardhekar has reflected this separation of man from Nature in the following lines:

Aaj antarat bhiti  
Khulya chandanyachi thodi,  
Ani nadicha pravah  
Angavar kata kadhi (Kale 31)

In the above lines we come to know the fear aroused in the mind of modern man due to his isolation from Nature.

In Mardhekar's, poetry we see the alienation of the worker from his work of art. It shows an absurdity of the relationship between the creator and the creation, the artist and his art etc. The images of mason and house, God and human mind used by Mardhekar in the second stanza of the poem 'Dhavel Dhukyacha Santha Batanch' reflects the sense of alienation when he says:

Laj gharachi gavandyas na,  
Imarticha Ishwar wali  
Laj mansach Ishwaras na  
Daldal ratri fakt mawati. (ibid 50)

The mason constructs the house but after the completion of the construction, he gets alienated from it. No more he lives in that house. Therefore, he should not worry any more about the house. If the house is used for any good or bad purpose by the owner, the mason is not blamed for it. Secondly, God has made human mind. But

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he doesn't have any concern with the mind of man. When man makes misuse of his mind for amassing huge wealth by exploiting labourers and workers, it is not the fault of God, but it is the fault of that rich man himself. God creates the human mind and he gets alienated from his creation. And hence God need not care for the polluted mind of that so called rich man any more. Mardhekar here expresses a sense of alienation caused due to social inequality, exploitation of common man by the capitalists as a result of which the house and the mind get polluted.

In his poem 'Trutik Jeevani Suti Kalpana'. Mardhekar points out the alienation of man from another man. He argues that in the human society there is no humanitarian, attitude between one man and another man. There is no attachment between them at all. This sense of alienation enervates the poet when he says:

Trutit jeevani suti kalpana,  
Tring tiring jaisa khota number  
Salag jamena ek bhavana  
hello, hellola halkat uttar (ibid. 45)

In the above lines the poet displays the isolation of man from another man, by using the image of 'wrong number'. He says that in this world of disturbance and disorder, there is no communication between one man and another man. The gap of communication between one man and another man, exhibits the abused human life. There is no sense of unity and integrity among all the men in the society and because of this one man is alienated from another man. We all human beings have lost the 'we' feeling. When there is a wrong number on the phone and we say hello, hello expecting that the receiver, the man at the other end will respond to our call, our expectation gets unfulfilled here because instead of responding to our call, that man replies in a non-sensical and vulgar manner to our call. This shows a sort of non-communication among human beings. Thus, one man gets cut off from another man due to the gap of communication.

Mardhekar believes that man can overcome any type of sense of alienation. For that purpose, man should have a sense of belief and trust on God. If man believes in the supernatural power like God, he will hardly feel loneliness or detachment in his life in case of the things mentioned by the poet. But a surprising

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thing is that man has lost this faith or belief also. And due to the loss of faith or belief in God, man is cut off from God. In the poems 'Kele Janmapansuni Raan' and 'Alo Kshanicha Visava Mhanun' he shows the detachment of man from God. The following lines from the poem 'Kele Janmapasun Raan' poem reflect it:

Zali tatatut kaishi  
Kevha ani kothe,  
majasi kahich nurale smritisheshi  
kripavanta (ibid. 34)

Here the poet shows his spiritual devotion towards God. He says that he tried hard to meet God but he could not meet God. He experienced a sort of detachment between God and him. But he further says that he tried to overcome this alienation by experiencing his contact or communion with God through the unseen power of God and through the expression of emotions through the words in his poetry.

In the poem, 'Kshanacha Visava Mhanun' the poet surrenders before God and tries to show his attachment with Him. However, he can't see God anymore and therefore he becomes nervous and reflects his sense of alienation from God as follows:

Alo kshanacha visava mhanoon,  
Tekale Paya:  
To tuch hatakales' kon'? mhanoon  
Ani manatil shinlele hetoo.  
Shen zale. (ibid. 68)

The poet tries to show his integral love for God here but he thinks that God has neglected him and therefore the poet felt to be an alien to God. The sense of alienation expressed in this poem is made clear by Dr. A. Kale in his following comment on this poem-

Throughout this poem Mardhekar feels tortured by his awareness of alienation. In this poem the poet has revealed his heart which is full of sorrow and dejection because of his sense of alienation from another man, from God and from Nature. He thought that he would submit himself to God and he would recover himself from his alienation.

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However, he couldn't get concerned from it. The feeling of isolation reflected in this poem shows the meaninglessness and purposelessness of human life (Kale 344).

In short, the sense of alienation exists in many poems of Mardhekar. It reveals the nervousness of the poet caused due to the disintegration of mind. of the poet. The poet's disintegration of mind represents the disintegration of mind of all people in society. Like the poet, all people do suffer and experience the feeling of nervousness, which ultimately, arouses a sense of alienation among them. Like the poet, every man experiences a sort of detachment from culture, religion, Nature, society, other man and from himself as well. It is because of this feeling of loneliness or isolation showed in every common man, the modern common man thinks that his life is but an absurd life and his society is also an absurd society.

This view of absurdity of human life developed by the sense of alienation is reflected in the following remark of Akshaykumar Kale-

In the poetry of Mardhekar we see man alienated from culture, society, God, nature etc. This sense of alienation makes Mardhekar to think that human life and human society as absurd. Some other poets like Mardhekar accept this reality and in their poetry, we see the sense of alienation. However, we don't see the sense of nervousness in their poetry as it exists in Mardhekar's poetry. Mardhekar represents the sense of alienation reflecting nervousness and sufferings of man. (Kale 344-345)

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