

Tragic Trajectory in Jumpha Lahiri's *The Lowland*

Dr. Padmavati S. Undale,

Assistant Professor, MIT Arts, Commerce & Science College, Alandi(D), Pune.
Corresponding Author: Dr. Padmavati S. Undale,

Abstract: The present research paper deals with the tragic trajectory in Jumpha Lahiri's novel *The Lowland*. The paper presents how the life of each character in the novel is full of tragic experiences. The novel is the story of two brothers and the impact of the death of one of the brothers on the whole family. The paper is an attempt to present the emotional suffering of the characters in the novel.

Keywords : Tragic trajectory, miserable life, loneliness, Naxalbari movement

Date of Submission: 28-12-2017

Date of acceptance: 11-01-2018

I. Introduction

Literature reflects the socio-cultural environment of the society. It depicts ups and downs in the development of the society. The literature mirrors the issues emerged in the society. The socio-cultural environment have a great influence on people. The transitions in the society may have positive or adverse effect. People willingly or unwillingly follow these changes. Adverse effects of the transitions and unwillingness of the people to follow the changes are the root causes of social unrest. People demand and revolt for a change. Such situations lead to social controversies. Literature presents this social scenario in the literary pieces. It depicts the victims of such controversies in the society. Literature creatively unfolds various angles of human life. Shelley in his essay *On Life in a Future State* (Shelley: 2007) described life as a miracle. According to him what can happen nobody can guess. These happenings have to be accepted with or without willingness. Nothing is predictable. These happenings bring changes in our life. That may be adverse or beneficial. Buddha explained four Noble Truths. The first noble truth is *Dukkha*. It means life is unsatisfactory, disjointed and suffering. The second is *Smudaya*. It means there is a cause of suffering which is attachment or desire. The third is *Nirodh*. It means once the person eliminates his cravings, ill will, delusions, and ignorance, then true and lasting peace is the end result. The fourth truth is *Marga*. It means path that leads out of suffering. These four noble truths reveal the real cause of man's suffering and ways to overcome these suffering to make life happy. But it is difficult for a common man to follow these truths. This inability to follow results into tragic happenings in life. The literature presents how man engages himself in the desires and attachments. The man caught in desires suffers if these desires are not fulfilled. Jumpha Lahiri presented tragic life story of Mitra family in *The Lowland*.

Jumpha Lahiri is one of the prominent women writers in English. Being the daughter of Bengali Indian emigrants, her writings reveal the presence of memories about India. She depicts struggles, anxieties and solidarity predominantly observed in human life. She has written novels and short stories. Her major works are *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), *The Namesake* (2003), *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008), and *The Lowland* (2013). *Interpreter of Maladies*, collection of short stories, won the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. *The Lowland* was a nominee for the Man Booker Prize.

The Lowland is a story of a family, Mitra. The family consisted of two brothers, Subhash and Udayan and their parent. The father was a clerk in Indian Railway and mother did some earning by helping neighbourhood tailors. The story begins with the childhood description of the brothers, their love for each other and their parents' expectations from them like other parents. The novel describes the influence of Naxalbari movement started in 1967 and led by Charu Majumdar, Kanu Sanyal and Jangal Santhal. Mao Tse-tung provided ideological leadership for the Naxalbari movement, advocating that Indian peasants and lower class tribal overthrow the government and upper classes by force. A large number of elites were attracted to the ideology spread through Charu Majumdar's writings. Udayan's involvement in Naxalbari movement became the cause of his early death which disturbs his family life. The novel also presents how Subhash's marriage with Udayan's wife, Gauri, though done by their choice turned into forced arrangement day after day and finally broken as Gauri left him.

Lahiri had skilfully presented this tragic trajectory in *The Lowland*.