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**TRANSLATING TRAUMATIZED MINDS: A STUDY OF SELECT
POEMS OF SUSHMA ANDHARE TRANSLATED BY
AJAY DESHMUKH AS *CURSED ANKLET***



Dr. Rahul Baburao Kendre

Dept. of English,

Milind College of Arts,

Nagsenvana, Aurangabad.

rahul.kendre1979@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Dr. Ajay Deshmukh has translated Sushma Andhare's Marathi poetry collection *Shapit Painjan* (शपित पानजान) as *Cursed Anklet* in English. In recent times, poetry as a genre is not considered serious genre to express the anxieties of human existence. Translating poetry from regional language to English is quite unbeaten path. Considering this and many other socio-cultural and political and existential dimensions, *Cursed Anklet* has emerged as one of the most significant work of literary recreation in English in terms of its interlingual discourse and cognition. These poems are not only a delightful experience for the readers but also useful in unfolding the layers of meanings of the poetry in the source language. In fact, Ajay Deshmukh has created entirely new set of poetry in his attempt to translate the

essence of the Marathi poems without much regard for meter and rhythm. His adherence to original poetry's cultural context and references makes his translation more engaging and satisfying for English readers. All the 46 poems translated by Ajay Deshmukh are mesmerizing and captivating but poems like *Power*, *He Krishna*, *Today's Mahabharat*, *Mother*, *Oath* and *Saheb* are special and awe-inspiring.

Present research paper is an attempt to trace the translation of traumatized minds in the selected poems from *Cursed Anklet*.

KEYWORDS

translation, cultural, ethnic, scriptures, mythologies, poetry, fantasies, ideologies, trauma, women, aesthetic, torture, pain, depression, marginalized, agonized, didactic, tone, voice, imagery, rhythm, meter, syntax, semantic, sanctity, womanhood, Bulutedari, Alutedari, Subjugation, Suppression, hypocritic, bankruptcy, utilitarian, manipulate, exploitation, manifestation etc.

RESEARCH PAPER

This research paper deals with a brief study of translation of the traumatized mind of women in the select translated poems from Sushma Andhare's Marathi poetry collection *Shapit Painjan* translated by Ajay Deshmukh as *Cursed Anklet*.

Translation opens avenues for readers to transcend into different and unknown world of knowledge and ideas. Though literary translation is a recent phenomenon, the act of translation is being done since ancient times through different forms of conduct. It was so to break the cultural barriers between any two distinct ethnic groups so as to expand the boundaries of knowledge. But after the invention of Printing Press different literary forms in multiple languages flourished and were circulated to classes and masses in a large number. This literary and intellectual revival aroused curiosity and inquisitiveness about unknown people across the boundaries who spoke and wrote unfamiliar languages. Hence the urge to know the unknown stimulated the need to translate literary works from one language to the others.

English is the most readable and universally accepted language, religious books, scriptures, mythologies, treaties, poetry, fiction and non-fiction have been translated into it since long. but all the concrete and abstract traits and faculties of human existence can truly be expressed in poetry only and hence translation of poetry into English helps to access distant cultures, ideologies and practices. We have already seen Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali's* translation by himself, Harivansh Rai Bacchan's *Madhushala's* translation by Rupert snell, Namdeo Dhasal's *Golpitha's* translation by Dilip Chitre, Bhalachandr Nemade's, Arun Kolhatkar's and various other poets' poetry translation into English which left an everlasting impact worldwide. In the same tradition, Ajay Deshmukh's translation of Marathi poetry collection *Shapit Painjan* as *Cursed Anklet* in English is a feast of gratification and knowledge for the readers of English poetry all over the world. *Shapit Painjan* is originally a poetry collection in Marathi by Sushma Andhare which is highly influential in terms of its sound, meaning, descriptive and vivid language, and though provocativeness. As a member of Kolhati Caste, her aesthetic mind drives her to throw light on miserable condition, sufferings, pain, tortures and depression of women who are the marginalized strata of her society. Her agonized self is indistinguishably reflected in *Cursed Anklet* by Dr. Ajay Deshmukh.

Sushma Andhare places meaning of a poem higher than its form. In one of her most didactic poetic creation titled as *Samarthya* she clearly states that poetry should be meaningful in terms of its emotional and sentimental deliverance. Ajay Deshmukh in his rendition follows the same set of directions to make his translation as identical as the original one in terms of its efficacy. In his translation of *Samarthya* as *Power* and all other poems he very meticulously and deliberately attaches more significance to tone, voice, diction, imagery and symbolism instead of getting obsessed with syntax, rhythm, meter and structure. As has been anticipated in by Sushma Andhare, Ajay Deshmukh prefers to pay more attention to semantic rather than syntactic and grammatical aspects to make his translation moving, touching, passionate and appealing, which fulfills psychological desires of the readers rather than intellectual.

In two of her most reminiscent and allusive poems *He Krishna* and *Ajachya Mahabharatat*, Sushma Andhare very suggestively makes use of characters from one of the greatest epic and ancient scripture *Mahabharata* to symbolically relate the elements of contemporary social scenario with the then influential figures which secures greater effect. Here, on the part of Indian readers, it is obvious to be familiar with the characters like Krishna, Radha, Meera, Draupadi, Karna, Duryodhana, Pandavas and Kauravas and their character traits. Deploying same characters in its English translation compels the global readership to know more about India's historical and literary background which in turn makes them potentially capable of connecting the dots in such poetry. Ajay Deshmukh cleverly avoids meddling with the characterization in original poetry in Marathi considering its importance in producing desired effect. He succeeds in the poetic creation of the character of Krishna for English readers, attributing it with the qualities of a savior and protector of sanctity of womanhood. While reading his translated poem *O Krishna* and *Today's Mahabharata* one tends to feel the necessity of reincarnation of Krishna and the manifestation of his divine powers in the contemporary situation to deal with fake and corrupt Krishnas of the elite class.

Sushma Andhare herself belongs to Kolhati community which is entitled as Nomadic due to its migrating nature. The Kolhat is particularly accounted for contribution in enriching the culture of their motherland. They are known for their acrobatic and dancing activities which are meant to be performed for the sake of livelihood and survival. Because of their skills they are involved mainly in folk

dances like Lavani which is the cultural identity of Maharashtra. Kolhati community is traditionally a part of Alutedari system and hence the female members of the community are supposed to entertain people of the higher castes by performing stage shows. Though the Kolhatis are the enriching agents of the cultural advancement of the nation, they have been left to live a neglected and disregarded life. Particularly the women of the Kolhati community suffer a lot due to their subjugation and suppression by men of the elite class. Apart from their theatrical exposure, these women are very often subjected to violence and lust of their male spectators. The very first poem *Maay* (Mother) in *Shapit Painjan* expounds the tormented self of a mother who presents her art on the stage for the sake of survival of her children. 'Mother' here, becomes a representative of all women artisan who perform. It is not personal but universal entity that strives hard to overcome the hurdles of day to day problems. Sushma Andhare puts the plight of this mother in a very heart wrenching manner. One can sense attribution of intense emotional fervor to project the extreme pain of a mother and the hypocritic nature of masculine disposition. To consolidate her perspective Sushma also makes symbolic use of characters like Mahananda and Draupadi from scriptures like *Shiv Puran and Mahabharata*. Ajay Deshmukh while translating it as *Mother* senses the tragic spirit of the original work exactly and makes use of proper words to depict satirically the irony in the fate of the character of mother. The scale of Ajay Deshmukh's moral and logical reasoning by the means of his diction is much in concord with Sushma's figurative argumentation as if he himself is the victim of moral bankruptcy of the society.

Along the same lines, Sushma Andhare in one of her seminal work of poetic expression entitled as *Saheb* seems ambivalent to some extent in fixing her juxtaposition between the feelings of strong love and extreme hatred. A woman from the marginalized class is the central figure of her argument who represents the vulnerable and helpless section of the society. Her desire to legitimize her illegitimate relationship with the so called 'Saheb' proves to be hopeless because of his utilitarian and selfish attitude. The woman feels ashamed for being sexually exploited by the rich man without even a hint of recognition by him of her love. Ajay Deshmukh in his translation of the poem retained the same title without translating it to exert similar effect of the original because as an Indian citizen he is very well aware of the weight of the word 'Saheb' and power politics played around it to manipulate political, social,

financial status of the society. The word 'mehfil' has also been retained by the translator because of its peculiar context and link with so called *Sahebs* in Indian society. Ajay Deshmukh successfully fetched the class conflict and the bitter truth of sexual and emotional exploitation of women of a particular segment of Indian society by the means of his poetic and lingual manifestation which delivers intellectual honesty.

The so-called creators of Indian social structure not only divided the people living within geographical boundary of the state into multiple castes but also separated the duties assigned to them. One more excellent work of art *Shapath* by Sushma Andhare depicts this traditional compulsion which is irrational in terms of natural urge of each member of the society. Ajay Deshmukh in his English translation of the poem as "Oath" exposes the very divisive nature of the system to the outer world. The readers of his English translation unambiguously get acquainted with the Balutedari and Alutedari frame of the caste system in India which is the root cause of woes and wretchedness of numerous Indian citizens. By the means of his translation the readers of English poetry can understand Sushma's agony and anguish of being a victim of this coercive subjugation in the name of Satwai who is being regarded as Goddess of Destiny in Hindu way of life in India particularly in Maharashtra State.

The critical and sarcastic tone of Sushma Andhare's *Shapit Painjan* is paralleled by tincture of love and compassion. Her collection consists of highly esteemed and venerated series of six poems titled as *Ghar*. These poems are about love and betrayal, hope and despair, trust and treachery, dream and destruction and also about innocence and hypocrisy. *Ghar..1* to *Ghar..6* is a poetic narration of heartbroken young woman who has already been in a relationship with a man but doesn't have the right to give it a shape of life-long bonding. After a few years of nameless attachment, she develops craving for a conjugal bond between them and consequently setting up a sweet home. But in the course of time, the truth of his inclination towards another *Woman* and his struggle to distance himself from her by making formal conversation dawns on her. The realization of being looted of her sanctity and deprived of true love makes her feel disgraced. But still prefers to wait till the last moment of her life. She is ready to accept her grave as her last abode but can not bear the indifferent, insensitive, merciless, selfish, deceptive and hypocritical nature of men. Ajay Deshmukh has translated this *Ghar* series in *Shapit Painjan* as

Home...1 to Home ...6. He discerns an air of nostalgia in his translated version realizing the longing of a young woman in Sushma's poems for home and family. His translation evokes a strong sense of melancholy that is hard to escape by associating anxiety and mental pain he observed in the tendency of a lonely and betrayed woman. Ajay as a true translator easily cognizes the depressive theme of being doomed to desolation by her own false consciousness and thus infuse a sense of yearning for the past, its possibilities and events. He justifiably agrees with the delicate and innocent mind of a young woman character in Sushma's poetry and reveals a potentially debilitating and total mental condition expressing extreme homesickness.

The journey of a traumatized soul finds its refuge in the dense shadow of *Boddhisatva*. It parallels the journey of Aamrapali, an artisan, who became Buddhist monk. The redemption, salvation awaits as

I am determined to follow the path;

The one Tathagat

Has shown to Amrapali. [italics original] (Cursed Anklet 37)

Because of his bilingualism and nativity Ajay Deshmukh is aware of the cultural diversity, cultural norms, caste system, barter system and Balutedari system of the land. On Sushma Andhare's part, her poems are a heart wrenching experience for Marathi readers due to her incorporation of intense emotional fervor and because emotions can be learned by the means of language, culture, and cognition. At the structural level her poems are well composed and styled. Her use of vernacular slang, a style of expressing intensity, is a distinctive character of Dalit poetry and propagates a message of gender equality, abolition of caste system and women empowerment.

Ajay Deshmukh is well-aware of the fact that Sushma's poetry is the consequence of her wretched and tormented being. Her feelings of deep affliction and distress is the result of painful past of every artisan woman which compels her to give vent to her own despair and to the sufferings of the others of the similar plight. In his translated version, he has taken care of all these features of Sushma's poetry. He is simply outstanding in applying syntactic, semantic as well as prosodic properties in his English version to make it as effective and attractive as the Marathi version.

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