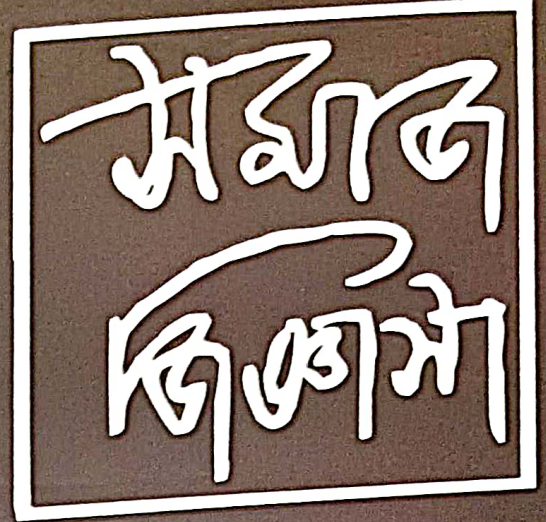


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- শ্রীশঙ্কর বিকাশে বিংশ শতকের নির্বাচিত বাংলা সাময়িকী ত্রীর ভূমিকা
- ভারতে দলিত মুক্তির প্রাথমিক জাতপাত বিরোধী সামাজিক-রাজনৈতিক আন্দোলনের ভূমিকা: একটি পর্যালোচনা
- আন্দোলনের প্রবর্তিত 'নবযান বৌদ্ধধর্ম': একটি ঐতিহাসিক অনুসন্ধান
- অভিপ্রাণ, উন্নয়ন এবং নারী-কর্মতায়ন : উত্তরবঙ্গের কয়েকটি জেলার অবস্থার অনুসন্ধান
- ভারতবর্ষের রাজনীতিতে নকশাল আন্দোলন ও জাতপাত বিভাজনের প্রাথমিক : একটি অনুসন্ধান
- বাংলায় সাঁওতাল উপজাতির সামাজিক ও প্রশাসনিক সংগঠন : একটি পর্যালোচনা
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- Advent of Missionaries in 19th Century Koraput: Restructuring Tribal Religion

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# সমাজ জিজ্ঞাসা

Samaj Jijnasa

অষ্টাদশ বর্ষ। ২০২৫

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সমাজ জিজ্ঞাসা  
অষ্টাদশ বর্ষ, জুন ২০২৫  
লেখক পরিচিতি

ড. নিবেদিতা সাহা	সহযোগী অধ্যাপক, রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞান বিভাগ, কল্যাণী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, কল্যাণী।
বিশ্বনাথ সরকার	সহকারী অধ্যাপক, রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞান বিভাগ, খালিসেনি মহাবিদ্যালয়, হুগলি।
রাখীদাস	গবেষক, ইতিহাস বিভাগ, আলিয়া বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, কলকাতা।
ড. শোভন চট্টোপাধ্যায়	রাজ্য সরকার অনুমোদিত কলেজ শিক্ষক, ভূগোল বিভাগ, ঋষি বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র ইন্ডিয়ান কলেজ, নৈহাটি, উত্তর চব্বিশ পরগনা।
সত্যজিৎ সাহা	পিএইচ ডি স্কলার ও জুনিয়র রিসার্চ ফেলো, রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞান বিভাগ, কল্যাণী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, কল্যাণী।
সঞ্জু সরকার	পিএইচ ডি রিসার্চ স্কলার, ইতিহাস বিভাগ, যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, কলকাতা।
ড. সুদয়িতা ঘোষ	সহকারী অধ্যাপক, রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞান বিভাগ, রায়গঞ্জ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, রায়গঞ্জ।
স্বপন দোলই	রাজ্য সরকার অনুমোদিত কলেজ শিক্ষক, ইতিহাস বিভাগ, কে.ডি.কলেজ অফ কমার্স এণ্ড জেনারেল স্টাডিস, মেদিনীপুর, পশ্চিম মেদিনীপুর। পিএইচ ডি রিসার্চ স্কলার, সেন্টার ফর আদিবাসী স্টাডিজ এন্ড মিউজিয়াম, বিদ্যাসাগর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, পশ্চিম মেদিনীপুর।
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- Dr. Udaybhanu  
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# **Bhojpuri Theatre and Social Realism: Bhikhari Thakur's Portrayal of Migration**

Satrughan Kahar

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, the jute mills of Bengal experienced a significant influx of labourers from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. However, despite their migration for employment opportunities, these workers often did not bring their families along with them. The report of the Royal Commission of Labour in India (1931) states that “the Indian workers remained only partially committed to industrial life with half of their mind in the village from where they had come.” (Royal Commission Report, 1931:12-13)<sup>1</sup> This led to a notable deterioration in family and social values within the community. Issues such as alcohol consumption, extramarital affairs and a decline in traditional rural values became prevalent among the workers, undermining the established social fabric. (Curjel, 1923:6)<sup>2</sup> Even keeping their married wife in villages, some workers turned to city brothels for comfort, which went against traditional rural values. Bhikhari Thakur closely observed and experienced these phenomena, which later became central themes in his plays and poems. He challenges the inherent decline witnessed among workers transitioning from villages to cities due to the mechanization of the modern world. To help them and strengthen their social ties, Bhikhari Thakur organized theater shows called 'Noutanki' in mostly around mid-20th century. His plays became hugely popular among migrated workers. Later, a movie based on the play 'Bidesia' was made, which was liked not only by peoples of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh but also the migrated labourers in Bengal. (लोक कलाकार भिखारी ठाकुर, 2004:81)<sup>3</sup> His efforts are directed towards awakening rural values within these individuals. (सिंह, 1998:39-40)<sup>4</sup>

For this work, Bhojpuri dramas like *Bidesia*, *Kaliyug Prem*, *Gabarghichor*, *Bhai Birodh*, *Beti-biyog* or *Beti Bechwa* and *Bidhwa Bilap*, his autobiography *Nay Bahar* and his interviews as primary Source and many valuable books and essays like “Bhikhari Thakur Angar Hira”, “Bhojpuri Pravasi Sramiko Ki Sanskriti Our Bhikhari



Thakur Ka Sahitya", "Lok Kalakar Bhikhari Thakur: Eyadan kea khoul se" etc. written about his biography as secondary source have been used.

### Introduction

This article delves into the life and literary contributions of Bhikhari Thakur (1887-1971), a prominent Bhojpuri poet, playwright and social activist. Central to this exploration is Thakur's acclaimed play *Bidesia* and others like *Kaliyug Prem*, *Gabarghichor*, *Bhai Birodh*, *Beti-biyog* or *Beti Bechwa*, and *Bidhwa Bilap*. Thakur's works vividly depict the social impact of labour migration from the Bhojpur region (comprising western Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh) to Bengal during the late 19th century. Through characters such as Sundari, Thakur portrays the challenges faced by women left behind by their migrant husbands, illuminating issues of gender roles, societal norms and familial obligations.

Thakur's plays also critique prevalent social evils such as forced marriages, the exploitation of widows, and the breakdown of joint family systems. Concurrently, they advocate for education and empowerment within marginalized communities. By preserving Bhojpuri culture and language in his works, Thakur envisioned a more just and egalitarian society. His dramas prompt ethical reflections on migration, family separation, gender roles, sexual exploitation, and polygamy within the context of cultural and societal norms, urging audiences to confront and address these issues for societal improvement.

### Background of Thakur's Literary Contribution

The life and works of Bhikhari Thakur, often referred to as the Shakespeare of Bihar, have been extensively researched. Notable studies include Taiyeb Hussain's *Bhikhari Thakur Angar Hira*, Dhananjay Singh's *Bhojpuri Pravasi Sramiko Ki Sanskriti Our Bhikhari Thakur Ka Sahitya*. In all these works, Bhikhari Thakur's contribution to Bihar's literature is emphasized. In this article, it is tried to explore the reasons for migration from Bihar to Bengal through Bhikhari Thakur's dramas, as well as to understand the social realities and conditions of the villages left behind by the labourers who migrated to the city depicted in his dramas.

Bhikhari Thakur was born on 18th December 1887 at the village of Kutubpur in the district of Saran, Bihar. His mother's name was Shivakali Devi and father was Dalsingar Thakur. He belonged to a



Nai (barber caste), one of the most backward castes in Indian society. The traditional work of his caste was cutting and trimming hair and assisting brahmins in marriage as well as in death ceremonies. They also worked as village messengers to send and distribute ceremonial (in cases of marriages and deaths) and other messages in the village and nearby areas. They acted like postal workers in the traditional-feudal village setup. (कुमार 'पंकज', 1983:सुत्रधार)<sup>5</sup>

In one of his works, he says: *Jati Hajjam more Kutubpur mokam. Jati pesha bate, bidyanaheen bate babujee* (I am a barber by caste and I come from Kutubpur. My caste is merely my work. It is not my education kind sir.) In this he speaks about his own caste and regrets that his caste people are distributing letters to all without knowing the importance of the letter, or the alphabets. He clearly understood the power of education and continuously chided his people for being illiterate and bounded by *jajmani* (patron-client) relations with the *dikus*. (हूसेन, 2023:35-36)<sup>6</sup> Belonging to a low caste (*nayi* or barber) and having lived his life in very poor conditions, Bhikhari Thakur was illiterate but became self-taught to read and memorize *Ramcharitmanas* by Tulsidas whom he considered his literary *guru*. And gradually he became an Indian poet, playwright, lyricist, actor, singer-song writer, and social activist who penned his creativity in the *Bhojpuri* language. He is recognised as one of *Bhojpuri* literature's greatest contributors and the most well-known folk writer of Purvanchal and Bihar. In the early 1900s, the artiste started began his career with the talents he possessed and remained active until his death in 1971. He published most of his works between 1938 and 1962. (The Free Press Journal, 2022)<sup>7</sup>

In modern Indian theatre, Bhikhari Thakur, referred to as the 'Shakespeare of Bhojpuri' by Dr. Manoranjan Prasad Sinha for his immense popularity amongst his folk, as a major playwright and artist. Thakur wrote more than a dozen plays and of those, Monologues, Poems, and Bhajans appeared in print as nearly three dozen books. He has to his credit twenty-nine books, consisting of famous plays like *Bidesia*, *Kaliyug-Prem*, *Gabarghichor*, *Bhai Birodh*, *Beti-Biyog* or *Beti-Bechwa*, and *Vidhva-Vilap*, and songs and *kirtans* like *Shiv-Vivah*, *Ramlila-Gaan*, *Budhshalake Beyan*, *Shanka Samadhan* etc. His theatrical style known as '*Bidesia*', after his most famous play of the same title, uses folk idioms, music, and elements



from folk forms like *tamasha* and *nautanki*. Bhikhari Thakur, in his travels across Assam and Bengal, had been exposed to *jatra*, which, along with *Ramlila* and *Raslila* influence his dramatic form. In his plays, female parts were played by male actors, who wore false long hair and ornamented them. It has also been noted that Thakur was familiar with the popular Parsi theatre of that time. The stage in his theatre was always an improvised raised platform, with the audience sitting on all three sides. The lighting used consisted of locally available options like *lalten* and *dhibri*. (Chaturvedi, 2017)<sup>8</sup>

His plays illuminate various facets of society in Bhojpur (It consists of the Purvanchal region of Uttar Pradesh and the western parts of the Magadha region of Bihar). They delve into themes such as immigration, the social deterioration stemming from it, the emergence of nuclear families following the dissolution of larger ones, the challenges faced by wives left behind in villages during migration, problems of unequal-age marriages, and the plight of widows. These topics provide a candid portrayal of Bhojpur's social landscape. In this discussion, we will explore several of these plays in detail.

### **The Reflection of *Bhojpuri* Society in Bhikhari Thakur's Major Works**

Perhaps his best known and popular work in terms of modern production, *Bidesia* is the story of a man who has to leave behind his village and family to seek a job in the city of Calcutta. Although the story seems to be ambiguous, it has strong elements of auteur ship, which is very common to *Bidesiya* style. The play remains relevant even today as modern-day Bihari people have become a migratory community. This has happened due to more than half a decade of misgovernance in the Indian state. The educated flee to Indian metropolises or abroad. Thakur was until recently largely forgotten but because of *Bidesi*'s modern-day relevance, a revival movement led by the Bihari theatre artists has brought his work to public attention once again.

The play *Bidesia* has primarily five characters, namely *Bidesi*, *Batohi*, *Sundari*, *Randi* and *Devar*. The play is named after the central character *Bidesi*, who represents the predicament of young village men, who are forced to migrate to foreign lands (*bidesh*) in search for better living. His wife, *Sundari* is a simple woman, devoted to her husband. When in *bidesh*, her husband meets and falls



in love with another woman, typified as '*randi*' (live in partner), referring to her socially unacceptable position. *Batohi* is a wise man of the village, one who is wont to traveling frequently, and so is a man of the world. He is the messenger who goes to town carrying the wife's message. Another character is referred to as '*devar*' (literally means younger brother of husband), a young man, who, in the absence of Sundari's husband, tries to come close to her and exploit her sexually. Besides, there are other minor characters like Bidesi's friend, Samaji, and some village people. The *Sutradhar* comes after the *mangalacharan*, and introduces the prologue, which is mainly in song mode. The songs are set to folk rhythms like *jatsari*, *lorikayan*, *sorathi*, and verse forms like *kabitta* and *chaubola*.

The characters in Bidesia are types representing the general rather than the particular rural life. The young man *Bidesi* stands for all those young men, who are left with no choices but to try their fortune in unknown places like Assam and Bengal. In this play, Bidesi goes to Kolkata, on the suggestions of his friends and based mainly on the promises of opportunities and better prospects there. His wife is a type for all women who are left behind in villages, sacrificing their marital life for the betterment of their family. Bhikhari Thakur was very sensitive to the issues of women in their mostly passive and marginalized conditions as wives, daughters and widows. In this play, through the innocent and sincere character of Sundari, Thakur has drawn attention to the helpless positions of such women who are financially dependent on men and therefore, always remain outside the domain of decision making. Also, these women are forced to part with their husbands so that the solitude and depression resulting from this separation become the reality they live with every day. Further, in the absence of their life partners, and in moments of sexual desire, the men find options of engaging in relations with other women.

Though these men can recreate a parallel life for themselves in towns, it is their wives who are the ones yearning for a life that has been shattered, back in their villages. While Thakur is sympathetic to the conditions of these women, he is also sensitive to the awkward position of the other women in the life of these men. The new woman he lives with is also sincere in her relationship and her position becomes compromised once the man returns to his village. Eventually, Thakur offers a solution, which, though not very liberal,



is in keeping with his vision of happy, extended families. Finally, the man and the two women along with the children he has in Kolkata, live together as a complete family. From a feminist ideological point of view, this may appear to be an antagonistic solution to a serious problem. However, one has to look at the immediate coordinates of time and place to understand that what Thakur is offering is a practical solution to a problem that is rampant in that region. (ठाकुर, 2005:21-58)<sup>9</sup>

Various aspects of rural life and migration stand out in his written and acted plays. First of all, Thakur's work sheds light on the adverse effects of migration on the social fabric of the Bhojpur region. The process of migration, whether from rural to urban areas or within the same city, leads to social disorganization as entire families did not relocate. Upon settling in the city, migrants often become detached from their village roots, succumbing to moral degradation fueled by alcohol and the allure of prostitution. Bitohi, upon discovering that the migrant (*Bidesi*) had a wife still in the city, confronts him, questioning his choices and urging him to reconsider his path. Bitohi's words

Bitohi- Who is she, my son? (बटोही-बबुआ ई के हऽ ?)

Bidesi- Wife. (बिदेसी-मेहरारु)

Bitohi- Whose? (बटोही-केकर)

Bidesi- Mine. (बिदेसी-निज के।)

Bitohi- you take the dirty Path. (बटोही-धइलऽ राह गलीज के।)

When *Bitohi* informs *Bidesi* about the hardships endured by his abandoned wife back in the village, *Bidesi* begins to contemplate a return to his roots. However, complications arise when *Bidesi's* kept or live-in partner also follows him to the village. Surprisingly, *Bidesi's* first wife accepts the newcomer, integrating her into the family. Through this narrative, the play offers a stark reflection of the lives of migrant workers, reminiscent of the themes explored in Thakur's works. The evolving relationships within rural communities underscore the increasing complexity brought about by migration and its repercussions.

The play *Kaliyug Prem* deals with the devastating impact of addiction and moral decline in rural family, highlighting the challenges they face and the eventual redemption brought by the



return of a responsible family member. The passage describes the decline of traditional village life due to various factors such as the destruction of household industries, unreliable farming conditions, lack of modern agricultural resources, and the influence of negative habits from urban areas. Drug addiction, alcoholism, and moral decay are rampant, leading to the breakdown of families and traditional values.

The focus is on a particular family where the head, a young man, is addicted to drugs and alcohol. His addiction leads to the deterioration of his family's livelihood, forcing his elder son, Shankar to leave home and seek work in Calcutta. The father's addiction escalates to the point where he sells off the family's land, jewelry, and household items to sustain his habits, leaving his wife and younger son in poverty and despair. Despite efforts from the family to intervene and the involvement of outsiders like a prostitute, the situation remains dire until Shankar returns after five years with wealth earned from his work in Calcutta. His return brings hope and prosperity back to the family, allowing them to rebuild their lives. (ठाकुर, 2005:105-114)<sup>10</sup>

In his autobiographical work *Nay Bahar*, Bhikhari Thakur highlights both the negative and positive aspects of migration on rural life. While he draws attention to the negative impacts such as the degradation of values and social deterioration, he also acknowledges the benefits of migration. Bhikhari wrote, '*Jājamāni kā mē kucha nā bātē, lagaba sīla'ōta lōrhā chātē/ nagada jākē kāmāiya bahārā. Rahē nā dīhī akāla kē pahārā.*' (Bhikhari critiques the *Jajmani* system, stating that there is no benefit in it, particularly for those from lower castes who often have to survive by eating leftovers.) He suggests that it is better for such individuals to seek work outside their rural environments, where they can earn a livelihood and find security, especially during times of famine. (सिंह, 1998:15)<sup>11</sup>

One example illustrating the positive aspect of migration is depicted in the play *Kalyug Prem*. Here, a family head succumbs to addiction, mistreats his family, and indulges in inappropriate relationships. However, his eldest son, Shankar, decides to work in a jute mill in Calcutta. After earning a substantial amount of money, Shankar returns to the village to provide happiness and support to his



mother. Thousands of villagers, inspired by stories like Shankar's, also migrate to Calcutta to work in jute mills, successfully lifting their families out of poverty. This narrative aligns with Bhikhari Thakur's observations on the positive impact of migration on rural communities as portrayed in his works.

*Gabarghichor*, the story of an illegitimate son of Garbari and Galij's wife. Galij returns from the town to find the village gossiping about his son's parentage. He wants to take *Gabarghichor* back to Calcutta with him. But both Galij's wife and Garbari intervene a quarrel ensues as each of them claims *Gabarghichor* as their own. The panchayat is called and they decide that *Gabarghichor* be divided into three pieces. A man comes and maps *Gabarghichor* body and agrees to do the job for four annas a piece. The mother relents refusing to pay and giving up all claim on the son. The panchayat sees the light and *Gabarghichor* is allowed to stay with his mother. (ঠাকুর, 2005:163-176)<sup>12</sup>

In this play *Gabarghichor*, another vivid portrayal of social chaos stemming from migration is presented. Interestingly, the characters within his plays portray as reflections of societal virtues and vices. At the center of the narrative stands Golij, whose name ironically means 'dirty'. He abandons his newly wedded wife, leaving her to fend for herself, as he ventures abroad in pursuit of financial gain. Meanwhile, his wife has a child with another man, named as Garbari. In the play *Gabarghichor*, the husband's prolonged absence triggers misery in the lives of women, here his neglect drives his wife to unbearable loneliness and unfulfilled desires. This alienation attracts her to build extramarital relationship, particularly in rural society. The narrative also raises fundamental inquiries about the rights and status of children born out of illicit relationship, adding depth to the portrayal of societal upheaval caused by migration-induced neglect.

The play *Bhai Birodh* deals with the theme of joint family, which is a very prominent feature of Bihar's rural society, where a low-income farming family resides, consisting of three brothers named Upkari, Upadar, and Ujagar. Upkari, the eldest, is educated and respected, while Upadar, the middle brother, manages family affairs but is easily influenced by his wife. The youngest brother, Ujagar, is loved by everyone and has a simple character within the family. The family faces turmoil when Upadar's wife is manipulated



by an old woman named Kutni into breaking the family apart for personal gain. Property has been divided, causing rifts among the brothers. Upadar's wife, influenced by Kutni, even conspires to murder Ujagar. However, the plan backfires, resulting in Upadar's arrest for attempted theft to appease his wife's demands. In the end, the family suffers due to greed and manipulation, leading to broken relationships and legal troubles. However, at the end they realise the importance of living together but not before a lot of harm had actually taken place. (ठाकुर, 2005:59-70)<sup>13</sup>

The play *Bhai Virodah* does not extensively look into the topic of migration. However, it does illuminate the gradual disintegration of joint families and the emergence of nuclear families in the Bhojpur region. This disintegration puts pressure on available land, reducing the land per capita. Consequently, some individuals no longer rely on village land and opt for migration as a means of sustenance. Moreover, a segment of migrant laborers gradually establishes permanent residence in Bengal.

The drama *Beti-Biyog* or *Beti-Bechwa* depicts the plight of a village in a backward area, focusing on a family consisting of Chatak, a financially weak and morally questionable man, his wife Lobha, who is greedy and narrow-minded, and their daughter Upato. Despite their miserable condition, the girl takes all the responsibilities of the family on her shoulders. But soon she reaches marriageable age.

The narrative contrasts the current state of the village with its past, where societal bonds were strong, and every member was considered part of an extended family, resolving disputes through collective decision-making. As Upato becomes eligible for marriage, societal pressure mounts on Chatak and Lobha. Unable to afford the expenses, Chatak decides to sell his daughter to a rich, elderly man named Jhantul. This practice of selling daughters for marriage, though frowned upon, was not uncommon in backward areas. When news of the transaction spreads, the community condemns Chatak, threatening to ostracize him. Despite this, Chatak proceeds with the marriage, disregarding his daughter's emotional turmoil. Upato, upon realizing the situation awaiting her, flees from her new home back to her parents, seeking refuge. Despite attempts by the village elders to uphold traditional moral duties, the incident highlights the



prevalent issues of selling daughters, forced marriages, and the plight of helpless daughters in rural areas. (ঠাকুর, 2005:71-93)<sup>14</sup>

This play is considered a very progressive play. Bhikhari Thakur through this play criticises the widespread custom of selling young girls in marriage to much older men. This custom prevailed in *Bhojpuri*-speaking areas until recently. The protagonist is a young girl whose father sells her to an older person.

The story of *Vidhwa-Bilap* is about how widows are treated within their homes. It is seen as an extension of *Beti-bechwa* for more often than not young girls married to old men; spend most of their lives as widows. The story reflects the hatred and seclusion a widow has to suffer in *brahminical* society for no fault of her own.

The play depicts the story of Upato, who marries an old, sick man named Jhandul and becomes a childless widow when he dies shortly after their marriage. To manage her wealth and farm, Upato invites her poor relatives, Udabas and his wife, to live with her. They serve her dutifully, but tension arises when Upato donates to a beggar without consulting them, leading to conflict. Udayabas's wife feels marginalized and suggests leaving Upato, deeming her presence inauspicious.

Udabas seeks advice from his friend, Upadesh, who initially advocates for Upato's autonomy over her wealth. However, when Udayabas faces pressure to choose between his wife and his widowed aunt, he succumbs to greed. Upadesh proposes taking Upato on a pilgrimage and abandoning her, allowing Udayabas and his wife to claim her wealth. During the pilgrimage, Udabas and Upadesh plot to murder Upato in her sleep. However, when Upato wakes up and pleads for her life, a nearby monk intervenes, scaring off Udabas and Upadesh. The monk provides Upato with shelter and advises her to worship *Shri Krishna* for salvation from her suffering. (ঠাকুর, 2005:95-104)<sup>15</sup> The drama highlights the exploitation and marginalization of childless widows in Indian society, highlighting themes of greed, betrayal, and eventual redemption through spiritual guidance.

### Findings and Evaluation

In the initial phase of setting up jute mills, many women workers migrated to Bengal in search of work. Historians believe that mostly women who were abandoned by their husbands, widows, or childless



women worked in these mills. Although the history of the struggles of these women workers in the mill town can be found in historical texts, there has been little trace of their earlier lives. Bhikhari Thakur's '*Beti-Bechua/Beti Blyog*' and '*Bidhwa Bilap*' outline the earlier lives of these women workers. The tragic stories of young girls being married off to old men due to incapability of their parents to give them in marriage following existing customs and subsequently being forced to live as widows due to the death of their husbands at a young age has emerged in the two dramas. Moreover, the oppression of widowed women by their relatives forced them to leave their familiar world and flee to the city's jute mills in search of liberation. Although he does not explicitly mention this migration in his play, it is easy to guess that such was the eventual fate of these widows.

Thakur is perhaps the greatest author who portrays a true and vivid picture of the Bhojpuri Society of the mid-20th century. People living both in distant villages of Gangetic North India as well as people who migrated to the cities to work as distingue labourers. But the solutions he offered to suggest no doubt are subject to serious criticism:

His painting of the traditional feudal society is over-exaggeration and, in any case, any change of return to this idyllic/golden past is simply not practicable. On the contrary, he gives a roseate picture of the industrial workers lives in turn is also far from truth. Modern researchers show what kind of hellish life they have to spend in labour *mohullas/bustees* and yet finding no other alternative they have to bear all these.

Secondly, the solutions he offered are simply impracticable and wishful thinking only. The degeneration and decline of joint family system were inevitable because of practical economic and social changes. His dream of keeping two wives side by side with the children of both and framing a happy family is legally an impossible solution in the changed setup. The second wife and her children do not have any social respectability. Moreover, he probably missed the fact that during the decade of his creative writing and his life time, the migrant society was slowly undergoing changes. Migration of the entire family of the labourer (particularly wife and children) from village to their workplace has already started then in a very limited extant and later the trend became universal. Here in lays the solution



of the problem of the bickering in the joint family, alienation between husband and wife, lack of regular conjugal/ physical intimacy and physical and sexual desires on compatibility on the part of both man and woman.

### Conclusion

Thakur is the greatest flag bearer of *Bhojpuri* language and culture. Though his plays revolved and evolved around villages and rural society, they still became very famous in the big cities like Kolkata, Patna, Benares and other small cities, where migrant labourers and poor workers went in search for their livelihood. Breaking all boundaries of nation, he, along with his *mandali*, also visited Mauritius, Kenya, Singapore, Nepal, British Guyana, Suriname, Uganda, Myanmar, Madagascar, South Africa, Fiji, Trinidad and other places where *Bhojpuri* culture has been flourished with the migrant labourer from Bihar. (कुमार 'पंकज', 1983:13)<sup>16</sup>

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