



MATERIALISTIC PERSPECTIVE ON MINING PUNDALIK NAIK'S UPHEAVAL

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ABSTRACT

The novel Upheaval traces the impact of mining on the native life of the Kolambi Village, in Goa. This village was once known for its agricultural output and all its inhabitants were happy sowing seeds in the fields and reaping the crop. They were busy all through the year and enjoyed the festivals also. But the Portuguese who formerly ruled Goa introduced mining in the state. This Novel is set in Kolambi Village which is a part of the Ponda District in Goa. The poor agricultural workers who led a bare hand to mouth existence are lured by the higher wages offered in mining and they give up their traditional occupation of agriculture and this brings about a total upheaval in the village. The traditional joint family system is broken down and people go about their own way. Money brings about a materialistic out look and people become more and more selfish. The seasonal festivals are no longer celebrated and people become strangers to each other.

This paper brings out the effect of mining on the native life of the people of Kolambi Village in Goa from a post-colonial perspective because it was introduced in Goa by the colonizer but its effects are felt even after 25 years of home rule.

Key words: Mining, Industrialisation, Post-Colonia Kolambi, Celebration, Ploughing.

Cite this Article: Kanchan Gaonkar, Materialistic Perspective on Mining Pundalik Naik's Upheaval, International Journal of Education (IJE), 2(1), 2020, pp. 17-20.
<https://iaeme.com/Home/issue/IJE?Volume=2&Issue=1>

INTRODUCTION

Pundalik Naik's 'Upheaval' is a story that deals with the havoc that mining, a symbol of modernization, brings about in the lives of the Goan people. Set in the town of Ponda with the village of Kolambi as the centre of action, this novel projects the shifting paradigms of Goan life. The state of Goa is known for its beautiful beaches, hoary temples, magnificent churches etc.

At the same time, the state abounds with natural resources and the Portuguese, the colonizers of the state sought to exploit these natural resources to the hilt and the germ of modernization that they had sown continued even after the state gained freedom from their clutches. And mining by itself has brought about far-reaching changes in the traditional goan society. The goan society initially depended solely on agriculture and the people lived on the returns that the crops gave them. The people did not have any prosperity but they could live a fairly comfortable life. They worked all day at the fields and had their leisure time too. They enjoyed the music and dance and were very particular about their festivals and offerings to be given to the gods etc. They also held some people in very high esteem and they gave some part of their produce to them the school master, for instance. The school master in this novel is 'Savlo Master and he was given a share of the agricultural produce by the people and he, in turn, would run the school and teach the children letters

The first two chapters of the novel *tupheaval* a devoted to the description of a typical Goan village in Kolambi. The author Pundalik Naik at the outset itself gives a glimpse of the agricultural occupation of this village. The chief protagonist Pandhari is busy ploughing his land and he wants to be higher a few extra hands so that he could finish the sowing of seeds the next day. His neighbour Shanu reminds him that he has to remember to offer something to the spirit of the lake or else the whole crop may be destroyed because of the wrath of the goddess of the lake. Pandhari thanks Shanu for his timely help. And he goes back home where his wife Rukmini and children Kesar and Nanu are waiting for him. They have the frugal meal of rice *kangi* and are about to retire for the night. But they see a shadow and someone calls out to Pandhari. Through this chapter the novelist has given the reader a glimpse into the agricultural Goa State. And it is here that the paradigm shifts. Until this time Pandhari was happy ploughing his land and reaping the produce of the land. He was happy with whatever he got and enjoyed his drink as well when he was at leisure after a hard days work. The element of modernization, mining is now introduced.

The colonial Portuguese had introduced mining in Goa to serve their own interests. But with Goa becoming free the charge of mining in Porida is taken by a Gujarathi businessman. He wants someone who could carry the stones by several trips of carts. Pandhari has a cart and a fellow villager Babuso comes to him along with the Gujarathi to seek his help. Though reluctant at first Pandhari agrees to ferry his cart and instructs his wife Rukmini to put away the seeds which were to be sown the next morning. He asks her to protect the seeds by splashing cow dung on them. Rukmini does not like the idea and remarks that he has lost his head. But Pandhari is lured by the promise of seventy rupees by the Gujarati per day. And he decides to abandon his sowing to the lucrative mining. Pandhari gets involved in this work so much that he does not have time even to offer his routine prayers at the village temple. He has to be scolded by Abu the elderly villager and only then Pandhari performs his duties. He is just on time for his prayers and he had not bathed Abu admonishes him and sends him to the river. Then the *pooja* is performed and the *prasadam* is distributed. The very fact that Pandhari preferred mining to agriculture itself speaks volumes of his selfishness. This is an indication of the shifting paradigm from a rural society to a modern one. Earlier all the people used to assemble at night at the temple and share their experiences. But now nobody has a time to do it. Earlier people were broad minded And they did not hesitate to share their produce with others. But now, with the value of money entering into the heads of the villagers they think twice before giving away their produce to others. Pandhari who was always punctual while giving his share to the school master, Salvo master thinks twice before giving grains to the teacher. He does so only when he was pulled up by Abu. Abu is a representative of pristine Goa and he is the conscience-keeper of the village. The first after effect of industrialization is felt when Nanu Pandhari's son is seen calculating the amount his father would earn at the end of the day. His sudden interest in mathematics takes Salvo master by surprise.

Abu's death cuts off the remaining link with the ancient and it is an irony that nobody is ready to spare time for the old man's funeral. Salvo master keeps vigil over the body but nobody turns up. Finally Shankar and Salvo have to cremate the old man.

The effect of industrialization is again seen when Pandhari's brother-in-law refuses to accept Kesar as his daughter-in-law just because she is not very educated compared to his son Narasimv. Narasimv goes on to become an officer and it is again money the symbol of modernity that comes in the way of the harmonious relationship between the cousins. This goes on for quite some time. Pandhari's brother-in-law was a highly respected person because he was virtually the son-in-law of the village. And he used to bid the highest, that is, five rupees for the holy coconut which was offered to God Ganesha during the Ganesh Chaturthy festival. But even his days of glory come to an end when the miners who have a lot of money in their pocket bid and get the coconut for more money than he can afford. He then refuses to come to the village and get insulted.

Even the school master is not spared the strength of his school goes on dwindling and he has to go back to his native place just across the river. The boys and girls of the village are no longer interested in learning They want to earn money and prefer commerce to education and Salvo master dies a forsaken man. Years passed in this fashion and Nanu is now a youth who is totally into mining. He does not visit his old parents and gives them money sometimes and not always. He has his own life style, his separate set of friends and girls. However, is drawn to Devki who really was the wife of Babuso. She had been abandoned by Babuso but now he wants her again. There is also a fight between the miners for her sake. But she is devoted somewhat to Nanu. Babuso himself was not a man of morals. He had seduced Rukmini many times. But yet he wants that Devki should come back to him which was not possible. Thus there is a disintegration of the joint family as well. Nanu sister Kesar is also a grown up woman and she attracts the lusty eyes of Babuso who also wanted to enjoy her body. When he tried to do so he was beaten black and blue by Rukmini who wanted to protect her under any circumstances. She has to undergo an abortion too as she was carrying an unwanted child. And she was not yet married. Though this was common among the people here, it just shows the kind of society that existed. And all this was because of money. Nanu's Christian friend Manuel is attracted to Kesar and towards the end of the novel they elope. Thus the disintegration of the family is complete. The whole society is wrecked in this manner. The final blow comes when Nanu is killed by a landslide which is caused by excessive mining. The whole lump of mud false on him when he goes to shade himself from the blazing sun Rukmini is distraught with grief and she pulls out the hand of her dead son. Thus the colonizer though not directly is the cause for the disintegration of the society of Goa and this is shown in a symbolic manner when Shankar destroys his paintings of the pristine village that he had known since his childhood. He gathers all his paintings that he had lately done and proceeds towards the place where Nanu was lying dead. Pandhari is left coughing with no one to care for him. This is perhaps the fate of any parent whose children go out to work Pundalik Naik the novelist has graphically captured the scenes of rural Goa in his novel and has named it aptly as Upheaval

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Citation: Kanchan Gaonkar, Materialistic Perspective on Mining Pundalik Naik's Upheaval, International Journal of Education (IJE), 2(1), 2020, pp. 17-20

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