



**A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of
English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University,
Chandigarh**

Stories of Kartar Singh Duggal: India in a Microcosm

Saikat Banerjee

Abstract: Kartar Singh Duggal, with his acute sensitivity to gender issues meticulously explored various aspects of familial relationships. In the short stories of Duggal, patriarchy presents itself as a significant socio-cultural force that orders and demands its own discriminatory and biased social structure. His short stories focus on the way that power, class, caste and gender become linked in society to oppress and marginalize certain groups. Along with gender, age also emerges as a distinct ground of social and particularly familial marginalization with older people gradually being forced to occupy the margins of family life. Again, the family has a well-defined and well-regulated orbit of kinship relationships and matters and issues considered to be ‘private’ and personal must be strictly kept within its four walls. However, in cohesive communities, friends and neighbours are often admitted into this closed circle and gradual replace kinship ties. In view of these ideas, this paper will try to explore the various discrepancies of familial relationships that Duggal outlined in his short stories.

Keywords: Duggal, Family Conflict, Gender, Domestic violence.

Family has always remained one of the most significant social institutions in India. “The family is the basic and important unit of society because of the role it plays in generation of human capital resources and the power that is vested in it to influence individual, household and community behaviour”(Sriram, 122). It is often understood as an ideal homogenous unit with strong coping mechanisms. Moreover, family acts as a basic, cohesive and integral unit in a large and culturally diverse country such as India having plurality of forms that vary with class, ethnicity and individual choices. Its members are bound by interpersonal relationships in a wider network of role and social relations. It is considered a link between community and change (Desai, 16).



A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh

In the book *The Great Indian Family* (2006), Gitanjali Prasad discusses about the origin of family, structure and its relevance in India as long as back to the Vedic Era. Since ancient times, family, caste and community have dominated the Indian society. Family dominates the life of the individual as well as life of the community; hence it plays a pivotal role in Indian society.

Biological and cultural prejudices shape social perspectives on both the sexes and their gender issues are looked upon as belonging to markedly different sets. Along with caste, class, race and sexuality, gender also becomes an important parameter of categorizing and dividing a society into different groups. Gender thus, becomes enmeshed in issues of power and becomes an important parameter by which social dominance and marginality of population groups is mediated upon.

A man always tries to control 'women's body' and gain dominance by marginalizing her from power roles (Faith as cited by Lloyd, 82). Language pattern is normally used as a tool for dominating women by creating difference between man and woman. Language and speech furnish a way to exert supremacy of male over the other sex. Male has more say in the entire communication that takes place within a family and exerts dominance and control over women; they also prevent women from speaking because of their pre-conditioned mindset to devalue women [Dominance Theory by Thorne *et al* 1983 and Prominence Theory by Maltz and Broker (1982) and Tannen, 329, 1990].

Kartar Singh Duggal, with his remarkable range of writings, had always concentrated upon the institution of family. The subtle nuances underlying the wide, shifting and often conflicting range of family interests and gender relationships have been brilliantly fictionalized by him in his works to protest against the irrational and artificial social divisions.

Man and wife do not, as a rule, live together; they only breakfast together, dine together, and sleep in the same room. In most cases the woman knows nothing of her working life (he calls it her home life). (Shaw, 11)



**A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of
English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University,
Chandigarh**

In Indian society, the position and status of women is rather ambiguous since time immemorial. On one hand, women are worshipped as deities and embodiments of cosmic creative and destructive power, on the other, they are victimized and tortured. In a land where the conventional blessing given to a woman in myths, epics and legends is *May you be the mother of a hundred sons*, being born as a woman and giving birth to a daughter are tantamount to be failing in one's duties of womanhood and hence, the stigma of inferiority and unwantedness is attached to women, right from the time they are born. Marriage is being looked upon as the only alternative available to women in view of the limitations of female education and employment opportunities, the family further becomes a site in which it is expected that the woman must tolerate untold tyranny and miseries primarily because of the lack of social support. Kate Millett rightly points out:

Under patriarchy, the female did not herself develop the symbols by which she is described. As both the primitive and the civilized worlds are male worlds, the ideas which shaped culture, in regard to the female, were also of male design. The image of woman, as we know it, is an image created by men and fashioned to suit their needs. These needs spring from a fear of the "Otherness" of woman. Yet this notion itself presupposes that patriarchy has already been established and the male has already set himself as the human norm, the subject and reference to which the female is "other" or "alien." (Millett, 46-47)

The husband-wife relationship constitutes the chief and most important relationship in the network of family ties. A healthy relationship between spouses not only enables the effective functioning of the household and the growth and development of the partners involved but also ensures the proper socialization of the children born into the family. On the other hand, marital conflict brings about negative consequences on the physical and emotional upbringing of children and also disorganizes the household unit



A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh

apart, leading to private and social disharmony. The quality of interaction between husband and wife, thus, has serious repercussions for the entire family unit.

Kartar Singh Duggal, who has written extensively on issues pertaining to gender, family conflicts and unconventional relationships in his stories, has generally been identified as one of the foremost and finest short story writers from Punjab. His stories incorporate a vivid portrayal of the common man-his imperfections, flaws and his limited social destiny. With respect to family relationships, Duggal was well in advance of his times and his themes vary from inter-class conflict, adultery and female feticide, to neglecting and deserting parents in their old age. Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia opines:

Short story in a sense is an expression of atomistic experience happening in atomistic time. Because it is the experience in a flash of moment, so it has all the spontaneity looked up in that moment when it appropriates to itself the totality of time. Spontaneity and intensity- these are the qualities of Duggal's artistic experiences which have ensured him top position that he enjoys today. (Chaudhury, 26)

The characters in Duggal's stories are found to suffer because of the social labels that are tagged to them and which one cannot change like that of caste or class, greed, lust, poverty, pride and self-obsession. "Women's Lib" is the story of an ambitious woman Zarrina who desired to have a girl child and her husband Professor Ahmad failed to impose his wish for a boy on his wife. The daughter was named Zulfi as she was the split image of her father and was pampered by her parents from childhood. Zarrina thought of using Zulfi as an instrument to fight male chauvinism and take vengeance against the male who had, for generations, enforced humiliation and atrocities on women in the society. Exposed to such ideas and that too from a creative artist like Zarrina, Professor Ahmad was both astonished and disheartened. Zulfi gradually grew up to become a beautiful and charismatic lady with every passing year. Zarrina was overwhelmed by her daughter's beauty, talents and glory and thought that her daughter



A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh

will be a heartthrob for the rich boys who will empty their wallets charmed by her glamour. She wished her daughter to betray one lover after another and to lead a carefree life. Professor Ahmad protested at his wife's wild and vicious ideas but nothing could stop Zarrina from liberating her daughter and disappointed and heartbroken by the state of affairs in his family, Professor Ahmad ultimately died of heart failure.

Zulfi grew up to be a self-dependent woman and became the attraction of late night parties. She earned a substantial salary and was free and empowered to choose her partner on her own. Zarrina as a mother never questioned her daughter's late night returns to the house. In fact, she rejoiced over the issue that her daughter was a liberated new woman and was not a slave of the conventional norms and codes of patriarchal society.

"After all what is the purpose of the pill?" Zarina continued, "the pill has liberated woman. Today she is free as man ever was. I have told my daughter to avenge herself for mother and mother's mother. She must choose the best, the richest, the most handsome, the most gifted boys, exploit them and then throw away. The way men folk have done with women all these days." (Duggal, 19)

When Zulfi chose to marry Bansi who was a smart, good looking and rich man, and a prosperous owner of ten companies, the difference in religion did not emerge as an issue. Zarrina was not ready to leave her daughter but Zulfi, who was madly in love with Bansi and paid no heed to her mother's moral policing. Zulfi converted herself and married Bansi, giving birth to a baby boy but after Zulfi left her in-laws home as a result of frequent domestic violence.

In this story, Duggal depicts how even for the modern, educated and independent woman, marriage and its exploitations still remained intact. The greatest irony of the story is that though the daughter was given every parental freedom to defy the traditional gender practices of her age, she still is forced to undergo the same kind of victimization that almost every married woman of her society endured. Zulfi finds love and wants to spend her life with her family but even her rich educated husband ends up discriminating against her and, in attempting to dominate and subjugate her through violence, he erases



**A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of
English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University,
Chandigarh**

the entire liberated woman's identity that Zulfi's mother Zarrina had struggled to nurture for her.

Similarly, in the story "The Sins of Her Fathers", Magistrate Murli Manohar belongs to a scheduled caste and for that reason he enjoys special privileges which enabled him to accomplish swift and smooth promotions in his professional career. As per the opinion that the so-called higher class is always on a look out to deprive people like him, he was always been wary of the social class divisions. He was in love with a Brahmin girl Janki who too loved him and accepted him as her husband against her family's staunch opposition. They eventually became popular in the town as an ideal couple and Janki's family also forgave and accepted them into the family after they were blessed with a girl and a boy within couple of years of her marriage.

One day, a strange murder case came to Manohar for hearing in the court. The Zamindar's son had been murdered by an untouchable girl. The girl accepted her guilt in her confession statement about the crime but this case weighed heavily over Manohar's mind. The Hindu boy forced the girl to have sex with him in the crop field where the girl was scouring for weeds. The girl repeatedly told not to assault her sexually as she was a cobbler girl and, therefore considered untouchable in their society, but the boy refused to listen to her pleas:

How can one refuse a zamindar's son? God knows how long we had lain together in the field when something happened to me. I felt as if I was going to break into pieces. My eyes closed. I was exhilarated and I asked him to kiss me. My lips were burning. I begged him to kiss once. But he wouldn't. Again and again I took my lips but he would brush me aside. Then I do not know what happened to me. I felt like a tide rising inside me. I held his neck with both my hands and started kissing him; And then when I had fully quenched my thirst from his lips, I let him go. To my surprise, I found his body gone cold. He lay there dead. (Duggal, 281)



A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh

Murli Manohar had handled many strange cases in his judicial career but he had never come across such a case where the accused bluntly confessed. The words of the convict echoed in his ears, “My lips were burning, I begged him to kiss me just once. But he would not” (281).

The case changed Manohar’s domestic life completely; he lost all his interest in his wife and kids. He could not bring himself to kiss his wife on the lips anymore. Janki attempted to revive her marriage and bring back the old fervour of love into their life but was not successful. With the passage of time she came to know that her husband had developed an extra marital affair with a Municipal Board school teacher who also belonged to the same caste like that of Murli. Shattered by her husband’s deceit, Janki was completely heartbroken. She failed to understand or identify the reason as to which she had been victimized and concluded that in spite of all her modern ideas concerning caste prejudices and all her sacrifices that she had made, she was actually paying penance of belonging to a higher caste which was the root cause of the breakdown of relationship with her beloved husband.

Duggal, thus, depicts in this story how modernism and education also failed to liberate the suppressed feeling of the caste differences between a husband and wife who had been passionately united in a sanctified bond of marriage. Despite the strong love that existed between them, their sensibilities were ultimately overpowered by societal patterns of age-old discriminations that exist in the name of caste. The social taboo of caste could not be curbed even by love, education and rationality and ultimately Murli could find solace only in a relationship with a partner belonging from her caste.

“The Making of a Militant” is a story which brings out the adverse repercussions of the lineage of the caste system within a family. The so-called Chamars - Marhu and his son Mangu took up the practice of farming by abandoning “their caste profession of treating the hides of dead cattle” (Duggal, *The Miracle And Other Stories* 85). They worked as labourers in the farms of Bisweddar, the Zamindar of the village. While Marhu Ram never mentioned his caste, his son Mangu took pride in his lineage. “We are



**A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of
English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University,
Chandigarh**

Chamars by caste though we have taken to farming. My father's father and his father were the low-caste Chamars" (85).

Marhu Ram got his son married to Saleti, a woman of exceptional beauty. Mangu's wedding took place with great pomp and joy but when the marriage party concluded after midnight and Mangu entered the room, he was bewildered and aghast not to find his bride.

The revelation made by Mangu's parents about the village tradition according to which every new bride of the village has to sleep first with the Zamindar before spending her nights with her own wedded spouse and that Mangu's mother had also done the same, came as a cruel shock to Mangu's sensibilities. Consumed with anger and hatred, Mangu unearths a buried weapon and leaves the house to seek revenge from the Zamindar. The story ends informing the readers that, not many days had passed when news came that the Government had announced an award of one lakh rupees for anyone who would help arrest "Mangu Ram, son of Marhu Ram of village Talwandi Biswedar!" (89)

This story very clearly highlights the class conflict within the society in which people from the upper castes not just oppress the people of lower castes economically but deny them the human dignity as well. "Just because Mangu belongs to a low class (socially and economically), he is powerless in the face of the tradition that requires every lower-class male to give over his wife to the Zamindar of the village for the first night after his marriage just like his father had to. This kind of exploitation in the name of tradition is totally unacceptable and kudos to Duggal for so minutely and distinctly portraying this grave issue to his readers" (Banerjee, 111).

"Parent-children conflicts with regards to individual freedom and double standards giving greater freedom to sons than daughters, is a recurring feature and has been noted in many studies" (Kurian, 39). In Indian society generally a girl child is allowed to remain a child only for short period of life especially from psychological perspective. It is always stressed that her relationship with her natal home is temporary. Parents tend to discriminate among boys and girls not only in terms of reinforcing speech, activity and games, but also in terms of food, education and other material



**A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of
English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University,
Chandigarh**

possessions. Many of the social customs and rituals it appears tend to favour or promote child abuse. "Indian society makes a relative underestimation of girls and views them as a family liability. Girls get less autonomy and freedom from parents than boys" (Ghadially, 1988).

The twentieth century has been termed as the "Age of Anxiety" and the "Age of Alienation" (Murchland, 28). Modern man has, today, become acutely conscious of his role and responsibility and of the impact of psychological issues on his life. He is overwrought with feelings of uncertainty, loneliness, doubt, self-conflict, value conflict etc. which are gradually engulfing the entire human civilisation. Bewildered by the shattering and breaking down of the once standard values of life and behaviour, modern man is suffering from a crisis of faith. This condition is aggravated by the "crisis of the present". Edmund Fuller suggests, "in our age, man suffers not only from war, persecution, famine and ruin, but from inner problems . . . a conviction of isolation, randomness and meaninglessness in his way of existence" (Fuller, 3). There is an atmosphere of uncertainty and the modern man is languishing in confusion, frustration, disintegration, disillusionment and alienation. He becomes restless in search for peace and tranquillity. There is a gap in what the individual aspires for and what he achieves what he really is and what he would like to be taken for. This leaves his life crumpled. As Jasbir Jain puts it:

Alienation, a main concern of modernism, is an urban phenomenon; and at odds with the Indian belief in religion, the social life style of a joint family and the absence of the concept of privacy. Alienation is linked with the growth of individualism and with Western thinking. (Jain, 66)

Relationships between women are also explored in this context, sometimes between women of different generations, such as that between mothers and daughters and particularly between mother-in-law and daughters-in-law, which constitutes a central issue in Indian popular culture. Duggal excels in pointing out the shortcomings of the



A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh

society. His stories repeatedly bring out the absurdity of the ascription of communal labels like Hindu, Muslim, Sikh etc. to individuals. These categorizations, Duggal insists, are arbitrary and dilute the essence of a person as a human being. In the story, "What Is a Hindu?" a child Bubli delivers this lesson to her parents who have lost their moral values due to the terrible experience of partition. Mr. Singh and Mr. Pandit, two bosom friends, left their every possession they had in Pakistan during partition and came to Jalandhar. They become neighbours again but the communal violence between Hindu-Sikh and other communities forever cast a shadow on their old friendship. Their relationship came to be filled with suspicion and distrust which compelled the Singh's in asking their younger daughter Bubli not to play with the Pandit's son Banti. The young girl thus talks to Mrs. Singh, her mother: "Mummy' please tell me-What is a Hindu?" "Banti's daddy is a Hindu!" Mrs. Singh explains. "No, he is uncle," says the child (Duggal, 12).

All other evaluations and comments become superfluous as the truth comes out from the mouth of a child! What her parents and others failed to understand i.e. the terrible conditions prevailing in society, Bubli did. Moreover Bubli was alone as her own brother and sister were grown up and studied at other places. She had only Banti as her play mate but she never understood why Banti is different from her and the reason of her parents forbidding them to play together.

"Sibling relationship is recognized as unique among close human relationships as siblings share a common genetic heritage and common early experience within the family. The exchange patterns of emotional support are established among the siblings during early years" (cited in Sonawat 183, Avioli, 1989). Sibling relationship is also marked by discord when paternal authority is weak or almost absent. Such conflict is an important dimension of sibling relations. Herzberger and Hall (1993) stated that boys and girls might have different expectations when siblings are involved in the conflict. As joint family system is one of the basic features of Indian society, it becomes essential to consider the cordial and conflicting relationship between secondary relatives.

Kartar Singh Duggal has written some of the finest stories on basic harmony, communal divide, pre-and post-partition riots and migrations in his collection *Abducted*



A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh

Not and other Stories of Partition Holocaust. “The Clay of Muslim” is a complex, engaging and thought-provoking story arising from the theme of the partition. A Sikh girl, Rukko, is abducted by a Muslim during the holocaust of the Partition. Her brother Kulbir (Beera) manages to escape to India:

The three year old Beera had watched with his own eyes his parents and siblings writhing in pools of blood and breathing their last. And then he had also watched one of the rioters appear on the scene of that infernal pandemonium, with his head and face wrapped all around, and abduct Rukko in one neat and clean operation. Beera could never forget that scene thereafter. (Duggal, 169)

Kulbir became an elite officer in India and comes to Pakistan in search of his long-lost sister. Rukko's abductor Mohammedu marries her forcibly and loves her to madness. With the passage of time Rukko becomes the mother of a number sons and daughters. Finally Rukko's younger brother locates her. Rukko is given the option either to stay on or to go with her brother Beera leaving her loving husband and family behind in Pakistan. When at last she makes up her mind to leave, Mohammedu cannot accept Rukko's decision and puts three bullets with his pistol into her chest and then cries very loudly and profusely gathering the whole village.

Ironically she is killed by both the men who love her to craziness— Mohammedu her husband and Kulbir her long-separated brother who has a sort of monomania for her. Kulbir must search her out, and Mohammedu would never let her part. She gets killed between the two of them. She is a lady killed with kindness—if ever there was one!, Rukko's post-mortem canonization as a latter-day Muslim saint bristles with ironies of its own brother less sisters make a beeline for her mausoleum praying for a brother. And she has died as soon as she got back her own brother. (Madhumeet, 15)



A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh

Similarly in the story “Where is My Mother?” Yunus Khan saved a wounded little girl, a victim of communal riots and took her to the hospital where her life is saved. The girl reminded him about his own sister Nooran. After her recovery he wanted her to take home but the girl was a Hindu who was afraid of him. “I don’t want to go home,” the girl pleaded, “Take me to the refugee camp. I want to go to the camp” (Duggal, 286). The girl was not convinced by the benevolence of the soldier Yunus Khan. She was of the opinion that he would take her to a lonely spot and kill her. Even after Yunus Khan’s repeated assurance the girl screamed and began beating the Baluchi on the chest with her small fists. “You are a Muslim... you’ll kill me.” “I want my mother. Where is my mother?” (286). The story depicts the impact of bloodshed resulting from the communal riot which compelled even a teenage girl to disbelieve her life saver. The act of humanity turns to suspicion and even repeated assurance of a sibling like relationship between the two could not bridge the differences of religion and communal divide.

Family violence is a complex concept which encompasses wife abuse, child abuse and elderly abuse. Pagelow defined family violence as “any act of commission or commission by family members and any condition resulting from such acts and inaction which deprive other family members of equal rights and opportunities and/or interfere with their optimal development and freedom of choice.” (437)

Violence perpetrated on women in the family is a truthful fact truthful since centuries and across the world. It is listed under the category of gender based violence that includes abuses such as battering, sexual abuse of female children, dowry related violence, marital rape and female genital mutilation.

Family conflicts are related to human love and literature is about human love, feelings and behaviour and off course romance. Disagreements resulting in violence and rage bring the family and especially the children to a vicious circle of maltreatment, trauma and various kinds of marginalization for the rest of their lives. Duggal through some of his short stories highlighted this negative impact of family conflict which it can have on any society.



**A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of
English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University,
Chandigarh**

In Duggal's short story "Woman's lib," rich and educated man like Bansi with the passage of time became a drunkard and thrashed Zulfi brutally. Zarrina did not let her daughter tolerate such heinous behaviour. She humiliated Bansi and his family and took Zulfi back to her home. Zulfi recovered from her shock and returned to her old self and started working.

One night Zulfi did not return home. Zarrina was anxious as this never happened. She guessed Zulfi might have gone for a visit to her sister-in-law's house. She also heard the rumours that Bansi visited the place too. Next morning when Zulfi asked Zulfi about her stay outside the house and her guess came true. Zulfi was with Bansi at her sister-in-law's house and an affirmative nod of Zulfi on her interrogation pierced Zarrina's women liberation dream into tatters which Zarrina dreamt of achieving through Zulfi. She could not bear the defeat of her liberation dreams and found peace in the arms of death. She too died of heart failure like her husband Zulfikar Ahmad.

In the story "When Will This Father Die?", Gobindi's first husband was a mine worker. He had the habit of gambling and routinely lost more than he won. He had the condemnable habit of beating his wife; Gobindi faced domestic violence in every win and loss of her first husband. One day Goni, Gobindi's son saw Gobindi's body full of scars while she was taking bath and this act of brutality was enough to love his mother more as she received thrashings from her husband.

Gobindi wanted to work in mines like other fellow couples but her first husband would not allow that. The shallow pride of her first husband emerged from his pseudo pride that what the village folk would say if they come to know about it? Gobindi never beat her husband she would become angry when she heard a women raised hand on her husband in the miner's colony. She had internalized the social idea that the husband is the symbolic form of God and God cannot be beaten. One day her husband returned home and was constantly vomiting before the doctor could be called he was dead.

Gobindi started working in the mine for livelihood. With the passage of time Gobindi decides to marry again for the sake of better future for her child. But one evening her second husband also came in a dead drunk state. Gobindi was surprised as he



**A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of
English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University,
Chandigarh**

never spoke about this habit of his and she was also unaware of this habit. At Gobindi's disgust he slapped and beat her mercilessly. Then it became a regular practice but Gobindi tolerated all this violence without uttering a word fearing that her son would come to know of it. Goni loved his mother and knew how cruelly she was beaten each night and one day asked her mother, "Mummy, when will this father die?" (Duggal, 120)

This story is a portrayal of the fact that how a bad addiction ruins a family. Gobindi's first husband was addicted to gambling and second was addicted to drinking. The male chauvinism prohibited both men to allow Gobindi to work in mines. Inadequate money to run the household along with addiction brought untold miseries in their life and Gobindi was held responsible for all these resulting in her facing acute domestic violence. In case of Gobindi's second marriage materialistic pleasure superseded her reasoning as a result of which she failed to enquire about her second husband's addiction for drinking. As a result it amounts to her sufferings and brutal thrashing from her second husband, who didn't like Gobindi disliking his addiction.

"Trishna" is the story of female foeticide. Rajani, the female protagonist in the story cannot muster courage to face her husband. Partool-the male protagonist- is the stereotype of an insensible, run-of-the-mill bureaucrat who uses his dominant- male's right with absolutely no regard for the inmost feelings and cherished desires of his wife Rajani. He always pressed Rajani to become a mother to a son. After conceiving Rajani was screened and after the prenatal determination of the sex and knowledge that the foetus being a female, led to an abortion.

The poetic symbolism representing the death of an unborn child is remarkable and depicted the void of a mother. "She felt as if a serenade were wafting in the air; as if a soft fragrance were poking her right and left; and as if a shimmering ray were losing itself in the redness of the setting sun" (Duggal, 84). Trishna is the softly and feebly flickering ray of light who emerges in the light of the setting sun which symbolizes death. Duggal's story is a modern depiction of domestic violence in which especially females are forced to abort female foetus in lieu of becoming the mother to a male child thereby failing to realize their identity as woman.



A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh

The stories like “The Prostitute” give us a peep into this aspect of the society and the pertinent issue like AIDS is also taken up in this story. It evokes the plight of poor, helpless, exploited women commoditized by a male-dominated society. Prostitutes are not born as such but are made. They are helpless victims of a cruel society.

Sankranti is the conventional “noble prostitute” but her nobility is aroused in her when she meets Murli and considers him to be her real love. As regards to her other customers, she makes no issues about sleeping with them in return for money, knowing fully well that she is generously communicating to them the fatal disease of AIDS.

Murli’s love for Sankranti is quite genuine of course, but he leaves a dying Sankranti without a second thought. The ending of the story is indeed more pathetic because Murli’s cowardice comes to light. Had he taken Sankranti’s hand in his own, she would have died still, but her death would have been a little fulfilling for her as well.

To conclude, from the above exploration of some of the short stories of Kartar Singh Duggal, it is evident that familial relationships play a significant role within their fictional worlds. One may live harmoniously with friends and neighbours but within our most intimate kinship bonds, the stakes are greater and a happy and successful relationship is far less likely because of its gendered nature. Kinship bonds are the ones that we are born into which we further cultivate through marital alliances. Through his stories Kartar Singh Duggal insisted that in case of a conflict with self and family, it is the self which deserves to be chosen, though such a choice is always difficult to make and invites severe social criticism and neglect which, in turn, most likely might lead into marginalization especially in case of the ‘Other sex’.

Works Cited

- Avioli, P. S. “The social support functions of siblings in later life.” *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 33, 1989, pp. 45-57.
- Banerjee, S. “Inter-caste and Class Conflicts in Kartar Singh Duggal’s Selected Short Stories.” *The Criterion: An International Journal In English*, vol. 7, no. 2, April 2016. Web. Accessed on 28 March 2020. www.the-criterion.com/V7/n2/



**A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of
English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University,
Chandigarh**

018.pdf.

Beauvoir, S de. *The Second Sex*. 1953. Vintage Books, reprint.1973.

Chaudhary, A. K. "K.S. Duggal: Grand Auteur of Punjabi Literature." *The Radical Humanist*, vol. 75, no.12, March, 2012, pp. 26-29.

Desai, M. "Concept and conceptual frameworks for understanding family.Enhancing the role of the family as an agency for social and economic development (Unit for Family Studies Report)". Bombay, India: TISS, 1994, pp. 16-41.

Duggal, Kartar Singh. *Abducted Not and Other Stories of Partition Holocaust*. UBSPD, 2009.

---. *The Miracle and Other Stories*.UBS Publishing House, 2007.

Fromm, E.*The Sane Society*, Rinehart and Co. Fuller, 1955.

Fuller, E. *Man in Modern Fiction*. Random House, 1958.

Ghadially, R. *Women in Indian society*.Sage, 1988.

Gracia, J. "Dehumanization of Women in Tagore's Punishment" Blog. 5 April 2015. Web.Accessed on 25 March 2020. <https://medium.com/literary-analyses/dehumanization-of-women-in-tagore-s-punishment-70f504352cdb>.

Herzberger, S. D., and Hall, J. "A. Children's evaluations of retaliatory aggression against siblings and friends." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, vol. 8, 1993, pp. 77-93.

Jain, J. 'The Plural Tradition: Indian English Fiction', *Spectrum History of Indian Literature in English* ed. CharuSheel Singh, Atlantic Publishers, 1997. Kurian, G. "Intergenerational integration with special reference to Indian families." *Indian Journal of Social Work*, vol. 47, 1986, pp. 39-49.

Lakoff, R. *Language and Woman's Place*. Harper and Row. 1975. OUP.

Lloyd, A. "Information literacy Different contexts, different concepts, different truths?" *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 2005, vol. 37, Issue 2, 85.Published 29 June, 2016.Web. Accessed on 28 Feb 2020.10.1177/0961000605055355.

Lukmani, Y. "Poiseel Control", (A Review). *Debonair* June, 1989.



A bi-annual peer - reviewed journal of Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh

- Madhumeet. "Kartar Singh Duggal's Short Stories in English Translation." *Indian Literature*, vol. 52, no. 1, 2008, pp. 11-17. SahityaAkademi.Web. Accessed on 24 March 2017. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23347507>>.
- Maltz, D. N. and Borker, R. A. "A cultural approach to male-female miscommunication." in Gumperz (ed.). McKay, S. L. and Hornberger, N. H. (eds.) 1996. *Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press. 1982.
- Millett, K. *Sexual Politics*. Abacus edition, Sphere Books, 1972.
- Murchland, B. *The Age of Alienation*. Random House, 1971.
- Naik, M.K. *A History of Indian English Literature*. SahityaAkademi, 1982.
- Pagelow, M. D. *Women battering: Victims and their experience*. Sage. 1981.
- Prasad, G. *The Great Indian Family: New Roles, Old Responsibilities*. Penguin, 2006.
- Ramaswamy, E.V. P. *On women's Rights*. Emerald, 1989.
- Shaw, B. *The Complete Prefaces of Bernard Shaw*. Paul Hamlyn, 1965.
- Sonawat, R. "Understanding Families in India: A Reflection of Societal Changes." *Psicologia: Teoria e Pesquisa* Mai-Ago 2001, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 177-186.
- Sriram, R. "Family studies in India: Appraisal and new directions." In T. S. Saraswati & B. Kaur (Eds.), *Human development and family studies in India: An agenda for research and policy*. Sage Publishers, 1993, pp. 122-128.
- Tannen, D. *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. Ballantine. 1990.
- Thorne, B., Kramarae, C. and Henley, N. *Language, gender and society*. Thorne, B., Kramarae, C and Henley, N.(ed). Newbury House, 1983.