



**SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE AFRICAN STATES AND BOTSWANA WITH REFERENCE
TO SMITH'S *THE NO. 1 LADIES' DETECTIVE AGENCY***

Dr. Uttam B. Sonkamble

Asst. Professor, Dept. of English,
SMRK BK AK Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Nasik.

Abstract

This paper marks significance in itself as the fiction in question "*The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*" though being a popular fiction; it deals with social, cultural, religious facets of Botswana as well as Africa exploring each of them with relevance in the fiction and the African Literature in totality. Though the genre fiction differs in number of facets with the main stream literary fiction, it has successfully kept the momentum of the African fervour. The writer of the fiction, Alexander McCall Smith establishes from an average attempt to an author of number of books, an authority in his writings and an established and heightened writer of the popular English Literature with *The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency* and other works. The fiction depicts the social life of Botswana bringing about the actual African life. The issues dealt by Smith are: illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, AID (HIV) etc. to the core of the global spectrum.

Alexander McCall Smith honours the people who are loathed around the world especially by the white people; the fiction, Smith claims, is not mere his gratitude but conviction of his inherent bond with them. He reinvents and re-establishes his affinity with them beginning his professorial career with the establishment of the Law Department in the University of Botswana. The sub Saharan Africa (SSA) life has moulded Smith to be a perfect human being. Along with the Ramotswa fiction, the children's books representing the African subjects with most other works, to be precise, serve the social purpose in constructing a fabulous culture. Initiating from *Sandy* at the age of twenty eight, Smith

maintains his popularity index high in all the genres. His children's works are all entertaining subtly giving rational message of life inculcating the habits of adventure in the children because it keeps every one aware of the social responsibility to others. Smith remains a teacher through in entertaining and educating the children. The children are captivated themselves to be enjoying the books but nevertheless they are tapped at the juncture of time. Each book builds up an optimistic approach of life among the children. His medical law and family rights books serve for the purpose of medical ethics and the familial rights in the society. Further he proves useful through his professorial expertise in making the logical

usage of medical law in complications by both the patients and the medical authorities or which would lead to further undue complications as to the maligned treatment of both the parties. This genre books prove their worth from the grooming level of the students to common civilians. This input to Botswana and Scotland is historic in respect of their legal system. These countries remain ever indebted to Smith for his gift. Smith evinces his social commitment towards his readers and the society by imbibing about the drink and its consequences amongst the children.

The adult fiction, *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* is a fascinating creation of the writer and an inimitable work of art in the history of the Popular English literature. A petty affair of chicken chasing goes to ten volumes, due credit goes to its powerful foundation of the Moptswana locale. Should it have been another locale of the world it would not have had that impact. In this fiction, Smith very pertinently integrates his mesmerising African memories with the detective stories. The fiction serves as a pleasant reading and exceptional experience of the writer's memories. Smith being himself very sincere with the commitment to his duty of authorship, he achieves success in bringing forth the existent life of the SSA. Simply it can be concluded that one would amend his maligned frame of mind about the SSA to amazingly encouraging and optimistic approach. As of his adult fiction including *the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* are concerned, they are his breath. This very breath later forced him forsake all professional assignments and of course the university job. His other serial fictional works offer his connection with his present region; *the Sunday Philosophy Club* and *the 44 Scotland Street* are the fine examples of modern life commenting on today's

changing attitude in the youth of Scotland. The readers across the world acknowledge Smith's absolute supremacy in the writing what has adjudged him with number of honours and awards for his sincerity in the writing. This excels his stature as writer and ranks him amongst the paragon writers. His social contribution towards the underprivileged society in the SSA is incomparable by his generous donations because he feels he owes it. In simple terms, Smith is a great gentleman, a fabulous professor, an outstanding author and writer and a dedicated human being.

The paper deals with the social aspects of the fiction which emphasises on the global issues of poverty and unemployment with an effort to facilitate with the social aspect with its elements so as to make the paper an inclusive corroboration with the pragmatic theories. In the case of the SSA, it is mainly the perseverant undergoing harsh severity. Scientific study of these issues in the SSA and whole of the TW nations and rest of the world help make this an evidential study. Most of the TW nations are observed suffering of social evils and their failure to resolve in the social, geographical and economic sectors. They must eradicate these hurdles so as to come forward as developing nations.

Illiteracy issue is encountered by the undeveloped, underdeveloped and developing nations across the world. Due to the low literacy, general growth of nations is checked. Measures are given severe setbacks by various forces. So measures should be to redirect to achieve 100pc literacy by all possible ways, which in that course are sure to gain the results. Similar is the case with population, causing critical problems due to various aspects like illiteracy and ethnic crunch. The nations are seriously making efforts to overcome the

issue. Poverty and unemployment; the mutual reliant issues are observed creating desperate conditions in the SSA and the poor states worldwide. These being global challenges, they are dealt with by the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organisation, further efforts should be initiated to beat the issues under their supervision. Tribes and classes are dealt in the study for their inference in the fiction. The section along with numerous divergent tribes brings forth the ignominious social divide in the society. Another vital part of this study is AIDS epidemic. This is again treated like a war-like situation in the nations suffering of the syndrome. With the WHO initiatives, global measures are initiated to contain the virus spread. Being concerned of the syndrome, the states are treating it as a decisive issue. But the challenge before the SSA nations remains traumatised and exposed before the virus. Nevertheless they are sure to win over it. The last blot of society is the mounting offences against the children and the women, is equally imperative in this study.

In spite of marginalisation by the larger states like South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia and earlier the British, Botswana; a small republic is witnessed steadily continuing its growth from 1966. It establishes its economy at a high place and considered as one of the leading economies in the world. But its acute social issues deter its progress from all social classes and tribes. The urban and the rural Botswana are equally affected by the issues. The social and the economic conditions of the nation affect the entire life of the Batswana. The rural Botswana needs to be improved in all the sections by seeking diverse ways of development like modern technological farming and improvement in diverse trades instead of only agriculture and cattle. Racism

is yet another such hurdle making them diminishing their lives. To fight away these issues, Botswana needs the societal support. They need to overcome some cultural handicaps of the nation. Botswana being culturally a rich nation, each Motswana even migrants is seen committed to retain the nation untainted. The government with the society can develop as a nation of rich culture as its history.

The fiction can be dealt in various ways but what strikes the researcher through the fiction is the social milieu. Smith's unusual proficiency of presenting the SSA wins for him thumping applauds for the fiction. The Botswana milieu originates the fiction spreading the unusual flavour of the SSA. Smith exploits the Motswana locale but is never found snapping the African tradition to win over the readers. He adroitly weaves the social facet as a reflection of Botswana locale.

The paper purports to bring the fiction as what is intended by the writer and the Batswana. Though their literacy is substantial their utter negligence to the education can be observed as a setback to the education policies. It appears that they neglect the social setup when devising the education policies which are merely affordable to a small percentage of middle class population. Such education is the major hurdle in reducing poverty and unemployment as the lower class is unable to seek quality education that can cater employment opportunities and reduce poverty. People are aware of importance of education but are impaired when it comes to costly education. What the researcher suggests that the appropriate educational planning should undeniably help the state overcome the major social issues. Another factor of social equations against women and children are quite orthodox and

prejudiced as if they are subjected to anything as worthless beings of society. Contrary to the traditional beliefs, a few characters uphold children and women as essential constituents of the society. The society as a whole can reduce this wide divide by bringing them in the constructive role by pacifying the patriarchal order which actually cause demean them and remain unconstructive in developmental course of the society. The patriarchal order also makes the male reckless to marriage giving rise to AIDS as another impediment to the fair society causing the entire human force succumb to it. Marriage can be seen as a positive traditional measure to reduce the wild spread of AIDS and it should be performed with due respect.

The characters are witnessed succumbing to poverty and unemployment at every step. The government and the society are exposed before the deficient resources. Characters of higher or lower classes suffer of them. They are seen diverting to various immoral ways of earning their livelihood like women being pushed to prostitution and crimes and men to trivial to serious crimes including fraudulence. Superstition is one of the options; they find patronage for way out. On the whole, underdevelopment of the state is observed dominating every character suffers of poverty and unemployment to an extent irrespective of their social class or tribe.

Alexander McCall Smith, though, is a born white British, is barely witnessed an alien in his attitude the African people and account of the African society rather he is more inclined to the African basic culture that imbibed upon him from his childhood and his father's influence which continue to cater his motivation to life. His British demeanor is never seen influencing his depiction in the real sense that the other

writers whether native or others fail to do. He presents Africa in a positive sense which motivates the African community than demoralises it as is pictured by the other authors.

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