Depiction of Marginalization of Senior Citizens
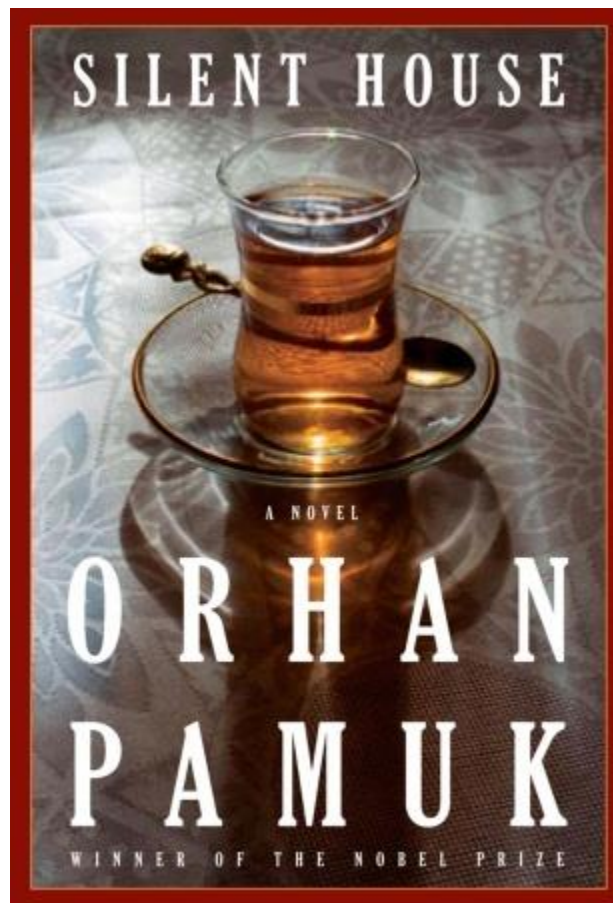# in the Novel *Silent House* by Orhan Pamuk

T. Raam Kumar, M.Phil. Scholar and Dr. R. Saravana Selvan

Courtesy: **https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13531059-silent-house**

Abstract

Growth in economic status has made various changes in the world in all aspect. In the current scenario, people widely talk about women empowerment and how to develop them economically under all conditions. The result of all these things is the empowerment of women in society in all aspects but people turn a blind eye to the darker issues that are prevailing in a society, there are many more burning issues out of which comes the marginalization of age-old parents, in the context with "Senior citizens". Traditionally, men were the breadwinner of a

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 18:5 May 2018**
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family in all cases. Women used to cater every one's needs in a family. In most of the families, after certain age elderly people are pushed to the edge and there is lack of consideration. The relationship within the family is broken due to lack in peace and harmony. This paper concentrates on how the senior citizens are marginalized by their own children due to industrialization and their need for sorting out problems for their selfish motives.

Keywords: marginalization, broken families, family economy, industrialization.

Introduction

Subaltern and western world are slightly incomparable. Though there is discrimination prevailing in the western world it is not as serious as the eastern world. In western countries, mostly all men and woman are equally employed in all fields of work, economically they are sound. Though it seems to be like there is no way for marginalization, but it still happens. Mostly the child is attached to the mother than to the father or vice versa for varied reasons. Thus, results in marginalization of parenthood. And this paper concentrates on the reasons behind the marginalization of senior citizens in present scenario.

The term 'Subaltern' is referred to the subordination in terms of class, caste, gender, race, language and culture. Subaltern studies are widely known in Eastern world. Eastern world is fully filled with different kinds of discriminations towards closely related people. In Eastern countries discriminations is based on caste (OC, BC, MBC, SC, ST…), gender (mostly oppressing women), language, culture, religion (Hindu, Christian, Muslim…). Discrimination happens with regard to societal setup. In a parallel when we look into the Western world, discrimination is based on the economic status of a person. Mostly in form of class (higher class, middle class, lower class). Western countries concentrate on economic power of an individual rather than caste and creed.

Marginalization

Marginalization is where someone is pushed to the edge of a group and accorded lesser importance. This is predominantly a social phenomenon by which a minority or sub-group is excluded, and their needs or desires ignored. Mostly, it is based on economic power of an individual. There are various marginalized groups such as women community, disabled people, Schedule Castes (Dalits), Scheduled Tribes, Children (Child labor), and now the list has also included the Elderly or Aged people too. This paper concentrates on how the senior citizens are being marginalized by their own children and grand-children due to industrialization and sorting out the reasons for their selfish motives.

Parenthood is the state of being a father and mother to one's own child. Fatherhood is a feeling that has diligent desire and determination to see one's family being exalted in the celestial kingdom of society. Fatherhood is men's precious gift, if he loses one such thing, nothing else really matters. Whatever may be his position in the public life, as he enters home he keeps away all his authority and becomes one with his children. He is traditionally known as the bread-winner of the family and chief care-taker too. Father is considered to be the head of an ideal family; this one can be considered as a parallel to the religious faith too. In most of the ideal families, father is considered to be the chief deciding authority for all things to happen.

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When a man becomes a father, he represents himself to be more responsible and caring. Likewise, motherhood also takes equal responsibility with much care and she is the most affectionate one in a family, yet she never expresses it.

Impact of Industrial Revolution in Western Families

In ancient days, before revolutions in all fields, parents were considered to be the superior object. Father was seen as a super hero and he was given all authority and treated well because of his social strata (mainly economic condition). But in present scenario, in most of the families especially in western families, men are considered to be an object and women are given all authority within the family and they take the role of men as a bread-winner of the family. As both husband and wife share their power in the family everything goes well but once when they hand over their responsibility to their children the situation changes as much importance is not given as they expect. By seeing this, question arises, what is the reason for this drastic change? While looking into past history of the western world, we could see many revolutions which changed the life style of people. The revolution in industrial sector (i.e., industrial revolution) had its hand in these drastic changes, after this the life style of people began to change in all phases, the way of dressing, food, and in culture too.

To talk about the impact of industrialization in western countries, industrialization paved way for many changes to happen in western countries like England and other European countries later which were implemented in eastern countries through colonization. As a result of industrialization, women were allowed to work in industries, this upgraded the lives of women (women empowerment) in western countries. In most of the families both father and mother are engaged with some jobs. This commitment towards work makes parents to stay away from their children. In the case of women, she somehow gets attached with her children. Also, when women start to earn, the traditional role of father as a breadwinner gets stolen by her. This made men to feel separated from his family, also children don't have any consideration for him. In most of the families, men are treated to be an object and they are only given the role of doing petty things in family and, also his words are not taken to consideration. Children wanted father for money and not for affection and love. This has made many fathers to be marginalized inside the family. Family structure was broken into pieces, with lack of love, harmony and peace.

Theory and Analysis

The theoretical concept that related to marginalization is the Alienation where certain group is isolated from their supremacy. According to Karl Marx, Alienation is a theoretical concept which isolates, dehumanizing and disenchanting effects of working within disenchanting effects of working within a capitalist system of production. The sociologist Melvin Seeman provided a healthy definition of social alienation in his paper titled "On the Meaning of Alienation" which is happening true today in the name of globalization where capitalism is dominating the most. The features are Powerlessness, Meaninglessness, Social isolation and Self-estrangement. In the above-mentioned aspects, it is applicable for the senior citizens who are facing a huge crisis in day today life. Most of their life is under toss.

Fatma

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In Orhan Pamuk's novel *Silent House*, there is a widow character named Fatma, who is waiting for their grandchildren during their annual summer visit. Here the expectation of the grand mother is huge to meet her grand-children, but they are not much affectionate as they focus only on their beneficial needs rather than being affectionate to her grandmother.

> "But tomorrow they'll come, and I'll think again. Hello, hello, how are you, they'll kiss my hand, many happy returns, how are you, Grandmother, how are you, how are you, Grandmother? I'll take a look at them. Don't all talk at once, come here and let me have a look at you, come close, tell me, what have you been doing? I know I'll be asking to be fooled, and I'll listen blankly to a few lines of deception!" (pg.17)

Here the expectation of the grandma is up to the peak and their grandchildren will be cheerful by seeing her but she herself knows that it is just a dream. The behaviors of the old age people are mostly like a child and they expect special concern for them which the modern society fails to give them but focuses on their own individuals' benefits. This is mostly because of the change in culture and the modern generation is moving towards extinction. The true love and affection is not taken into consideration as they only work for their favorable desires. "I'm just poor ignorant women, and look, now I have no one, they make fun of me, if you could see the miserable life I've had, son, how unlucky I've been, how much I cry…I clutched my handkerchief and crumples it up," (pg.73)

In the current scenario, we come across many incidents based on the abuse of elderly people by not mingling them with their family (joint family). This makes them to get depressed physically, emotionally, financially and thrown out sometimes. This is mostly because of industrialization and new technologies which leads to marginalization of the senior citizens and unfortunately today they are considered as a social burden. Once their assets, properties and wealth are legally transferred they are treated not like before. This shows that the modern world is giving much importance for their wealth than affection. Here the grandma is being isolated and felt unlucky for her living. Here the modern technologies can never replace any tool to fulfill their expectations.

Summing Up

On the other side of industrial revolution, we could see men travelling across the globe to enhance their business. Mostly, men would stay in other part of the world, being separated from the family to earn and also to build his industrial sector. They would be separated from their family for months and years together. Though they have a traditional role of a breadwinner of the family, they have a kind of relationship with his family. They work for his family needs and benefits. Once he gets retirement from earning he is not consideration as a family member. The extreme level is that we see old age homes in every city. We are not aware of the fact that one day everyone will be getting aged and suffer the same as their parents and grandparents are undergoing.

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   ┌──────────────┐          ┌──────────────┐
   │ Globalisation │   ⇒      │   Mobility   │
   └──────────────┘          └──────────────┘
                                     │
   ┌──────────────┐          ┌──────────────┐
   │ Alienation of │   ⇐      │ Broken Family │
   │    Elderly    │          └──────────────┘
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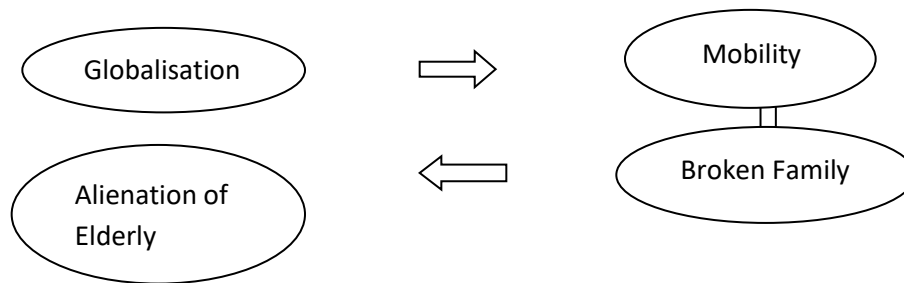
Fig.1

Here the above figure concludes the full analysis of marginalization of senior citizens, it also represents the effects of Globalization which leads to mobility which is the root cause for broken family and as an extreme action, Alienation of Elderly people happens. Industrial revolution also has allowed children to work in industrial sectors in the name of 'child labour.' This is due to the poverty in many families. Though industrial revolution has given many job opportunities it has alienated the joint family and justified to live in the nuclear family.

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