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Psychological Effect on Vasudhaiva Kutumbkum of Materialism: Reading with Arthur Miller's Plays, *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*

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Abstract

Ayam bandhurayam neti ganana laghuchetanam udaracharitanam tu vasudhaiva kutumbkum, the concept originates in the Vedic scripture Maha Upanishad. (Ch. 6, Verse 72) This proverb means "The thought that one person is related to me and another is not is that of the narrow-minded. For the broadminded, however, the whole world is one family. (Hitopadesha: 1.3.71)"¹ is narrow minded thinking but when we think that the whole world is our family is our broad minded thinking. Vasudhaiva Kutumbkum means the whole world is one family. We all are the relatives and family members but unfortunately, we are far from this type of broad thinking in this materialistic world. Every person is crazy about name and fame and mainly for his appearance. For which he is forgetting his real duty towards nature, relations with this whole world. This paper focuses on psychological effect on Vasudhaiva Kutumbkum of materialism where everyone is totally depended on materials. "Materialism is a way of thinking that gives too much importance to material possessions rather than to spiritual or intellectual things."² In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and *All My Sons*, we find the human psyche which is altered in this materialistic world with which the meaning of Vasudhaiva Kutumbkum is also altered.

Keywords- Psychological effect, Materialism, Dreams, Desires

We are all one because we have oneness of God, religion and humanity but we are far from this good thought in this modern age. We become the slave in the hand of materialism. Where everyone fights with each other for their status, country, and religion and with their- selves also. Even they fight with their own siblings while they know them splendidly but in this materialistic world their frame of mind is distorted and they think that the whole world is the land of competitors. Through English literature, we can see the real image of the world which is dividing for status, appearance and for states. Every day we can read much news which shows us the divided thinking of every person and this thinking is narrow. So, we can say that this is the psychological effect on the feeling of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbkum* because in

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modern time people have more desires, dreams and expectations for which they become depressed and stressed which are the outcomes of their narrow thinking.

We are very full of activity in day to day life and we have no time for our neighbors even for our relations and relatives for which we are psychologically affected in this modern world and we are going far from this *Vasudhaiva Kutumbkum* theory. The modern thinking effects on the human mind and we are living like the strangers in the society. Materialism has extreme effects on society. According to Slay Bone,

Today, life is being lived too fast. No one slows down to enjoy their life. We should all get off the train once in a while and experience things at our own pace. In today's society, life is about how successful a person can be, how much money they can earn, and how much nice stuff they have. Society's prime focus is mainly about materialism instead of the more important things in life such as family. Prime focus is mainly about materialism instead of the more important things in life such as family.³

We are forgetting the relation between our body and soul. We never questions with our own mind that why are we strangers when we are all like a family. In this modern time, people are artificial and money-oriented and becoming an animal who has no sense about his own vices. We can analyze this problem through *Death of a Salesman* and *All My Sons*, the great works of Arhur Miller in American Literature. Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* and Joe Keller in *All My Sons* are the best examples to prove this proverb. Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* and Joe Keller in *All My Sons* are the main characters and the protagonist who are struggling for their astonishment. They prove in the last of the play that man can do everything for their family. But in this materialistic world, it is not wrong to say that they can also do anything for their physical comforts without the realization of their wrong activities. Through this paper, we can understand the value of the *Vasudhaiva Kutumbkum* with the help of Willy Loman and Joe Keller. Willy Loman is the central character in *Death of a Salesman*. He wants his past life in his present time because in the past time he was very happy with the behavior of his boss, old Wagner. Willy says,

If old man Wagner was alive, I'd been in charge of New York now! That man was a prince, he was a masterful man. However, that boy of his, that Howard, he does not appreciate. When I went north the first time, the Wagner Company didn't know where New England was!⁴

In this speech, Willy is not happy with his new boss who is the son of old Wagner. We can see the problem between new generation and old generation. In modern time, there is no value of old relationships. The new world is now the industrial world where every person wants to fulfill their desires and dreams at any cost for which they can sacrifice their old relations. In this modern world everyone is materialistic and his thinking also modified into materialism. For his physical comforts, he is ready to forget his close relationships with his family members, friends and others in which he is unknown with his real identity. We can

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also see the comparison between old time and present time. In the present time of Willy, everyone becomes the materialistic or money-minded.

We can see the bad relationship between Willy Loman and Biff Loman. Willy wants to fulfill his dreams and desires through his both children but Biff Loman hated the competition in this new world and money is not everything for him. That is why, he says,

Well I spent six or seven years after high school trying to work myself up. Shipping clerk, salesman, business of one kind or another. And it's a measly manner of existence. To get on what subway on the hot mornings in summer. To devote your whole life to keeping stock, or making phone calls, or selling or buying. . . that's how you build a future.⁵

These lines represent the relations in the materialistic world where no one have good relationships. According to *Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam*, we should have the oneness of relations also but in present time, there is no value of relations. In the whole world, we all are separated. We can easily find the separations between man; mind and family. We can see the psychological effect on person who is always tries to make more and more money without any realization but when they realize; they become frustrate and they find themselves uncomfortable with other persons who are busy to fulfill their requirements. Here, Biff Loman is not happy with Willy Loman because of his dreams, demands and desires. This is not just the problem of Willy and Biff but problem of the modern society where everyone is in the race of rabbits for physical comforts.

This modern world is becoming artificial where no one has genuine face, heart and mind. God created us and made this world beautifully with enthusiasm for us but we changes this world differently where we use the things for our physical interest not for our spirituality. Willy Loman also becomes frustrate with this materialistic world for which he expresses his views,

The Street is lined with Cars. There is not a breath of fresh air in the neighborhood. The grass do not grow any more, you cannot raise a carrot in the backyard. They should have had a law against apartment houses. Remember those two beautiful elm trees out there? When I and biff hung the swing between them?⁶

These lines give us an idea about the illustration of this newest world or this money-oriented world, which is full of crowd. Willy criticizes this mercenary Society. Here, Willy proves that people have no meaning of natural world. He values of the cities which are powerful and brings money. Willy though has never liked the city, and prefers the country, because there is not so much pressure. He is attracted to the wild, free and open countryside.

When we analyze *All My Sons*, we find the same problem with Joe Keller, the chief character who sacrificed everything for his family. He has lost his elder son, Larry in war because of his fault. In this play, Joe Keller supplied malfunctioning airplane parts causing the death of many boys only for his family's comfortable life but he never worried about other family. In the end of the play, Joe realized that they were all his sons but it had too late

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for his responsiveness. He hides this genuineness from his own family that it was his entire blunder. He says to his son Chris,

“Chris...Chris, I did it for you, it was a chance and I took it for you. I’m sixty-one years old, when would I have another chance to make something for you? Sixty-one years old you don’t get another chance, do ya?”⁷

These lines prove that we are similar to the unaware animal that is failed to distinguish the responsibility. We are living in our ambitious dreams or in illusions where we are far from the reality. We continued try to fulfill our wrong desires at any cost. For our physical happiness, we are forgetting the thinking of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbkum* where we are a family but in this materialistic world, our thinking becoming disgraceful. We want to improve others in our own way but we are not ready to improve our self. Day by day, we are narrowing our mentality. We can see the reality of the money-oriented world when Joe Keller wants to spend his black money contentedly for which he says to Chris,

“Chris, I want you to use what I made for you ... I mean, with joy, Chris, without shame... with joy.... Because sometimes I think you’re ... ashamed of the money.... Because it’s good money, there’s nothing wrong with the money.”⁸

In this modern society, we can see many broken relations such as; father- son; brother-brother relation for money interest. We can see this problem in daily life with parents because they have no rich time for their children. They are so busy in making more and more money for their children’s future without being conscious about their spiritual happiness. Children want only the love and company of their parents but parents think that they shall brighten the future of their child with materials or money. It is true that money is not merely the problem but belief of the modern man is the big problem in this modern society where we are ignoring the thought of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbkum* which gives us oneness of humanity. Yes, humanity is the main thing where we are spiritually connected with each other. Otherwise, we represent like a dead tree which have only dry roots and branches. We should living with this oneness of mind where we are the family and we will follow the thought of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam*.

We all think about our reputation not about our relations who give us love, pride and lots of interest in this beautiful world. No one have purity of mind in this materialistic world. We can easily understand the value of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam* with the help of Chris’ lines which says to his father, Joe when he forbade accepting his fault,

“What is that, the world- the business? What the hell do you mean, you did it for me? Don’t you have a country? Don’t you live in the world? What the hell are you? You’re not even an animal, no animal kills his own, what are you?”⁹

Through these lines, we can see the reality of human beings in this materialistic world who have no responsibility towards the world. It refers to the whole world where we are the one family and we should care about all not merely of one person. Here, we can understand

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the psychological effect of materialism on human mind which create many different problems. In the end of *All My Sons*, we can see one important speech of Chris which tells us the pure truth of this modern world where we are just like the animals who is not conscious about the reality of man. Chris is frustrated with the materialism that is why he feels,

This is the land of great big dogs, you don't love a man here, you eat him! That's the principle, the only one we live by- it just happened to kill a few people this time, that's all. The world's that way, how can I take it out on him? What sense does that make? This is a zoo, a zoo!¹⁰

We have all the conveniences in our life but without the happiness of mind, love with all and soul satisfaction, we are departed, alone and unhappy person. We have to attain our aims or goals without harming anyone because everyone is the branch of our life which can make us in high spirits. It is the bitter truth of modern time when anyone died and no one involve in the funeral because all are busy in their personal life. In old time when anyone died in neighborhood, we all were the partner of the sorrow of that family but in most advanced world there is no humanity because now, we feel ourselves free from these rituals. We always want to show off our status. It is very shocking to say that we have the artificiality of thoughts and nature or behavior. We are the part of narrow thinking not the part of spiritual world. We think that we are the part of this beautiful world but unfortunately, we are the part of materialistic society because we make it revolting where no one has the feeling of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbkum*. It is factual that we are in the market where money is all in all and we are just like a puppet. We all are unknown in this unknown world where we wear mask to hide our actual personality. Man shows the happiness in front of world but in reality we are hollow. There are lots of examples in this world which prove that we are avoiding the thinking of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbkum*.

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