



**THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES OF SIBLING
RELATIONSHIPS IN MUNSHI PREMCHAND'S SHORT STORY
"BADE BHAI SAAB"**

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Abstract

Munshi Premchand (1880-1936) was one of the most celebrated writers in Indian literature, majorly known for his powerful and realistic portrayal of rural life and social issues. He usually wrote in Hindi and Urdu. His real name is Dhanpat Rai Srivastava. While Premchand is his pen name. He has written many short stories. To support this research, analysed one of his great short stories "Bade Bhai Saab"

(Big Brother) Munshi Premchand's short story "Bade Bhai Saab" (Big Brother) offers a timeless portrayal of siblings' relationships, academic pressure, and childhood innocence. This paper aims to analyse the characters of the story with the eye of psychology, particularly B.F Skinner's behaviorist theory, and Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory. It explores how the different behaviours two of the characters reflect the different stages of social learning, cognitive development and emotional growth. The older one is serious about his studies but still has an unsuccessful career. on the other hand, the younger one is playful and carefree yet manages to perform well in the academics. This paper examines the social interaction and



educational dimensions in “Bade Bhai Saab “and highlights its relevance in understanding the complexities of human relationships and the educational system in the contemporary scenario.

Keywords: Munshi Premchand, Psychological Theory, Child Psychology, Socio- cultural Theory, Behaviourist Theory. B.F Skinner, and Vygotsky.

Introduction

Munshi Premchand is one of the most well-known writers in Hindi-Urdu literature.

His short story Bade Bhai Saab tells a funny yet meaningful story about two brothers

One who takes studies very seriously and another who enjoys life more freely. On the

Surface of, the story seems to be about school and discipline, but it also shows deeper ideas about how people grow and learn in different ways. This paper looks at the two brothers using two important psychological theories. B.F Skinner’s Behaviorist Theory and Lev Vygotsky’s Socio-Cultural Theory. Skinner’s theory helps explain why the elder brother focuses so much on hard work and rules, while Vygotsky’s theory helps us understand how the younger brother learn from his surroundings and social interaction. By using these two theories, the paper explores how the brothers are shaped not only by their personalities but also by their environment, family, and society.

About the Author

Premchand (born July 31, 1880 Lamahi, near Varanasi, India and died October 8, 1936, Varanasi) was an Indian author of novels and short stories in Hindi and Urdu who pioneered in adapting Indian themes to Western literary styles. Premchand worked as a teacher until 1921, when he joined Mohandas K. Gandhi’s Non-cooperation Movement. As a writer, he first gained renown for his Urdu- language novels and short stories. Except in Bengal, the short story had



not been an accepted literary form in Northern Indian until Premchand's works appeared. Though best known for his works in Hindi, Premchand did not achieve complete fluency in that language until his middle years. His first major Hindi novel, *Sevasadana* (1918; "House of Services"), dealt with the prostitution and moral corruption among the Indian middle class. Premchand's works depicts the social evils of arranged marriages, the abuses of the British bureaucracy, and exploitation of the rural peasantry by moneylenders and officials. Premchand's others novels include *Premashram* (1922), *Rangabhumi* (1924), *Ghaban* (1928), *Karambhumi* (1931), and *Godan* (1936).

Methodology

Through the close reading of the short story by Munshi Premchand (*Bade Bhai Saab*), a comprehensive analysis has been conducted on both of the characters. This paper uses a qualitative approach to study the psychological differences between the two main characters in Munshi Premchand's short story *Bade Bhai Saab*. The analysis is based on close reading of the text, focusing on the behaviour, dialogue, and action of the elder and younger brother in different situations. To understand the deeper psychological aspects of the characters, two major theories are applied:

1. B.F. Skinner's Behaviorist Theory.
2. Lev Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory.

About the Text

"*Bade Bhai Saab*" is a short story by the renowned Indian author Munshi Premchand. The narrative revolves around the relationship between two brothers, story explores



The dynamics between a young boy and his older brother, who is both his guardian and a source of both affection and resentment. The story delves into the themes of rivalry, affection, and the contrasting perspective on education and the life experience. The elder brother, despite his academic struggles, act as a disciplinarian, while the younger brother, initially resistant to his guidance, eventually develops respect and a sense of understanding. In the end the story concludes with a poignant moment of reconciliation and understanding, where the elder brother acknowledges his own failures and the younger brother recognizes the value of his brother's guidance. The brothers are shown to be more connected than ever, suggesting a future where they will learn from and support each other.

Theoretical Framework

1. Behaviorist Theory

The American psychologist and social scientist B.F. Skinner was one the most influential psychologists of the 20th century. Skinner pioneered the science of behaviourism, discovered the power of positive reinforcement in education, invented the Skinner Box, as well as designed the foremost psychological experiment that gave predictable and quantitatively repeatable outcomes.

B.F. Skinner's behaviourist theory says that people learn through their environment. When people get reward for something, they do it again. When they are punished or something bad happens, they try to avoid doing that gain. This is how behaviour is shaped.

Analysing characters through Behaviorist theory

- 1. Bade Bhai Saab (Elder Brother):** He is serious, responsible older brother who believes that studying all the time is the only way to succeed in life. He doesn't like fun and want his younger brother to follow strict rules. He studies hard because he is afraid of failing



not because he enjoys it. This is called **negative reinforcement** (doing something to avoid a bad result). He keeps giving lectures to his younger brother, hoping to change his behaviour. But when he fails in his exams, even after all the hard work, his belief in strict study weakens. Over time, he starts to realize that maybe his way isn't always right. His behaviour was based on fear and pressure. But when his efforts didn't bring success, his behaviour started to change.

2. Chote Bhai Saab (The Younger Brother):

He is cheerful, fun-loving and sharp minded. He doesn't study as much but still manages to pass his exams. He gets **Positive reinforcement** meaning he gets good marks even while playing and enjoying life. So, he keeps doing what works for him. He doesn't take his brother's scolding seriously because he sees that his own way is still giving good results. He learns from experience when something works, he repeats it. He is shaped by the reward he gets. Since his method brings success, he doesn't feel the need to change it.

According to Skinner's theory. It's the **result and consequences** that shape how people behave and we can clearly see that in both characters.

3. Socio- Cultural Theory

The Socio-Cultural theory given by Lev Vygotsky in 1930s. The sociocultural theory of cognitive development explores the influence the world has on individual development. It asserts that learning is a mostly social process whereby development occurs through interaction with people who possess more knowledge or skill than the learner¹. Theory emphasizes that a person's development is deeply influenced by their social interaction and cultural surrounding. In *Bade Bhai Saab*, Premchand's brilliantly portrays two brothers whose personalities and behaviour reflect the impact of their environment, traditions, and relationship.



1. Bade Bhai Saab (The Elder Brother)

. Social Role and Cultural Expectations: The elder brother represents the traditional Indian ideas of a responsible, serious, and rule-abiding figure. He believes in discipline and values hard work above all. His character has been shaped by societal expectations of what an elder brother should be. He is expected to guide his younger siblings and set an example. As a result, he is always worried about being taken seriously.

Example from the story dialogues: He says, 'Main tumse paanch saal bada hoon aur paanch saal ka Anubhav koi choti bat nahi hoti'. This line shows how he places importance on age and experiences, ideas passed down by society.

. Influence of Education Culture: He strongly believes that studying a lot and following strict routine will lead to success. This reflects the societal belief that education is the only way to progress, and he feels pressure to live up to it. Even though he fails in exams repeatedly, he continues to believe in the system and insists his brother follow the same path.

. Inner Conflicts: He doesn't allow himself to enjoy life or explore things outside books because he thinks fun is a distraction. However, this is not his natural self- he secretly wishes to be free like his younger brother, but culture and responsibility stop him. This struggle reflects how cultural norms can limit personal growth.

2. Chote Bhai Saab (The Younger Brother)

. Social Learning through Observation: The younger brother learns not by being told what to do, but by watching and experiencing life. He respects his elder brother, but he also questions the rigid rules. He notices that despite studying so much, his brother still fails. This makes him reflect and form his own opinion.



Example from the story: ‘Bhaiya poore saal padhte hain, phir bhi fail ho jaate hain. Main khelta hoon phir bhi pass ho jata hoon.’ This shows his growing awareness and critical thinking, key elements in Vygotsky’s theory- how children learn through social context and self-reflection.

. Cultural Influence and freedom: Unlike his brother, he represents the new generation that wants to balance life with fun and learning. He questions tradition and seek his own path, although he still respects his elder brother. This shows how the younger generation, influenced by changing cultural values, starts a shaping a different identity.

. Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): Vygotsky talks about how people grow when supported just beyond their comfort zone. In the story, the younger brother sometimes follows his brother’s advice, like pretending to study, but eventually learns to develop his own way. His environment (school, hostel life, interaction with other) becomes his learning space.

According to Vygotsky’s Socio-Cultural Theory, both brothers are influenced by their surroundings, but they respond differently. The elder tries to strictly follow cultural rules, while the younger brother adapts, question, and learns in a more flexible way.

Together, they show how individuals grow through interaction, observation, and the cultural values they absorb form the world around them.

Conclusion:

In story the psychological differences between the two brothers highlights how human behaviour is shaped by both external influences and social surroundings. By applying B.F. Skinner’s Behaviorist Theory, we see how the elder brother’s strict habits and belief in discipline are a result learned behaviors and repeated patterns. He tries to control his younger brother’s action through reward and punishments, thinking this will bring success. On the other

hand, Lev Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory helps to understand this paper how the younger brother learns and grows through social interaction, experience, and observation. His playful yet insightful behaviour shows that learning doesn't only come from books, but also from real-life experiences and relationships.

Together, these theories show that both environment and culture deeply affect how people think, learn, and behave. Premchand uses the two brothers to represent two different approaches to learning and growing up. In the end, the story teaches us that understanding someone's behaviour requires looking at the world around them, not just their actions.

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