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## **Fandry: Reflection of Society Through Language**

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### **Abstract:**

India has a rich combination of language groups and social groups. Everyday social interactions always take place between people belonging to a particular social group in the context of a particular situation. In social interactions, the social structural arrangements have control over the use of language and emphasize the relationship between language and social factors such as class/caste, gender, education and age. These factors help us to understand the social dimensions of language use. Each social group has particular pattern of interaction. One of such groups of Hindu society in India is 'Dalit'. The language that Dalits use in their day-to-day life is considered as foul and vulgar language. This language does not have sophisticated words and grammar. The speech characteristics of Dalits clearly set them off from the upper -castes in the country.

In this light, the present paper attempts to focus on how Nagraj Popatrao Manjule in his first Marathi film, Fandry (2014) has represented the society through language. It is the story of a dalit boy Jambhuvant Kachru Mane, nicknamed as Jabya who is in love with a girl (Shalu) from a higher caste. The language used by the characters mirrors the linguistic characteristics of the society depicted in the film. When characters are made to speak language in a particular social context, it is assumed that the film maker has chosen that medium consciously to achieve certain ideological objectives. The linguistic behaviour of the characters in the film reveals both their personal identity and their search for social role. Therefore, in this paper, an attempt is made to investigate how the character uses the dialogue as a medium to expose the power, authority and significance of language in both the film and in the society.

**Keywords:** Film, Characters, Language and Society.

Language is a key aspect of the narrative. The words are used to communicate narrative detail through characters and their speech. Nagraj Manjule, in his film '*Fandry*', uses dialect as a defining feature rather than a requisite of 'local colour'. The development of characters on the screen is significantly linked to the linguistic variety they speak. The language used by the film maker as well as the characters represents the linguistic characteristics of the society. It is generally accepted that a person's sociological background has great impact on his language. The language character uses very clearly suggest about the social background he/she belongs to. Therefore, it is very essential to study the linguistic expressions of the characters to understand the nature of characters. This also helps to realize the real meaning of the works under study appropriately.

Before exploring specific conversational pieces from the film to demonstrate the close relation between language and society, it is required to know about the director and also throw light on the story of the film.

Nagraj Manjule, a National award-winning director for his first short film *Pistulya*, hails from Jeur Tal village in Karmala taluka, a small town of Solapur district in Maharashtra. Manjule is one of the promising poets in Marathi literature whose collection of poems '*Unhachya Kataviruddha*' has highly acclaimed in contemporary Marathi literature, was praised by literary stalwarts, and won the prestigious 'Damani literary Award'.

Nagraj Manjule's debut film '*Fandry*', winner of the Grand Jury award at the Mumbai International Film Festival, features a fictional story told in the Marathi language. Jabya, a dark-skinned boy born in a Kaikadi (untouchable Dalit) caste, falls in love with fair-complexioned higher-caste classmate, Shalu. He is deeply entrenched in an inferiority complex about his looks, his personality, his caste, and his poverty. He is ashamed of his family's traditional source of livelihood – catching and killing stray pigs causing nuisance to the villagers. These social impediments prevent him from expressing his love for Shalu. As advised by Chankya (a bicycle repairman), Jabya hunts for a black sparrow in order to win Shalu's love. In the end, the family is forced to chase away the pig which goes mad, bites people and desecrates a religious procession of the village deity. This act becomes an object of fun and laughter for the other villagers, including Shalu. Jabya is left with no alternative but to face and accept the harsh reality of his life. The movie ends when Jabya, in an ultimate humiliation, throws stone at the teasers which symbolizes the rage of the oppressed against the evils of the caste system in the society.



The film tells the story of everyday life and social interactions in rural setting. As the standard language does not have enough strength to express the intensity of feelings of characters, Manjule has gone with their own dialects. He used the language of underprivileged or marginalized people to express their sufferings and sorrows in the most possible natural way. This usage of colloquial language has become a landmark of the film.

The title of the film (*'Fandry'*) itself is a slang word from Kaikadi dialect, a language spoken by a Dalit tribe of the same name in rural Maharashtra, which simply means a wild pig. The title alludes to the community that catches pigs and does all sort of menial labour. Manjule has used the term symbolically to depict impurity that is related to the Dalits.

In one of the earliest scenes in the film, we see Jabya goes to his classmate Vedant Kulkarni to ask about what the school homework is. Standing at the gate of Vedant's house, he asks:

*Jabya: Kaku, Vedant Aahe ka ho?*

*Vedant's Mother: Vedant, Kaikadyach poraga aalay bagh.*

Meaning:

*Jabya: Aunty, is Vedant at home?*

*Vedant's Mother: Vedant, Kaikadi's son is here.*

The above lines throw light on how social status makes an effect on utterances. Jabya calls Vedant's mother as '*Kaku*' which is the respectful term in the Maharashtrian culture used to refer to the familiar elder lady. On the other hand, Vedant's mother doesn't refer to Jabya as his classmate but identifies him by his caste '*Kaikadi*'. Vedant's mother belongs to Brahmin caste. Her expression shows how the caste system is deeply rooted in Indian society and influences the language of the person belonged to higher caste.

In the following scene we see Jabya refuses to pick out the piglet from the ditch in front of the Patil's house. Mr. Patil calls Kacharya to accomplish the work and informs him that

*Mr. Patil: Kacharya, tuha poraga lai majurada he re. Mekar ulat sulat boltay.  
Tuzyawani nahi leka.*

*Kacharya: Lahan hai.*

Meaning:

*Mr. Patil: Kacharya, your son is getting too big for his boots. He replies arrogantly. He doesn't behave like your son.*

*Kacharya: He is just a kid.*

Catching and killing pigs is a deeply rooted practice in the culture of Kaikadi community. Kacharya performs the duty dutifully but his son refuses to follow Patil's order. The linguistic expression 'He doesn't behave like your son' expresses Patil's anger for Jabya for not being submissive. The hatred of upper-caste people towards the Dalits finds expression in the above lines. They also show the impact of ethnicity on the language used by the character.

The next scene shows how education influences the language of the characters. There is a 'girl-seeing ceremony' at Jabya's place. Kacharya welcomes the guests and starts communication in the Kaikadi dialect. One of the guests asks Jabya

*Guest: Shala kidh shikas leka?*

*Jabya: Ha, satavilahe.*

*Kacharya: Aapali bhasha bolayachi laaj watate tyanna. Gharatbi Marathitach bolaav lagat tyanchyabarobar.*

Meaning:

*Guest: Do you go to school, boy?*

*Jabya: Yes. I'm in seventh standard.*

*Kacharya: Children are ashamed of speaking our language. Even at home we've to speak with them in Marathi only.*

The linguistic expression of the guest is in Kaikadi dialect. Jabya responds to him in Marathi language. Jabya's father mentions that the children do not speak native tongue (Kaikadi) and others have to speak with them in Marathi language even at home. This expression suggests that educated person from Kaikadi community prefers Marathi language to their own dialect for communication.



### **Address Terms:**

Address terms is an important feature of social interaction, which can provide valuable information about the interlocutors, their relationship and their circumstances. Terms of address play a crucial role in communication and maintaining social relationships between members of a society. We can see the characters in the film use various forms of address. The upper-caste people use derogatory forms of the first name for addressing the Dalits. The surnames used in the film are identification markers of the caste of the characters. Some of them are as follows:

**Kacharya (Kacharu Mane):** Kacharya is a derogatory form of his first name Kacharu which literally means garbage.

**Jabya (Jambuwant Kachru Mane):** Jabya is a derogatory form of his first name Jambuwant which considered to be the foremost ancestor of monkeys and Matangs/Mang community claim to be the descendents of Jambuwant.

**Pirya (Piraji):** Pirya is a derogatory form of his first name Piraji.

**Chankya (Chankeshwar Sathe):** Chankya is a derogatory form of his first name Chankeshwar.

### **Some taunting expressions:**

Taunting expressions are scornful or insulting remarks used to dishearten or demoralise someone. Making such remarks is considered an offensive act as per social etiquette and customs. It emphasizes the social positions of both the speakers and listeners. There are some taunting expressions used for Dalit characters in the film. They are as follows:

**Kaalya:** Kaalya is a Marathi word which literally means 'Blacky' i.e. a black-skinned boy. It is a taunting expression used for Jabya which makes him a victim of humiliation.

**Dedphutya:** Dedphutya is a Hindi word which literally means 'Shorty' i.e. a person with less height. The expression reveals height discrimination.

### **The Code Mixing and Code Switching:**

Bilingualism or multilingualism has become the mode of communication for many people in this modern world. In many situations, a fluent bilingual changes the language by using words from other language that is mixes codes even within very short utterances. This is called code mixing. In Code Switching, any bilingual/multilingual who speaks two or more than two languages choose between them according to situations. In this way, the person creates a new code in a process known as code-switching.

Nagraj Manjule used the code switching and code-mixing techniques to express specific function in social dealings. Following expressions reveal the fact.

Wang Wang: It must be a kind of greetings in Kaikadi language. It is an exchange of cheerful expressions or good wishes between two people or a group of people. This greeting helps people in establishing interpersonal relationship. It means “Welcome! Welcome!”.

Wadh Pachachi: In the film, a group of upper caste people provokes Kacharya, a lower caste who drinks cheap wine by saying ‘wadh pachachi’. The Marathi word ‘wadh’ means drink and ‘pachachi’ means cost of five rupees. It means lower caste people drink wine of lower cost. In other words, it means a worthless man drinks worthless liquor.

### **Caste related terms:**

There are a few glaring examples of caste-related words. The names and surnames are indicative of a certain caste. Following are some surnames used in the film which suggest the caste of the characters.

Kulkarni: Brahmin

Patil: Maratha

Mane: Kaikadi

Sathe: Matang/Mang

Out of the four above mentioned surnames, two belong to low caste and two belong to high caste. The low caste surnames include Mane and Sathe. The high caste surnames include Kulkarni and Patil.



## **Conclusion:**

The role of language in the film is becoming more and more important day by day. 'Fandry', with such an appealing language, is a hard-hitting film which critically comments on the caste system in Indian society. Analyzing the dialogues of the characters in the film 'Fandry', it can be said that the language manifested in every particular piece of conversation plays a key role in identifying the social background of the characters. Education, ethnicity and social caste/class membership stand as major social factors which differentiate characters' speech from one another. 'Fandry' makes us realize that a person's language used in social interactions play an important role in reflecting his social status, region and gender. It also reveals that language and society are inextricably linked. The language used by the characters of the film definitely serve a social function, it does not only convey the text content but also transfer the social information with great effect.

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