

Marginalisation of Children with Reference to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *The Cry of the Children*

P. Ishwariya, II M.A. English

**Department of English and Comparative Literature
Madurai Kamaraj University
Madurai**

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to expose the marginalization of children in England due to industrialization. Analysing the painful lines of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, this paper tells how children are forced to undergo sufferings and haunting pains. From denial of proper food to facing fatal disease, the abandoned children of England suffer much, and it is evident through the words of Elizabeth Barrett Browning in her poem *THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN*. Thus, this paper walks into her lines and brings out the ideas discussed by the poet in a thoughtful way.

Keywords: Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *The Cry of the Children*, marginalisation, industrialisation, loss of faith, health issues, suppress, lack of freedom, screaming cry of the children.

This paper is a projection of Marginal position of children. This paper tells how children are getting marginalised in society. This paper also deals with sufferings including child labour system, slavery, etc. The exposure unbelievable pain they suffer as children are the main intention of this paper.

Literature is an art of compiling our thoughts and imagination into a whole idea. Literature is also called as the process of creativity. Literature is derived from the Latin word "*litera*" which means "*acquainted with letters*". It is also procedure of analysing a work of art which includes prose, poetry, drama, fiction, short story, essays. Literature educates to know about life, culture, tradition, experience. It also shows invisible part of life which we can only feel and imagine. Literature also gives entertainment and aesthetic pleasure.

Poetry is an amazing process of expressing our thoughts, emotions, ideas. Poetry includes personal experience and feelings. Poems portray different feelings: some poems are happy, and some may be in a sad note. It depends upon the mind of the poet. Poetry needs creativity, emotion and feelings, imaginative power, aesthetic thoughts and artistic quality. Poetry follows patterns like rhyme scheme, figure of speech etc. This paper deals with the emotions and feelings of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

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Elizabeth Barrett Browning was famous Victorian poet. Her major themes are based on social issues, slavery, oppression of women, child labour and political issues. She was born on 6th March 1802 and died on 29th June 1861. She was more popular in England and America. She worked to eradicate slavery and child labour. Elizabeth volume poems (1884) were a successful complication of Browning's poetry. Her works are influence by author like Edger Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson. One of her best poems was *How do I love thee?* She concentrated more on the social and slavery issues. She pictures the pain and suffering in her poem.

The title itself signifies the cry and suffering of the Children. The children are forced to do heavy works at industry and factory. They worked for 14 hours continuous without any break. They feel their pain in every part of their body. So, their cry is filled with torment. This was portrayed by Elizabeth in her poetry "*The cry of the children*".

The cry of the children is a thoughtful poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. It was published in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine in the year 1843. The poem is about child labour and suppression of child. The poem consists of 13 stanzas with the rhyme scheme ABAB CDCD EFEF.

In this poem, 'The Cry of the Children', the poet finds the hardship of the children who are working at mines, industries and factories. The children toil day and night, they are working like slaves. It is because of Industrialism the children are compelled and forced to work. The children are so tired and need a break from their work in factory. But these children are not giving any freedom. They work because of poverty, lack of awareness and compulsion.

The small children were forced to do work continuously. They toil everyday and wail with lot of pain. At young age the usual habit of children is to play and wander around. All other creatures are playing and enjoying but these children are toiling every day. In the spare time also, they shed tears and did not have time to play. Parents never felt this suffering of their children, but their children continue their work because they adder fear of their mother's safety in the country.

"They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see" (lines 25 & 26).

The above lines depict that the faces of the children are sunken because of their suffering, theirs tired eyes look sad and filled with pain. These lines perfectly clarify that they are marginalised.

“Crying, ‘Get up, little Alice! it is day.’
If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries;” (lines 44-46)

The children are in pathetic condition because they suffer from serious health issues like lung cancer, heart disease and some other fatal diseases. The death of Alice is told by author because all children die before their time.

The children in mines and other factories don't want to go out and enjoy because they are too weak. Their only need is some peace of time to take rest. Their eyes are so tired, and they cannot run or leap. They are utterly filled with tiredness. Their eyelids are so heavy because they need some rest. They are continuously driving the wheels of iron round and round.

Everything in the world is changing but the spontaneous work of the children never changed. So with all tiredness they wanted the wheels to stop for a day. “Stop be silent for today” the children started to lose hope towards God, and they think that is their fate to work continuously. When these children cry, passing human hear those screaming voice of children but they just pass away. The children became hopeless, the people can hear the voice of the children, but they do not feel for them to tired to help them. Instead they just passed away. This shows the loss of humanity. So, the children started to lose hope in God.

“They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun.” (lines 125&126)

These children only live in darkness and continuous work burden. They never see the beautiful and glorious sun. Because for several hours these children are working like a slave without any rest. The children started enquiring how long they are going to undergo the pain. And these pains of the children are because of industrialization. They call England as a cruel nation. The pain and suffering are still continuing. The children once cried loudly became silent. Because in their point of view. Their nothing is going to change screaming would not help them and they understood that.

In this poem the children undergo a lot of pain and suffering. They are marginalised because, they were abandoned and provided heavy works and could not take rest for a while. They also suffered from health issues and slowly started to lose their hope. Because of industrialization, children were forced to do heavy works. Their crying is not valued or notified. So, this made the author to portray the pain of the children. The children are completely

marginalized and suppressed; they have no hope towards their life in the world. “Where there is child labour in a nation, they started to lose humanity and development”

This paper dealt with the marginalised position of children. This paper reported also how children are getting marginalised in society. This paper also discussed sufferings including child labour system, slavery, etc. Revealing the unbearable pains children suffer was the main intention of this paper.

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