UNEMPLOYED HOPE

Umeshwar Prasad

DR UMESHWAR PRASAD (1933-1998), a professor in the Department of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in English, Bihar University,

Muzoffarpur, was the General Editor of Indian Sensibility Publications, and was for many years the Chief Editor of the Articulator, a quarterly journal. His poems and critical articles, both in English and Hindi, have appeared in a number of prestigious anthologies and journals published from important cities of India. His collections of poems include Confrontation and Other Poems, Unemployed Hope, and A Nailed Dream. His poems have the making of urgent intensity. Virginia Woolf (criticism) and Vyawaharik Alochana (criticism in Hindi) are his other important works.



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My dreams have fallen among arching aches in deep-levelled bowels; Who will fool with them now that you really did, father! for four secular years in an unproviding democracy, for the unemployed hope of your postgraduate son,

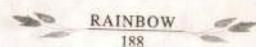


who would often apply,
and would often discuss
His fairy salary,
"I'm getting this job, father
and with the first month's salary
I will get for you
a Maharaja dhoti
and a silken Kurta";
and your tears would sing
a tender prayer,
and your aged eyes sprang
a gay gratitude
for your only son's
unemployed fancies.

They haven't come his way, father! though your hands have gone off his head for good.

Wasn't it father –
my mother would tell me
oftener in her last hours,
in her dotted voice,
knotted and timberless –
that you so much cherished
a Maharaja dhoti
and a silken Kurta
that proudly sat
on young labour's limbs
in your wedding...?

With smouldering lead in my eyes now. I'm utterly jobless, father;



Even the doting dream For a maharaja dhoti and a silken shirt has lapsed in transaction with loyalism for life, and with starved protest against death.

LET'S THINK AND DO

- 1. How does the poem express the frustration of the unemployed youth?
- 2. Comment on the title of the poem?
- Do a project work on the employment among educated youths, focussing on its causes and consequences. Also, suggest ways to deal with the problem.

