

AN EPIPHANY JOURNEY OF BHOLI BY KA ABBAS FROM DUMB TO DYNAMIC &  
SUPPRESSED TO EXPRESSED

RAJIB MAJUMDER

Guest Lecturer of English  
BBM College.

Email:rajibmajumder20081997@gmail.com



RAJIB MAJUMDER

Article information

Received:11/1/2023  
Accepted: 06/2/2023  
Published online:10/2/2023  
doi: [10.33329/ijelr.10.1.4](https://doi.org/10.33329/ijelr.10.1.4)

ABSTRACT

Khwaja Ahmad Abbas (June 7, 1914 – June 1, 1987) was a journalist and writer, activist and filmmaker, scenarist, playwright, thinker, and philosopher all wrapped into one, a man whose pen not only inked words but a vision of human awakening. Like Sardarji, Panchi, Pinjra, and Udaan, authored Aasman Mehel provides the outlandish character "Bholi" a revelation, converting her static persona into a dynamic one. She is a girl in this story who, as a result of an unintentional fall and disease as a child, struggles with the problem of being dull and ugly. She is always a target for everyone because she is not attractive or intelligent. Her life changes when she enrolls in a nearby school where her teacher encourages and assists her in becoming a knowledgeable and confident individual. Later in the story, circumstances force Bholi to accept an unequal marriage, which she rejects when she sees her father pleading with the bridegroom for dowry. The plot depicts a young girl's struggle against social injustice.

**Keywords:** Epiphany; Static; Dynamic; Childhood; school; encourage; assists social injustice.

Introduction

Bholi, the heroine of Abbas's short story, is a simple girl. Sulekha is the true name of Numberdar Ramlal's fourth daughter. When she fell out of her crib at ten months old, a piece of her brain was most certainly destroyed. Her physique was scarred at birth and again at two years old as a result of a smallpox outbreak. Only her eyes were spared. The students taunted her because she couldn't talk effectively because she was a late speaker. Bholi was the sickly child, while her brothers and sisters were in good health. Her attractive sisters were married off, and her brothers were sent to the city to study.

Bholi's father, a revenue officer, wanted her to attend the new primary school in their village when it opened. Despite her mother's protests, he sent Bholi to school. She was dressed in new clothes and sent to school. She was relieved to see other girls and hoped that one of them would become her friend. Bholi was too scared to respond when the teacher asked her name. The teacher encouraged her to speak with a smile. She also asked Bholi to come to school every day. She gave her a book filled with brightly coloured illustrations. She also told Bholi that she would be able to read it soon and that everyone would respect her. Bholi was filled with optimism. As the village grew, the primary school evolved into a high school.

When Bholi reached marriageable age, her father arranged for her to marry a man named Bishamber, who owned a large shop, a house, and a large bank balance. He was nearly fifty years old and walked with a limp as well. In addition, he was a widower with grown children. When this marriage was planned, Bholi was not consulted. The wedding day arrived, and Bishamber arrived with a large baraat. He was pleased with the arrangements, but when Bholi's silken veil was removed, he was taken aback by the sight of her pock-marked face. He refused to garland her and stated that the marriage would only take place if an additional 2,000 rupees were given to him. Ramlal delivered the funds. Bholi threw the garland into the fire as Bishamber was about to garland her. She told her father unequivocally that she would not marry that man, who was not only old and lame, but also mean and greedy. She made a vow never to marry. She resolved to become a teacher and serve her parents in their old age.

### Discussion

"What is epiphany?" is the first question that springs to mind. Okay, it's when you suddenly see or comprehend something in a new or particularly clear light. Alternatively, it is a spontaneous spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of a gesturer's speech or in a noteworthy mental state. The term "epiphany" refers to a spiritual state, and Joyce developed on this issue in "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man." And "dumb" refers to someone who is unable to communicate.

And other words, "suppressed" implies to forcibly cease or stop something or someone, whereas "expressed" means to express one's thoughts or feelings, as in the flow of water.

Bholi, the story's protagonist, was a neglected child and Ramlal's fourth daughter. Bholi had suffered from pox as a child, which left marks on her face, as well as a head injury that caused her mind to be slower than that of a typical child her age. She practised speaking slowly and stammering. Her family and the other villagers looked down on her because she was illiterate. Her medical condition, as well as how others treated her, made her an introvert with low self-esteem. She was just like any other child who adored her pet cow, Lakshmi. Her reluctance to attend school demonstrates that she was also unaware of age-old customs and traditions, but still perceived them as negative and feared them. She became a confident, easy-going, and kind girl after receiving education and encouragement from her teacher.

We discovered 5-8 children per couple in typical Indian families from the past. He, like Numberdar Ramlal (Bholi's father), had seven children, three of whom were sons and four of whom were daughters, with Bholi being the fourth and youngest. Ramlal, who earns the family's bread, serves as the father figure and exemplifies pre- and post-independence India's patriarchal society. He should, on the other hand, allow his daughters to be oppressed and depressed. For the four daughters, attending a girls' school was a dream come true. Despite the fact that this patriarchal system persists until the end of the story, Tehsildar inaugurated a primary school in the village and instructed Ramlal to send Bholi to school, "which will set an example to the village that has sent his daughter to the school." From that point forward, the fate of the stammering girl begins to change.

Bholi was so natural, so innocent, like a butterfly sucking honey from a flower. Bholi was "frightened" because she had never left his house, and she compared herself to their cow (Lakshmi), which was kicked out and sold. Bholi was afraid to leave his house.

On the eve of her first day of school, she was dressed in "decent clothes," bathed, and oil was rubbed into her dry, matted hair. With this fear and terror, she goes to school and works with her teacher to overcome them. Bholi described the first day of school as "interesting" because "she looked at the pictures on the wall." "The colours fascinated her; the horse was brown, just like the horse on which the Tehsildar had arrived in their village; the goat was black, just like their neighbour's goat; the parrot was green, just like the parrots she had seen in the mango orchard; and the cow was just like their Lakshmi." This innocent child found herself alone and delighted in seeing these heinous images. It was the best day of her life, she said.

Bholi's attitude was changed by her teacher's sweet, soothing, and soft voice; the teacher motivated her in her studies and helped her overcome her fear of stammering. Bholi was able to express herself freely, free from the clutches of bondages, free from suppression, and ready to express and ignite moral values and ethics

as a result of the teacher's affectionate teaching, who treated Bholi as if she were her own child. As a result, Bholi is now ready.

Bholi married "a well-to-do grocery store owner (named Bishamber Nath)" when he was of marriageable age. "Bholi was dressed in a red silk bridal gown on the day of her wedding." Bishamber noticed pockmarks on Bholi's face and demanded dowry of two thousand rupees right away. Ramlal threw the 2,000 rupee bundle at the bridegroom's feet to put the situation in jeopardy and avoid humiliation. All of these circumstances were reflected in Bholi's sad eyes. Bholi looked her prospective husband in the eyes, and there was no anger or hatred in her eyes, only cold contempt. Bishamber struck out like a lightning bolt and flung the garland into the fire.

Telling her father- "*I've agreed to marry this pathetic old man. But I will not have a husband who is mean, greedy and a coward*".

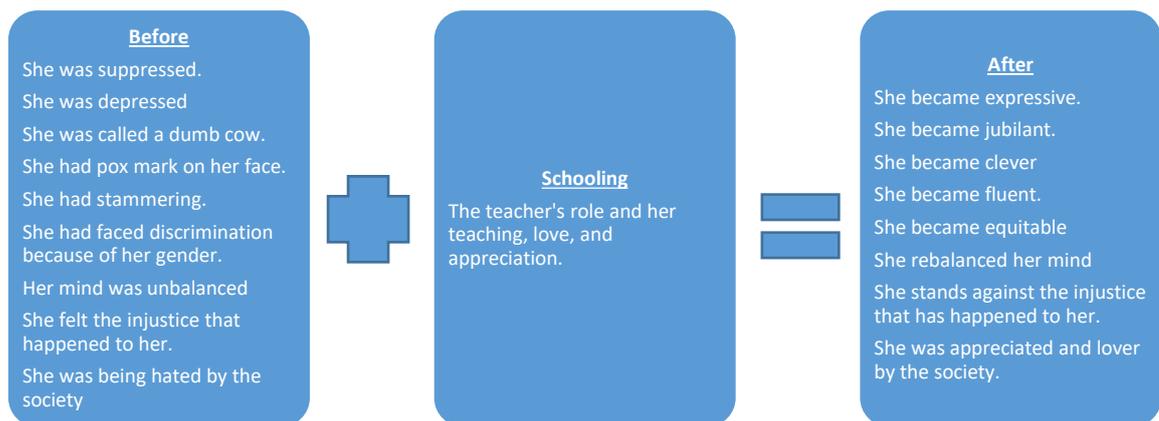
She also stated that, "*she will look after Ramlal and her mother in their old age and teach at the same school where she received so much education.*"

This entire story was told by Bholi without a single stammer, without fear, without terror, and with complete zeal, effort, and belief. The teacher had been standing in a corner, observing the play, and her eyes shined with a deep delight. Bholi was converted from a girl who was unsure about herself and a backward youngster to a courageous and fearless girl battling social injustice as a result of her realisation that her soothing words, education, and determination provided her confidence to confront the world. Her entire life transformed as a result of her education, from being suppressed to being expressed, and from being dumb to being dynamic.

### Conclusion

Bholi was obtrusive, suppressed, dejected, sad, and homesick at the start of the story. Her good education moulded her into an extrovert and energetic individual. The epiphany is a rapid change in her behaviour, attitude, and mentality that might be described as a character twist. She became the narrator of her own life, which she could not have done without the careful instruction of her teacher.

#### A table of before and after traits of Bholi can be found below



### Reference

Abbas, Khwaja Ahmad. "The Dumb Cow," IV 2 5-14. 445.

Cole, David & Throssell, Paul. (2008). Epiphanies in Action. *The International Journal of Learning: Annual Review*. 15. 175-184. 10.18848/1447-9494/CGP/v15i07/45841.

Cuddon, J. A. A Dictionary Of Literary Terms And Literary Theory, Fifth Edition, ISBN 978-1-4443-3327-5, Blackwell Publishing House, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148–5020, USA

RESONANCE - I: General English Textbook for I Semester B.A./B.S.W./B.A.(Music) and other courses coming under Faculty of Arts, is prepared by the Members of the Textbook Committee, Bengaluru Central University (BCU). Edited by Dr. Chitra Panikkar, Bengaluru Central University Press, Bengaluru, First Edition: 2019

Showkat Hussain, "Selected Short Stories of Khwaja Ahmad Abbas: A Study in his Progressive Vision". M.Phil., Dissertation, Central University of Haryana, Mohindergarh, September 2013

Subodh Kumar Upadhyay, "Text To Screen, Journey Of Khwaja Ahmad Abbas", *International Journal of Education and Science Research Review*, 2017, Volume-4, Issue-1, pp 15-18