

Post-Independence Indian Literature

DEENG519

Edited by:
Dr. Ajoy Batta



LOVELY
PROFESSIONAL
UNIVERSITY



Post-Independence Indian Literature

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CONTENTS

Unit 1:	Literary Terms	1
	<i>Dr. Devendra Kumar Tiwari, Lovely Professional University</i>	
Unit 2:	Literary Terms	15
	<i>Dr. Devendra Kumar Tiwari, Lovely Professional University</i>	
Unit 3:	Literary Terms	29
	<i>Dr. Devendra Kumar Tiwari, Lovely Professional University</i>	
Unit 4:	Rupa Bajwa's the Sari Shop	42
	<i>Dr. Devendra Kumar Tiwari, Lovely Professional University</i>	
Unit 5:	Rupa Bajwa's the Sari Shop	55
	<i>Dr. Devendra Kumar Tiwari, Lovely Professional University</i>	
Unit 6:	Tagore's Leave this Chanting and Singing	68
	<i>Dr. Devendra Kumar Tiwari, Lovely Professional University</i>	
Unit 7:	My Grandmother's House by Kamala Das	82
	<i>Dr. Devendra Kumar Tiwari, Lovely Professional University</i>	
Unit 8:	My Grandmother's House by Kamala Das	95
	<i>Dr. Devendra Kumar Tiwari, Lovely Professional University</i>	
Unit 9:	Difficult Daughters by Manju Kapur	108
	<i>Dr. Devendra Kumar Tiwari, Lovely Professional University</i>	
Unit 10:	Difficult Daughters by Manju Kapur	121
	<i>Dr. Devendra Kumar Tiwari, Lovely Professional University</i>	
Unit 11:	Mahesh Dattani - Final Solution	135
	<i>Dr. Devendra Kumar Tiwari, Lovely Professional University</i>	
Unit 12:	Mahesh Dattani: Final Solution	151
	<i>Dr. Devendra Kumar Tiwari, Lovely Professional University</i>	
Unit 13:	Girish Karnad; Nagamandala	164
	<i>Dr. Devendra Kumar Tiwari, Lovely Professional University</i>	
Unit 14:	Girish Karnad; Nagamandala	177
	<i>Dr. Devendra Kumar Tiwari, Lovely Professional University</i>	

Unit 01: Literary Terms

CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

1.1 Feminism

1.2 Patriarchy

1.3 Sexism

Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

Answers for Self Assessment

Review Questions

Further Readings

Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- understand the roots of feminism
- evaluate the cause of gender discrimination
- examine women's rights on the ground of the equality of sexes
- understand the origin of patriarchy
- evaluate the characteristics of patriarchal system
- Examine the position of women and men
- Understand the origin of sexism.
- Evaluate the characteristics of sexism.
- Examine the difference between sexism and feminism.

Introduction

Feminism as a movement gained potential in the twentieth century, marking the culmination of two centuries' struggle for cultural roles and socio-political rights – a struggle which first found its expression in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). The movement gained increasing prominence across three phases/waves – the first wave (political), the second wave (cultural) and the third wave (academic). Incidentally Toril Moi also classifies the feminist movement into three phases – the female (biological), the feminist (political) and the feminine (cultural).

Patriarchy, as a word, will be one of the many words to lose its original meaning and usage by the end of the 21st century. It has become, recently, a rejuvenated concept that occupies the lips of revolutionary feminists. Etymologically, the word is derived from Greek patriarkhia which means a "system of society or government by fathers or elder males of the community." The above definition asserts that patriarchy as a 'system' is manifested in the 'society' and in 'government.' Thus, a society or government that encourages or upholds the governance or rule of male in a community is patriarchal. A distinguishing feature of such societies and governments is that it is often patrilineal. However, the term has been recreated to mean "an unjust social system that enforces gender roles and is oppressive to both men and women." phrases frequently associated with patriarchy include: male chauvinism, male dominance, sexism, male supremacy etc. Essentially, the fervent supporters of the latter definition argues that, as a system, patriarchal

Post-Independence Indian Literature

domination is exhibited in the cultural, social, economic, political and even ideological ramifications of life.

Sexism is prejudice or discrimination based on one's sex or gender. Sexism can affect anyone, but it primarily affects women and girls. It has been linked to stereotypes and gender roles, and may include the belief that one sex or gender is intrinsically superior to another. Extreme sexism may foster sexual harassment, rape, and other forms of sexual violence. Gender discrimination may encompass sexism, and is discrimination toward people based on their gender identity or their gender or sex differences. Gender discrimination is especially defined in terms of workplace inequality. It may arise from social or cultural customs and norms.

1.1 Feminism

Definition

As its core, feminism is the belief in full Social, Economic, and Political equality for women. Feminism largely arose in response to western traditions that restricted the rights of women, but feminist thought has global manifestations and variations.

We apply it by closely examining the portrayal of the characters, both female and male, the language of the text, the attitude of the author, and the relationship between the characters. We also consider the comments the author seems to be making about society as a whole.

One of the Primary themes of feminist writing is its insistence on expressing and valuing women's Point of view about their own Lives. It has since become a classic of Feminist Literature, and illustrates that women's writing, from whatever time period, expresses a clear Female experience, viewpoint and voice.

Characteristics of feminist Literature

Feminist Literature portrays characters or Ideas that attempt to change gender norms. It tends to examine, question, and argue for change against established and antiquated gender roles through the written word. Feminist literature strives to alter Inequalities between genders across societal and political arenas.

Types of feminism

1. Liberal Feminism,
2. Socialist Feminism,
3. Marxist Feminism
4. Radical Feminism.

Main features of feminism

Feminism advocates Social, Political, Economic and Intellectual equality for women and men. Feminism defines a political perspective; it is distinct from sex or gender.

Feminist Literary Criticism

Make sure you examine the views that men and women in the book express concerning females. All in all, the more detailed and Argumentative your essay is the better Impression it will produce on the readers. Therefore, examine various aspects and Questions, since It will help you get a complete picture of the piece

Important of feminism in Literature

With the much publicized oppression of female reproductive rights, it is essential that women and young Girls have strong, Inspiring Females to look up to. In a male dominated society, it is easy for a woman to be overlooked and under represented by the media.

Feminist Literary Criticism in literature

Feminist Literary Criticism is Literary Criticism Informed by Feminist theory, or more broadly, by the Politics of Feminism. This way of thinking and criticizing works can be said to have changed the way literary texts are viewed and studied, as well as Changing and expanding the Canon of what is commonly taught.

The women's Liberation movement

Unit 01: Literary Terms

Both rediscovered and encouraged New Female writers. They also took over the means of production by setting up Feminist Printing houses such as virago Press.

The Women's Liberation movement opened Doors for women in Literature.

Strength of feminism

Feminism may strengthen human Rights. One major advantage of feminism is that it can strength our human rights.

Less gender discrimination Best access to education.

Higher level of education.

Better overall treatment of women.

Feminist theory can be traced to the theories of Simon de Beauvoir in the second sex though in 1919, Virginia Woolf also formed the town ration of Feminist criticism in her seminal work, A Room of one's own. Feminist criticism, or Gender Studies, focuses on the role of women Core Gender in a literary text.

1. Feminism for the real world Edited by Kelly Jensen is a feminist Anthology of 66says, poems, comics and Lists, published in 2017. Here we are Engages with recent de bates over the true meaning and purpose of feminism and takes the form of a scrapbook - style guide and primer on the central Ideas of the women's equality movement.

Waves of Feminism

First wave - political Equality

Second wave - social and economic equality

Third wave - Inter sectionalist, focusing on Rights of those ignored by second wave feminism

Fourth wave - empowerment of women digital feminism

Liberal Feminism

Tackle inequality by utilizing existing Systems - Legal reform.

Legal changes have impacted on many Aspects of women's Lives - Education Family, work, Stratification:

Despite Notaries Successes, Inequality still exists and has evolved to bake newer

Forms that Liberal Feminism continues to Challenge.

Marxist Feminism

Women are exploited by both capitalism and men

1. Benston, I reserve Army of Labour.
2. Ansley women absorb men's frustrations
3. Delphi and Leonard - women. Exploited through Domestic Labour. Men control workforce and women's part in the workforce. Inequality in workplace, but changes have occurred with feminization of workplace.

Radical Feminism

Patriarchy is present in all Aspects of society recent changes are Superficial and token Gesture.

Female separatism and female Supremacists Are Extreme variations. millet women controlled physically, psychologically and ideologically by men.

Ignore Progress and Intersections between women's lives.

Feminist methodology

Critical of maelstrom research and rejected traditional research methodologies that are objective and scientific

Post-Independence Indian Literature

Dockley Introduced Feminist Interviewing that sought out a rapport with respondents and as two-way Dialogue between researcher and respondent interventions in respondents. Lives, uttering advice and grievance and engaging them in discussion about findings.

Evaluation

Feminism ailing to tackle Inequality but Global Inequalities between women remain.

Intersectional nature of women' Experiences Leads to criticism that Feminism focuses more on western women's Desires rather than Basic needs of women in developing world.

Can be argued to have a fragmented nature with disagreements from within the movement – subjective Judgments:

Contributions to feminism;

Introduced Greater understanding of Gender differences in society and Increased knowledge of women in comparison to millstream Sociology.

Evolves to tackle contemporary Issues, including forms of post modern Feminism and Arguments cantered on specific social contexts.

Created Legal Changed that have Improved Educational outcomes, Employments. Opportunities and reproductive Rights of women revolution.

Feminism is a movement or a that Includes women and men who wish the world to be equal because they view the human world as being unequal and experience male superiority over female.

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, developed to make women free. Feminism seeks a culture in which women. are treated differently from men, and because of these Discriminatory treatment women are Losers in many respects.

The term - Patriarchy refers to the rule of the farther in a male-dominated society where they hold authority over women, Children and Property.

Aristotle also followed his view. Aristotle C 384-322 BC] in his book Politics 350 B.C] says thank by nature male is Superior and female is interior.

In a patriarchal family the birth of a son marks the family happy but the birth of a daughter is unwelcome

They were not happy because they had no civil rights and were Bison franchised- Betty friend (1921-2006] in her book the Feminine Mystique (1963) reveals that women in the 1950s were only at home to perform their duties as housewives and mothers. She starts that woman were not happy because they were evaluated according to their body and beauty. She criticizes women's traditional duties as or wife and a mother not to right of voting

The 1890s were a transitional period for women's writing and it was a Great Grow for women writers. British women writers mostly presented their Feminist views through short stories.

Women started asking and searching for their rights and Identities. They demonstrated and fought for their freedom in order to be away with men and participate in all spheres of life.

1.2 Patriarchy

Definition

1. Patriarchy literally means the Rule of Father. It is a system of society or Government in which the father or eldest male is heard of the family and Descent is Reckoned through the male line.
2. A Form of social organization in which the father is the supreme Authority in the Family, clan, or bribe and descent is reckoned in the male sine, with the Children belonging to the father's clan or tribe.

Characteristics

1. The Focal point in this Arrangement is Men;
2. This system has been in existence in The Indian social system for a long time and is still prevalent today. 3]
3. This system understands its responsibility towards women, but out Present the Equality and Freedom of women is also being violated by this system.
4. In this arrangement men take decisions at home and outside.
5. Men are at the centre of social-economic cultural, political and religious activities Etc.
6. Women are not considered to be trailing men or follower of men in this system.
7. Discrimination between boys and women is done by this arrangement both at home and outside.
8. Economic need is met by the man in this system.
9. Through this system, the feeling of Superiority goes on in the Children from the beginning, due to which Gender based distribution Discrimination occurs.

Power control in patriarchal;

The patriarchal and matrilineal system is as long-standing of our Society, in this system, the control of power has been handed over to the men in the society, but the men Started misusing this power by considering themselves superior

Education Status of Boys and girls;

The education status of Boys and girls under the patrilineal and Patriarch social system is as follows:

1. The starts of men are dominant under this social system, due to which Attention is given to the Education of boys.
2. In this system, Instead of Talking education, girls are employed in Domestic works.
3. Where proper Education of Children is made the need for girls Child Education is not taken seriously.
4. Girls are more prone to loss in Wastage and Stagnation.
5. The Interest and needs are not taken care of in the Education system of girls **what is Patriarchy?**
 1. Social system where men are in the positions of power,
 2. Society Dominated by men comes within
 1. Authority, 2. Social Privilege

What is Patriarchy in Feminism?

Patriarchy refers to the Male Domination both in public and private Spheres. Feminists mainly use the term Patriarchy to describe the power relation Ship between men and women. Wallaby defines; Patriarchy as a Systems of Social Structures and Practices in which men dominate, oppress and Exploit women.

What are Examples of Patriarchy?

The definition of a patriarchy - is as system of society where the men are the heard of the house hold, carry the most power and where the family Lineage passes on through men an example of a patriarchy Society is where men hold the control and make all the rules and women stay home and care for the kids.

What is patriarchy in gender?

Patriarchy is about the social Relations of power between men and women and women and men and men.

Who is responsible for patriarchy?

In a patriarchal family, the male acts as the Primary authority figure

What we the six structures of patriarchy?

Post-Independence Indian Literature

1. Paid work
2. House work
3. Cultural
4. Sexuality
5. Violence 6 the state.

How many types of patriarchy are there?

Private and public Patriarchies, Finally, wallaby argues that there are two distinctive forms of patriarchy that exist in the social world; private patriarchy and public patriarchy. Private Patriarchy. This form of patriarchy can be found in the household what are the four core values of patriarchy?

For Example, Jades responses to the first two Questions summarized the Reading by merely Listing; In response to the Question describe Johnson's four core values of patriarchy she listed the four categories rather than offering any elaboration

1. Male dominance
2. Male identification
3. Male centeredness
4. Male control

How does Patriarchy attest society?

One of the core Attributes of patriarchy is that traditional male Qualities are central to other qualities. Patriarchy Influences different areas of Society Including culture, Family, school, the workplace and relationship. Its presence can translate to Inequality and gender-based violence, what is the negative impact of patriarchy in the society?

Patriarchy reinforces gender Imbalance against women by preserving certain benefits in favor of men. The Imbalance is the basis for uneatable use of power between men and women and also a major falter for the disproportionate Effect of climate Change on them.

Is patriarchy an Ideology?

Patriarchy is a social structure and legitimating Ideology in which men,

Have more power and privilege than women; according to feminist ideology, patriarchy is the main source of violence such as rape, battering, and murder against woman in contemporary society.

1. The key difference between Patriarchy and Feminism is their treatment of women; in patriarchy, women Face oppression and discrimination whereas, In Feminism, women have equal rights to men. Patriarchy is a system of society or Government in which men hold Power and women are largely excluded from it.
2. One of the most negative aspects of the patriarchal norms of masculinity is the tendency for men to constantly be in competition with each other.
Almost every aspect of many men's Lives is shrouded by the need to see themselves and better than other men, or other people in General.
3. Patriarchy is an analytical concept referring to a system of political, social and Economic relations and Institutions structured around the Gender Inequality of socially detained men and women with patriarchal relation s, women are collectively excluded from full participation in political and economic life.
4. There is such a thing as male privilege, and that is institutionalized as patriarchy. That is heavily influenced by religion, and it influences government, and business, and everything else.

1.3 Sexism

Definition

According to Fred R. Shapiro, the term "sexism" was most likely coined on November 18, 1965, by Pauline M. Leet during a "Student-Faculty Forum" at Franklin and Marshall College. Specifically, the word sexism appears in Leet's forum contribution "Women and the Undergraduate", and she defines it by comparing it to racism, stating in part (on page 3): "When you argue ... that since fewer women write good poetry this justifies their total exclusion, you are taking a position analogous to that of the racist—I might call you, in this case, a 'sexist' ... Both the racist and the sexist are acting as if all that has happened had never happened, and both of them are making decisions and coming to conclusions about someone's value by referring to factors which are in both cases irrelevant."

Also, according to Shapiro, the first time the term "sexism" appeared in print was in Caroline Bird's speech "On Being Born Female", which was published on November 15, 1968, in *Vital Speeches of the Day*. In this speech she said in part: "There is recognition abroad that we are in many ways a sexist country. Sexism is judging people by their sex when sex doesn't matter. Sexism is intended to rhyme with racism."

Sexism may be defined as an ideology based on the belief that one sex is superior to another. It is discrimination, prejudice, or stereotyping based on gender, and is most often expressed toward women and girls.

History of sexism

1. Ancient world

The status of women in ancient Egypt depended on their fathers or husbands, but they had property rights and could attend court, including as plaintiffs. Women of the Anglo-Saxon era were commonly afforded equal status. Evidence, however, is lacking to support the idea that many pre-agricultural societies afforded women a higher status than women today. After the adoption of agriculture and sedentary cultures, the concept that one gender was inferior to the other was established; most often this was imposed upon women and girls. Examples of sexism in the ancient world include written laws preventing women from participating in the political process; women in ancient Rome could not vote or hold political office. Another example is scholarly texts that indoctrinate children in female inferiority; women in ancient China were taught the Confucian principles that a woman should obey her father in childhood, husband in marriage, and son in widowhood.

2. Witch hunts and trials

Sexism may have been the impetus that fuelled the witch trials between the 15th and 18th centuries. In nearly modern Europe, and in the European colonies in North America, claims were made that witches were a threat to Christendom. The misogyny of that period played a role in the persecution of these women.

All wickedness is but little to the wickedness of a woman ... What else is a woman but a foe to friendship, an inescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic danger, a delectable detriment, an evil of nature, painted with fair colors!

Witchcraft remains illegal in several countries, including Saudi Arabia, where it is punishable by death. In 2011, a woman was beheaded in that country for "witchcraft and sorcery". Murders of women after being accused of witchcraft remain common in some parts of the world; for example, in Tanzania, about 500 elderly women are murdered each year following such accusations.

When women are targeted with accusations of witchcraft and subsequent violence, it is often the case that several forms of discrimination interact—for example, discrimination based on gender with discrimination based on caste, as is the case in India and Nepal, where such crimes are relatively common

3. Covertures and marriage regulations

Until the 20th century, U.S. and English law observed the system of covertures, where "by marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law; that is the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage". U.S. women were not legally defined as "persons" until 1875 (*Minor v. Happersett*, 88 U.S. 162). A similar legal doctrine, called marital power, existed under Roman Dutch law (and is still partially in force in present-day Eswatini).

Post-Independence Indian Literature

Restrictions on married women's rights were common in Western countries until a few decades ago: for instance, French married women obtained the right to work without their husband's permission in 1965, and in West Germany women obtained this right in 1977. During the Franco era, in Spain, a married woman required her husband's consent (called *per miso marital*) for employment, ownership of property and traveling away from home; the *per miso marital* was abolished in 1975. In Australia, until 1983, a married woman's passport application had to be authorized by her husband.

Women in parts of the world continue to lose their legal rights in marriage. For example, Yemeni marriage regulations state that a wife must obey her husband and must not leave home without his permission. In Iraq, the law allows husbands to legally "punish" their wives. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Family Code states that the husband is the head of the household; the wife owes her obedience to her husband; a wife has to live with her husband wherever he chooses to live; and wives must have their husbands' authorization to bring a case in court or initiate other legal proceedings.

Abuses and discriminatory practices against women in marriage are often rooted in financial payments such as dowry, bride price, and dower. These transactions often serve as legitimizing coercive control of the wife by her husband and in giving him authority over her; for instance Article 13 of the Code of Personal Status (Tunisia) states that, "The husband shall not, in default of payment of the dower, force the woman to consummate the marriage", implying that, if the dower is paid, marital rape is permitted. In this regard, critics have questioned the alleged gains of women in Tunisia, and its image as a progressive country in the region, arguing that discrimination against women remains very strong there.

The World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) has recognized the "independence and ability to leave an abusive husband" as crucial in stopping mistreatment of women. However, in some parts of the world, once married, women have very little chance of leaving a violent husband: obtaining a divorce is very difficult in many jurisdictions because of the need to prove fault in court. While attempting a de facto separation (moving away from the marital home) is also impossible because of laws preventing this. For instance, in Afghanistan, a wife who leaves her marital home risks being imprisoned for "running away". In addition, many former British colonies, including India, maintain the concept of restitution of conjugal rights, under which a wife may be ordered by court to return to her husband; if she fails to do so, she may be held in contempt of court. Other problems have to do with the payment of the bride price: if the wife wants to leave, her husband may demand the return of the bride price that he had paid to the woman's family; and the woman's family often cannot or does not want to pay it back.

Laws, regulations, and traditions related to marriage continue to discriminate against women in many parts of the world, and to contribute to the mistreatment of women, in particular in areas related to sexual violence and to self-determination regarding sexuality, the violation of the latter now being acknowledged as a violation of women's rights. In 2012, Navi Pillay, then High Commissioner for Human Rights, stated that:

Women are frequently treated as property, they are sold into marriage, into trafficking, into sexual slavery. Violence against women frequently takes the form of sexual violence. Victims of such violence are often accused of promiscuity and held responsible for their fate, while infertile women are rejected by husbands, families and communities. In many countries, married women may not refuse to have sexual relations with their husbands, and often have no say in whether they use contraception ... Ensuring that women have full autonomy over their bodies is the first crucial step towards achieving substantive equality between women and men. Personal issues – such as when, how and with whom they choose to have sex, and when, how and with whom they choose to have children – are at the heart of living a life in dignity.

Summary

- Feminism

The present day feminism in its diverse and various forms, such as liberal feminism, cultural/radical feminism, black feminism/womanism, materialist/neo-marxist feminism, continues its struggle for a better world for women. Beyond literature and literary theory, Feminism also found radical expression in arts, painting (Kiki Smith, Barbara Kruger), architecture (Sophia Hayden the architect of Woman's Building) and sculpture (Kate Millett's Naked Lady).

- Patriarchy

Unit 01: Literary Terms

The patriarchal domination of women under men – father or husband, has been in existence since time immemorial. Evidence of such pervasive patriarchal acts is manifested in the three texts analyzed. It was revealed that women were mostly viewed as “property” belonging to men. This article also points out how culturally subversive steps taken by female characters as Portia, Jessica, Nerrisa, and Elizabeth-Jane sow the seeds of feminism in their different ways.

- Sexism

Sexism may be defined as an ideology based on the belief that one sex is superior to another. It is discrimination, prejudice, or stereotyping based on gender, and is most often expressed toward women and girls.

Keywords

1. **Exploitation;** Using selfishly for one’s own profit
2. **Inequality;** difference in size, degree, circumstances, etc.
3. **Discrimination;**the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.
4. **supremacists;** A person who believes that a particular group, especially one determined by race, religion, sex, is superior and should therefore dominate society.

Self Assessment

1. Who is known as first modern feminist?
 - A. Mary Wollstonecraft
 - B. J.S. Mill
 - C. Plato
 - D. Kate millet.
2. Who is known as mother of feminism?
 - A. Betty Friedan
 - B. Simon de Beauvoir
 - C. Gloria Steinem
 - D. Mary Wollstonecraft
3. Which types of feminism talks about creation of sisterhood?
 - A. Liberal feminism
 - B. Postcolonial feminism
 - C. Radical feminism
 - D. Marxist feminism
4. Who wrote the reproduction of mothering?
 - A. Kate millet
 - B. Germaine Greer
 - C. Cynthia Enloe
 - D. Nancy Chodorow
5. Who argued that nobody raised the problem of black women?

Post-Independence Indian Literature

- A. Angela Davis
 - B. Germaine Greer
 - C. Cynthia Enloe
 - D. Bell hooks
6. What is the main purpose of feminist movement?
- A. Eliminating gender inequality
 - B. Political Rights
 - C. Legal Rights
 - D. All of the above
7. In which decade did feminist studies begin?
- A. 1970
 - B. 1980
 - C. 1990
 - D. 2000
8. The word patriarchy literally means?
- A. The rule of the mother or the matriarch
 - B. The rule of the female child
 - C. The rule of the father or the patriarch
 - D. The rule of the male child
9. Which of the following is not a characteristic of patriarchal society?
- A. Only women that are a married can inherit properties
 - B. Men dominate women in every aspect
 - C. Only men can inherit properties
 - D. Legal system is biased and favors the male
10. A patriarchal society permits....., though not very openly.
- A. Workplace violence
 - B. Religious Violence
 - C. Domestic Violence
 - D. None of the above
11. During the "feminist" phase (1880-1920) of feminism, women:
- A. Gave up on equal rights
 - B. Advocated for minority rights and protested
 - C. Led the repeal of Prohibition
 - D. All of the above
12. Which one of the following is NOT one of Elaine Showalter's four models of sexual difference?

Unit 01: Literary Terms

- A. Biological
 - B. Occasional
 - C. Linguistic
 - D. Psychoanalytic
13. A social system organized around the principle of mother- rule in which mothers or females are at the top of the power structure?
- A. Patriarchal society
 - B. Matriarchal society
 - C. Democratic society
 - D. Monarchy
14. Early feminist approaches to development have been criticized for?
- A. Only looking at women
 - B. Not engaging with development agencies
 - C. Having unrealistic aims
 - D. Ignoring women's roles in production
15. According to most contemporary feminists, what is gender?
- A. A natural behavior linked to someone's sex
 - B. One's biological sex
 - C. An identity one can chose at will
 - D. A learned performance that organizes social, political and economic relations
16. During the "feminine" phase (1840-80) of feminism, women:
- A. Imitated the dominant tradition in writing
 - B. Advocated minority rights and protested
 - C. Focused on women's texts and women as opposed to uncovering misogyny (hatred of women) in male-authored texts
 - D. Carried out armed insurrections against men
17. How sexual identity influences creation and reception of literature is the focus of:
- A. Marxist feminism
 - B. Gender studies
 - C. The linguistic model
 - D. None of the above
18. Feminist criticism:
- A. is concerned with the marginalization of women in a patriarchal culture
 - B. tries to explain how the subordination of women is reflected in or challenged by literary texts
 - C. tries to examine the experiences of women from all races, classes, and cultures
 - D. all of the above

Post-Independence Indian Literature

19. Gender studies:
 - A. argues that the female gender is superior
 - B. finds sexuality unimportant
 - C. examines how gender is less determined by nature than constructed by culture
 - D. is strictly about gay and lesbian writers

20. During the "female" phase (1920-present) of feminism, women:
 - A. are increasingly focused on uncovering misogyny in male-authored texts
 - B. focus on women's texts and women
 - C. have largely given up writing true literature
 - D. have looked back to the "feminine" past but put a modern spin on it

21. The most prominent U.S. minorities among feminist writers are:
 - A. 18th-century poets
 - B. Black and lesbian feminists
 - C. Male feminists
 - D. Native Americans

22. Marxist feminists believe that:
 - A. Art is always conditioned by social beliefs and needs
 - B. "personal" identity is inseparable from class identity
 - C. Art is a waste of time
 - D. Both a and b

23. Feminist criticism in general has moved away from exposing male bias and towards:
 - A. Studying women's texts and women authors
 - B. Advocating lesbian-only criticism
 - C. Acknowledging women's inferiority to men
 - D. None of the above

24. Third-wave feminism seeks to include:
 - A. Wage-earners
 - B. White, upper-class women
 - C. Lower-class, Third-world women
 - D. Only racial minorities

25. French feminism is focused on:
 - A. Marriage
 - B. The body
 - C. Myth
 - D. All of the above

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. A | 2. C | 3. C | 4. D | 5. A |
| 6. D | 7. B | 8. C | 9. A | 10. C |
| 11. B | 12. B | 13. B | 14. A | 15. D |
| 16. A | 17. B | 18. D | 19. C | 20. B |
| 21. B | 22. D | 23. A | 24. C | 25. B |

Review Questions

1. What do feminists generally agree on?
2. What does feminism mean to you?
3. What are the main points of feminism?
4. How does patriarchy affect society?
5. What are examples of patriarchy?
6. How widespread is sexism?

**Further Readings**

- Mary Wollstonecraft's Contribution to Feminism – Literary Theory and Criticism Notes
- Kate Millett's Sexual Politics – Literary Theory and Criticism Notes
- The Influence of Poststructuralism on Feminism – Literary Theory and Criticism Notes
- Sigmund Freud and the Trauma Theory – Literary Theory and Criticism Notes
- Gender and Transgender Criticism – Literary Theory and Criticism Notes
- Second Wave Feminism – Literary Theory and Criticism Notes
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Unit 02: Literary Terms

CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

2.1 Misogyny

2.2 Misandry

2.3 LGBTQ

Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

Answers for Self Assessment

Review Questions

Further Readings

Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- to evaluate the characteristics of Misogynoir, and difference between sexism and Misogynoir.
- to understand the origin of misandry, characteristics of misandry and difference between misogyny and misandry.
- to understand the meaning of LGBTQ, differences and inequality faced by the LGBTQ community in the society and difference between feminism and LGBTQ

Introduction

Literary terms like Misogyny, Misandry and LGBTQ are very important in gender studies. Fight for equality and removal of all short of discrimination has been the main motto of feminism. As we know that feminism is a European movement by females for getting the right of liberty, equality and fraternity in all walks of life. Up to now it has four waves dealing with different kinds of demands of females in terms of equal treatment with them in every sphere of life. In the course of feminist movement the terms like Misogyny, Misandry and LGBTQ came in prominence. Misogyny is an extreme form of sexism that is often defined as the hatred of women. A related concept, misogynoir, involves a specific type of misogyny that has roots in racism. The term misandry originated from ancient Greek and it is a combination of "mis" meant, hatred, and "andro" meant, male or masculine, so masculine or male and so its meaning is hatred for men. The leaders of feminist movement and gender studies were dealing with the condition of males and females but what about some other group of humans who are neither male nor female, so they have been kept in the category of LGBTQ where L stands for Lesbian, G stands for Gay, B stands for Bisexual, P stands for transgender and Q stands for Queer. A detailed description of these terms is as following:

2.1 Misogyny

Post-Independence Indian Literature

Misogyny is an extreme form of sexism that is often defined as the hatred of women. A related concept, misogynoir, involves a specific type of misogyny that has roots in racism. Coined by the queer Black feminist Moya Bailey in 2010, the term is a blending of concepts that combines “misogyny” and the French word for black, “noir”. According to Ms. Bailey, misogynoir is the anti-Black racist misogyny that Black women experience. Notably, Sojourner Truth first spoke out about misogynoir in 1851 with her “Ain’t I A Woman” speech at the Women’s Convention – although she did not use that specific term. The term Patriarchy and sexism indicates that there has been discrimination with females since the dawn of human civilization. The female sex people denied opportunities, and they were not able to rub shoulders with the male counterparts. They were not able to go to school just because of certain rules and regulations which was set up by the society. They had no social, economic, and political liberty. And as a result, they started a kind of revolt for equality. They started protesting to get their rights and they wanted to have their own identity. So to get their rights different waves of feminism like the first wave, the second wave and the third wave of feminism started. The first wave, focused on equality, education. So they wanted to go to school, colleges, and study the subject of their own choice. They wanted to get a job as an engineer, as a doctor, as a teacher, as a professor, and they wanted to have the identity of their own. But were they able to get that? Did they get equality? Yes, Of course, in 1920 they got the right to vote in America and when we talk about feminism, and the first wave of feminism. Yes, of course it was restricted to America UK and the European countries, but not to the whole world. So, the female sex prominently the women in America, got the right to vote, and they thought that they have got equality but with the passage of time they realized that the scope is very narrow, and they are not getting equality in all the fields of life. Their jobs are restricted to teachers and nurses. So they started protesting, again, and as a result, the second wave of feminism started. And the second wave of feminism was divided into two groups the liberal feminists, and the radical feminists, or the liberal feminism, and the radical feminism. The liberal feminism was the continuation of the first wave of feminism, and they were protesting against discrimination. As in the first wave of feminism they wanted, equality, and they realized that there was discrimination. And they started fighting against this discrimination they protested against discrimination; hence the radical feminists started talking about oppression. So, the liberal feminists focused on discrimination, while the radical feminist focused on oppression. The point which is to be noted is discrimination can be eliminated by making some law. That is external restriction and about oppression, it is internal restriction. And how can it be changed if there will be internal restriction even if after making some laws. It cannot change the attitude of mind and the mind-set of the people. So, the radical feminists revolted against the male tradition, and they thought that patriarchy is the root cause of their problem. They don't have their own identity because of patriarchy, or the patriarchal system, and the society is male dominated, and that is why there is the master servant relationship between the husband and the wife, in their father's house, they were leading a life as a daughter, it means they were living under the protection of the Father, the decisions were being made by the father when she was young. Even her life decision the decision of a life was also being taken by the Father. In the wedding of a daughter, the decision maker is the Father, it is the father who has to decide that whom his daughter is going to get married. It is evident in the case of Beatrice that how she was not able to marry the person of her own choice, and her marriage was solemnized by someone else with someone whom she did not like at all. And as a result, she took a wrong decision in her life. So, who is responsible for her downfall, ultimately, when she dies, and to talk about the death of Beatrice, who is responsible for that. Nobody else but her father is responsible for the same, because he did not get his daughter married to the person whom she loved and she planned with the help of her own servant to kill the person with whom her marriage was arranged. And why did she take this particular step? Because she was a very good daughter, and did not want to disobey her father. And as a result, she had to take this step and it can be considered as a voice against patriarchy male domination. As for as the law is concerned, everybody knows anybody who is 18 plus can have the right to choose her husband or wife but what about the mind-set. What about the attitude? How it can be to changed? That is something which is internal. The internal restriction, how can it be abolished? That is not going to change unless and until the awareness is brought among the masses. This was realized by the radical feminists, they felt that the external restrictions can be eliminated, there is no problem in that but what about the mind-set of the people. The female sex, do not have the liberty to wear clothes of their own choice. And they can be criticized for that. And even today in the 21st century they have been repeatedly criticized for their dresses. And again, it is the internal restriction and the attitude of mind –set is required to be changed and unless and until we don't change that definitely this cannot be abolished. This cannot be eliminated from this society, And this biasness will always remain. So the radical feminists realize this. And that is why they're bolted against the male tradition. They understood that it is male domination, which is the root cause of this suffering of their oppression. And they wanted liberation from this oppression. So, they had their approach

Unit 02: Literary Terms

of this kind. After that, sexism, they understood patriarchy. They understood male female distinction. The biasness on the basis of sex, gender, they thought about that. And again, they realized that it is not because of this, gender, but it is also because of their sex. And as a result sexism came into existence, and when we talk about sexism, it is a kind of prejudice or discrimination against girls or women, they realize this, but later on, with the passage of time they observed that it was not only discrimination on the basis of sex, but also there were so many other factors which were responsible for the same. As a result, the boys, and the men, they were also discriminated in the society on the basis of colour, on the basis of class, on the basis of caste. It was realized in the second wave of feminism, and when they saw themselves as a group, prominently the feminists it became a kind of sisterhood and they started thinking about the plight of women as the group. But in the third wave of feminism the benefits of some other people were not being taken care of. A discussion about LGBTQ was need because in the third wave of feminism their issues were not addressed. And they realized that there were some people who were being marginalized, and their concerns were not addressed. They started focusing on individuals so, this is the point where we can say that this Misogynoir came into being, and the radical feminists, realized about the same.

And so it can be observed that misogyny is an extreme form of sexism. They realize the feminist radical feminists realized patriarchy as the root cause of the problem; they realized sexism as the root cause of their problem. They realized in the second wave feminists prominently about this extreme form of sexism. The second wave feminist were talking about oppression. They wanted to create their own identity. And they wanted to liberate themselves, and this was the approach. So here, the radical feminists, they identified that it is not only on the basis of sex, but the discrimination is on the basis of colour, class, caste, race etc. So, there was hatred, not because they were female sex, but they realize that the root cause of hatred is, number one their female sex, and number two they are black in colour. So it is clear now that misogyny is an extreme form of sexism that is often defined as the hatred of women, or related concept Misogynoir involves a specific type of misogyny that has roots in racism. And it was coined by the queer black feminist Moya Belly, in 2010, and the term is blending of concepts that combine misogyny and the French word for Black that is noir and then it came into existence. The word Misogynoir according to Miss Belly Misogynoir is the anti-black racist misogyny that black women experience. Now the question arises that how does Misogynoir play out in real life. How can it be identified in the real life? As for as literature is concerned we talk about fiction, about theory and about particular concept in literature and the second wave feminists, the radical feminists like Simone de Beauvoir and her work *The Second Sex*, Kate Millett *Sexual Politics* Sula Matt Firestone *The Dialectic of Sex* so, these are the monumental works and how they have highlighted such issues.



Example: In daily life, misogynoir comes in many forms: Doctors perceive Black woman as having a higher pain threshold, and so they are treated differently. Black women are viewed as threatening or angry whenever they speak up for themselves. Maternal mortality rates for Black women are three times higher than for white women in the United States, with many attributing that to racial bias in the healthcare system. For example, black girls are often viewed as older, more mature, more sexually advanced than white girls which causes many people to dismiss allegations involving the sexual abuse of black girls and teens. There are so many instances, there are several instances of such kind in our day to day life in the newspapers, we watch it on television as well. So, historically black women and girls have been overtly sexualized, leading to the modern day stereotype of be hyper sexual. About the European travellers who travel to Africa they also do the same thing, and they also depict in the similar way and if We talk about slavery in the United States, we find that the slave owners justify the rape of enslaved black women by claiming that they had insatiable appetites for sex. Now it is surprising whether it is justified. Can we think that this particular logic is rational? It is absolutely irrelevant and cannot be justified at all. What else stereotypes about black women are generally based in Misogynoir and black women are often slotted into one of four roles. It is surprising about the sassy black woman, the angry black women, strong black woman, the overtly sexual black woman now the question is, they have been leveled with these four titles with these four rules. And this is not only happening in Africa. But, in one way or the other, it happens across the globe. And if we talk about India the status of women is the same whether the educated class women or uneducated class women, the upper class women, or about the lower class women, or about the middle class women. All of them have been given a different tool or a different title has been assigned to them. And when they move from their own house to in-law's house, their title also changes, it means their

Post-Independence Indian Literature

identity also changes. They are no more with their own surname, but with the husband's surname. And there are several other examples as well. There are so many examples in literature of different countries like Caribbean, African or Indian literature, Canadian literature, Australian literature the plight of women has been depicted by different writers in a different way, and how a particular role has been assigned to them. So here, black women, and the role, you can see the Sassy Black women, the Angry Black Woman, the Strong Black Woman, or the Overtly Sexual Black Woman. What about their own identity, and by doing so what we are doing, we'll limit their ability to assert themselves.

From the very beginning we have been discussing this internal restriction, and this comes under the category of internal restriction and unless and until we don't change our mind-set, we won't be able to hear. We won't be able to listen to their feelings, their emotions, their thoughts and their ideas in this way we can not see that in daily life. Misogynoir comes in many forms. And who is responsible for that? Yes, of course, a male dominated society and be male domination. In what form how does it happen? I'm giving you some examples, doctors, they perceive, black women as having a higher pain threshold. And so, they are treated differently in India also, if you go to the civil hospital, and there you see the plight of the people who are from the lower street of society. Those who are labourers those who are from working classes, how are they treated, and if we go to the five star kind, hospitals, and there we see that how the people from other females from the upper class, or the aristocratic class, or the rich class, how are they being treated. And again, you can also notice one thing that the female sex from the upper caste and the female sex from the lower caste, casteism is also it is not eliminated completely, and the mind-set has not changed, but we say that we are all human beings and we all must be treated equally. Even then the situation is not the same. And the male female divide, and the caste divide the religious divide is always there and that is why we have Islamic feminism, also.

So, discrimination on the basis of caste is there, and it can be noticed in the hospitals as well as I'm talking about here about the black women, so it is not about the blacks but it is about the caste in class also, the people from the elite class they are treated differently, and the people from the lower class, they are treated differently by the doctors. Why, they are learned, they are educated, they are intellectuals, but it can be emphasized that it is not 100%. Exceptions are always there. They are considered to be angry, wrathful, why can't they talk about themselves, why can't. Why can't they talk about their benefits? Why can't they talk about their rights? And the moment they speak their mind. They are labeled as threatening or angry. Another example, maternal mortality rates for black women are three times higher than for white women in the United States, with many attributing that to racial bias in the healthcare system. Just imagine, and the doctor for him. A human being is a human being. He must treat a human being as a human being. He should not discriminate on the basis of caste colour, gender, sex, etc. and because of this stereotype of this strong black woman many black women are not allowed to show any emotion pain or distress, black women are viewed as overtly sexual just for wearing clothes that fit their bodies. It is not about money, aristocracy, but again it is something which is related to colour. The French Open banned Serena Williams for wearing a catsuit. Why is that a big question? Styles that are deemed unacceptable when worn by black women are celebrated when worn by white women. This is again the internal restriction unless and until we don't change our mind-set nothing is going to happen. Even in this 21st century, when we see that the female sex, they are equal, they are rubbing shoulders with the male counterpart. There is no discrimination, even after that each and every day we can find that they are being discriminated on the basis of such things coming sobbing past. Why, because of this internal restriction. They want to oppress them. They are being subjugated. So, black women face a double whammy of racism and misogyny that impacts them in nearly every facet of their lives.

Here are some works dealing with the theme of Misogynoir:

·Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl by Harriet Jacobs.

·Quicksand and Passing by Nella Larsen.

·Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston.

·The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison.

·The Street by Ann Petry.

·Kindred by Octavia Butler.

·The Women of Brewster Place by Gloria Naylor.

·The Color Purple by Alice Walker.

·Eloquent Rage by Brittany Cooper.

·Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era by Dr. Ashley D. Farmer.

·Coal by AudreLorde.

2.2 Misandry

The term misandry originated from ancient Greek and it is a combination of “mis” meant, hatred, and “andro” meant, male or masculine, so masculine or male and so its meaning is hatred for men. According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, “Misandry is the hatred of, contempt for or prejudice against men or boys. Misandry can manifest itself in numerous ways, including sexual discrimination, denigration of men, violence against men, and sexual objectification of men”

Now, the question arises what is the root cause of misandry. The spirit of feminism is against patriarchy. Feminists have always been against the patriarchal system, and they believe that the root cause of their problem is patriarchy or the patriarchal system. When we talk about patriarchy definitely we'll have to talk about male domination and when we talk about male domination. We'll have to talk about the discrimination that takes place between males and females. While male enjoys all his life, free to go outside, free to work, earns money and socially, politically independent on the other hand, the females were denied opportunities to grab the opportunities. Females were not allowed to go out of the houses. They were confined within the four walls. No right of education was provided to females. When we talk about equality it was also not there. Yes, of course in 1920 after the first wave of feminism, they got the right to vote, but that was not sufficient enough and they realize that they are not equal. Discrimination is still there and as the second wave of feminism was the continuation of the first wave, but the division was there in the second wave feminists. The liberal and the radical. And the radical feminists realized that the discrimination is not only on the basis of sex but there are so many other factors also which are responsible for the pitiable plight and one among them was patriarchy. They did not have their own individual identity, their identity depended on males as a daughter as a wife.

Now, the question is what about their own quest for identity. The literature at that time was being written by the males and not by the females. And the theories are also being written by the males, then definitely the interest of females will not be taken care of, and males will always be talking about their own benefits. The theories, the concepts will also be created accordingly which can benefit the males only and not the female sex so, the second wave of feminists realized that they are being discriminated. They are being hated, on the basis of sex, and the root causes of their problems are only the male, members of the house or the society. And as a result this hatred for male came into existence.

And one more thing which played a very important role that the theories or the concepts were being developed by the female sex if we talk about Kate Millett, Simone de Beauvoir they all started writing and as a result, the plight of women, the position in this society was now being depicted and interpreted by the female sex. They were able to identify the problem the subordination the subjugation, which were being faced by the female sex, and now they started revolting against the male tradition. We started getting these concepts, written in black and white, they started talking about feminism, and all the other concepts like sexism, misogyny, they started talking about this. And in this way, we come across the term, misandry it means, hatred.

Post-Independence Indian Literature

But again when we were talking about sexism we discussed the hatred for women or girls. It means the male members hated, but is it really so that they really hate the female sex. Were they being hated just because of being female? There were so many other elements also there were so many other factors also, which were responsible for the same caste and colour. So, the plight of the black women was different than the white women, they were being treated in the society in a different way then, the white women and again we had discussed about the group the female group or the sisterhood the feminists of this second wave prominently the radical feminists. They thought that they were taking care of all the female sexes. All the women, but it was not so. We all know that the plight of women in India is different from the plight of women in China, and the plight of women in the UK is different from Africa. So it was not being taken care of, and who was responsible for all these definitely will say that the society is male dominated. It is patriarchal and that is why the male sex they were taking the undue advantage of their masculinity since they were masculine, and that is why they were taking the advantage of the same. And we had also discussed that there are thinkers who say that the female sex, they are inferior to the males they are not intellectually strong. So this is definitely a kind of discrimination. And if they come to know about all these things and if they read this in literature, then definitely they will realize that now, these people hate us, and as a result, a kind of contempt will definitely arise in their own mind also. And if they notice that they are being hated by their male counterparts, then they should also hate them. When they talk about equality it means both husband and the wife, the male and the female. Both of them are supposed to work in the kitchen, and take care of the child. And if the husband does not do so, then that puts a big question mark and gives rise to a kind of hatred. So, this is where the problem starts. And the second wave feminists understood this and as a result, some books were written, and we come across such word misogyny.

But again, if the male hates female sex or the female sex hates the male sex then what about life? Is life possible without one another or each other? It is not possible. But this concept came in existence, because of the problems and the discriminations, which were being faced by the female sex. They were not given equal rights, they were not treated equally. And as a result the concept of matriarchy which was the counterpart of the patriarchal system came to prominence. And question were raised why can't the female sex be made the head of the family and given all the opportunities, which are to be given to her. That can also do something to bring change in the society, and improve their status or position in this society. They can get opportunities to work outside and they can go to offices. They can maintain balance in the office and the household. It will give an opportunity to them to create their own identity. And it is happening now, they are remunerated, they are earning, they are becoming economically independent. They are rubbing their shoulders with their male counterparts. But what is the ratio and as we discussed earlier about the internal restrictions and the external restrictions. We have discussed the external restrictions. They can be eliminated but what about the internal restrictions. And just because of this check, we find that they are the female sex, though they are getting salary, though they are working, though they're participating in all the walks of life. They are becoming socially, economically, politically independent, but even after that they are facing discrimination. And they realize that they know this, and that is why there is a kind of contempt for the male sex even today.

Now, the question is, is it possible for us to switch the power structure. The society is male dominated. So can it be female dominated. When we are talking about the contempt or hatred for the male sex just because of this that they are having a position which is of subordinate. Now, if we change the power structure, then what will happen if we put men on the bottom and the women on the top, then what will happen is a question of debate.

As we discussed the existing laws and bringing new laws to solve this conflict, but what about the mind-set, what about the attitude, can we change that particular attitude? That's a big question. Even today there are girls who stay in the boarding houses or in the hostels, they are not allowed to go out at the night time while boys are allowed, but the girls are not allowed to go out, step out of the hospital after eight o'clock. Now the question is, if we see that in this 21st century, there is no discrimination we all are equal, men why the girls are not allowed to go out of the hostel. And if this particular opportunity is not given to them then definitely they will hate this kind of feeling of hatred will definitely arise in their mind, and will lead to misogyny.

Unit 02: Literary Terms

Now the question is those who say that we are feminists or I am a feminist. What does it mean, does it really mean that the person or the female sex who says that I'm a feminist means she hates men. No, it is not so if somebody says that I'm a feminist, it doesn't mean that she hates men, but it means that she is struggling for her right, she wants equal rights, she wants to have her own identity. She may be against patriarchy, she may be against sexism, but it does not mean that she hates men or the male sex. So, feminism has been misconstrued as the idea of hating men. It means the interpretation of feminism is not that it hates the male sex. It is not an absolute revolt against the male. But it is something which talks about their benefit, their rights, and they seek equality. They want to have their own identity. They want to be treated equally in the society, and this is what the feminists want. They must be given liberty. And, as we discussed that in the first wave of feminism the female sex they were struggling for a equality. And in this second wave of feminism, there was not only discrimination, but there was oppression. So they wanted to liberate themselves from this oppression. And now, who was responsible for their operation. Yes, of course, the patriarchal structure, and if something is bad, or if something is not suitable. It can be eliminated, it can be abolished. **If they want to go anywhere alone, they must be given the opportunity to go alone. If they want to study any subject** maybe architecture engineering whatsoever they must be allowed to study that. As there are thinkers, and even if we talk about the *Second Sex* by Simone de Bevoir, she also acts now accepts that the females sex, we are physically weak, not always, but assert, but at a certain point of time. And at that time they require somebody to take care of them.

Men cannot be sexually assaulted or abused. It does not mean that men cannot take care of the children. We must have seen that yes, they also take care of the household, they also take care of the children, they take care of the wife as well so if they do this, then where is the problem, and why hatred. Why hatred for the male and why hatred for the female. An American writer, Joanna Ross in her essay *the new misandry* which was written in 1972 she writes, there are two types of women who don't hate men. Now the question is, is it right to hate men, or why should a female hate a male? This is really very ridiculous. We are human beings, intellectuals, we have the mind to think, then why should we be involved in this kind of hatred, why should we hate each other, but definitely we can love each other. As a poet says, our love letters, be true to one another, the male and the female they must love each other or one another. They must develop good relationships. What is the need to hate? So she writes, there are two types of women who don't hate men number one, the very lucky number two the very blind.

Finally, is feminists really hate is the patriarchy. And in the second wave of feminism, the radical feminists, they revolted against the male tradition and they disliked patriarchy and they understood that the root cause of the problem is the patriarchal system. And this patriarchal system was considered to be the web of institutions that systematically oppress women. So when we talked about misandry, it means they are against patriarchy, it means females are against patriarchy; they are against the patriarchal system and not about men, not against men. So, the final conclusion, this is that misandry is something which is related to the disassembling of patriarchy or the patriarchal oppression, and not the hatred of men. They don't hate being the female sex, they don't hate men.

2.3 LGBTQ

Post-Independence Indian Literature

First of all, let us try to understand that what exactly this term stands for and what is its meaning? So, L stands for Lesbian, G stands for Gay, B stands for Bisexual, P stands for transgender and Q stands for Queer. What exactly do they represent, and how one is different from another, and what is its definition or how can we define these terms, and what are the qualities, what are the attributes of these terms, or these people? So if we talk about Lesbian. Lesbian is a woman whose primary physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to other women. Since the dawn of human civilization we have been talking about males and females. But here we are getting so many other terms which represent different kinds of people. Here we can see the term, Lesbian, which represents a woman whose primary physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to other women. But if we peep in our past we find that the males were attracted to the females and the females were attracted towards the males, but here we can see that the lesbians, they are attracted, I mean to say they are women, and they are attracted towards another women. So, they are called lesbian. And a Gay who is referred to any man, who has primary physical, romantic and emotional attraction to someone of the same sex. So we discussed Lesbian and we show that the term represents women who are attracted towards another woman but when we talk about gay, it is mainly to describe the men who have attraction, emotional attraction to some other men. So we understood the difference between a lesbian and gay. Now comes another term that is bisexual. The people termed as bisexual are different from the lesbians, and the gays. So, a bisexual is an individual who's physically, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to both men and women. The lesbians are females they are women who are attracted towards another women. Gays represent men who are attracted towards another man, but when we talk about bisexual. They are individuals who are physically or romantically, or emotionally attracted to both men and women, Bisexual.

Now talking about Transgender; transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. It means the sex they were assigned at birth they feel that they are not the same, but they are different from the sex, which was assigned to them when they were born. For example, if a child was born and the doctor said that he is a boy but when he grows up with the passage of time he feels he feels that he doesn't have that particular emotion; he does not feeling like a boy or a man but he feels like a woman or, somebody who was born as a girl and the doctor says that she's a girl with the passage of time when she grows up, she feels like not having the feelings of a girl but of a boy so, the expression differs from the sex they were assigned at the birth. Such people are called transgender.

What is the term Queer? So, gender queer or queer is most commonly used to describe a person who feels that his or her gender identity does not fit into the socially constructed norms associated with his or her biological sex. Gender queer is an identity, that falls, anywhere between men, boy, male and women. Girl, female on the spectrum of Gender identities what does it means, the person is not able to decide what he or she, exactly, is like if we talked about the transgender male or transgender female. He or she can feel that emotion, he or she possesses but in queer or in gender queer they're not able to identify and understand as well that where do they fall? What exactly is their identity is as a male or as a female, they are not able to decide.

What is the difference we understood that how one is different from the another means how lesbian is different from a gay, and how a gay is different from a bisexual, and how a bisexual is different from transgender and how a transgender is different from gender queer.

LGBTQ plays a very important role and this community has a connection with the waves of feminism. As sexism has its in the radical feminism, when the females were talking about the equal rights and their oppression in the patriarchal society. When they were not being given equal opportunity they realized that they were not able to rub their shoulders with the male counterparts, so they started a kind of revolt for equality, against oppression, and they thought that it is patriarchy, which is the root cause of all the problems. And as a result we have seen the first wave of feminism, the second wave of feminism, third wave of feminism.

Unit 02: Literary Terms

When we talk about these lesbians, gays, transgender, bisexuals, and queer, who's going to talk about them? Definitely be feminists, they started talking about this LGBTQ community. And we saw this as a movement and they also started talking about their rights. They also started talking about equality because these lesbians, gays, bisexuals transgender started demanding their rights of equality for LGBTQ as a social movement, they advocated for LGBTQ people in society. The 2000s movements of same sex marriage or their focus on liberation, as in the gay liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Earlier movements focused on self-help and self-acceptance, such as the homophile movement of the 1950s, although there's not a primary or in overarching central organization that represents all LGBTQ people and their interests. Numerous LGBTQ rights organizations are active worldwide. And the earliest organizations to support LGBTQ rights were formed in the early 20th century. This movement started with the second wave of feminism around 1960s and 70s. So, who are pioneers of LGBTQ? It has its root in the first wave of feminism in 1920 when they got the right to vote in US or America. What happened, they thought that they got equality, but later on with the passage of time, they realized that the scope was not wide enough; they were restricted to a particular position. They were restricted to teaching and other clerical jobs. They did not get an opportunity to become an engineer, architect, or doctor as they were limited to being nurses only. So, again, they started revolting in the 1960s. Thus came the second wave of feminism. In second wave of feminism, the feminists were divided into two groups. The radical feminists, and the liberal feminists. It was the continuation of the first wave of feminism and their focus was on equality. But the radical feminists were thinking in a different way, and they started focusing on oppression, and they saw patriarchy as the root cause of their problem, they realized that they don't have their own identity. The males are becoming the protectors because they were considered as weak. It means males considered themselves as strong, active whereas the females were considered passive and not active enough to protect themselves. They need somebody to protect to exist in this society. And this led to the practice of the master. They started thinking of it as a kind of master servant relationship, the husband as the master and the wife as the servant. They are subordinates not equal and a lot of external internal restrictions were imposed upon females. The external risks can be eliminated; it can be abolished by making certain laws but what about the internal restrictions. So, they started focusing on that. And radical feminists started developing a kind of universal idea and formed a universal group or a kind of sisterhood. And they thought that the plight of women across the globe remains the same, it is universal. They wanted liberation, emancipation, self-identity but they were talking about universal ideas when they were talking about sisterhood they were making mistakes. And as we all know that in the beginning, when we talk about feminism, it was restricted to European countries like USA and UK and what about other countries like China, Afghanistan, India? There are so many other countries and what about the countries which were colonized and the plight of people there? What about the plight of women in the countries which were colonized, their condition was different, their plight was different in the society. So, with the passage of time the third wave of feminism came into existence and they realized that it is not so. They started thinking about individuals, there was discrimination not only on the basis of gender but there were so many other factors also which were responsible for the same. It means the plight of a Chinese woman, a woman in India, a woman in Africa, definitely will be different from the upper class or the middle class women in America or in the European countries. So who's going to talk about them? So in the third wave of feminism, they started thinking about the individuals and as a result with the passage of time, the feminists focused not only on this particular group or in this particular class of people but also about these LGBTQ.

Post-Independence Indian Literature

In Indian context the plight of the Dalit women will definitely be distinct from the plight of the aristocratic class, or the elite class women in America or in UK or in the European countries. So, who's going to talk about their interests, and whether the black women or women in America, who are black, what about their condition? They are discriminated not only on the basis of their sex but they are being discriminated on the basis of class, caste, color, language. So, these people were marginalized, and nobody was talking about their plight, benefits, interest, inequality, harassment. Since, we're talking about LGBTQ, lesbians, gays, transgender, nobody is attentive about them till date when we're talking about the third wave of feminism, still they are focusing on the feminists, or the feminist writers, they are all focusing on only caste class, color, gender, etc. But what about these people? Who's going to talk about gay rights, who's going to talk about their test who's going to talk about their equality, who is going to talk about rights, who is going to talk about interest, who is going to talk about their, status, their identity in society, their position in society? How are they going to take the social, economic, and political liberty or freedom? Who's going to talk about their social, economic and political freedom is also important. The third wave of feminism which was much influenced by the postmodern ideologies and as a result, the people or the feminists, they started talking about the rights of these people. Otherwise we have seen in the 18th and the 19th century Europe, same sex, sexual behavior, and cross dressing, were widely considered to be socially unacceptable, and the serious crimes under the existing laws. Then who's going to talk about their rights? So, feminism, played a very important role when we talk about the waves of feminism, and the feminist writer or feminism as a concept, it played a very important role to talk about or start a kind of movement again. For the benefit of this particular community, so that they can also lead a happy life in the society they can also live respectable lives; they can have their own identity. They can also be politically, socially, economically free and they can acquire this kind of freedom and lead a respectable life.

Summary

- I. According to Ms. Bailey, misogynoir is the anti-Black racist misogyny that Black women experience. The female sex people denied opportunities, and they were not able to rub shoulders with the male counterparts. So to get their rights different waves of feminism like the first wave, the second wave and the third wave of feminism started. The first wave, focused on equality, education. The liberal feminism was the continuation of the first wave of feminism, and they were protesting against discrimination. The second wave feminist were talking about oppression. The word Misogynoir according to Miss Belly Misogynoir is the anti-black racist misogyny that black women experience. What else stereotypes about black women are generally based in Misogynoir and black women are often slotted into one of four roles. It is surprising about the sassy black woman, the angry black women, strong black woman, and the overtly sexual black woman now the question is that they have been leveled with these four titles with these four rules. So here, black women, and their roles, we can see in form of the Sassy Black women, the Angry Black Woman, the Strong Black Woman, or the Overtly Sexual Black Woman. Yes, of course, a male dominated society and be male domination. Why can't they talk about their rights? Styles that are deemed unacceptable when worn by black women are celebrated when worn by white women.

Unit 02: Literary Terms

- II. The spirit of feminism is against patriarchy. When we talk about patriarchy definitely we'll have to talk about male domination which brings the discrimination between males and females. No right of education was provided to females. The theories, the concepts will also be created accordingly which can benefit the males only and not the female sex so, the second wave of feminists realized that they are being discriminated. It means the male members hated, but is it really so that they really hate the female sex. We all know that the plight of women in India is different from the plight of women in China, and the plight of women in the UK is different from Africa. The society is male dominated. So can it be female dominated. It means the interpretation of feminism is not that it hates the male sex. Why hatred for the male and why hatred for the female.
- III. What is LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer)? Lesbian is a woman whose primary physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to other women. Since the dawn of human civilization we have been talking about males and females. The lesbians are females they are women who are attracted towards another women. Gays represent men who are attracted towards another man, but when we talk about bisexual. Now talking about Transgender; transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Gender queer is an identity, that falls, anywhere between men, boy, male and women. As sexism has its in the radical feminism, when the females were talking about the equal rights and their oppression in the patriarchal society. When we talk about these lesbians, gays, transgender, bisexuals, and queer, who's going to talk about them? Definitely be feminists, they started talking about this LGBTQ community. In second wave of feminism, the feminists were divided into two groups. The radical feminists, and the liberal feminists. It means the plight of a Chinese woman, a woman in India, a woman in Africa, definitely will be different from the upper class or the middle class women in America or in the European countries.

Keywords

Misogynoir, Misandry, LGBTQ, Feminist, feminist, discrimination, exploitation, Black feminism, Dalit feminism, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-gender, queer etc.

Self Assessment

1. Misogyny is:
 - A. an extreme form of sexism
 - B. the hatred of women
 - C. both a and b
 - D. none of the above

2. Misogyny has its roots in:
 - A. Racism
 - B. Existentialism
 - C. Marxism
 - D. Modernism

Post-Independence Indian Literature

3. The term 'misogynoir' is coined by:
 - A. Moya Bailey
 - B. Mary Wollstonecraft
 - C. Elaine Showalter
 - D. Simone de Beauvoir

4. Sojourner Truth first spoke out about misogynoir in 1851 with her:
 - A. "Ain't I A Woman" speech
 - B. "Ain't I A Lady" speech
 - C. "Ain't I A Human Being" speech
 - D. "Ain't I A Girl" speech
5. Black girls are often viewed as:
 - A. older
 - B. more mature
 - C. more sexually advanced
 - D. all the above

6. Misandry is the hatred of, contempt for or prejudice against:
 - A. men
 - B. boys
 - C. both a and b
 - D. none of the above

7. Misandry can manifest itself in:
 - A. sexual discrimination
 - B. denigration of men
 - C. violence against men
 - D. all of the above

8. 'The New Misandry (1972) is written by:
 - A. Elaine Showalter
 - B. Joanna Russ
 - C. Simone de Beauvoir
 - D. None of the above

9. Who said, "There are two types of women who don't hate men: the very lucky and the very blind"?
 - A. Elaine Showalter
 - B. Joanna Russ
 - C. Simone de Beauvoir
 - D. Helene Cixous

10. Charges of man-hating have been historically used to:
 - A. silence women
 - B. empower women

Unit 02: Literary Terms

- C. liberate women
- D. marginalize women

11. Lesbian is a woman whose primary physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to:

- A. other women
- B. someone of the same sex
- C. both men and women
- D. none of the above

12. Gay is a word used to describe anyone, mainly men, who have primary physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction:

- A. to other women
- B. to someone of the same sex
- C. to both men and women
- D. none of the above

13. Bisexual is an individual who is physically, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted:

- A. to other women
- B. to someone of the same sex
- C. to both men and women
- D. none of the above

14. A person who feels that his/her gender identity does not fit into the socially constructed "norms" associated with his/her biological sex is called:

- A. Bisexual
- B. Transgender
- C. Queer
- D. Gay

15. An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth are called:

- A. Bisexual
- B. Transgender
- C. Queer
- D. Gay

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 2. A | 3. A | 4. A | 5. D |
| 6. C | 7. D | 8. B | 9. B | 10. A |
| 11. A | 12. B | 13. C | 14. C | 15. B |

Review Questions

1. Define Misogynoir and discuss its importance in gender studies with particular reference to a text you have studied.
2. Define Misandry and discuss its importance in gender studies with particular reference to a text you have studied.
3. Define LGBTQ and discuss its importance in gender studies with particular reference to a text you have studied.
4. What is difference between Misogynoir and Misandry. Supply apt examples in support of your answer.
5. Why terms like LGBTQ came in existence while feminist and gender studies were already in practice in order to eradicate existing discriminations in the society?



Further Readings

- [Gays' writings, American--Bibliography.](#)
- [Gays' writings--Bibliography.](#)
- [Homosexuality and literature--History--20th century.](#)
- [Sexual minorities in literature.](#)
- [Gays in literature.](#)
- [Libraries and sexual minorities--United States.](#)
- [Gays' writings, American--Bibliography.](#)
- [Lesbians' writings, American--Bibliography.](#)
- [Bisexuals' writings, American--Bibliography.](#)
- [Transgender people's writings, American--Bibliography.](#)
- [Homosexuality and literature--United States--Bibliography.](#)
- [Gay authors--United States--Interviews.](#)
- [Lesbian authors--United States--Interviews](#)

Unit 03: Literary Terms

CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

3.1 Gender Issues

3.2 Male Gaze

3.3 Womanism

Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

Answers for Self Assessment

Review Questions

Further Reading

Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- understand the root cause of gender discrimination, evaluate the gender roles, examine the opportunities and constraint that affect both men as well as women.
- understand the meaning of 'male gaze', evaluate the roots of male gaze and examine how society is structured by, and for the benefit of men.
- understand the roots of womanism, evaluate the development of womanism and examine the difference between womanism and feminism.

Introduction

Literary terms like **gender issues, male gaze, and womanism** are very important in gender studies. Fight for equality and removal of all short of discrimination has been the main motto of feminism. As we know that feminism is a European movement by females for getting the right of liberty, equality and fraternity in all walks of life. Up to now it has four waves dealing with different kinds of demands of females in terms of equal treatment with them in every sphere of life. In the course of feminist movement the terms like **gender issues, male gaze, womanism** came in prominence. Gender issues deals with gender inequalities which address unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender which causes differences in socially constructed gender roles, unequal treatment, discrimination, opportunities and constraints that affect both men and women. The word **male gaze** for the first time was coined by filmmaker and theorist, Laura Mulvey in her seminal 1973 research paper, which was titled *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* and Mulvey's essay was published two years later, in screen magazine. And this particular paper was written for an academic audience. Alice Walker coined the word **Womanism** in 1983. It was a response to the realization that feminism did not include black women's viewpoints and experiences. A detailed description of these terms is as following:

3.1 Gender Issues

The socially constructed roles, behaviors, expressions and identities of girls and boys; men and women; and gender diverse people are referred to as gender. Sex is biological reality while gender is social construct. When we talk about gender issues we mainly try to focus our attention on gender inequalities. And gender inequality refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based

Post-Independence Indian Literature

on their gender which causes differences in socially constructed gender roles, unequal treatment, discrimination, opportunities and constraint that affect both men and women.

When we talk about the difference between a male and a female, we talked about three major issues. How the male is different from a female? What are the reasons for these gender issues? What is the root cause, discrimination?

The root of this we find that there are three major differences.

Physical- The physical structure, the corporeal frame of a male and female and that is because of creation the way we have been created by God, the inherent biology that plays a very important role, and on that particular basis the female sex, they are discriminated because it is considered that they are physically weak. And if they are physically weak, then definitely they can be governed or controlled by the male sex. We all are living in a male dominated society. And the master servant has a certain kind of relationship, it is not correct, the master narrative, one is the lecturer and the other one is the listener. One is the teller, another one is the hearer. So, this kind of discrimination arises because one is more powerful and as a result, he is the protector, and since he is the protector, he can control and command and that is why the other sex or the female sex has to be the subordinate. She becomes the hearer, she becomes the listener. So, on the basis of this biological construct, we can notice that gender issues arise. Another thing or the another point is emotional, this attribute of the female sex, the characteristic feature of a female sex that she is emotional but it is not correct because there is nothing wrong in being caring and being emotional but they are labeled as stereotype, their stereotyped as sentimental and sweet. As a result they're assigned a different role in society. They are given limited opportunities and limited tasks. And as a result, they are restricted within the four walls. They take care of the household, giving birth to children. They are limited to taking care of the kids, the kitchen, cooking, cleaning, and so on. This is where they are different, and on the basis of this, because in this way if they're confined within the four walls of the houses and if we talk the opportunities to earn money, they're not given such kind of tasks, which is which is given to the male sex, and which they want, because they want to grab their shoulders with the male counterparts. They want to attain the status of equality, they don't want to be labelled as subordinate, but they want to excel in all the realms of life. But because of this particular element we say that they are emotional, this particular emotional difference, we find that somewhere, they are restricted. Not only this leaves, this emotional element leads to the external restriction, but to the internal restriction as well. This is another point of difference. And the third point of difference that we notice is the intellectual capacity. And on the basis of that we can see that the males are strong and smart, and as a result, they consider the female sex to be inferior, weak and subordinate. But the question is, is it really so? No, it is not so. But since they have been living in a patriarchal society, the patriarchy itself is a hindrance in their progress. They're not able to attain their identity and the difference is there. It is also because of the male domination, and the patriarchal system. And that is why when we read feminism and talk about the second wave of feminism there we find the radical feminist, they were absolutely against patriarchy and they revolted against these males' traditions. Why? Because they were being oppressed and this oppression again is something internal. It shows the internal restrictions which are totally based on their mindset and attitude. So, these three differences can always be noticed in the root of gender issues. In the first wave of feminism we have read that the females were not getting equal rights, equal opportunity and as a result, they noticed that there is gender inequality.

The question arises what is this gender inequality?

Gender inequality refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender. We all must have noticed it in India and abroad also. It is not a matter of one country but these differences, the gender inequality can be noticed across the globe. The problems faced by the females in different countries are different. And that is why the third wave of feminism is different from the first wave of the feminism or the second wave of the feminism. Second wave refers to oppression whereas the third wave talks about marginalization. Now in each and every day life or we can find this gender discrimination or gender inequality in our families.



Example: If there are some guests at home, it is always the girl child, who serves, whether the tea is to be brought, it is brought by some female member or a girl child, not the boy or the male member of the family. Why this discrimination is there and we can notice this. Take for example, if there is some work related to the kitchen. Why is it that? It is always the girl who's asked to cook. The girl

Unit 03: Literary Terms

child is asked to cook, not the boy. It is the female who is asked to go to the kitchen and not the meal. If we say that we all are equal, then definitely it is the responsibility of the male member or husband to assist the wife in the kitchen. And the wife can assist the husband in his work. But one more thing, the incapability of the husband at home or the male member at home that he cannot make a chapatti, he cannot make dishes, or he cannot prepare something to eat. It is again a matter of pride for him. He doesn't feel shy. But he feels proud of it, because he's the male member, and that is why he does not know how to cook, how to prepare a chapatti? How to make a chapatti? He does not know it doesn't matter. So this shows that gender inequality still prevails, it still exists. And how does it arise? What is the cause of this, what is the root cause of this inequality?

This difference arises from socially constructed gender roles. The tasks have been assigned by the male dominated society. The tradition, the norms, the culture, they are all responsible for this inequality for this gender issue. We all notice there is no equal treatment. We have already seen there are so many problems that exist in this society female feel inside forced prostitution. Why does it happen? Why they are not treated equally, definitely the society itself is the root cause of this; the patriarchal system is the root cause of this and if we change our mindset. If the internal restrictions are changed, eliminated, abolished then definitely there will be no discrimination. We're living in the 21st century, but even today we can notice that there is a lot of discrimination, they are being discriminated, even today. And why can't we change ourselves, why can't we change our mindset, why can't we provide them the opportunity to flourish like the male members flourishing in the society like the boys are flourishing, like the boys are achieving success in their life? Why can't they be given the social, economic and the political rights? The freedom, the liberty, the identity that they want, why can't they be given that? Yes, of course, that is only possible to see externally, if we talk about the external restrictions, and if you make some amendments in the laws. Find what you can do and that is already there. But if we are not going to change our mindset, then this change can never ever be possible. And one more thing, understanding the behavior, the opportunities and the constraints that affect both men, as well as women must also be taken care of that must be understood, understanding of these things, understanding the behavior, understanding the opportunities which are to be given, understanding about the constants, they are very important. And if we are able to understand that, then definitely, there could be some change, but it is not so. Now, what are things which are required? How can we bring that particular change? How can we change internal facilities? How can we change the internal restrictions which are there? Of course, we can talk about equality but not just to show off or not, just to showcase that they are equal but it must be from mind and soul.

What is equality?

How can the girl child be equal, how can the female sex be equal, how can the women be equal? What does equality mean? Equality is the state of being equal, especially in status, in rights or opportunities. If we change our mindset and eliminate the internal restrictions, and give the equal status, give equal rights, and give or provide equal opportunity to the female sex, then definitely we can say that there is equality, and they are equal to us, then there will be no problem at all. But even today, we find that the quality is missing, it is not there. Whether we talked about third world countries, we talked about the developed country, or we talked about the underdeveloped countries. Everywhere the plight of the women remains the same. It is not only on the basis of sex but there are so many several other factors also which are responsible for discrimination. They're being discriminated against on the basis of color. They're being discriminated on the basis of sex. The class, the cast, the religion in different countries there are different factors, which are responsible for the harassment, and for the discrimination or for inequality. There are so many factors, and they are being discriminated against on different grounds. And as a result, there are terms like sexist or sexism. So, equality, if we are able to provide them this equal status, the equal opportunity, the equal rights, then definitely will be no problem, and we won't be studying this topic, gender issues. What else equity. Now the question is what is equity? Equity is the quality of being fair and impartial. Let us try to introspect. That we are fair and really impartial and we will definitely find that we are biased and partial. It is evident in society that people pass comments on the dresses of females. The question is, why to criticize, why to comment on somebody's dress. There are cases of harassment in the offices, if the women are working. If they are bold enough, then we can see that people say she is not a feminine better masculine, why? And even in literature

Post-Independence Indian Literature

we find expressions like, she is not feminine if a female works smartly and shows outstanding caliber. This shows our unfair, partial and biased attitude towards females. What does the term bias mean? It is an inclination of prejudice, for or against one person or group, especially in a way, considered to be unfair. And we have seen that, there are people who are biased and there are several examples of the same. Some team members from an organization had been to an orphanage. There they found that there were more male orphans than females and the number of female orphans were very less. Now the question is why? The members assumed that the family members have taken care of the daughters and they are at home. Or they thought the cute little girls were adopted first but that was not the reality. It was not that the baby girl was being adopted first. The cute girls were being adopted first, no, it was not like that. But the result was something different, and it was shocking. The female babies were more likely, abundant, and they were left to die. And that is why in the orphanage, there were more male orphans than the girls. Another example, on March 10 2008 BBC news story says that Chinese are facing shortage of wives. The Chinese people are facing a shortage of wives. Now the question is why there is this shortage of wives, and BBC also warned that by 2020 China is expected to have 13 million more men than women. Why, because of sex determination before birth. And this results in female foeticide. So what will happen? This is another big issue. So sex determination before birth has resulted in the abortion of many female foetuses. And as a result, we can find that the numbers of males are more than the number of females in the country. And the difference between boys and girls in the south of China is already as great as 130 Boys 100 Girls, just imagine. So, what is this, it means, they are being killed before their birth.

Now, we can see all the differences as we were talking about in the beginning. Men are lecturers and women are listeners. Why is it so? In the very first slide, we discussed the emotional differences, the intellectual differences, and the biological difference, the difference in the physical field, and it is just because of that. Whether we talk about the system, we talk about the patriarchal system, or we talk about world domination. It is just because of that, we find that the men are the lecturers and women are listeners, and this is what we find in the languages in literature, and everywhere. men use more negative faces than women while women use more positive faces than men. Men are more exclusive; women are more inclusive, men use languages vertically that are competitive, whereas women's language is horizontal, that is social. So, we notice these differences in literature. Whatever is happening in the society, is being reflected through literature. Be poetry, be drama, be novel, be fiction, be short story whatsoever it is? So, when we read and that is why we say that text is human action. Why text is human action because whatever we are reading it is text, each and everything is being jotted down. And what is being jotted down is the things which are happening in this society. So, these are the things which are happening and we are reading in the text. When we talk about equality, equality is giving everyone what they need to be successful. And this is what we are doing, this is what we are reading in literature. Even in 21st century, we're not fair enough to provide the females equal opportunities and we are still biased. And we say equality is treating everyone the same so the question arises whether we are treating everyone in the same manner. Equality aims to promote fairness. But it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help. But is it really happening? So, gender equality means equal treatment of women and men in law and policies, and equal access to resources and services within families, communities, and society at large. Gender equality means fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. But if we have a look at this society, the patriarchal norms, we find that gender equality, and gender equity, they're all vanished. They're not found. And as a result, we can come across cases of female foeticide, emotional, and physical abuse, differential access or deprivation to food, nutrition, and medical care. Childhood genital mutilation, incest, and sexual abuse, child prostitution, sexual abuse in workplace, forced prostitution, rape, sexual harassment, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, early marriage, reproductive abused by intimate partner, marital rape, dowry abuse and murders, partner homicide, psychological abuse, sexual harassment, forced abortion, bigamy, polygamy, old age abuse of widows and many form of discrimination. Why can't we talk about equality? How can we be free from biasness? We are still biased. Why do we discriminate, why can't we stop all these? See, the list is endless and apart from that, if we talk about violence. Let us talk about the types of violence that we see in this society. How are the females being harassed? We can see domestic violence, we can see trafficking. We can see forced prostitution, we can see sexual harassment. Now the question is what is this domestic violence? Each and every day you read in the newspaper that the wives are being beaten, they are being twisted. They are being tortured. That is, domestic violence, and we come across such instances, every day, when we get up in the morning when we read the newspaper, we find some cases like this, of domestic violence, trafficking. The females are being harassed, they are being raped, seduced, sold, at the workplace they are being criticized. How can we stop that? Forced prostitution, the female sex, they are being called as prostitutes and they are being sexually harassed also. We can see this kind of violence. And apart from that there

Unit 03: Literary Terms

are other violence also, like, honor killing, mistreatment of widows, accusations of witchcraft and then dowry. On one side we're talking about equality and on the other hand, we can see these discriminations, and these kinds of violence. Now, why is it happening, what is the root cause of it, why this gender discrimination? Now why is it happening? We have to understand that so number one, prejudice. Why are we prejudiced? That, the male they are strong and the female they are weak. Why do the males think that they can do whatever they want? Why do they think that they are protectors? Why male domination? And if it is there definitely it must be taken care of. They will have to be fair enough. Number two, the reason is biological as I was talking about in the beginning, that the physical frame that differentiates the anatomy of a male is different from a female that is also another cause of discrimination. The third one; socio-cultural, we have already discussed, that how the culture and the society discriminate? How there is no equal right? How there is no equal opportunity? How they don't have the right to earn their own livelihood? Why can't they be remunerative? Who is behind this, because we have assigned different roles? Male for the field and woman for the hearth so they have been given their roles, their roles have been assigned and that is why they are supposed to stay within the four walls of the houses, take care of the children, or rather it can be said that they are restricted to child birth only. So a number of socio-cultural, economic reasons are there. They can't be economically strong and be free to earn. They will have to depend on the husband for their livelihood. they cannot go to the offices to earn, no they will have to depend on the husband for the same. Education, if you remember there was a time they were not going to school when if I talk about the first wave of feminism. They did not have the right to vote, they did not have the right to study also. They were confined within the four walls, within the houses. They were not going to school. So but if they are educated they will understand their rights and yes of course they can excel in all the rest of life and apart from that there are personal and psychological reasons also and they are also the root cause of discrimination. So we will have to understand this and we must provide the females the equal opportunities to flourish so that they can have their own identity as their male counterparts and they can also excel in life.

3.2 Male Gaze

According to Oxford Reference male gaze is “ A manner of treating women's bodies as objects to be surveyed, which is associated by feminists with hegemonic masculinity, both in everyday social interaction and in relation to their representation in visual media: *see also* objectification.” The word male gaze for the first time was coined by filmmaker and theorist, Laura Mulvey in her seminal 1973 research paper, which was titled *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* and Mulvey's essay was published two years later, in screen magazine. And this particular paper was written for an academic audience. According to Laura Mulvey, “The world ordered by sexual imbalance pleasure in looking has been split between active male and passive female.” Since Mulvey had written for an academic audience or academic reader. The paper is a bit difficult to decode or understand. So let us try to understand in a very simple manner, or in a very simple way, what exactly this male gaze means. We've been talking about feminism. We have discussed in our previous lectures about sexism, about LGBTQ about the waves of feminism. We have discussed and seen at the same time that there is discrimination against female sex. They are not getting equal opportunity, they're not getting equal rights. They are discriminated, harassed and oppressed in society. Feminists rather we talk about the radical feminists, or we talk about the liberal feminists. Whatever is happening in this society is being reflected through the medium of literature in the form of poetry, drama, novel and short story. We have seen the writers; they all have highlighted the problems and predicaments, of the females. If we talk about *Silence! the Court is in Session* written by Vijay Tendulkar, we find the plight of a school teacher whose name is Miss LeelaBenare, she is not able to lead her life according to her own will, she falls in love with her own maternal uncle and when she requests him to marry her. He runs away. He does not have the courage to marry Miss LeelaBenare then, the most important character Professor Damle who enjoys the physical frame indulges in physical relationship and impregnates Miss LeelaBenare and he also runs away, he was already married and even after that he indulged in this kind of physical relationship with Miss LeelaBenare. She loved Professor Damle because of his intellectual capacity it was all devotion and dedication to his intellectuality to his knowledge to his wisdom. But it was Miss LeelaBenare who had to build the brand. She had to suffer. She was prosecuted and ultimately the judgment by the court of the mock trial was that she will have to abort the child in her womb. On the other hand, if we talk about Professor Damle, he was enjoying the symposium. He was attending conferences. He was visiting different countries to attend seminars, deliver lectures, and nobody was pointing a finger at Professor Damle. Now the question is why this society was repeatedly pointing a figure at Miss LeelaBenare and not at

Post-Independence Indian Literature

Professor Damble why this double standard. So, all these problems of the female sex has been very nicely depicted by different writers. We have read in novels, also, how the females are being oppressed, denied opportunities, how they are being heaviest in the society. And the novel, *The Saree Shop* by RupaBajwa. It reminds us of the plight of a working woman in this society and how she is treated and how she has been objectified. Examples like when the protagonist of the novel was taken to the police station by the policemen and at the FIR lodged by the so called heiress to critique society, or the elite class people or the business class people. They not only beat Kamala one of the characters in the novel but the kind of torment and torture she suffers, at the police station is really very shocking apart from her husband. He used to drink every day and beat Kamala. So this is the plight of women and how it has been projected by the novelists, by the story writers, by the poets. Now, we have read fiction, poetry, drama but what about theatre and movies. What about cinema films? So, when we talk about this term male gaze. We find that, how the female sex are objectified in the cinemas or in the films. So we find that particular male domination in film making also. And that patriarchal system can be noticed in the cinema in filmmaking. And who is the audience, the writer is the male, the producer is the male, in most of the cases the director is the male, and the audience is also male. They do go. But who is the audience, targeted by the producers and the directors? They target the male audience, not the female audience. And the female sex prominently the actresses. They are presented in an eroticized manner. And this is what the male audience the hated sex will mean, this is what they want to see. And this is what we understand as male gaze, this is what we call male gaze. And this particular imbalance can be seen in different movies we watch, we go to the theatre, and we watch movies, but I would like to say one thing that the movies will be super hit. Only if the female sex, they are being objectified or they are being made as an object presented as an object in an eroticized manner, only then there will be a hit at the box office. There are movies like *Mother India*, there are movies like *Bahubali*, which you can see that they were super-duper hits. And there was not a single scene where we find the female character or the actress presented as an object. All the audiences are not the same, they love the plot, the story and the content. These things are happening in the society and like we are talking about male gaze. So don't find the item songs in the movies. What is the need to project the sea beach scenes and present the actresses in swim suits, because this is liked by the heterosexual men and just to see that they go to the theatres to watch movies, and that is why they are presented in this way it is not about that the females don't go to the theatre to watch movie, they do go. But they remain passive women, passive means they won't speak, they won't say anything they will just go watch and enjoy. That's all. They won't comment or say anything. Why, because they are living in a male dominated society and world. So, we discussed the plight of women in the context of literature. And here, when we talk about male gaze, we are discussing the plight of women in the context of cinema, and why they are objectified. When we talk about the protagonist, the protagonists are male members, not the female members and even if I talked about the Shakespearean tragedies, he also in his tragedies presented the protagonists as the most powerful creatures. Whether I talk about *Macbeth*, I talk about *Hamlet*, I talk about *King Lear*, or I talk about *Othello*. We find *Macbeth*, as the most powerful character, a hero, turned into a villain. In the beginning we find that *Lady Macbeth* is more ambitious and she's persuading *Macbeth* to assassinate *King Duncan*. But what happens later on. And *Lady Macbeth*, she was not able to share anything with anybody else. And as a result, she turns mad repeatedly, and says, "all the perfumes of Arabia cannot sweet this little hand." We sympathize with *Lady Macbeth*. Maybe when we watch the visual effect can be different when we watch, we may enjoy that now she is the culprit and she is being punished by nature, but even then we can see that there is no poetic justice at all. There is partial justice. That is something else, something that is something different. That can be analysed with a different angle. But when we are talking about a script written by a male, we can see here that the tragedies from an entry of the protagonist is a male. And again what about the female characters did not perform means the female characters were not being performed by the females, but it was being performed by the boys whose voice was not broken. Again, the question is, why were the female sex, not allowed to perform the role of a female character, these days we are doing so we can see that the bold avatar of the female sex, the heroines, how they are being visualized, how they are being presented on screen on the silver screen, but that was also timed when they were not allowed to perform on stage. And that is why Shakespeare had very few female characters in his plays. They were very limited in numbers. *Hamlet*, again we can see *Hamlet*, Very powerful characters like *Claudius* and weak characters like *Gertrude* and *Desdemona*. *Hamlet* addresses his mother, "Frailty thy name is woman." So, at that time also we have seen this, and even today, we can see the movies, or the films. They are mostly written by men. And who is the target in the Shakespeare time, or the Elizabethan age, the target audience, was built, and even today the target audiences, men. Even if we talk about the comedy of merits the restoration period, at that time also the target audience

Unit 03: Literary Terms

was the male sex not the female sex. And even today the target audience is the male sex. Men are given the lead in the stories when we talk about Christopher Marlowe, or William Shakespeare. Yes, of course, in the comedies, we can see that Shakespeare has presented the female sex as very witty. Exceptions are there, but why not in the tragedies. So men are given the lead in their stories, female characters, they are limited to serving the goals of male protagonists. Even today we are in the 21st century where females are being presented as an object, the lead roles are being given to the male sex the plot of story is written in such a way that the male member gets the credit, or the hero gets the credit for the same exceptions are there. So, female characters are limited to serving the goals of female protagonists then what about pleasure in looking. Only the plot is not sufficient. Apart from that, it is presented. It is visualized. So some icons are also required. They require some pleasure. And that is why we go to the theatre, we spend money to watch movies, the question arises why we love movies. It is because watching people without being seen, ourselves, plays a very important role.

The people want to see that and that is why they spend money, and they go to the theatre to the multiplexes to watch the same. And the determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure. This is the reality and determining male gaze projects, its fantasy onto the female figure with her appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact as we were discussing that only the plot is not going to help. People go to the theatre to watch a movie, which has some content and a good plot, but at the same time, they want to see something else. They want to enjoy something else. Also, and that is why we can see some item songs in different movies. What is the need of these item songs? So, the males want to gaze. They want to see this. And that is why that particular visual and erotic impact is there and one more thing as we discussed about the imbalance. Why does the imbalance exist there because the imbalances there in this society, that is why this imbalance is there in the movies also in the entire process of the creation of a movie men, writing the films men, making the films, men being the protagonist men being the target audience so all these combined into a unified heterosexual male perspective of female characters. It is important since they are the doers, as we discussed earlier also, men are the doers, and that is why they are active. So, they are important. And the female sex, they are just to support them, and that is why they're passive. And this is what we can see in the entire process of making a movie. So in other words, we can say that this is all to adopt be male gaze. This entire process is there to adopt the male gaze, and this is how the traditional cinema is raised. So, traditionally, the woman displayed has functioned on two levels. Number one is erotic object for the characters within the screen story. And number two, as erotic object for the spectator within the cinema auditorium. That's all and what about being beautiful, or sexy. Yes, of course, this is the requirement of this cinema.

So we can say that this male gaze objectifies female characters, the male gaze also reaffirms the power of the patriarchy, to use women as props in service of the heterosexual male narrative, and a female character doesn't have to be overly sexualized, to be the object of the male gaze. What does it mean to present them in an overly sexualized manner is also not important. It is important. Why, if it does not happen, then definitely the heterosexual men who go to the theatre or the auditorium to watch the film will not get the pleasure. The pleasure of looking, and as a result, the producer and the director or the filmmaker can incur loss. We can see that the models are also presented in an overly sexualized object.

3.3 Womanism

Womanism is a social theory based on the history and everyday experiences of black women. It seeks, according to womanist scholar LayliMaparyan (Phillips), to "restore the balance between people and the environment/nature and reconcile human life with the spiritual dimension". (Wikipedia) Alice Walker, an American poet feminist, and author of the critically acclaimed novel, *The Colour Purple*, coined the word Womanism in 1983. It was a response to the realization that feminism did not include black women's viewpoints and experiences. Now, let us make it clear that how the black woman's viewpoint, or their viewpoints, were not taken care of, or their experiences were not included in the feminist movement. It requires a detailed discussion. Why it happened and why Alice Walker was forced to coin the word Womanism in 1983. The route of Womanism lies in feminism, how Womanism came into existence. What is the root cause of its origin, and why it came into being, or why this word came into existence? Definitely, the answer will be the lack of equal opportunity.

We are not talking about females, but we are talking about the black women. Because if we talk about the definition of Womanism. We will definitely say that it is not something related to the white women, but this is something which is related to black women. Why black women, because their viewpoints and experiences were not included in the revolt of the feminist movement, the

Post-Independence Indian Literature

feminists were talking about women hood as a group, the feminists were talking about sisterhood day we're talking about universal feminism or universal womenhood. What does it mean? It means the plight of every woman is the same, they're suffering their sorrow, their predicament, their problems they are the same. But it was not the same with black women and they were being discriminated not only on the basis of gender but also at the same time other factors were also responsible for the discrimination for the imbalance, for inequality, for the lack of opportunities. There were so many other factors responsible. And as a result came into existence, the word Womanism and it is related to the black women, not the white women and one more thing should be noted down that womanists not only talk about the plight of women, but they also talk about the plight of black men as well, their sorrow, their suffering, their calamities, their oppression their harassment. So they talk about the male members also, not only about the females. So Womanism was there just because their condition, their position, their plight was not being taken care of by the white women. But again there is a question mark on this because with the passage of time when we talk about the third wave of feminism and the fourth wave of feminism, there will definitely find that the feminists and the critical thinkers started talking about them. Because in the first wave of feminism, and the second wave of feminism, their benefits, their interests, were not being discussed. It was being ignored, or it can be said that the feminist movement was being dominated by the white women, and the black women, they were being ignored. The white women ignored the plight of black women. They were focusing only on the white women. And that is why the black women had to revolt against this. They also wanted their voice to be heard. Then as a result of this Womanism emerged as the response to the lightest aspects of the early feminist movement. Womanism distinguishes itself from feminism as a social construct. It honours womanhood and it reflects on black women. What does it mean? It means that Womanism talks about the plight of black women, It talks about aspirations, equality of not the white but the black women. Womanism aspires to achieve and uphold societal inclusivity. It means they must be equally honoured, they must be equally respected, they must be given equal opportunities in all walks of life in the social, economic, and political arena. They must be recognized as a true human being. They must be recognized, not different from the male they must be recognized, not different from any other person, on the basis of caste, colour, religion, language. It means no discrimination on the basis of anything, any point, any aspect, any concept, and their voices must be heard.

So, according to Ellis walker womanists are black feminists, or feminists of colour who are dedicated to the wholeness and survival of all communities, both men and women. In the second wave of feminism if we talk about the radical feminists, they thought, or they were of the opinion that the patriarchy is responsible for their oppression. But that is something which is highlighted by the white women. But the black women realized that they are not talking about their interest. And they are being marginalized, their voice is not being heard and as a result, there was a need of different kinds of concepts as we have discussed in our previous lectures that the third wave of feminism, focused on plurality. The third wave of feminism, focused on individuals. Individuals means each and every individual's interest must be taken care of, be it a woman from China, be it a woman from Africa, be it a woman from Afghanistan, be it a woman from India, or from any part of the world and when we are talking about discrimination. So it is not that only the black women are being discriminated but the black men are also being discriminated on the basis of their colour, and that is why Womanists or black feminists, or the feminists of colour came in existence. They are dedicated to the wholeness and the survival of all communities, incorporating men, not only women but also men. So Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender, says, Alice Walker implying that she sees feminism as part of a larger ideological umbrella called Womanism.

Now our third objective was what is the difference between Feminism and Womanism, How can we understand how can we identify that whether we are talking about feminism, or we are talking about Womanism so, feminism, and equality if we talk about feminism, and equality they are inextricably linked. And this has given birth to a wide range of movements and ideologies, and the goals remain the same. They have a similar goal to create, to define and achieve gender equality in social, economic, and political terms. To combat gender stereotypes then, what is the difference? Feminism talks about equality, feminism gave birth to different kinds of movement and ideology. The goals are to create, define and achieve gender equality in social, economic and political terms to combat gender stereotypes. Then, what is the difference? For that, we'll have to understand how the problem arises. How the females were never given opportunities. What was the root cause? Because if we talk about the Womanist. They also talk about equality. If we talk about feminists, they also talk about equality, feminists they talk about oppression womanist they also talk about oppression. Then where is the problem and what is the difference? How are we going to identify that? For that, we'll have to peep, our past, will have to understand the roots of this feminist movement. In the beginning, as we all know that the gender rules were already assigned. And if I

Unit 03: Literary Terms

talk about different thinkers like Darwin, like Aristotle, we find that they label them as weak, they label them as inferior. So the inequality starts from there. Yes, of course the biological construction is different. The anatomy of the female sex the physical form of the female sex is different from the male that is accepted, but it doesn't mean that they are inferior. And this is what Simone de Beauvoir, French feminist talks about in her work *The Second Sex*. Biologically they are different, but it doesn't mean that they are inferior. They are equally capable, but the patriarchy and the male domination did not allow the minds that are thinking to understand that. They have equal strength, they have equal calibre, they have equal intelligence but people were not ready to accept that. At that time, and even today and as a result, the females started talking about equal rights. They started focusing on equality. And then we can say that this is from where the feminist movement starts when they started realizing that they are not being treated equally. They are not being given the right to study, they are not being given equal opportunities to go to schools and colleges. They are not being given the right to vote, they're not being given the opportunity to go out and work. They are not remunerated. They realize this for the first time. Mary Wollstonecraft made them realize through the medium of her book. *The Vindication of the Rights of Women*. They are equally strong and they can do whatever the males can do. This book played a very important role. Before that, nobody was talking about their rights and as a result, they started talking about equality. And this is really from where the first wave of feminism starts. And how did it end in 1920. When they got the right to vote they thought that yes, we have got equality. But with the passage of time, they realized that no, it is not the same. In 1960 feminists realized that are going to school but they are being given limited subjects. They are not getting admission in architecture, they are not getting admission in engineering, they are not getting admission in medicine, they are not getting admission in so many other subjects and they are not being admitted in that. If I talk about jobs, their jobs were limited to teaching and nursing. So there was not a wide scope. So the second wave of feminism came in existence and it was divided into two groups: the liberal feminists and the radical feminists. Liberal feminism, and the radical feminism was the continuation of the first wave of feminism but the radical feminists thought that they are being oppressed, as we can see that the first wave of feminism focused on equality, they were talking about equal rights. And when we talk about equality, we can make some amends, in the constitutional laws and all, and then we can be equal, so the external restrictions can be eliminated but by making some law, as we discussed, but the internal restrictions. How can that be eliminated. How can we remove the internal restriction, how can you abolish that it is not possible unless and until we are going to change our mind-set, womens suffrage, equal pay, domestic violence, reproductive rights, maternity leave, sexual harassment, sexual assault. They are all among the topics addressed by the feminists. They are all addressed by the radical feminists. They talk about all these things and how they are going to be eliminated and again, the goals if I talk about the goals of this movement. The default between cultures and countries and the radical feminists. They realize this and so we can see that the feminism in the West has gone through three cycles suffrage, and political equality was central to the first wave of feminism. The second wave was divided into two groups: the radical and the liberal or the liberal and the radical. And the radicals were talking about all these things, which was internal, or we can say, which was internal restriction equality when we talked about equality for example external restriction. So, the first wave focused on equality, they wanted equal rights, but in the second wave they wanted to liberate themselves, and they wanted to have their own identity. And this is here, when they develop the radical feminists, or the second wave feminists. When they developed a kind of universal sisterhood, or a universal group, they thought that the problem of each and every woman is the same. And it is not different, and if they talk about the problem of women, they are talking about the women across the globe but in reality it was not so when they were thinking like this, they were committing a blunder, a great mistake, and they were marginalizing the other people because the problem of different women in different countries differ. So, the third wave feminists started discussing all these issues intersectionality. Now what is this intersection, they started talking about everyone means that discrimination on the basis of sex and then we get the word sexist. What is discrimination on the basis of colour, discrimination on the basis of caste discrimination on the basis of religion, LGBTQ and what about them. It is all about male and female, no till the second wave of feminism, we noticed that they were talking about only M and F, male and female. But what about the others, there are other people also who are known as lesbians, gays, Transgender, Bisexual, who is going to talk about them so they have been marginalized, nobody is talking about their interests. Now, the plight of the black women, who is going to talk about the interest because it was being dominated the feminist movement was being dominated by the white women, and they were talking about their own interest. So who is going to take care of this black woman who is going to talk about their interest and ultimately, the feminists of colour, they have to talk about their own plight, and they have to talk about their own interest. And as a result, we came across the word Womanism, the term Womanism. And this is how Womanism is different from feminism. Womanism focuses on black women. It talks about

Post-Independence Indian Literature

their plight. It talks about their interests. But it doesn't mean that the feminists did not talk about them, but of course they had to revolt, or they have to talk about, or they had to raise their voice for their own interest.

The third wave of feminism was very much influenced by the post-colonial or we can say that it was very much influenced by the postmodern thinkers, and the impact of post colonialism was there in the third wave of feminism, post-colonial feminism, we come across. Why, because the country is tried to understand the countries which were colonized by the colonial master and the female sex for the women who were living in those countries, their plight was different. So the second wave feminists, they did not notice, or they were not talking about their plight their predicaments, their problems. In India what is the plight of Dalit women what about their problems and one more thing, if we talked about class. The upper class and the middle class, their plight is different from the lower class. So we cannot say that the problem of the lower class women is the same as of the middle class, or the upper class. The discrimination also differs and in this way the third wave of feminism the feminists realized that the female there are so many females, they are being marginalized, there are so many people who are being marginalized, and their interests are not being discussed. So, it focused on intersectionality. It focused on individuals. It focused on male-female divide and apart from that, it focused on Islamic feminism also, then if we talk about the fourth wave of feminism. We notice that at this particular time, or during this period. The plight of women, to some extent, had become better. And there was fear of pay for equal work. And the three types of oppression, like racism patriarchy in classicism, were being very much talked about. And the term intersectional unpick. It comes into existence and the thinkers the critical thinkers, the feminists, they all discuss about all these problems and they were being taken care of. Oppression, subordination, subjugation even today have not come to an end. They are visible in one way or other way. Intersectional feminism is the term that recognizes how various aspects of people live such as sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, and class. Interact to the individual experiences of discrimination as we were discussing about intersectionality. It is important to discuss what intersectional feminism is, and the third wave of feminism focused very much on this term. And talking about Womanism, it is a multi-faceted movement which campaigns for not only gender equality, but also justice for both black men and women who are oppressed, on three levels Womanism is a darker version of feminism. It incorporates and reflects the voices and viewpoints of women and people of colour because it was the feminist movement dominated by the white women which was found in America, UK, and the countries of Europe, or the European countries. This particular movement was limited to these areas only and moreover, it was the movement of the elite class, the aristocratic class or the middle class women and if it is being discussed by only these women, then definitely the interests of other women will definitely be ignored and marginalized.

Womanism was a darker version of feminism because their interests were not being taken care of. It was not being discussed their viewpoints were not important for them. So they had to raise their own voice and Womanism has been at the forefront of the feminist movement. Womanism strives for gender reconciliation, whereas feminism is strives on gender equality.

Summary

1. The socially constructed roles, behaviors, expressions and identities of girls and boys; men and women; and gender diverse people are referred to as gender. Sex is biological reality while gender is social construct. When we talk about gender issues we mainly try to focus our attention on gender inequalities. When we talk about the difference between a male and a female, we talked about three major issues. How the male is different from a female? We all are living in a male dominated society. Second wave refers to oppression whereas the third wave talks about marginalization. This difference arises from socially constructed gender roles. The tasks have been assigned by the male dominated society. Whether we talked about third world countries, we talked about the developed country, or we talked about the underdeveloped countries. Everywhere the plight of the women remains the same. There are cases of harassment in the offices, if the women are working. We talk about the patriarchal system, or we talk about world domination. Gender equality means fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men.

Unit 03: Literary Terms

2. A manner of treating women's bodies as objects to be surveyed, which is associated by feminists with hegemonic masculinity, both in everyday social interaction and in relation to their representation in visual media. The word male gaze for the first time was coined by filmmaker and theorist, Laura Mulvey in her seminal 1973 research paper, which was titled *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* and Mulvey's essay was published two years later, in *Screen* magazine. We've been talking about feminism. We have discussed and seen at the same time that there is discrimination against female sex. Feminists rather we talk about the radical feminists, or we talk about the liberal feminists. And even today the target audience is the male sex. So men are given the lead in their stories, female characters, they are limited to serving the goals of male protagonists.
3. Womanism is a social theory based on the history and everyday experiences of black women. It seeks, according to womanist scholar LayliMaparyan (Phillips), to "restore the balance between people and the environment/nature and reconcile human life with the spiritual dimension". (Wikipedia) Alice Walker, an American poet, feminist, and author of the critically acclaimed novel, *The Colour Purple*, coined the word Womanism in 1983. We are not talking about females, but we are talking about the black women. Because if we talk about the definition of Womanism. Why black women, because their viewpoints and experiences were not included in the revolt of the feminist movement, the feminists were talking about womenhood as a group, the feminists were talking about sisterhood day we're talking about universal feminism or universal womenhood. The white women ignored the plight of black women. They were focusing only on the white women. It honours womanhood and it reflects on black women. It means that Womanism talks about the plight of black women, It talks about aspirations, equality of not the white but the black women.

Keywords

Gender issues, feminism, feminist, discrimination, gender identity, gender roles, male gaze, womanism, black feminism, colonialism, post colonialism, Indian feminism, womanhood, universal feminism etc.

Self Assessment

1. Gender inequality refers to:
 - A. unequal treatment
 - B. perceptions of individuals based on their gender
 - C. both a and b
 - D. none of the above
2. Gender inequality arises from:
 - A. differences in socially constructed gender roles
 - B. unequal treatment
 - C. both a and b
 - D. none of the above
3. Equality is the state of being equal, especially in:
 - A. Status
 - B. Rights
 - C. Opportunities
 - D. All of the above

Post-Independence Indian Literature

4. Inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group:
 - A. Bias
 - B. Equity
 - C. Unfair
 - D. None of the above

5. Who coined the term "the male gaze"?
 - A. Elaine Showalter
 - B. Judith Butler
 - C. Doris Lessing
 - D. Laura Mulvey

6. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" is written by:
 - A. Elaine Showalter
 - B. Laura Mulvey
 - C. Judith Butler
 - D. Doris Lessing

7. The term 'male gaze' is the part of:
 - A. Film Theory
 - B. Feminist theory
 - C. Lesbian Theory
 - D. Queer Theory

8. Who coined the word "womanism"?
 - A. Simone de Beauvoir
 - B. Elaine Showalter
 - C. Judith Butler
 - D. Alice Walker

9. Who wrote the novel 'The ColorPurple'?
 - A. Simone de Beauvoir
 - B. Alice Walker
 - C. Elaine Showalter
 - D. Judith Butler

10. Black women had to face:
 - A. socioeconomic inequality
 - B. classism
 - C. racism
 - D. all of the above

11. The quality of being fair and impartial:
 - A. Justice
 - B. Equity
 - C. Balance
 - D. Fair

12. The term male gaze is the act of depicting women as:
 - A. sexual objects
 - B. pleasurable object
 - C. heterosexual
 - D. transgender

13. The male gaze is the manifestation of:
 - A. Gender inequality
 - B. Unequal social power
 - C. Both a and b
 - D. None of the above

14. Feminist movement lacked:
- diversity
 - opportunity
 - equality
 - freedom
15. Womanism distinguishes itself from feminism as a:
- literary theory
 - social construct
 - theory
 - none of the above

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 2. C | 3. D | 4. A | 5. D |
| 6. B | 7. B | 8. D | 9. B | 10. D |
| 11. B | 12. A | 13. C | 14. A | 15. B |

Review Questions

- Discuss the concept of Gender and make distinction between gender and sex.
- How gender issues are different from feminism?
- What is male gaze? Elaborate with apt examples.
- What is the concept of womanism? make distinction between feminism and womanism.
- What are some root causes of gender discrimination? Explain by supplying suitable examples.
- What are gender roles? Examine the opportunities and constraint that affect both men women in the society.



Further Reading

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Web Links

<https://www.ipl.org/essay/Laura-Mulveys-The-Male-Gaze-And-Objectification-FK3NLF74SCF6>

Unit 04 : Rupa Bajwa's the Sari Shop

CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

4.1 Rupa Bajwa's Shaping as a Writer

4.2 Plot of the Novel: The Sari Shop

4.3 Narrative Techniques

Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

Answers for Self Assessment

Review Questions

Further Reading

Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- Examine the contribution of Rupa Bajwa to literature
- Understand the plot of *The Sari Shop*
- Evaluate the narrative techniques used by the author in the novel

Introduction

Rupa Bajwa is a new star in the galaxy of Indian writers in the English language. She created commotion in the realm of contemporary Indian-English fiction with the appearance of her debut novel, *The Sari House* (2004). Born in Amritsar, Punjab in a Sikh family, she started her writing career as a book reviewer and columnist in various famous publishing concerns such as 'The Telegraph', 'The Tribune' and 'India Today'. She writes immense reviews and articles. One of her articles entitled "Dark Things Do Happen in Gurdwaras Sometimes" published in the every day 'The Telegraph', an Indian paper, has brought her enormous criticism for the depiction of her own Sikh community. "That rare creature, a writer who can interweave comedy and tragedy with élan [Bajwa's is] a stunning debut" (OutLook}, published her first novel, *The Sari Shop* in 2004, depicting her hometown and distinction of class in India. .." Bajwa's next novel ``*Tell Me a Story*`` published in April 2012 was also received with a huge response. It is neither completely a story of the individual(s), nor it is based on fairy tales. It is in fact, a surprising description of the events and happenings of the daily life of the major Indian middle-class families with the delusions they have and sudden unexpected damage of their expectations. A part of its story satirized the citizens of New Delhi so it aroused serious deliberations amongst the literary circles in New Delhi.

4.1 Rupa Bajwa's Shaping as a Writer

Rupa Bajwa as a postmodern writer Rupa Bajwa, India's new literary find created commotion in the realm of contemporary Indian English fiction with the appearance of her debut novel, *The Sari House* (2004). Born in Amritsar, Punjab in a Sikh family, she started her writing career as a book reviewer and columnist in various famous publishing concerns such as *The Telegraph*, *The Tribune* and *India Today*. She writes immense reviews and articles. One of her articles entitled: *Dark Things Do Happen in Gurdwaras* brought her enormous criticism for the depiction of her own Sikh community. That rare creature, a writer who can interweave comedy and tragedy with perfection. Being a postmodern writer, she chooses not to write about fantasies and love stories, rather she

portrays grim reality of things. Both of her novels *The Sari Shop* (2004) and *Tell Me a Story* (2012) aim at exposing the realities of life, the gruesome class distinction and the snobbery of society. Both these works are set in her hometown Amritsar and depict the plight of poor people or so-called lower strata in the society. Rupa Bajwa's debut novel won her Sahitya Akademy award and was also shortlisted for Orange prize for fiction. *Tell Me a Story* was also received with a huge response. It is neither completely a story of the individual(s), nor it is based on the fairy tales. It is in fact, a surprising description of the events and happenings of the daily life of the major Indian middle class families with the delusions they have and sudden unexpected damage of their expectations. A part of its story satirized the citizens of New Delhi so it aroused serious deliberations amongst the literary circles in New Delhi. Coming from an ordinary Sikh family, Bajwa has spent the most of her life in the rented spaces of Amritsar. The novel *The Sari Shop* taken up for this present research work is an outcome of her microscopic observation of her hometown. One finds in it a straightforward projection of class dynamics prevailing in Indian society, mortifying control of wealth, the bare and tedious subsistence of lower middle their discontented life in post-class people and independence era. Because of the unpretentious portrayal of the events and the characters of her hometown, the novel caught so much of attention among critics and reviewers. Coming from an ordinary Sikh family, Bajwa has spent the most of her life in the rented spaces of Amritsar. The novel *The Sari Shop* taken up for this present research work is an outcome of her microscopic observation of her hometown. One finds in it a straightforward projection of class dynamics prevailing in Indian society, mortifying control of wealth, the bare and tedious subsistence of lower middle-class people and their discontented life in the post-independence era. Because of the unpretentious portrayal of the events and the characters of her hometown, the novel caught so much of attention among critics and reviewers. Although Bajwa faced a bit of censure yet she won international acclaim for her narrative. She was honored with a number of prestigious literary awards such as Grinzane Cavour Award for a finest primary story in June 2005, the Commonwealth Award 2005 and India's Sahitya Akademi Award 2006. The novel was also listed for the Orange Prize for fiction in 2004. It has also been translated into several languages such as French (*Le vendeur de saris*), Dutch (*De Sariwinkel*) and Serbian (*Prodavnica sarija*). Bajwa shows an intense social and political awareness about people around her and their sufferings. She narrates a realistic story of the plight of women which is rife with humor and irony. Since human civilization saw its first light, a spirit of competition and conflict has been prevailing among human beings. They are denied opportunities and are being shackled and tortured by their own class of species. One is forced to think why this occurs in our society. Maybe it is due to the scarcity of resources and unlimited needs. Why is one dominant and the other is overbearing? Why is one's vision of a satisfied life devastated by obstacles and interference caused by others unnecessarily? In an interview, Rupa Bajwa stated that "I wrote about my people, about the world I grew up in. I wrote in the response to my own society; even though I do believe that human nature remains essentially the same everywhere. And, so being acknowledged by people from this society is definitely important and satisfying" (Bajwa 3). The streets of the holy city of Amritsar build the background of the novel. Bajwa has very realistically described the city life of Amritsar. "The bazaars of Amritsar were busy places where, every day, throughout the year, transactions were made, prices were bargained over, shops were opened in the morning and shut in the evenings" (Bajwa, *The Sari Shop* 2). Various sub-plots and episodes are interwoven within the text. The central character Ramchand is assigned the task of observing them but as the plot moves forward, he gets involved in all these events. Every experience, may it be with upper middle-class women like 'Rina' or 'Mrs. Sachdeva' or with 'Kamala' or 'Sudha' women of lower social background, brings him new insight on social realities and meanness prevailing in the society.

4.2 **Plot of the Novel: The Sari Shop**

In the novel *The Sari Shop*, Rupa Bajwa frames extensively the jobs and conduct considered suitable to the genders in the upper layers as well as the lower layers of the general public and communicates their qualities, customs, regulations, and social jobs. These are communicated in illustrations which become an indispensable piece of the social construct and social framework. The central theme of *The Sari Shop* touches different parts of social position, status, and instruction of female characters and underestimated male characters. The protagonist, Ramchand works in a sari shop, *Sevak Sari House*. He had figured out how to read the faces of ladies customers, their behaviors and states of mind. Mrs. Sachdeva, the professor of English in a nearby college, favored fair tones and was against colors like orange and gold. She prefers something that could be worn in the college and was not obscure for the society. Mrs. Sachdeva was not normal for different ladies like Mrs. Gupta and Mrs. Bhandari. Mrs. Sachdeva considers herself better than other ladies of her society but she is childless. And for other high society ladies, she is no one. Mrs. Bhandari's tries to

be noteworthy as she was wife of D.I.G. in the police. Mrs. Sandhu is significant as she is wife of a Central Architect in the Punjab State Power Board. Mrs. Gupta's family was the group of business people. Mrs. Kapoor was the spouse of Ravinder Kapoor, the greatest industrialist in Amritsar. This multitude of ladies carried on with materialistic and luxurious lives. Mrs. Kapoor was a moderately aged lady wearing a silk salwar suit and costly looking dresses, jewelry of gold and precious stones in her ears and wrists. She had the standing of having purchased pashmeena shawl wraps worth ten lakhs. Her little girl Rina was an advanced young lady. Her most memorable gathering with Ramchand occurred in her home and she 'sniggers' at 'the sari-wala'. Ramchand disregarded it and showed them saris. Be that as it may, what occurred at their house was his past experience. He had figured out how to peruse their appearances and their mind-sets precisely. He could think about when they were most certainly going to purchase a specific sari. He could perceive when they were in two personalities and must be driven into getting one. He could quickly detect when they had made up their brains not to purchase anything and were claiming to be fascinated.

These two confident ladies purchased saris without exchanging words and trying to figure out their cost. They picked their saris in a savage way which was the characteristic of their skill. Mrs. Kapoor was a status cognizant lady. Because of her girl, she must be in touch with conventional, teacher type, administration class ladies. Rina realizes that there were different things more significant than cash on the planet. Out in the huge world, she knew, individuals with learning were thought of as educated. It was not regard from not many little towners or vulgar money managers however what made a difference was regard from everywhere the world, from the intellectual, refined world. Rina was wedding an assistance class individual, an army man. That was her method for crossing the gap in the general public. Rina had a terrific and sumptuous Indian style wedding. Ramchand too went to the wedding despite the fact that he was an invited visitor there.

Three days after her wedding Rina visited Ramchand's sari shop and she looked carelessly at the silk saris Ramchand was showing her. She conversed with him and posed him individual inquiries. She asked him his perspective on various issues, tastes and feelings. He became abnormal and superficial and made statements he didn't mean. She left after casually purchasing a silk sari. Not long after five months, Rina published her novel. Because of her collaboration with Ramchand, she had become inquisitive about him and had gone to meet him. She had been stirred to compose the novel succeeding to seeing the shaking sari-Wala remaining by the security officers and had heard him lie about being welcomed by her to the party. To develop character of her hero named Sitaram, she had met Ramchand and begun to draft at the main draft of her novel while she was still on her wedding trip. Along these lines, she fashioned a character for herself. For her purposes, cash and marriage were not all that matters. However her dad had sufficient the means to deal with her necessities despite the fact that he didn't pay his workers on time. Lined up with the plot of these rich ladies and as an absolute opposite to it, the account of the mother of Ramchand, Sudha and Kamla has been set. Rupa Bajwa has handily portrayed the distinctions in their qualities, culture, day to day life, social and monetary circumstances and way of life. Their needs also were different throughout everyday life. Ramchand's dad was the proprietor of a little shop in Amritsar. His family lived in a more modest room behind the shop. He felt that his mom was the most pleasant lady on the planet. His parents died in an accident when he was six. His uncle's wife and his grandma were different ladies' family members in his day-to-day life. His dad's shop was taken over by his uncle. Sudha was the spouse of his house owner. Ramchand had seen her perform different household works in all seasons for just about eleven years. He had seen her as another lady of the hour with marriage ivory chooda on her wrists. Around then, he was only fifteen years of age. To Ramchand, she was the loveliest lady on the planet. She smiled and gestured at whatever point she saw him. It was still normal that Ramchand had started to fantasize about her in his extra time. Later Ramchand went over numerous ladies in the sari shop, with its extreme air of infesting womanliness, however it was just seeing Sudha, completely dressed, doing normal family works, that could kindle Ramchand categorically and one after other, she brought forth three children. Kamla was married to Chander who worked first in a factory and later on in the Sevak Sari House. She was denied of life as a youngster. Her mom worked in the places of others and after her mom's passing, she started working in her mom's place-at home and in different homes too. After her marriage, she moved to Amritsar and began living with an unknown. She had carried with her two frocks which she had worn in her experience growing up and an accessory of red pearls. Around then, Chander worked in a factory and lived in a tiny room. Kamla was a decent spouse however felt forlorn. Her better half become inebriated and frequently beat her. This made her sharp. Her life was dull and she was supposed to bear kids soon. Her life changed when she understood that she was pregnant. Her reality excessively changed for the time being. It became more current and fresher. Sadly, in the third month of pregnancy, she had a premature delivery. She bore the aggravation and wretchedness in isolation. She was crushed when the specialist told her she wouldn't consider once more. That evening Chander got back more alcoholic than expected and

without separating, however in a frequently shaking voice, she enlightened her significant other. He also was upset and murmured that he had lost his employment and had brought about obligation as he was without pay for quite a long time. He faulted her for being unfortunate for him. He kept a container of liquor at home and Kamla began taking a couple of drinks from it. She would eliminate cash from his pocket and purchase a jug for herself. She grinned covertly when her head knock against the divider when Chander tossed her at it in trance. Her brow was brimming with knocks. In her stunned, tipsy condition, the news that Chander had acquired some work in a sari shop didn't enroll. In the blink of an eye, the pretty, happy young lady had vanished and Kamla turned into a stone peered toward beast. Before long, Kamla had begun drinking straightforwardly and Chander beat her everyday. She was loaded with unpleasant toxic substance. She turned into a shame to her significant other and neighborhood. This habit impacted Kamla as well. She didn't wash up for three days and thus smelt foul. There were rashes on her skin because of intensity. Her hair was ruffled and her eyes were wild. She knew who to fault for and who was to blame. Her better half had proclaimed the names of Gupta and Kapoor to her. She went to the Guptas and said that they were liable for their (Kamla and Chander's) predicament and swore at them. Her language was oppressive to such an extent that eventually police were called for and Kamla was captured and placed in a lock up. Around evening time, Kamla was assaulted by two cops in the lock up. Next morning, she rocked back home. Chander chastened her for remaining out throughout the evening. He didn't ask her the justification for it and missed the blood-stained sari and neglected to see her vacant and empty eyes. He encouraged her to commit suicide in the event that she had any disgrace left in her. At the point when Ramchand was shipped off Chander's place to figure out his justification behind nonappearance from the shop, he recollected his most memorable gathering with her in the city and how she was beaten by Chander at home later. At the hour of second gathering, that day of first gathering returned to him clearly. That day had tormented him as an industrious feeling of culpability stayed in him. That day too Kamla kept mum however something made him wait. She wore a modest, purple nylon sari with an example of enormous white blossoms on it. In a croaking voice and with a squeaking body and a phantom like grin, she portrayed the tale of how the two cops had assaulted her and after her having kicked the second police in the stomach, how he abused her with a 'lathi'. Subsequently, she was draining lavishly. Following two months, Kamla went to the Kapoor House and mishandled the family. Whenever Ravinder Kapoor emerged, she flung a stone at him and it hit him on his brow. He began dying. Following day, four men broke into Chander's home and beat Kamla beat up within the sight of every one of her neighbors. They broke everything in her home. They broke her ribs, collar bone and her skull. They marched her in the area and later consumed her alive in her little house. It was reputed that she was strutted bare before her passing. Chander rescued a few things starting from the burnt house. He found in Kamla's trunk two dresses and a line of red glass globules wrapped cautiously in a Chinese silk scarf. He pondered regarding the reason why she had saved those things with her for such a long time.

The people, who assaulted Kamala, are, as a matter of fact, two cops and when she kicked one of the police officers, he did that with lathi (a stick). Simply envision the individual who should deal with the majority was himself associated with this sort of intolerable wrongdoing and it has been well depicted by Rupa Bajwa in the book. This novel involves concern in view of these mental inspirations, incensing dissatisfactions and stirred consciousness of individuals.

The novel investigates Rupa Bajwa's old neighborhood, and the class elements of India. The clever The Sari Shop was for some time recorded for the orange Award for Fiction in 2004. It won the 24th Wilson Kava Grant for Best first novel in June 2005. The clever won the Republic grant in 2005 and India's renowned Sahitya Institute Grant for English in 2006 separated from The Sari Shop Rupa Bajwa, additionally composed a disputable piece called Dim Things Occur in Gurdwara's Too in the Tribune. Furthermore, her second original she distributed was Recount to Me a Story. What's more, this is additionally exceptionally respected and valued by the perusers. Presently, discussing the novel, The Sari Shop, we observe that the city Amritsar, has been well investigated and portrayed in the novel, the old city has a shop named Sewak Sari House. What's more, it is this Sewak Sari House where Ramchand works. There are six different people additionally who work in Sewak Sari House and Mahajan is the proprietor of this Sari Shop in Amritsar. Ramchand, the hero of the novel, isn't happy with his own life and he needs a superior life for himself. He was not content with the existence he was driving. He was living in only one room, which was extremely dull and day to day he used to start off promptly toward the beginning of the day, get ready for the shop, and was frequently getting late and along these lines, he was being reproached by the Mahajan, sometimes or habitually he was being chastened for being late. Furthermore, the sort of life he drove was going to the Dhaba to have his supper, and afterward on Sundays, visiting or going to the performance centers to watch films, the early show shows, and this was the sort of life he was driving. Also, the Sari shop, where he worked, the rich ladies used to come and the shop

was belittled by them. Indeed, even the customary people likewise used to come, yet they were a couple of like the Kapoor's, or the Gupta's and the Sachdeva's, unmistakable the Mrs Sachdeva who was the head of an administration school in Amritsar. She likewise used to visit Sewak Sari House. On one occasion Mahajan requested Ramchand to go to the Kapoor's home for certain saris and afterward Ramchand goes there as an agent, to show these saris to the Kapoor's loved ones. He was amazed and entranced by the magnificence and effortlessness, the luxuriousness, the status, nobility of, and the abundance of the clients. The sort of life they were driving he had never considered. In the wake of noticing the status and expectation for everyday comforts of the Kapoor family Ramchand decides to learn English. About his past he was not poor yet his dad additionally possessed a shop. Be that as it may, presently, it was being claimed by his uncle's child since he was cheated by his own uncle, and it was acquired by him. His folks passed on at an early age, and he was dealt with by his uncle.

Rupa Bajwa has sensibly portrayed in the clever that the needy individuals are not just taken advantage of by the high society, or the exclusive class individuals, yet they are additionally taken advantage of by their own kin likewise, by their own family by their own family members, by individuals of their own local area and Ramchand's uncle is the best illustration of this. If not, Ramchand could not have possibly been working in the Sewak Sari House, or he would have been sitting in his own shop, and would have been the proprietor of the shop and partaking in his own rich life. Along these lines, who is answerable for his pitiable predicament as of now, obviously his own uncle. Thus, when he visits Kapoor's home, he is entranced to see the opulence, poise, and abundance of Kapoor's Family and this motivates him to learn English, which will make him like these distinguished individuals. It means to concentrate on English to lift one's status. On the off chance that someone has authority in English it implies he will have a well-off existence. He will have a refined existence and he can find true success in his life too. In this way, it is a medium to find actual success throughout everyday life, one can make progress throughout everyday life, with the mechanism of English language. This is the very thing that he thinks and therefore, when he returns, he proceeds to purchase a word reference, a book, so he can figure out how to compose letters. However, does it truly work out? Is it true or not that he is ready to change his own life? Is it safe to say that he is ready to be a fruitful individual? Presently, discussing one more person to some degree two of the novel, we track down another person Chander and his better half Kamala. Chander is one more sari vender in Sewak Sari House. Chander is exceptionally poor. Prior he used to work at Mr. Gupta and Kapoor's plant. Yet, he was not given compensation, and was sacked from that point and his significant other, Kamala was exceptionally irritated and disheartened at this. Kamala got hitched at 16 years old to Chander yet Chander was a lush. He used to drink, return home and beat his significant other. Here Chander practices his self-assumed male predominance on his better half and the writer has delightfully portrayed the double-dealing done by Chander on Kamala in the book. Whenever Chandra beats his significant other, the collaborators accept that he is correct. Chander had given legitimization in beating Kamala and his associates had additionally defended that he's making the best choice. There is no good reason for anything which is off-base.

Model "A lady ought to know her place. Perhaps she has had issues, yet it is a lady's obligation after all to bring care of her significant other and his back home first, and later contemplate herself." (The Sari Shop, 11)

By utilizing such sort of portrayal Rupa Bajwa needs to feature the man centric framework the man controlled society and according to the idea of the second rush of woman's rights, the extreme women's activists, they rebelled against the male custom that the male centric society is the underlying driver of their affliction. They are being abused, they don't have their own character and male-controlled society is liable for their misery. Whenever Bajwa says that perhaps she experiences issues, perhaps she has had issues, however it is a lady's obligation all things considered, to bring care of her significant other and his back home first and later ponder herself. It implies she has no privilege to contemplate herself except for it is her obligation to ponder the spouse first, she needs to deal with the jobs unmistakably that have previously been appointed to her. She can't work, she can't go out, she needs to observe every one of the guidelines, the standards which are set up by the general public. She can't ponder her own characters, she can't bring in cash. In this way, the jobs are as of now allocated. Furthermore, for that reason she needs to rely upon her better half and the spouse has the option to beat the wife. Also, for that reason Chander used to drink, and beat his better half, Kamla. He was a disappointed character and thus, he was drinking and beating his significant other. Thus, what should a spouse do then especially a Kamla like who was so good, so modest, so amenable thus respectful to her better half got totally different, on the grounds that it was actually quite challenging for her to bear the torment done by her significant other consistently and subsequently, she began disregarding accepted practices by becoming

inebriated and manhandling the affluent production line proprietor. Presently the inquiry is, the reason was she manhandling the rich processing plant proprietors. Chander said nothing, yet she was the person who needed to get payback from the plant proprietor for not paying the compensation of the work done by her better half. At the point when she begins mishandling the plant proprietors she is gravely beaten and tormented by the landscapers and drivers of Mr. Gupta and Mr. Kapoor. Everything her actual casing was twisted. She didn't get her own cash back, which she truly merited, yet rather was beaten. Thus, what is this, and who was answerable for this. It was Chander's obligation to proceed to request his cash, yet he didn't go. Kamala was cheerful when she was working with her mom when she was just six-year-old. She was content with her two dresses. She used to go to various houses where her mom used to work. She used to play with her dolls, and was blissful, and she believes that when she grows up and gets hitched, her life will be loaded with joy however this is the truth after marriage yet her fantasy about having a cheerful existence never materializes. At the point when she is pregnant, she believes that life will be fine and every one of her concerns will reach a conclusion. Why, on the grounds that in the house there was nothing with the exception of dejection, she was isolated in the house. There was no one to chat with her and to see the dawn and the nightfall separated from that there was nothing. Also, when she was pregnant, she believed that the kid will acquire satisfaction her life yet because of a premature delivery she loses her kid and once more, the manner in which she goes to the medical clinic, and how she was abused by the specialist, and around the same time she was feeling better from the emergency clinic. That is actually quite disheartening. At the pitiable situation of Kamala, and her better half, who should be thoughtful, shots on her and says that Kamala is answerable for her unsuccessful labor. However, the torment, the warding off her better half was answerable for that unnatural birth cycle. In any case, he faults Kamala, that she has killed her mom, her dad, her sibling's position is likewise gone in light of her. Furthermore, Chander continues accusing her by saying she has murdered his child and she will kill Chander likewise one day. Thus, this is the predicament of Kamala. In the novel, and Rupa Bajwa has well portrayed this separation. The class issues and the manner in which those who are well off acted with the poor. Individuals who are from the high society, individuals who are from the privileged class, they don't have anything to do with individuals from lower class. They won't ever help them. There is one illustration of Mrs Sachdeva, who was the head and from the informed class of the general public. She discusses the pitiable situation of the poor in conferences and seminars, however when Ramchand discusses Kamala and brings into her notification the predicament of Chander yet, when Ramchand discusses Kamala and brings into her notification the predicament of Chandra's significant other, she rejects straight away to do any sort of help to give assistance to Ramchand to Kamala. Seeing the predicament of Kamla, obviously she isn't just taken advantage of and tormented by the high society individuals yet additionally by her own significant other and individuals of her group. Privileged individuals don't have anything to do with the lower-class individuals and they won't help them however what might be said about this equivalent local area. Shouldn't something be said about a similar sex? At the point when we discuss woman's rights, the women's activists discuss balance. They discuss personality, they discuss pitiable situation, and they need to get freed from this multitude of tortures. On account of Kamla this large number of mistreatments and oppressions bring up an issue whether Kamla was dealt with similarly, was given right to training, and was practicing equivalent opportunity. Yet, to contemplate Kamala's predicament one might say that no move was initiated against the individual who was answerable for her pitiable situation and her affliction. Thus, along these lines, one might say that *The Sari Shop*, with its delicate streaming and delightful materials can be a declaration of effortlessness, unobtrusiveness and outlandishness, however it can likewise be prohibitive never permitting the lady to be by and large the thing she needs yet compelling her to be that what society believes her should be. Presently obviously *The Sari Shop* addresses effortlessness, unobtrusiveness and intrigue yet when the lady wears a sari when she encloses herself by the sari and she grins with it. This signal turns into an analogy of limitation that now she isn't permitted. It implies a lady isn't permitted to do what she needs however what the general public believes that her should do. She is shackled in the chains of custom and her own desire turns out to be less significant and what this general public needs turns out to be more significant.

Ramchand and his companions every now and again visited Lakhan's dhaba for food. Lakhan, whenever he got an opportunity, talked about his dead children. His significant other couldn't find some peace with the demise of her children. It was a hot day. The family felt crabby and cooped up. The more youthful child, scarcely sixteen, wore another blue turban. The two children were continually making either request thus the mother asked them both to go out for an hour or so as they were prepared. They needed to go to Organization Bagh-a public nursery. Whenever the mother brought up the distance, they said they would go to the Darbar Sahib. So his children had gone to the Brilliant Sanctuary. It was the day of the attack of the Brilliant Sanctuary. In the fight

between the military and Sikh fundamentalists, guiltless individuals were killed. Sikhs were killed on the spot. Lakhan's young men who seem to be monkeys yet in all actuality, is generally excellent looking, also are among the people in question.

Ramchand had generally stayed away from any discussion with Lakhan as he would definitely wind up discussing his children. However, after Kamla's demise, he went to the dhaba and requested Lakhan. On discovering that he was home, with practically no prelude, he burst into Lakhan's home. The old couple, in the daughterless, perfect house, was shocked as well as furious to see him. That evening, Ramchand understood the worthlessness of his investigations. He couldn't save Kamla structure Chander's beating and her life. He was insufficient notwithstanding Lakhan's despondency. As it were, he was continuously taking off from circumstances and life. He felt choked, insufficient and realized he was a defeatist, coldhearted individual.

There are changed sub-plots running in the text. Ramchand goes about as the associating join in *The Sari Shop*. His underestimated mind is featured in the book. He was the hero of Rina's novel and a visit to her home steered his life. Right from youth, his folks had discussed sending him to an English Medium school yet their inconvenient passing upset the plans. As an outcome, he became calmer and removed from everything. Yet, after the visit to Rina's home, he began purchasing and understanding books and learning English. He tidied up his room and needed to transcend his station. He was drawn in towards Sudha and fantasized about her. She and her significant other too were endeavoring to send their youngsters to English medium school. Rina and Sudha made him mindful of the number of nights he that had squandered throughout everyday life. In his investigation of English, he had learned about a cop being an extremely valuable and significant community worker. He went over the word 'twirly doo' and its equivalents, for example, 'club' and 'bludgeon'. Kamla's eyes and her story tormented him. Whenever he first had met her, Chander had beaten her and Ramchand had felt exceptionally vulnerable. He had felt compassion toward her and needed to help her somehow or another or other. He had taken in her name solely after her demise. He needed to inquire as to whether he had some significant awareness of her assault yet couldn't marshal boldness to do as such. After her assault, Ramchand turned out to be more removed. He wanted to shout without holding back. He needed to gather every one individuals in the shop and let them know everything. He had the senseless expectation that they would follow through with something. He considered telling Mrs. Gupta or Rina about it. He felt that being ladies, they would grasp its direness and importance. He had trusted in Mrs Sachdeva in light of the fact that he felt that being a scholarly she would identify. Yet, her response shocked him totally. He needed to give equity to Kamla after her passing. He needed to give equity to Lakhan also. This was another inclination, an extremely compelling inclination, and it was a blend of nonsensical dread and outrage. In his experience growing up, his mom had once thought that he is crying. His response on finding out about Kamla's assault was practically comparable. He cried uproariously and rambled. He felt weakened, vulnerable and unprotected. Dimness covered him. He had continuous bad dreams. He envisioned he was distant from everyone else in the sari shop. He was encircled by saris and quietness. There were shadows behind him. Little, thorny and undetectable things crept out of the white sleeping pads and continued on his body. Then, at that point, the saris started to get increasingly long and started to fold. Without precedent for his life, he yelled at his landowner. Then in the evening, he scowled at Mahajan and tried him to follow through with something. He got a seat and flung it at Hari and Chander who were snickering. He lurched at Mahajan and shook him in rage. He cautioned Hari not to chuckle and requested that Chander have heart and fortitude and not to act like an elderly person. All his disappointment and outrage had been given vent as such however accordingly he was in the feeling of dread toward losing his employment. He burned through twelve days secured in the room. On the thirteenth day, he understood that he had lost his employment. He went to the shop and paid attention to the reproving of Mahajan who believed that he was tanked on that specific day. Ramchand didn't dissent and requested to be excused as it was the most ideal way to save his work. In the evening, he tidied up the room yet painstakingly tried not to check the books out. The books had edified him to a little degree. This recently unfolded mindfulness had made him more aware of the predicament of the minimized, the resultant disappointment in addition to powerlessness and the power condition that existed in the general public. Along these lines, Rupa Bajwa utilizes the third individual account to think of her book. Also, she has depicted the general public she has reflected in an exceptional way. We say that writing is the reflection of society which mirrors the awkwardness, the treachery, the issues winning in this general public looked by the female sex and the issue looked by the lower-class individuals are equivalent for both the females and the guys. Their every one of the pitiable predicaments have been flawlessly depicted by Rupa Bajwa, in *The Sari Shop*.

4.3 Narrative Techniques

In *The Sari Shop* Rupa Bajwa has used a very genuine narrative technique. The setting of the novel is the urban society and market of old Amritsar city and the novelist has expressed her first hand experience of her personal life throughout the novel in developing the characters and extending the plot of the novel. The point of view used to narrate the story is a third person omniscient narrator who is none other than the writer, Rupa Bajwa herself. This novel has various themes like the ditch between rich and poor, exploitation, hopelessness, betrayal, hypocrisy, self-introspection, superiority and inferiority complex etc. The atmosphere created by the novelist to develop the plot and character is a perfect blend of traditional and modern life, rich and poor social status, cultured and savage life. The tone of the novel is mournful, pathetic and full of ironical expression. The genre of the novel is autobiography and satire.

Summary

Rupa Bajwa as a postmodern writer Rupa Bajwa, India's new literary find created commotion in the realm of contemporary Indian English fiction with the appearance of her debut novel, *The Sari House* (2004). Born in Amritsar, Punjab in a Sikh family, she started her writing career as a book reviewer and columnist in various famous publishing concerns such as *The Telegraph*, *The Tribune* and *India Today*. She writes immense reviews and articles. One of her articles entitled: *Dark Things Do Happen in Gurdwaras* brought her enormous criticism for the depiction of her own Sikh community. That rare creature, a writer who can interweave comedy and tragedy with perfection. Being a postmodern writer, she chooses not to write about fantasies and love stories, rather she portrays grim reality of things. Both of her novels *The Sari Shop* (2004) and *Tell Me a Story* (2012) aim at exposing the realities of life, the gruesome class distinction and the snobbery of society. Both these works are set in her hometown Amritsar and depict the plight of poor people or so-called lower strata in the society. Rupa Bajwa's debut novel won her Sahitya Academy award and was also shortlisted for Orange prize for fiction.

The Sari Shop is Rupa Bajwa's debut novel. Her depiction of the grim reality of life in multicultural, multilingual Indian society is amazing. She has drawn a number of male and female characters from the upper as well as lower strata of the society. Some of them are well etched, especially those of Ramchand and Kamla and project marginalized psyche. The hypocrisy of Rina and Mrs. Sachdeva is representative of stereotyped rich and neo-rich. The social realism depicted in the oeuvre is synonymous with the prevalent power equations in modern contemporary India. The main action of the story takes place in the *Sevak Sari House* which is an attraction and purpose of visit for women of all types. It is a prominent place where women assemble to buy new saris. This place is also a replica of trend, style, social influence and economic background.

The narrative technique used by Bajwa in the novel *The Sari Shop* is very effective. As the point of view used in the novel is a third person omniscient narrator. Setting is the urban life of both the rich and the poor. Language used by the writer is full of images.

Keywords

Overslept = Sleep too long

brawl = Fight

jolted = Shaken

zinc-coated iron cans = Made of Aluminum

strung = wound

bumped= bounced

pedestrian= men walking on the road

flared up= start suddenly
spectators= audience
ritual= ceremonial
intervened= interfered
stare= gaze
vacantly= expressionlessly
fuzzy = uncertain
frozen= ice-covered
dropping= falling
scalding = burning
fumbling = incompetent
rushed = hurried
bazaar= market
dodging= avoiding
perspiring= sweating
throbbing= excruciating
halwai= cook
Mishthaan = sweet cakes
Jalebi= a kind of sweet dish
simmered = boiled
cauldron= a large kettle or boiler
bazaars= markets
slightly = somewhat
Amritsar = A city in Punjab state of India, famous for Golden temple
transactions = businesses
bargained = negotiated
red-brick houses= Houses made of red brick
signboards= hoardings
thronged= crowded
doorsteps= entrances
Crumbling= Decaying
terraces = porches
overlapped= covered
Occasionally= Irregularly
Nudge= Jolt
Unyielding= rigid
squeeze = crush
congestion = overcrowding
eternal= everlasting
crazy= unwise
flourished= succeeded

tucked = inserted

reputations = Status etc.

Self Assessment

1. The name of the shop in the novel 'The Sari Shop' was:
 - A. Sevak Sari Emporium
 - B. Sevak Sari Ghar
 - C. Sevak Sari Mandir
 - D. None of the above

2. Kamla belonged to:
 - A. stereotypical orthodox family
 - B. aristocratic family
 - C. elite class
 - D. none of the above

3. Kamla is:
 - A. Chander's wife.
 - B. Ramchander's wife
 - C. Gokul's wife
 - D. None of the above

4. Rina Kapoor is a:
 - A. Professor
 - B. Teacher
 - C. Doctor
 - D. None of the above

5. Kamla gets married at the age of:
 - A. twelve
 - B. eight
 - C. sixteen
 - D. eighteen
6. Ramchand _____ the life he lives currently:
 - A. likes
 - B. dislikes
 - C. enjoys
 - D. ignores

7. Ramchand resolves to change his life by:
 - A. studying
 - B. working
 - C. playing
 - D. gambling

8. Kamla gets beaten and raped by:
- A. A police constable
 - B. Mr. Kapoor
 - C. A doctor in hospital
 - D. Mr. Gupta
9. The Sari can be a metaphor for:
- A. the lives of Indian women
 - B. the lives of rich people
 - C. the lives of people in rural India
 - D. none of the above
10. The Saree Shop is _____ novel of Rupa Bajwa
- A. Second
 - B. Sixth
 - C. Fourth
 - D. First
11. Who shouts at Ramchand when he enters into the Sevak Sari Shop
- A. Mahajan
 - B. Chander
 - C. Kamla
 - D. None
12. Who greets Ramchand joyfully as he sits for his work
- A. Gokul
 - B. Hari
 - C. Kamla
 - D. Mr Gupta
13. Who were the oldest shop assistants?
- A. Hari and Gokul
 - B. Shyam and Rajesh
 - C. Chander and Kamla
 - D. None
14. Whose son was Puneet:
- A. Mrs Sandhu
 - B. Mrs Gupta
 - C. Kamla
 - D. None
15. Whose marriage was fixed:
- A. Puneet
 - B. Shyam
 - C. Hari

D. Tarun

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. D | 2. A | 3. B | 4. D | 5. B |
| 6. B | 7. A | 8. A | 9. A | 10. D |
| 11. A | 12. B | 13. B | 14. B | 15. D |

Review Questions

1. Discuss Rupa Bajwa as a postcolonial novelist. Also comment on her shaping as a novelist.
2. Supply the plot of the novel *The Sari Shop*.
3. Comment on Rupa Bajwa's Art of Characterization with special reference to her debut novel *The Sari Shop*.
4. Class conflict is the main issue around which the entire story of *The Sari Shop* takes place.
5. Justify the title of the novel *The Sari Shop*.
6. Examine the narrative technique employed by Bajwa in the novel *The Sari Shop*.
7. What is the sub-plot in the novel *The Sari Shop*? Discuss in detail.



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Unit 05: Rupa Bajwa's the Sari Shop

CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

5.1 Social and Political Background

5.2 Character Analysis

5.3 Minor Characters

Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

Answers for Self Assessment

Review Questions

Further Reading

Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- Understand the Socio Political Background of the novel
- Examine the characters of the novel,
- Do the thematic analysis of the novel

Introduction

The Sari Shop, written by Rupa Bajwa depicts the social and political background in the novel which shows the corrupting influence of wealth i.e., the people who have money do not treat other people as a human being. They don't bother about the other person, and become self-centered. So, corrupting influence of wealth means the person who has wealth involves in corrupt activities. He becomes selfish personality, and there are so many examples in the novel, like the family of the Gupta's or the Kapoor's or, Mrs. Sachdeva, they all behave in the same manner as if they are absolutely mechanical. And there is total loss of human values. In the novel, Rupa Bajwa has very nicely depicted the class dynamics of India after independence. She has also highlighted the people who procure wealth and become rich but they behave with the poor people in a different way and different manner and they oppress, subjugate and torment them. They become ruthless and the emotions totally vanish. And there are several examples of the same and Rupa Bajwa has also discussed the empty and monotonous existence of middle-class people, and their unfulfilled desires. We come to know after reading the novel that corruption influences wish fulfilment and life struggles, a common man is not only exploited by the upper class, but also by the people of his own class, as in the case of Ram Chand, he was brought up by his uncle, there is no doubt in it, but actually, his property and his is inherited by his uncle, the shop for which Ram Chand was supposed to be the owner. His uncle's son was sitting there as the owner. And Ramchand himself works in shop Sewak Sari House as a sales person. His own kinsmen, his own uncle exploits, cheats and deceives him. And, so far as the law is concerned, law exists for the rich, while the poor, except injustice. That is true in the case of Kamla and Chander as well. Chander was working in Gupta's factory, but was not given remuneration. He came back and started working as a salesperson in Sewak Sari House and his wife, Kamla when she comes to know that her husband has not been paid salary for his work in the factory of Gupta's and Kapoor's. She plans to take the remuneration from the Gupta's and the Kapoor's. But what happens when she abuses them? She has to bear the brunt the torture and yet, the people who are supposed to be the protectors of common people, they themselves are indulged in criminal activities. So, how can a poor person expect justice in this society, it means rules are made for the poor, and not for the upper class, or the aristocratic class

people, they can do whatever they like. They can grease the palm of the authorities and be tension free.

5.1 Social and Political Background

In the novel *The Sari Shop* Ramchand was not born poor. He was born in a family of shop owners. But his bad luck started with the death of his parents. His parents died in an accident. He was forced to work in a sari shop by his uncle. His inheritance was also grabbed by his own uncle. And Rupa Bajwa has rightly portrayed, "Years later Ramchand had realized many things. He realized that he had once had a shop. A very small oneby rights that shop should have been Ramchand's. Instead, it now belongs to uncle's son.....Ramchand just couldn't be bothered to fight for what was his anymore." (47)

The changes took place when he visited the house of a wealthy family. The family hires the shop to provide saris for their daughter's (Rina Kapoor) upcoming wedding. His (Ramchand) glimpse into a different world gives him an urgent sense of possibility. He begins to see himself, his life, and his future more clearly. He attempts to recapture the hope that his childhood had promised him. 'Kamla' one of the central characters of the novel Bajwa burns the candle at both ends and goes about her deep concern about revealing the helplessness of the poor and the exploitation they face in life by the rich and aristocratic people Sorrowful joy and joyful sorrow in the thirsty soul of Kamla Her mother used to tell her: "girl must learn all household work and the sooner they started, the better it was for them.." (SS141).

She used to go with her mother to different houses and assisted her mother in her work. The household responsibility always remains only upon a girl. How can an eight-year-old girl take care of the complete house, her brother, and her father as well? However, it is the stereotypical orthodoxies followed since the old-time until today. Kamla worked in other houses and earned money. At the age of sixteen, she became very much an expert in her profession: "went in three different houses to work, cooking daals and vegetables, boiling rice and cleaning utensils efficiently every day" (SS144). She was very happy and satisfied with her life.

It is the second phase of her life where the real crisis begins. She gets married at the age of sixteen to Chander whom she never met before her marriage. She played the best role of an Indian housewife and Chander, on the other hand, played the best role of a husband by beating her like an animal in a drunken condition.

Previously Chander used to work under Mr. Gupta and Mr. Kapoor who expelled him without giving him wages. Chander tolerates it silently but it becomes intolerable for Kamla. So, she goes to Mr. Kapoor's house in a drunken condition and stands outside the gate, shouting at the top of her voice. Mr. Kapoor, a reputed personality, sees the poor woman and sends his driver and gardener to restrain her. But she let out a stream of abuses at them and abused the whole Kapoor family. "May God burn all you up in that big house or that big car of yours. May you die thirsting for a sip of water ...Your son is also a villain. Will your grandson also be the devil?" (SS168)

She does not stop here. Further, when Mr. Kapoor himself comes out, she throws a stone upon him and it struck upon his forehead, and the blood oozes out from there. Now, this was enough for Kapoor's family to make Kamla realize what mistake she had done. Now, Kamla is snared by the highbrows of cultured society. She is surprisingly ignorant towards the way of the world, which is disguised in good faces. Here, her entire life is translated into an even increasing entanglement. Consequently, her soul-destroying experience arrives at an absolute conclusion as this was a matter of prestige, a matter of honor for Kapoor's. The man-made world is shaken when a woman tries to go beyond her boundary. "They systematically broke her collarbone; they kicked her till two of her ribs broke. The back of her head split.....Then they dragged her outside and paraded her in the neighborhood with her hands tied behind her back so everyone could see what happened to those who stepped beyond their limits."(SS217)

Not only did this much happen to her but also, she has been pushed back to her home, locked the door, put kerosene, and set the house on fire. Kamla never went to school. She had to stay with her mother at home and sometimes went to other houses where her mother worked. After the death of her mother, she bore all the household responsibilities at the age of eight. There were her elder brother and father too. Still, her Bua (her father's sister) asked her: "Now, after your mother, you'll have to take care of your father and brother, okay? Behave like a big girl now." (SS143)

Kamla thought that her marriage would settle everything, and life will no longer be difficult. But soon she realized that she was wrong. Her life was filled with miseries and calamities. She 'had

Unit 05: Rupa Bajwa's the Sari Shop

begun to be tired of her life.' She accepts her husband's beating as part of her married life. "This was pretty common, she knew. Men often beat up their wives. It was a matter of routine, nothing personal. It shouldn't have worried her." (152)

Kamla wanted to earn money by doing some work outside but there were many restrictions for her as she was married. She remained alone in the house and passed time by watching the light changed from dull gray at noon and then dark gray in the evening. Her husband became very cruel towards her day by day and she silently accepted it because she did not have any other choice. She is supposed to bear exploitation and sufferings with willing fortitude. The silence of Kamla is not that of peace and tranquility. Rather, it is an amalgam of pain, anger, defensiveness, and rejection. It is one bristling with suppressed anger and a strong sense of injustice. She also adopts it as a strategy like most other women of our community do.

When Kamla becomes pregnant, she thinks that the child will bring happiness in her life. And her feelings have been very realistically presented by Bajwa in the novel, "Her world seemed to change overnight. It became newer, fresher and the gloom that had settled on her for the past year lifted. She smiled to herself sometimes while she worked. She began to look forward to having a child of her own. She knew she would never be bored or listless or lonely again once the child came." (153)

She was very happy that she will become a mother very soon but her destiny was something else. She had a miscarriage one day. She hurriedly went to the government hospital which was full of ailing people. No one took her seriously until an attendant saw the traces of blood at her ankles, below her sari. Here Bajwa accedes to cast light on the human psyche that is swayed by the social forces of the existing system in society. A rude doctor examined her. She was admitted and discharged from the hospital on the same day, in spite of her intense pain. The doctor told her that she had lost her baby and would never conceive again. This was the end of her happiness; there was nobody with whom she could share her pain. It gathered inside. Her agonizing predicament is that she is in excessive distress and runs to the earth herself alone. That is what creates murkiness in her life. She is not in receipt of love and affection from the near and dear ones. And initially, she has not remarkable courage to fight hand to hand against this solitary isolation, which is translated into the evil spirit and inconceivable nightmare. Poignant sorrow, utter disappointment, enormous suffering, emotional isolation, and mournful bewilderment towards present-day society are the saddest consequences of her crisis.

Even Kamla bites the bullet of an unexpected point at the issue of the miscarriage and the death of her child. Her husband Chander accused her of the death of his child. Bajwa narrates her humiliating experiences of struggle for existence, "You killed your mother. You ate up your own father. Your brother lost his job. Now you have eaten up my child. Soon you will devour me." (Bajwa, 157)

Poverty, lack of education, loneliness, and most importantly the beating of her husband became the cause of her abortion. The whole life was full of gloom and when a ray of happiness came towards her, she could not capture it. Her worst trouble, increasingly tormenting, mind-numbing despair invites readers to the way towards the ominous apprehension of the wholehearted appreciation of life. To tell the truth that gets to be like a catharsis she learns that life has no ideal substitute and everyone has to lead the life. As a result, she started drinking, "Kamla started by taking swigs from this bottle. She would drink just a little bit, and to make up for it, she would fill the bottle up with water, making sure she dried the outside of the bottle and cork with one end of her sari pallu." (SS158)

Her inner pain mixed with alcohol came out into a new shape. A very sensitive and wise girl became very abusive. She was considered very insane and a lunatic by people. She became very rebellious and she went to her husband's previous owner who did not give him his wages. For the sake of her husband, she took this step but she had been beaten up and burnt up by these people. Who brings this critical stage? Can the legal system offer the right justice? These questions are directed toward social realism. Bajwa voices her enforced solitude that points to solitary isolation from human relationships and also trenches upon repudiation by society. Bajwa in an interview says, "In our complex society, it is really not easy to change the world, or even part of it, or even our own life sometimes" (The Tribune, 2004).

She accedes to cast light on the human psyche that is swayed by the social forces of the existing system in society. Kamla is even tortured by the policeman who is considered as the public servant and the rescuer of a human being. In Kamla's life, the meaning of the police changed when she is raped by two policemen inside the jail. One of them is a married man. So after his full satisfaction, he went home to his wife, while the other stayed back, drinking cheap rum and hoping to have another go at Kamla in the morning before letting her leave. The white flowers of her sari become

red with blood because when she kicked him back to rescue herself, she had to bear a dangerous situation.

After the first attempt, when he came for the second time to do it, Kamla kicked him. It was against his self-respect and reputation that how a worthless woman beat him back. So he picked up his lathi and do it with it. Kamla was helpless because the savior of the public was ruining her, so how could Kamla get justice.

5.2 Character Analysis

Ramchand

Ramchand was not born poor. He was born in a family of shop owners. But his bad luck started with the death of his parents. His parents died in an accident. He was forced to work in a sari shop by his uncle. His inheritance was also grabbed by his own uncle.

“Years later Ramchand had realized many things. He realized that he had once had a shop. A very small oneby rights that shop should have been Ramchand’s. Instead, it now belongs to uncle’s son.....Ramchand just couldn’t be bothered to fight for what was his any more.” (47)

Ramchand has a wish to learn English grammar for the fulfillment of his desire. He buys a second-hand grammar book, an Oxford Dictionary, a fresh pair of socks, and a bar of lifebuoy soap. These four things will give him the kind of life he has wanted since childhood. But soon these efforts turn his life upside down, bringing him face to face with the cruelties on which his very existence depends.

After the death of Kamla, Ramchand had spent the next twelve days locked up in his room. These twelve days without any rage, reservations, contentment, doubt, objective and grief, feeling completely void. But on the day of thirteen, he proceeds to his senses, the very actuality of life.

“What had he done? People died to get a good job all their lives.....he had thrown a perfectly good job away. How could he survive now”? (237)

Then he decided to go back to Mahajan and sought forgiveness.

Bhimsen Seth

Bhimsen Seth is the owner of Sevak Sari House.

The Shop had been set up by Sevak Ram.

Mahajan had come to Bhimsen looking for a work.

Mahajan was only fifteen at that time.

Mahajan

Mahajan looked for practical affairs of the shop under Bhimsen’s supervision.

He oppresses Ramchand.

“Coming late? You think I don’t notice? Am I blind? Are you a king or something? Raja Ramchand? Should we send an entourage and a bagghi to pick you every day (6,7) ?” Every moment he has to listen to the harsh words of Mahajan. Therefore, he has to lead the life of a disaffected man. Thus, the story exposes the corrupting influence of wealth and bad effects of poverty that continue in parts of India today.

Chander

Previously he used to work under Mr. Gupta and Mr. Kapoor who expel him without giving him wages. Chander tolerates it silently but it becomes intolerable for Kamla. So, she goes to Mr. Kapoor’s house in a drunken condition and stands outside the gate, shouting at the top of her voice. Mr. Kapoor, a reputed personality, sees the poor woman and sends his driver and gardener to restrain her. But she let out a stream of abuses at them and abuses the whole Kapoor family, “May God burn all you up in that big house or that big car of yours. May you die thirsting for a sip of water ...Your son is also a villain. Will your grandson be also the devil?” (SS168)

Kamla

In the novel, Kamla, the wife of Chander, works along with Ramchand in the same sari shop.

Unit 05: Rupa Bajwa's the Sari Shop

Kamla never went to school. She had to stay with her mother at home and sometimes went to other houses where her mother worked. After the death of her mother, she bore all the household responsibilities at the age of eight. There were her elder brother and father too. Still, her Bua (her father's sister) asked her: "Now, after your mother, you'll have to take care of your father and brother, okay? Behave like a big girl now." (SS143)

Kamla thought that her marriage would settle everything, and life will no longer be difficult. But soon she realized that she was wrong. Her life was filled with miseries and calamities. She 'had begun to be tired of her life.' She accepts her husband's beating as part of her married life.

"This was pretty common, she knew. Men often beat up their wives. It was a matter of routine, nothing personal. It shouldn't have worried her." (152)

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She is raped by two policemen inside the jail. One of them is a married man. So after his full satisfaction, he went home to his wife, while the other stayed back, drinking cheap rum and hoping to have another go at Kamla in the morning before letting her leave.

Mrs. Sachdeva

Mrs. Sachdeva, Head of the English Department at a local college. Ramchand did gather enough courage to talk about Kamla to Mrs. Sachdeva in the hope of justice, but she curtly refutes his charges saying "The Gupta's are respectable people. They happen to be friends of the Kapoor's. Do you know what you are saying? And do you have proof of all this? And why are you telling me? What have I got to do with all this dirty business (214)?"

Ravinder Kapoor

A Businessman of the town who is full of pride of his wealth and social position. The sad end comes when Kamla hurls a stone at Ravinder Kapoor. "It was a matter of prestige in the city. He could not let a common woman go scot-free after that. Yes, it was a matter of his prestige, a matter of honour" (217). The next morning saw the woman brutally beaten and paraded naked in the streets and then burnt to death. Was this the plight of a woman who wanted a simple life for herself?

Mrs Kapoor and Rina Kapoor

They are Ravinder Kapoor's wife and daughter. Mrs. Sachdeva goes to meet Rina to wish her for her forthcoming wedding? As Mrs. Sachdeva wishes Rina, Mrs. Kapoor gets up and leaves the room. Her speaking in English is taken as a gesture of showing off. This most probably irritates Mrs. Kapoor: a moneyed class woman. Rupa Bajwa clearly shows this..."

Mrs. Kapoor

Mrs. Kapoor at once gets up and moves out of the room. That woman, speaking in English on purpose, just to show her up, she thought, as she left the room fuming. Well, they didn't even have their own house, they lived in accommodation provided by the college, so she wasn't going to bother about this sort of woman" (92).

She tries to cover up her inability to converse in a foreign language by throwing around her weight of money by saying all this. Now here the disparity existing in the class categorization is evident. We can easily judge that her English speaking is deplored by the non-English speakers. It seems as if Mrs. Sachdev is carrying a curse by living in a house provided by the college or is it her English which is irksome to some. Now it is not that the moneyed people are looking down upon the service class. It is also the other way around.

Mrs. Sachdeva

Mrs. Sachdeva plays her part of the society's representative of the educated and elite group and moves to the length of saying that she is glad that Rina is not marrying into the business families. According to her a girl like Rina needs a more cultured atmosphere to explore her potential (92).

She even goes to the length to tell Rina not to be offensive of her talks about not marrying in a business family. The youth of today realizes this gap between the moneyed business class and the educated service class. They try to lessen the gap with much sensitivity. In this case, Rina offers the other side of the coin.

Rina Kapoor

Rina says, "There are, of course, what we call the service class families. They look down upon us moneyed, uncultured ones, and we look down upon them, for they have no money, no big houses, though I must say that these days, with bribes and all, even they are doing quite well. Most of them have big houses in the outskirts of the city also ancestral property I suppose..... (93). Rina carefully tries to bridge the gap by saying that today's service class too has progressed fast.

Mrs. Bhandari, Mrs. Gupta and Ms. Sandhu

Mrs. Bhandari, Mrs. Gupta and Ms. Sandhu talk about family affairs of daughter -in - law, daughter and so on. The rich upper class gives big lectures on equality in the real society where can we see this equality. Not only the moneyed people look down on the literates, but the tables are also turned when the literates like Mrs. Sachdev call people like Mrs. Sandhu as having nothing in their heads except money and non-sense. The elite class is adept at camouflaging their ways through their smooth talks. Mrs. Gupta says that one has to be polite because, "as we live in the same city so we tend to meet each other frequently."

5.3 Minor Characters

In the novel there are some minor character like Tarun the elder son of Mr and Mrs Gupta's, Shilpa Tarun's wife, Puneet the younger son of Mr and Mrs Gupta, Lakhani Singh talks about his dead son with Ramchand, Hari, Gokul, Shyam, and Rajesh work in Sevak Sari House. These characters play an important role in the story in establishing the link with main characters and the plot.

Thematic Analysis

Class Struggle: The Upper and The Lower Class

Social scientist Karl Marx was one of the first to focus mainly on social class and according to him, one's social class dictated one's social life. The upper-class people enjoyed all the facilities of life, while those in the lower class lived lives of hardship and poverty. According to conflict theory, social stratification benefits the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor.

The Literate Class

The literate class of the society is so-called 'respected' by one and all. When Ramchand tells Gokul that he had not brought the payment of saris from the Kapoor's house....Gokul was shocked at the thought of Ramchand and trying to take payment from Kapoor's.

The Aristocratic Class

He says, "I was so scared. You'd start demanding the payment and create a scene and Mahajan would haul me up for not briefing you properly. Now, go and report to Mahajan. He has a list of all that was sent. He will send in the bill to Ravinder Kapoor who will give us a cheque. That's how it works with these big people, you know" (69).

The Face of Society

This is what is presumed by us. But is this the real face of our society? Do we call a good thing good and a bad thing bad on the face of it? The blatant and obvious answer is a big no. We try to imitate the rich, as when Ramchand after coming from Kapoor's house goes to buy a book for himself in the vain hope of being at par with the elite group of the society. When Ramchand comes out of the shop after purchasing a book he feels so elated that Rupa Bajwa explains his condition as if "he felt armed to fight now." (72) He wanted to show the society that he also can become equal to the literate class.

The Affluent and The Service Class

The society is subdued somewhere by the weight of the affluent class. The class of literate are somewhat thrown in the background of the society as the so-called 'service class who have to survive on limited resources only. Rupa Bajwa very poignantly throws light on the multilingual and multicultural aspects of life in a society woven by false prejudices.

The Class Conflict

How evident is the class conflict when Mrs. Sachdev goes to meet Rina to wish her for her forthcoming wedding? As Mrs. Sachdeva wishes Rina, Mrs. Kapoor gets up and leaves the room. Her speaking in English is taken as a gesture of showing off. This most probably irritates Mrs. Kapoor: a moneyed class woman. Mrs. Kapoor at once gets up and moves out of the room. That woman, speaking in English on purpose, just to show her up, she thought, as she left the room fuming. Well, they didn't even have their own house, they lived in accommodation provided by the college, so she wasn't going to bother about this sort of woman" (92).

The Significance of Language

She tries to cover up her inability to converse in a foreign language by throwing around her weight of money by saying all this. Now here the disparity existing in the class categorization is evident. We can easily judge that her English speaking is deplored by the non-English speakers. It seems as if Mrs. Sachdeva is carrying a curse by living in a house provided by the college or is it her English which is irksome to some. Now it is not that the moneyed people are looking down upon the service class. It is also the other way around. Mrs. Sachdeva plays her part of the society's representative of the educated and elite group and moves to the length of saying that she is glad that Rina is not marrying into the business families. According to her a girl like Rina needs a more cultured atmosphere to explore her potential (92).

Living Standard

Not only the living standards of both classes are wide apart, but their topics of discussions too vary. When Rina and Mrs. Sachdeva, the HOD of the English department talks, it is about subjects like anthropology and about gaining a position in society through academics. On the other hand, Mrs. Bhandari, Mrs. Gupta and Ms. Sandhu talk about family affairs of daughter-in-law, daughter and so on.

Equality

We talk so much about equality everywhere. Even the rich upper class gives big lectures on equality. But in the real society which our eyes behold, where can we see this equality? Not only the moneyed people look down on the literates, but the tables are also turned when the literates like Mrs. Sachdeva call people like Mrs. Sandhu as having nothing in their heads except money and non-sense. The only saving grace is that the elite class is adept at camouflaging their ways through their smooth talks. Hence Mrs. Gupta says that one has to be polite because she says, "as we live in the same city so we tend to meet each other frequently."

Hypocrisy

All this clearly brings forth the hypocrisy existing in the society on a parallel plane with the conflicts of the rich and the 'not so rich class'. Society is a juxtaposition of goodness and evil prevalent in the society. The most victimized lot is that of females living below the poverty line. They are treated as mere objects by the egoist members of society. Rupa Bajwa very clearly unfolds the status of women in such cases through the case of Kamla, the wife of Chander who had lost his job because of the downfall of Gupta's.

Male Domination

Kamla did not know the reason for her husband's indifference and she really wanted to find out why her husband was so rude and ruthless to her. Later she finds that her husband's previous owner Mr. Gupta and Mr. Kapoor are responsible for this animal kind of behaviour. Chander works in Sevak Sari House. Previously he used to work under Mr. Gupta and Mr. Kapoor who expel him without giving him wages. Chander tolerates it silently but it becomes intolerable for Kamla. Oppression So, she goes to Mr. Kapoor's house in a drunken condition and stands outside the gate, shouting at the top of her voice. Mr. Kapoor, a reputed personality, sees the poor woman and sends his driver and gardener to restrain her. But she let out a stream of abuses at them and abuses the whole Kapoor family, "May God burn all you up in that big house or that big car of yours. May you die thirsting for a sip of water ...Your son is also a villain. Will your grandson be also the devil?" (SS168) She does not stop here. Further, when Mr. Kapoor himself comes out, she throws a stone upon him and it struck upon his forehead, and the blood oozes out from there. Now, this was enough for Kapoor's family to make Kamla realize what mistake she had done. In a society such as ours, "there are manifolds of relations of power that permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse" (Foucault, 59).

Matter for Honour

Now, Kamla is snared by the highbrows of cultured society. She is surprisingly ignorant towards the way of the world, which is disguised in good faces. Here, her entire life is translated into an even increasing entanglement. Consequently, her soul-destroying experience arrives at an absolute conclusion as this was a matter of prestige, a matter of honour for Kapoor's. The man-made world is shaken when a woman tries to go beyond her boundary.

"They systematically broke her collarbone, they kicked her till two of her ribs broke. The back of her head split..... Then they dragged her outside and paraded her in the neighborhood with her hands tied behind her back so everyone could see what happened to those who stepped beyond their limits." (SS217)

Cruelty

Not only did this much happen to her but also, she has been pushed back to her home, locked the door, put kerosene, and set the house on fire.

Justice

In Kamla's life, the meaning of the police changed when she is raped by two policemen inside the jail. One of them is a married man. So after his full satisfaction, he went home to his wife, while the other stayed back, drinking cheap rum and hoping to have another go at Kamla in the morning before letting her leave.

Helplessness

The white flowers of her sari become red with blood because when she kicked him back to rescue herself, she had to bear a dangerous situation. After the first attempt, when he came for the second time to do it, Kamla kicked him. It was against his self-respect and reputation that how a worthless woman beat him back. So he picked up his lathi and do it with it. Kamla was helpless because the saviour of the public was ruining her, so how could Kamla get justice.

Social Consciousness

Thus, a close examination of the novel substantiates the fact that Rupa Bajwa as Indo-English Writer, like any creative writer, writes with a social consciousness born of the phenomena enacted around her. She is essentially a realist who moves around the society and experiences the crisis and tensions of the struggling classes.

Summary

- Both the protagonists Ramchand and Kamla of the novel *The Sari Shop* are victims of their socio-political background. Kamla accedes to cast light on the human psyche that is swayed by the social forces of the existing system in society. She is beaten mercilessly by the goons of Mr. Gupta and Mr. Kapoor when she goes to their house to demand the wages of the work done by her husband in their factory. Kamla is even tortured by the policeman who is considered as the public servant and the rescuer of a human being. In Kamla's life, the meaning of the police changed when she is raped by two policemen inside the jail. One of them is a married man. So after his full satisfaction, he went home to his wife, while the other stayed back, drinking cheap rum and hoping to have another go at Kamla in the morning before letting her leave. The white flowers of her sari became red with blood because when she kicked him back to rescue herself, she had to bear a dangerous situation. Ramchand works as a helper in The Sevak Sari Shop but he is not a born poor. His parents were owners of a shop but after their death that shop were grabbed by his uncle and he is left to suffer. So the case of suffering in the life of Ramchand is also the socio-political background of his society. When he goes to the house of Ravinder Kapoor to show saris to the ladies he observes his language and living standard is case of his lower status and he decides to learn English and wear fashionable clothes which is nothing but an example of class consciousness. But by heart Ramchand is a genuine human being and he fails to control his emotion on hearing about the case of Kamla and her heart trenching death and he locks himself in his room for fifteen days in remorse and guilt. So both Kamla and Ramchand are a reflection of the social and political background of Bajwa's contemporary society.
- The novel *The Sari Shop* deals with the pain and suffering of the poor who are not only exploited by the upper class but also by the people of their class and close relatives. Ramchand was not born poor. He was born in a family of shop owners. But his bad luck started with the death of his parents. His parents died in an accident. He was forced to work in a sari shop by his uncle. His inheritance was also grabbed by his own uncle. Kamla In the novel, Kamla, the wife of Chander, works along with Ramchand in the same sari shop. Chander previously used to work under Mr. Gupta and Mr. Kapoor who expelled him without giving him wages. Chander tolerates it silently but it becomes intolerable for Kamla. So, she goes to Mr. Kapoor's house in a drunken condition and stands outside the gate, shouting at the top of her voice. Mr. Kapoor, a reputed personality, sees the poor woman and sends his driver and gardener to restrain her. But she let out a stream of abuses at them and abuses the whole Kapoor family. Remaining characters of the novel are minor either associate with Sevak Sari Shop or they are customers of this shop but the main plot of the novel rotates around Ramchand and Kamla.
- The novel *The Sari Shop* deals with the themes like Class Struggle: The Upper and The Lower Class, The Literate Class, The Aristocratic Class, The Face of Society, The Affluent and The Service Class, The Class Conflict, The Significance of Language, Living Standard, Equality, Hypocrisy, Male Domination, Matter for Honour, Cruelty, Justice, Helplessness and Social Consciousness. Through these themes the author has tried to project the plight of Ramchand, Kamla and Chander, the protagonists of the novel.

Keywords

Karl Marx, class conflict, upper class, lower class, literate class, aristocrat class, hypocrisy, male domination, cruelty, justice, helplessness, social consciousness

SelfAssessment

1. The owner of Sevak Sari House is:
 - A. Mahajan
 - B. Bhimsen Seth
 - C. Sevak Ram
 - D. None of the above

2. The Shop 'Sevak Sari House' had been set up by:
 - A. Sevak Ram
 - B. Mahajan
 - C. Bhimsen Seth
 - D. None of the above

3. Mrs. Sachdeva goes to meet _____ to wish her for her forthcoming wedding?
 - A. Priya
 - B. Ms Gupta
 - C. Rina
 - D. None of the above

4. The elder son of Mr and Mrs Gupta is:
 - A. Tarun
 - B. Rahul
 - C. Dinesh
 - D. None of the above

5. The name of Tarun's wife is:
 - A. Chhaya
 - B. Aarati
 - C. Priyanka
 - D. Shilpa

6. Why does Ramchand go to the Kapoor's family?
 - A. for a job
 - B. for money
 - C. to sell sari
 - D. none of the above

7. What did Kamla think about her future after marriage?

Unit 05: Rupa Bajwa's the Sari Shop

- A. Her life will no longer be difficult
 - B. Her life will be same as was in her parents house
 - C. Her marriage would destroy her life
 - D. Her marriage would change her husband's life
8. When Kamla becomes pregnant, She thinks
- A. The child will bring a lot of problems in her life
 - B. She will lose her freedom
 - C. Her husband will stop loving her
 - D. The child will bring a lot of happiness in her life
9. When Kamla was admitted in the hospital as the result of her miscarriage, she was discharged from the hospital-
- A. after 2 days
 - B. after 1 weeks
 - C. on the same day
 - D. she was not admitted in the hospital
10. Which of the following is not the cause of Kamla's sabostion?
- A. Beating by her husband
 - B. poverty
 - C. loneliness
 - D. her frank nature
11. Ramchand was born in a family of:
- A. sweet sellers
 - B. shop owners
 - C. teachers
 - D. doctors
12. How did Ramchand's parents die?
- A. Met with an accident
 - B. Ailing for a long time
 - C. Drowned
 - D. Committed suicide
13. Ramchand's inheritance was grabbed by his own:
- A. elder brother
 - B. uncle
 - C. cousin
 - D. sister
14. Ramchand buys:

- A. a second-hand grammar book
 B. an Oxford Dictionary
 C. a fresh pair of socks
 D. all of the above
15. After the death of Kamla, Ramchand had spent the next _____ days locked up in his room.
- A. Ten
 B. Twelve
 C. Fifteen
 D. Five

Answers for Self Assessment

1. B 2. A 3. C 4. A 5. D
 6. C 7. A 8. D 9. C 10. D
 11. B 12. A 13. B 14. D 15. B

Review Questions

- Analyze the social political background of the novel *The Sari Shop*. Also quote lines from the text of the novel in support of your answer.
- How relevant is the opinion of Karl Marks about class conflict in the context of the background of the novel *The Sari Shop*?
- Which social factor is responsible for the pain and suffering in the life of the Protagonist Ramchand in the novel *The Sari Shop*? Discuss it with reference to the text of the novel.
- The characters of Bajwa are an epitome of her real life experiences of Amritsar city. Comment on this statement in the light of characterization done by the novelist in *The Sari Shop*.
- Compare and contrast the character of Ramchand and Kamla of *The Sari Shop*.
- Supply the character sketch of *Ramchand*.
- Supply the character sketch of *Kamla*.
- Write an essay on different themes employed by the author of the novel *The Sari Shop*.
- Comment on the theme of class conflict in the novel *The Sari Shop*.
- Comment on the theme of justice and cruelty in the novel *The Sari Shop*.

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Unit 06: Tagore's Leave this Chanting and Singing

CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

6.1 Shaping of Tagore as a Poet

6.2 Textual Analysis of the Poem

6.3 Thematic Analysis of the Poem

6.4 Symbols and Motifs

6.5 Stylistic Features of the Poem

Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

Answers for Self Assessment

Review Questions

Further Reading

Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- Explore the life and works of R N Tagore,
- Textual analysis of the poem *Leave this Chanting*
- Thematic analysis of the poem *Leave this Chanting*
- Symbol and motifs in the poem *Leave this Chanting*
- Stylistic features of the poem *Leave this Chanting*

Introduction

Ravindra Nath Tagore is a stalwart in the galaxy of Indian intellectuals who is famous for many reasons. Be it his contribution in the form of composing national anthem of India and Bangladesh or be it the first Asian to achieve prestigious Nobel Prize for his Geetanjali or establishing Shanti Niketan a learning center modeled on Classical Indian pattern with blend of western philosophy. For his role as a guide in every march of life Mahatma Gandhi gave him the gracious title of Gurudev. The present poem *Leave this Chanting and Singing* is a multidimensional poem targeting spiritual and social aspects of the society in his collection of songs 'Geetanjali'. This poem reveals the poet's profound devotion and faith in God. It belongs to the tradition of 'Bhakti poetry'. The poet's deep knowledge of God gives him new treatment. In this poem addressing the worshipers the poet shares the practical aspect of devotion. The poet says that the God cannot be found in the temple rather He is in the hardworking farmers and laborers. So through this poem Tagore conveys as message to the people of the world to respect the poor workers and farmers which will be real devotion to the God.

6.1 Shaping of Tagore as a Poet

Introduction: Rabindra Nath Tagore was born on 7th May 1861, in Calcutta as youngest Son among thirteen children and he was raised by servants and maids. He lost his mother while he was very young and his father was an extensive traveler, so Tagore grew without care of his parents. He had been associate with Bengal Renaissance and started penning down poems and composed art works

Post-Independence Indian Literature

at a tender age of 8 years only. By the age of sixteen he started publishing poems under the pseudonym Bhanusimha and wrote the short story, 'bhikharini' in 1877. His collection of poems 'sandhyasangit' was published by him in 1882. Tagore drew inspiration by reading the classical poetry of Kalidasa and started coming up with classical poems of his own. For his poetic creativity influences and inspirations came from his brothers and sisters also. Dwijendra Nath, his elder brother, was a poet and philosopher. Satyendra Nath, his another brother was in a highly respectable position. His sister Swarna Kumari, a well-known novelist

Home-schooled, was trained by his siblings in the field of gymnastics, martial arts, art, anatomy, literature, history and mathematics among various other subjects. In 1873, he accompanied his father and toured the country for many months and acquired knowledge on several subjects. His stay at Amritsar paved the way for him to learn about Sikhism and penned down as many as six poems and many articles on the religion. Tagore's traditional education began in Britain, East Sussex, England, at a public school. He was sent to England in the year 1878 as his father wanted him to become a barrister. He was later joined by some of his relatives like his nephew, niece and sister-in-law in order to support him during his stay in England. Despised formal education and no interest in learning from his school later on, Tagore enrolled at the University College in London to learn law. Once again dropped out and learned several works of Shakespeare on his own. Learning the essence of English, Irish and Scottish literature and music, he returned to India. He married Mrinalini Devi when she was just 10 years old. Rabindra Nath's father had bought a huge stretch of land in Santiniketan and with an idea of establishing an experimental school in his father's property, he shifted base to Santiniketan in 1901 and founded an ashram, a prayer hall, named the temple.

Classes used to take place under the trees and there was a traditional guru-shishya method of teaching in practice. His wife and two of his children died during their stay in Santiniketan left Rabindra Nath distraught. In the meantime, his works started growing more and more popular amongst the Bengali as well as the foreign readers and he gained recognition all over the world. In 1913 Rabindra Nath Tagore was awarded the prestigious Nobel Prize in literature, becoming Asia's first Nobel Laureate. Rabindra Nath Tagore believed in the concept of one world, set out on a world tour, spread his ideologies. His translated works caught the attention of many legendary poets. He delivered lectures in countries like the United States and Japan and also visited places like Mexico, Singapore and Rome. He met national leaders and important personalities including Einstein and Mussolini in 1927, Southeast Asian Tour. He inspired many with his wisdom and literary works. Tagore also used this opportunity to discuss with many world leaders, the issues between Indians and the English. His initial aim was to put an end to nationalism as the nationalism was mightier than his ideology. In order to accomplish his ideology he visited as many as thirty countries spread over five continents. He wrote several poems, novels and short stories. Tagore started writing at a very young age, he began to write short stories since teenage. As we know that his first story is 'bhikharini' and at initial stage, his stories dealt with the reflection of his surroundings, mixed with social issues and problems of the poor man. He wrote about the downside of Hindu marriages and several other customs that were part of the country's tradition back, Kabuliwala, Kshudita Pashan, Atottju, Haimanti, Musalmanir Golpo. His writings include novels which were mostly under-appreciated. His unique style of narrating a story is difficult for comprehension by the contemporary readers. Tagore has spoken about the impending dangers of nationalism among other relevant social evils. In 'Shesher Kobita' Tagore has narrated its story through poems and rhythmic passages of the main protagonist and has given a satirical element to it by making his characters take jibes at an outdated poet named Rabindra Nath Tagore whose other famous novels are 'Noukadubi', 'Gora', 'Chaturanga', 'Ghare Baire' and 'Jogajog'.

Talking about his poems it can be said that he drew inspiration from ancient poets like Kabir and Ramprasad Sen his poetry is often compared to the 15th and 16th century works of classical poets. By infusing his own style of writing, he made people to take note of not only his works but also the works of ancient Indian poets.

He composed a poem in 1893 and addressed a future poet through his work and urged the yet to be born poet to remember Tagore and his works while reading the poem and his best works include 'Balaka', 'Purobi', 'Sonar tori' and 'Gitanjali'. He wrote many dramas, based on Indian mythology and contemporary social issues. He began his dramatic works along with his brother when he was only a teen. The drama 'Valmiki Pratibha' at the age of 20 based on the legendary dacoit Valmiki drawing and painting at sixty displayed at exhibitions organized throughout Europe. The style of his dramas had certain peculiarities in aesthetics and coloring schemes distinguished from other artists influenced by the craftwork of the Malanggan people, Northern New Ireland. He was also influenced by Haida carvings from the west coast of Canada and Woodcuts by Max Pechstein. The

national gallery of modern art in New Delhi Houses had as many as 102 art works of Tagore. Though Tagore denounced nationalism, he also vouched for the Indian independence through some of his politically charged songs. He supported Indian nationalists and publicly criticized European Imperialism. He also criticized the education system that was forced upon India by the English. In 1915, he received knighthood from the British Crown, which he later renounced citing the massacre held at Jallianwala Bagh. He said that the knighthood meant nothing to him when the British failed to even consider his fellow Indians as humans. Many of his novels and short stories made into films by Satyajit Ray and other filmmakers also over the years, drew inspiration from his works and incorporated his stories into movies as many as 39 stories of his were made into films by various directors and a few other stories were made into TV Series. Some of the recent movie adaptations include 'Detective', 'Postmaster', 'Jogajog', 'ShesherKabita' and 'TasherDesh.' Rabindra Nath Tagore spent the last four years of his life in constant pain and was bogged down by two long bouts of illness. In 1937, he went into a comatose condition, which relapsed after a period of three years. After an extended period of suffering, Tagore died on August 7, 1941 in the same Jorasanko Mansion in which he was brought up. He changed the way Bengali Literature and left an everlasting impression on many. Many busts and statues erected in many countries. Many institution organize yearly events to pay tribute to him. Many of his works have gained international reputation and have been translated by many famous international writers. Five museums dedicated to Tagore, three in India, two in Bangladesh have been constructed and millions of visitors visit them every year.

6.2 Textual Analysis of the Poem

The poet sees a devotee alone in the corner of the temple with all the doors locked. He performs a song in honor of God. The poet asks him to leave the poem, to sign and to say the beads. The poet asks him to open his eyes and see that there is no Deity in front of him. God is not dwelling in temples. If one really tries to find God, he's got to get out of the temple. He's going to meet God where the tiller tills the land. He's going to meet him where the route builder splits the bricks. It's still with these boys, whether it's sun or shower. Poet says that God's garments are often coated with dust like these modest hard-working people. He asks the seeker of God to throw off the holy mantle, and like him, to come down on the dirty earth to work hard with these guys. This is the most substantial way to reach out to God.

Poet further tells to stop thinking to attain deliverance. Often people think that they can attain deliverance by singing religious songs in praise of God. For them deliverance means freedom from the cycle of birth and death. But to attain deliverance is impossible God, himself is not free from all this. God has taken upon himself the difficult task of creation. God is not only a creator but also take care of everything on this earth. God is bound to his duty forever. There is no other way than hard work to attain God. Poet asks the worshipper to come out from his meditation. He says that God could not be found through meditation or through offering flowers and incense. All these efforts are futile. Poet further says that there is no harm if our clothes gets dirty and stained. If we want to attain God we have to stand by him with all those people who work hard throughout the day to earn their living. The whole idea of the poem is that hard work itself is worship.

Explain Reference to context

Stanza 1

Leave this Chanting and singing and

Telling of beads! Whom dost thou

Worship in this lonely dark corner of a Temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

Reference to Context

The lines quoted above have been taken from the poem 'Leave This Chanting' written by great Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore. This poem was originally written in Bengali but later the poet translated it into English. This poem shows poet's faith and deep understanding of God. The poem is written in the manner of traditional 'Bhakti' poetry. In this poem poet condemns the traditional way of worship. He says that one can find God only by hard work. Because work is worship.

Explanation

Post-Independence Indian Literature

The poet sees a devotee sitting in the corner of a temple with all doors shut. He was singing in the praise of God. Poet condemns him and asks him to leave this chanting and singing. He also asks him to stop telling of beads. He asks him why he is sitting in the dark corner of the temple. Why have you shut all the doors? The Poet asks the devotee to open his eyes and look, God is not before him. What poet here tries to say is that that all these traditional ways of finding God are futile, useless. You cannot get Him by this way. God does not reside in temples.

Stanza 2

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground where the path maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off they holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil.

Reference to Context

The lines quoted above have been taken from the poem 'Leave This Chanting' written by Rabindranath Tagore, a great Indian poet. This poem was originally written in Bengali. But later the poet translated it into English. This poem shows poet's faith and deep understanding of God's nature. The poem is written in the manner of traditional 'Bhakti' type of poetry. Poet gives it a new treatment. Throughout the poem, the poet condemns the traditional way of worship. He says that one can find God only through hard work. Because work is worship.

Explanation

In these lines the poet says that living place of the God is not temples. You will find Him among simple and hard working people. You will find him where tiller is tilling the ground. You will find him where the path maker is breaking stones. He is always with these people whether it is sun or shower. Poet further says that clothes of God are covered with dust like these humble hard working men. He asks the seeker of God to put off their holy mantle and like him come down on the dusty earth to work hard with these men. This is the only and substantial way to reach to God.

Stanza 3

Deliverance? Where is the deliverance to be found? Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation; he is bound with us all for ever

Reference to Context

The lines quoted above have been taken from the poem 'Leave This Chanting' written by a great Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore. This poem was originally written in Bengali but later the poet himself translated it into English. This poem shows poet's deep faith and understanding of God. But the poem is written in the manner of traditional Bhakti poetry. Poet says that to find God one need not follow the traditional way of worship like repeating 'mantras' and telling of beads. The only way to find God is hard work. For God hard work is the best way of worship.

Explanation

In these lines, the poet addresses all those who are in pursuit of deliverance. Often people think that they can attain deliverance by singing religious songs in the praise of God. For them deliverance means freedom from the cycle of birth and death and hard work. But to attain deliverance is impossible. God himself has taken upon his shoulder the hard work of creation. God, not only creates but also takes care of everything. God is bound to us for ever. There is no other way than hard work to attain God.

Stanza 4

"Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense!

What harm is there if thy clothes become Tattered and stained? Meet him and stand by him in toil and in Sweat of thy brow"

Reference to Context

The lines quoted above have been taken from the poem 'Leave This Chanting' written by Rabindranath Tagore, a great Indian poet. The poem was originally written in Bengali but later the poet himself translated it into English. This poem shows the poets' deep understanding of God. The poem is written in the manner of traditional 'Bhakti' poetry but poet handled it in a different style. The Poet says that God is all - pervasive. You need not go to temple and repeat 'mantras' to find him. The only way to find God is by hard work.

Explanation

In these lines the poet condemns all those who follow the old way of worship. He asks the worshiper to come out from his meditation. Poet says that one cannot find God through meditation. One cannot find Him by offering flowers and incense. All these efforts are futile. The Poet further says that there is no harm if our clothes get dirty and stained. If we want to attain God we have to stand by him with all those people who work hard to earn their living. The whole idea hidden behind these lines is that hard work itself is worship.

6.3 Thematic Analysis of the Poem

In this poem *Leave this Chanting and Singing* Tagore has presented his spiritual philosophy which is little different from the traditional religious life. Through this poem Tagore suggests the devotees to discard the rituals they perform in order to get salvation within the locked room of the temple. Tagore advises the devotees to see the creation of God where He is available every minute taking care of his creation. So the present poem has the following themes:

Reaction against aesthetic way of life

In the present poem Tagore directly suggests the devotees of God to come out of the fore wall of the temple of God and try to identify the real form of God who is not in the temple but can be found in the toil of laborers taking care of them and guarding them from any type of hardship of life. The following lines from the poem are apt to highlight the theme of reaction against aesthetic way of life,

"Leave this chanting and telling of beads!

Whom does though worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut?

Ope thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!"

Theme of uncontaminated worship

The theme of uncontaminated worship is visible clearly in the poem when Tagore concludes the poem by sharing his view about pure worship which is not in the meditation and traditional method of worship but in the toil and sweat of workers,

"Come out of thy meditation and leave aside thy flower and incense!

What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained?

Meet him and stand by him in toil and in the sweat of thy brow."

Counter against Class Conflict

Tagore wants to remove the class conflict from the society that's why he suggests that every individual's aim of life is salvation or to meet with God but God Himself can be seen among hard workers. So by presenting the analogy of God's association with every creature He has created Tagore encourage people to do their duties with sincerity that will be the greatest worship to God. And following lines aptly signify Tagore's attempt to eradicate the conflict in the society on the name of status,

"He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path maker is breaking the stones.

He is there with them in the sun and in shower and his garment is covered with dust.

Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil!"

Future of the Nation

Through this poem Tagore wants to make his dream of a free nation come true about which he has already penned down a poem entitle "Where mind is without fear.". A nation can only be completely free when its citizens are spiritually free and practical minded that's why Tagore appeals to the worshipers through this poem to give up their traditional way of worshipping and worship the work and workers.

Ultimate Spiritual Goal of life

Ultimate spiritual goal of every worshiper is deliverance from the life cycle of this mortal world. So for the seekers of deliverance Tagore shares a realistic example in this poem, "Deliverance?

Where is this deliverance to be found?

Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation;
He is bound with us all forever."

Location of God

In the present poem *Leave this Chanting* Tagore has given a hint where God can be found and he suggests the worshipers to visit that particular place where God is available,

"He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground
and where the path maker is breaking the stones.
He is there with them in the sun and in shower
and his garment is covered with dust.
Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil!"

6.4 Symbols and Motifs

The present poem has the symbol and the motifs like temple, God, hard worker, death, work is worship, deliverance and true religion which is very clearly visible in the text of the poem.

Temple

Tagore has used the motif of temple in stanza one in form of his suggestion to the worshipers to leave their traditional way of worshipping God and try to find Him in every object living or non-living He has created. Here the myth of *Hirankasyap* and his son *Prahlad'* episode will be relevant. As per this story *Prahlad* shows a faith in God that He is omnipresence. Even God is in non-living things and this belief of *Prahalad* is justified with *Narsimha Avatar* of God. So the first stanza is exclusively having a motifs of temple, "

Leave this Chanting and singing and Telling of beads!
Whom dost thou Worship in this lonely dark corner of a Temple with doors all shut?
Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!"

Image of God

Tagore has depicted the image of true God who is omnipresent. Tagore also suggests the traditional worshipers to come out of the close premises of the temple and see the presence of God in the hard work of workers because God loves to be with His subjects in the time of both prosperity and adversity irrespective of any discrimination on the ground of status. The following lines from the poem are very relevant to portray the image of God, "

Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense!
What harm is there if thy clothes become Tattered and stained?
Meet him and stand by him in toil and in Sweat of thy brow"
"

Laborers

No doubt God is everywhere but he prefers to be with hard workers who keeps doing their work without expecting the result and this practice has been rightly suggested by Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the *Geeta*, "*Karmanewadhikarate maphalesuKadachana*". Similar opinion has been given by John Milton in his seminal poem "*On His Blindness*" in form of presence of God everywhere in the universe, "

His state is kingly.
Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:

They also serve who only stand and wait." And giving example of workers doing their work with full devotion Tagore says, "He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground where the path maker is breaking stones.

He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust.

Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil."

Work is worship

Poet's faith and deep understanding of God's nature has been depicted in the poem in form of location of God is not temple but the company simple and hard working people where the workers keep doing their work in both rough and fair weather and their work is true worship of God.

Praise of God

According to Tagore the attainment of deliverance by singing religious songs is not possible. He suggests the folks to do hard work as God is the creator of entire universe and He loves to be among the hard working people. There is no other way than hard work to attain God. Talking about deliverance Tagore says that deliverance can be found in coming out of home and temples and work hard which will cause to attain the real deliverance from the worldly cycle of life and death. The following lines are very apt to highlight the praise of God and deliverance, ""Deliverance? Where is the deliverance to be found?

Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation;

he is bound with us all forever

Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense!

What harm is there if thy clothes become Tattered and stained?

Meet him and stand by him in toil and in Sweat of thy brow"

6.5 Stylistic Features of the Poem

Talking about the artistic features of the poem first of all let us discuss its structure. *Leave this Chanting* is a fifteen lines poem. It has been divided by the poet in four stanzas in a sequence of three, five, four and three lines stanza. The poem is in unrhymed verse which is free from the limitation of verse poetry. The rhyme scheme of the poem is ABC, DEFGH, IDJF and KLM. There is repetition of theme in this poem, for example in first and last stanza the poet talks about the same idea that is to discard the traditional method of worshipping the God and adopting the realistic approach to meet God who is strong supporter of 'work is worship'. The imagery used by the poet distinguishes institutions and practices of worshipers. In the present poem the symbol of idol and blind worship has been used by the poet to educate the worshipers with blind faith in idol worship. The poem is incorporated with notion of Karma Philosophy and depicts that even God is not free from the duty. After creation he takes care of every object of this universe that's why He can be found among the laborers doing their hard work in their day to day life. The present poem also glorifies the life of the humble laborers and rejects the ascetic way of life. There is balanced use of both colloquial and figurative language in the poem, for example simile and alliteration both have been used in the following line, "Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil!"

Summary

Rabindranath Tagore was born in 1861 and he was given a name Rabindranath Thakur by his parents. He is famous for many reasons like composing national anthem of India and Bangla Desh. First man from Asia to get prestigious Nobel Prize for his collection of devotional songs 'Geetanjali' etc. he died in 1941 at the age of 80.

God is not dwelling in temples. If one really tries to find God, he's got to get out of the temple. Poet says that God's garments are often coated with dust like these modest hard-working people. Poet further tells to stop thinking to attain deliverance. Often people think that they can attain deliverance by singing religious songs in praise of God. God has taken upon himself the difficult task of creation. God is bound to his duty forever. There is no other way than hard work to attain God.

The present poem has the themes like Reaction against aesthetic way of life, Theme of uncontaminated worship, Counter against Class Conflict, Future of the Nation, Ultimate Spiritual Goal of life, Location of God.

Post-Independence Indian Literature

The present poem has the symbol and the motifs like temple, God, hard worker, death, work is worship, deliverance and true religion which is very clearly visible in the text of the poem.

Leave this Chanting is a fifteen lines poem. It has been divided by the poet in four stanzas in a sequence of three, five, four and three lines stanza. The poem is in unrhymed verse which is free from the limitation of verse poetry. The rhyme scheme of the poem is ABC, DEFGH, IDJF and KLM.

Keywords

Chanting, Dost, Thou, Thine, Thy, Tiller, Mantle, Deliverance, Incense, Tattered, Stained, Toil

Self Assessment

1. By which pseudo name Rabindranath Tagore first published his poems?
 - A. Gurudev
 - B. Bhanusimha
 - C. Bangasimha
 - D. Pirali

2. When was Rabindranath Tagore born?
 - A. 17 July 1861
 - B. 7 April 1858
 - C. 7 May 1861
 - D. 11 May 1863

3. In which year was Rabindranath Tagore awarded Nobel Prize for Literature?
 - A. 1910
 - B. 1913
 - C. 1919
 - D. 1923

4. What is Rabindranath Tagore's father's name?
 - A. Narendradutt
 - B. Narendranath
 - C. Debendranath
 - D. Dwarkanath

5. In which city Rabindranath Tagore was born?
 - A. Calcutta
 - B. Dhaka
 - C. Murshidabad
 - D. Berhampur

6. In the poem "Leave this Chanting and Singing" 'Telling of beads' refer to
 - A. Holding beads while reciting prayers

-
- B. Using beads as a musical accompaniment
C. Threading beads to make a necklace
D. None of the above
7. In the poem "Leave this Chanting and Singing", why is the temple lonely and dark?
A. There are no windows
B. The lamps are not lit
C. The doors are shut
D. The walls are made of stone
8. As per the poem "Leave this Chanting and Singing" where can one find God?
A. Inside the temple
B. In the houses of the rich
C. In heaven
D. Among the hardworking
9. As per the poem "Leave this Chanting and Singing" how should we seek deliverance?
A. by incessant prayers
B. by going to the temple regularly
C. by being pious and righteous-minded
D. by helping our fellow beings who are in need
10. As per the poem "Leave this Chanting and Singing" what should we do to meet God?
A. Meditate on God
B. Have true faith in God
C. Offer flowers and incense
D. by God 'in toil and in sweat'
11. Apart from India's national anthem "Jana Gana Mana", Tagore also scripted national anthem for which other country?
A. Pakistan
B. Myanmar
C. Bangladesh
D. Nepal
12. Which magazine was edited by Rabindranath Tagore?
A. Bangadarshan
B. AnandbazarPatrika
C. BangaSandesh
D. Amrit Sandesh
13. Which sobriquet has been given to Rabindranath Tagore?
A. Guruver

- B. Guruji
- C. Gurudev
- D. Mahatma

14. By what name Rabindranath Tagore's songs popularly known as?

- A. BangaSangeet
- B. RabindraSangeet
- C. GitanjaliSangeet
- D. MadhurSangeet

15. Which university awarded Rabindranath Tagore with Doctor Of Literature in 1940?

- A. Calcutta University
- B. Oxford University
- C. Visva-Bharati University
- D. Cambridge University

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. B | 2. C | 3. B | 4. C | 5. A |
| 6. A | 7. C | 8. D | 9. D | 10. D |
| 11. C | 12. A | 13. C | 14. B | 15. B |

Review Questions

Q1. How does the poet bring home the philosophy of 'Karma'?

Ans.:- Tagore brings home the philosophy of 'Karma' by saying that this is the only substantial way to find God. The poet condemns the traditional ways of worship. He says that people follow many stupid ways to attain God like chanting, singing, telling of beads and meditation. But all these efforts are futile. One can find God among all those people who work hard for the whole day to earn their living. Hard work is the only way which leads us to God. 'Karma' which means work, itself is worship. Poet further says that God, himself is engaged in work. He performs the task of creation. So, if you want to find God, you have to work hard.

Q2. Where is God found according to the poet?

Ans.:- The Poet says that one cannot find God by sitting in the dark corner of the temples with all doors closed or by singing songs in the praise of God. All these ways of finding God will be proved useless because God does not live in temples. If anyone really wants to find God, he or she has to search among the people who work hard. God lives there where tiller is tilling the ground. He lives where path maker is breaking stones. God lives with only those who work hard. God will be found among humble and hard working people.

Q3. What does 'deliverance' refer to?

Ans.:- Deliverance means freedom from the cycle of birth and death. Everyone wants to attain deliverance because it will help him to escape from the hard work in life. The Poet does not like the idea of deliverance. For him it is useless because deliverance is not possible. Often people try to attain deliverance by meditation and other traditional ways of worship like chanting and singing which is not desirable. Poet says that God is also not free from hard-work. He has taken upon himself the difficult task of creation. God is not only a creator but he takes care of everything. So the idea of deliverance is of no use.

Q4. What does the poet ask us to leave in order to realize God?

Ans.:- The poet asks us to leave the traditional modes of worship. He advises the seekers of God to leave chanting and telling of beads in order to please God. He asks the worshipers to come out from their meditation. The Poet also advise them to stop offering the flowers and incense to God. The Poet says that one cannot find God by following all these traditional ways of worship. We can attain God only by hard work. Hard work itself is the best way of worship.

Q5. Write an essay on Tagore's mysticism.

Ans.:- Rabindra Nath Tagore was a deeply religious and mystic poet. His mysticism is of a different kind 'Leave This Chanting' is a deeply religious poem which shows poet's love for God. His mysticism is very easy to understand. This poem presents a new aspect of God. The Poet believes that God does not live in heaven. You need not sing songs of praise in order to please God. According to Tagore God is all pervasive. God is present in every humble creature created by him. If anyone really wants to find God, he or she has to come out of temples, because God does not live in temples. He lives with those people who work hard. He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground. He is with path makers who are breaking stones. All the traditional ways are of no use. The Poet asks the worshippers to give up all those ways. The Poet also condemns the idea of deliverance. The Poet says that deliverance is impossible to attain. People follow different ways of worship in pursuit of deliverance because they want to make themselves free from the cycle of birth and death. Poet further argues that God Himself is also not free. He has taken upon himself the difficult task of creation. He is not only a creator but also takes care of everything present on the earth. So we should not try to free our-selves from this birth-death-cycle and hard work. According to the poet, hard work is the key to reach God. Poet also advises worshippers to come out, from their mediation. He also advises them to stop offering flowers and incense to God. If they want to attain God, they have to come out from temples to work with those people who work hard. It does not matter whether it make their clothes dirty and stained. This is the only way to reach God. So, we can say that Tagore as a mystic poet is different from other poets.

Q6. What does the poet castigate?

Ans.:- In this poem, from beginning to end's Tagore loudly castigates the traditional forms of worship. Yes, he is a religious poet, has deep faith in God. But he is different from other religious poets because he condemns all these useless modes of worship. Some people believe that God lives in temples and heaven. They can attain him by singing songs in the praise of God. But their thinking is wrong. God does not reside inside temples. He could not be attained by chanting and telling of beads. To attain God you need not to sit in the dark corner of the temples. If you want to find God you have to come out of temples because He lives outside with humble and hard working people. You will find him with the tiller who is tilling the ground. You will find him with path maker who is breaking stones.

Tagore castigates idolatry and blind worship. He also castigates the idea of deliverance. He says that to attain deliverance is impossible.

The Poet says that our God is also not free. He is bound to us. He has taken upon himself the task of creation. So we have to give up the idea of salvation because it is not possible. Poet asks the worshippers to come out from their meditation. He also advises them to stop offering flowers and incense in order to please God. If they want to attain God, they have to take off their holy mantle and have to come down in the dusty soil to work hard with those hard working people. This is the only way to attain God. The Poet further says that there is no harm if your clothes get dirty and stained. You have to work with those people. You will find God in the sweat of your brow. You can attain God only by hard work. This is the reason why the poet castigates idolatry and blind worship.

Q7. How can one realize God. Discuss with reference to Tagore's philosophy.

Ans.:- 'Leave This Chanting' shows Tagore's deep love and faith in God. In this poem Tagore says that one can realize God only by following the path suggested by Tagore. And that path is of hard work. One can realize God only by hard work. Hard work is the key which leads us to God. God is all-pervasive. You need not to go to temples to find Him. You need not to sing songs of praise to please Him. He is to be found among those farmers who till the hard land throughout the day. He will be found among the path makers who do the hard work of breaking stones. God lives with all these humble, hard working people. So the poet asks the worshippers to take off their holy mantle and come down to the dusty soil to work with these men. Poet also castigates the idea of salvation. For people, deliverance means freedom from the cycle of birth and death. The Poet says that the very idea of deliverance is useless. Deliverance is impossible to attain. God himself is not free. He

has taken upon His shoulders the task of creation. He creates everything and takes care of everyone. God is bound with us all forever. The Poet advises the seekers of God to come out of their meditations because this is not the appropriate way to reach God. He also asks them not to offer flowers and incense to God. God could not be pleased by this way. He could be pleased only by hard work. God is always with those who work hard. The Poet says that there is no harm if your clothes get dirty or stained. If you really want to meet God you have to work hard because hard work is worship. The Poet says, "Meet him and stand by him toil and in sweat of the brow."



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Unit 07: My Grandmother's House by Kamala Das

CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

7.1 Shaping of Kamala Das as a Poet

7.2 Text and Summary of the Poem

7.3 Textual Analysis of the Poem

7.4 Enjambment

7.5 Thematic Analysis

Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

Answers for Self Assessment

Review questions;

Further Reading

Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- Explore the life and works of Kamala Das,
- Symbol and motifs in the poem *My Grandmother's House*
- Stylistic features of the poem *My Grandmother's House*
- Do critical appreciation of the poem *My Grandmother's House*

Introduction

My grandmother's house is a poem written by Indian poet Kamala Das. The poem first appeared in an anthology of verse entitled 'Summer Time in Calcutta 1965). It is an autobiographical poem in which the speaker's nostalgic desire for home reflects through the inability to visit the happy past. The poem describes the speaker's happy life before her grandmother's death and sad life after her grandmother's death. The speaker of the poem is a married woman. She is reminded of her parental home which is the symbol of immense love. The poem describes the clear difference between past and present. In past, the life was full of activity whereas now it has turned into deadly silence. The intensity of sadness is expressed by dark and negative imagery. Kamala Das is one of the three most popular Indian poets writing in English today, the other being Nissim Ezekiel and Ramanujan. Her poetry is all about herself, her deeply felt desire for love, her emotional involvement, and her inability to achieve such a friendship. In this poem, "My Grandmother's House," Kamala Das remembers her ancestral home and her deceased grandmother. This poem takes the form of a confession that contrasts her current fractured state with that of being unconditionally loved by her grandmother.

7.1 Shaping of Kamala Das as a Poet

Kamala Das is a very popular Indo- Anglican poet. Her poetry is confessional and autobiographical. It is the poetry of introspection and self-analysis. Here we find the best expression of feminine sensibility. The poet expresses her need for love with astonishing frankness and openness. Kamala Das is a confessional poet. In this context she can be compared with Ramanujan, Ezekiel, R. Lowell, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath and J. Wright. As a true confessional poet

Post-Independence Indian Literature

she takes her readers into confidence about her private life. She shows with remarkable frankness the wrongs, injustice and the humiliation that she suffered in a male dominant world. She has candidly described her traumatic experiences of lovemaking and of the sexual act. We can easily find the tone of confession in her poems like 'The Sunshine Cat', 'The Invitation', and 'The Looking Glass'. In 'The Invitation' she has shamelessly described her sexual experience:

I want no other
On the bed with him, the boundaries of
Paradise had shrunk to a mere
Six by two and afterwards. ...

Kamala Das is a poet of love and sexual relationship. Love and sex form the main theme in her poetry. Her poetry is largely an expression of her frustration in love. She always speaks of her unfulfilled love and expresses her need for love. In 'The Sunshine Cat' the poet abuses her husband because he never loved her and never used her properly. She calls him a selfish and cowardly man who was a ruthless watcher of her sexual act with other men. This frustration of her love boils over in poems like 'The Invitation' and 'The Looking Glass'. In fact, the poetry of Kamala Das is devoted to her confessions of her sex life. Sexual humiliation becomes a central theme in her poetry. She goes to the extreme in her frank treatment of sex. In 'The Looking Glass' she says:

Gift him all,
Gift him what makes you woman, the scent of
Long hair, the musk of sweat between the breasts,
The warm shock of menstrual blood, and all your
Endless female hungers.

Kamala Das has added a new dimension to the poetry of love and sex. Her frank admission and bold treatment of her private life make her a great confessional poet. In this context she can be compared with Gauri Deshpande.

Kamala is a poet of protest also. She rebels against the conventions, traditions and accepted norms of society. Her protest is directed against injustices and exploitation. She made her poetry a vehicle for the expression of her resentments against male domination over women. In 'The Sunshine Cat' she writes in a strong tone of protest:

Being selfish
And a coward, the husband who neither loved nor
Used her, but was a ruthless watcher.....

Kamala Das's poetry is a frank and straightforward expression of feminine sensibility. She revolts against the exploitation of women. She expresses anger against the male dominance in the society. She attempted to establish her identity as women through her poems. At the same time she tried to impart an identity to Indian women. Thus her poetry signals the advent of new phenomenon in Indo- Anglican poetry.

Kamala Das's command over the English language is remarkable. She cultivated a style that is characterized by colloquial simplicity and clarity. Her poetry reveals a mastery of phrase and control over rhythm. In the choice of words, Kamala Das exercises a special care. The words effortlessly come to her and become one with emotion. She is a poet in the confessional mode. Thus her diction is most often colloquial. Her poetry abounds in imagery. Her images are suggestive and functional. She offers imagery in dealing with her favorite subjects like love and sex. Thus it is not boring and monotonous.

Thus Kamala Das is a great poet. She directed the path of women poets in modern English poetry. She has certainly made a name for herself by virtue of her craftsmanship. No doubt, her poetry is autobiographical and confessional. She reminds us of Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath. The charge of obscurity and obsession with sex is groundless. Being a confessional poet she expresses her own emotions.

7.2 Text and Summary of the Poem

"There is a house now far away where once
 I received love..... That woman died,
 The house withdrew into silence, snakes moved
 Among books, I was then too young
 To read, and my blood turned cold like the moon
 How often I think of going
 There, to peer through blind eyes of windows or
 Just listen to the frozen air,
 Or in wild despair, pick an armful of
 Darkness to bring it here to lie
 Behind my bedroom door like a brooding
 Dog...you cannot believe, darling,
 Can you, that I lived in such a house and
 Was proud, and loved.... I who have lost
 My way and beg now at strangers' doors to
 Receive love, at least in small change?"

Summary of the poem

At the beginning of the poem, the poet says that there is a home that is now very far from her where she received love. It was the house of her grandmother in which she spent the days of her childhood.

However, that woman, (her grandmother) is dead now and the home "withdrew in silence" i.e., without any life because her grandmother was the very soul of it.

Grandmother also had books which she could not read as he was quite young and she would read stories for her (poet). But now the snakes are moving in those books. All these things made the house quite horrible and the poet "like the moon" i.e., quite unhappy. She is now without any life and warmth.

The poet expresses her desire to go to her grandmother's house because she is emotionally attached to it since her childhood. She wants to look through the "blind eyes of windows" of her grandmother's house.

The term "*blind eyes of windows*" means that there is no one (in other words, her grandmother) in the house to look for. She also desires to listen to "*the frozen air*" of that house. "*Frozen Air*" probably means that that the house is locked and the fresh air has not moved in.

In my views, the poet desires to move into her thoughts which are buried deep inside her heart and no air has blown into it. Thus, **the grandmother's house here is rather a sweet memory that she wants to recall.**

The poet further says that she wants to bring the darkness of her grandmother's house with her "in wild despair" i.e., in her troubled life.

The line makes it clear that her grandmother was very protective. And now that she feels insecure, even the darkness of her grandmother's house, which is though unpleasant like cold moon comforts her.

In the final lines, the poet is in conversation probably with her husband or her readers. The poet says that one won't believe that she had some of the best memories of her grandmother's house and she is quite proud of it.

Now that she has lost her grandmother, she begs at strangers' doors for love. She knows well that you won't be able to get that much love but she still hopes for at least a part of it.

Hence the poet ends with hope and despair. In her poem, *My Mother at Sixty-Six* the poet is struggling with similar feelings. Please refer to this doc for further reading. Here are some important questions and answers to this poem.

7.3 Textual Analysis of the Poem

"My Grandmother's House" has 16 lines and is composed of a single stanza of free verse, so there is no set rhyme scheme. The lines alternate between pentameters and tetrameters, longer than shorter, to sharpen the contrast between past and present, between being loved and not loved.

The basic theme is that of lost love, with the speaker bemoaning the fact that once she lived in a house where she was loved, but now her circumstances mean that she has no love in her life.

Lines 1 and 2

The speaker ruminates on the past, telling of a house that still exists but is far away in her memory. There she was loved. This is the grandmother's house the reader can presume, and the woman is the grandmother (or the actual speaker?).

Note the dots at the end of the word love. Some have been critical of this device, calling it a lazy prop, but the dots play a part as a pause (think of Emily Dickinson's use of those famous dashes) or a poignant gap in proceedings.

Lines 3 and 4

When the woman passed away, the house became silent. Nature invaded in the form of the snake, a symbol of danger and coldness, sliding among the books, a telling scene, perhaps of significance to the speaker. The speaker was too young, she didn't really understand what was going on.

Lines 5 and 6

She couldn't read anyway; she only had the dark feelings, and she became cold like the house itself, but still, she thinks about a return.

Lines 7 and 8

She wants to peer in through the windows, which may be 'blind eyes.' Perhaps she won't be able to see anything at all; she won't be able to go back in her memory to once again feel the love. Even though the air may be frozen, she wants to go back. This is a longing in her – to restore the love.

Lines 9 and 10

And she'll be so overcome with despair that she'll bring back some darkness from that house – a reminder of the past. This is how desperate the speaker is – even darkness would suffice in alleviating her current crisis.

Lines 11 and 12

That darkness will be used figuratively, like a dog (note the simile), a dark body brooding. Is the bedroom door significant? Why not the living-room door? The kitchen door? The bedroom is a place of intimacy and quiet. Perhaps this is why the speaker wants to return. She has no intimate love in her life.

She is talking to someone close because she uses that word darling. Is this her current partner, a husband, spouse, or a dear close friend? Either way, her situation is unbelievable.

Lines 13 and 14

The speaker reinforces the disbelief. Yes, she did once enjoy being loved in her grandmother's house before she could read when she was young. But now she's lost all that pride and love. **Why? How?**

Lines 15 and 16

She has somehow lost it. Life and love go hand in hand, and she is now rock bottom, having to beg for small change. Is she really having to do this? For some solace? For cash? Is this a metaphorical scene portraying her plight in the realm of love? Or is she having to go to people she does not know, giving herself away for little?

7.4 Enjambment

Enjambment occurs when one line runs on into the next with no punctuation to bring about a pause so that meaning continues uninterrupted. This poetic device causes the reader potential confusion, as there is no need to pause or stop. The idea is to carry on reading and make sense alongside.

This poem is full of enjambed lines, a ploy to cause unusual break of line, a reflection of the contrasting state of the speaker. There are only three lines that end with punctuation where the reader has to pause.

This content reflects the personal opinions of the author. It is accurate and true to the best of the author's knowledge and should not be substituted for impartial fact or advice in legal, political, or personal matters. The poem **My Grandmother's House** is written by Kamala Das. The poem has been written in the memory of her grandmother with whom she had spent her childhood.

The poet considers those moments to be the best moments of her life and desires to get them. She also mourns their loss. Like her poem *An Introduction*, this poem also falls into the category of confessional poetry.

7.5 Thematic Analysis

Kamala Das is one of the three most significant Indian poets writing in English today, the other two being Nissim Ezekiel and Ramanujan. Her poetry is all about herself, about her intensely felt desire for love, for emotional involvement, and her failure to achieve such a relationship. In this poem, "My Grandmother's House" Kamala Das, recalls her ancestral home and her dead grandmother. This poem takes the form of a confession comparing her present broken state with that of being unconditionally loved by her grandmother. An overview of the poem: "My Grandmother's House" is a nostalgic poem written by Kamala Das (Kamala Suraya). Though it's a short poem its meaning is vast and wide. The undercurrent of the poem is Kamala Das's childhood life with her grandmother where she felt more love and peace than she enjoys in her present life. The poem *My Grandmother's House* has only 16 lines, very short poem. The opening line tells the readers about her grandmother's house, where she lived when she was very young. This is a constituent poem of Kamala Das's maiden publication *Summer* in Calcutta. Though short, the poem wraps within itself an intriguing sense of nostalgia and up rootedness. In her eternal quest for love in such a loveless world, the poet remembers her grandmother which surfaces some emotions long forgotten and buried within her- an ironical expression of her past which is a tragic contrast to her present situation. It is a forcefully moving poem fraught with nostalgia and anguish. The poet says that there is a house, her grandmother's home, far away from where she currently resides, where she "received love". Her grandmother's home was a place she felt secure and was loved by all. After the death of her grandmother, the poet says that even the House was filled with grief, and accepted the seclusion with resignation. Only dead silence haunted over the House, feeling of desolation wandering throughout. She recollects though she couldn't read books at that time, yet she had a feeling of snakes moving among them- a feeling of deadness, horror and repulsion, and this feeling made her blood go cold and turn her face pale like the moon. She often thinks of going back to that Old House, just to peek through the "blind eyes of the windows" which have been dead-shut for years, or just to listen to the "frozen" air. The poet also shows the ironical contrast between her past and present and says that her present has been so tormenting that even the Darkness of the House that is bathed in Death does not horrify her anymore and it is a rather comforting companion for her in the present state of trials. The poet says that she would gladly ("in wild despair") pick up a handful of Darkness from the House and bring it back to her home to "lie behind my bedroom door" so that the memories of the Old House and its comforting darkness, a rather ironical expression, might fill assurance and happiness in her present life. She wraps up the poem saying that it is hard for one to believe that she once lived in such a house and was so loved by all and lived her life with pride. That her world was once filled with happiness is a sharp contrast to her present situation where she is completely devoid of love and pride. She says that in her desperate quest for love, she has lost her way; since she didn't receive any feelings of love from the people whom she called her own, she now has to knock "at strangers' doors" and beg them for love, if not in substantial amounts, then at least in small change i.e., in little measure at least. The poet has intensified the emotions of nostalgia and anguish by presenting a contrast between her childhood and her grown-up stages. The fullness of the distant and absence and the emptiness of the near and the present give the poem its poignancy. The images of "snakes moving among books", blood turning "cold like the moon", "blind eyes of window", "frozen air" evoke a sense of death and despair. The house itself becomes a symbol of a cradle of love and joy. The escape, the poetic

retreat, is in fact, the poet's own manner of suggesting the hopelessness of her present situation. Her yearning for the house is a symbolic retreat to a world of innocence, purity and simplicity. Themes in the Poetry of Kamala Das: The poetry of Kamala Das is a search for the essential woman, and hence the woman persona of her poems plays the various roles of unhappy woman, unhappy wife, and mistress to lusty men. Kamala Das has also been called a poet in the confessional mode. The confessional poets deal with emotional experiences which are generally taboo. There is a ruthless self-analysis and a tone of utter sincerity. Reminiscent of the Poet's Ancestral Home: The poem is a reminiscence of the poetess's grandmother and their ancestral home at Malabar in Kerala. Her memory of love she received from her grandmother is associated with the image of her ancestral home, where she had passed some of the happiest days of her life, and where her old grandmother had showered her love and affection. With the death of her grandmother the house withdrew into silence. When her grandmother died, even the house seemed to share her grief, which is poignantly expressed in the phrase "the House withdrew". The house soon became desolate and snakes crawled among books. Her blood became cold like the moon because there was none to love her the way she wanted. Yearning for the Past: Choked with Grief: The poet now lives in another city, a long distance away from her grandmother's house. But the memories of her ancestral house make her sad. She is almost heart-broken. The intensity of her emotions is shown by the ellipses in the form of a few dots. Now, in another city, living Another life, she longs to go back. She understands that she cannot reclaim the past but she wants to go back home, look once again through its windows and bring back a handful of darkness – sad and painful memories, which she would have made her constant companion, to keep as a reminder of her past happiness. The poet is unable to proceed with her thoughts for sometime as is indicated by the ellipses (dots). The poet is now choked with the intensity of grief. She yearns for love like a beggar going from one door to another asking for love in small change. Her need for love and approval is not satisfied in marriage and she goes after strangers for love at least in small quantity. But she does not get it even in small change or coins. Her love-hunger remains unsatisfied, and there is a big void, a blank within her, she seeks to fill up with love but to no avail. The image of the window is a link between the past and the present. It signifies the desire of the poet for a nostalgic peep into her past and resurrect her dreams and desires. With the death of the grandmother, her life that was hitherto filled only with emotions becomes numb. Her veins thus become cold rather than warm. It is as cold as the moon, the moon being an emblem of love. The worms on the books seem like snakes at that moment, in comparison to the size of the little girl; and in keeping with the eeriness of the situation. The poetess also implies that the deserted house is like a desert with reptiles crawling over. The poetess now longs to "peer" at a house that was once her own. She has to peek through the "blind eyes" of the windows as the windows are permanently closed. The air is frozen now, as contrasted to when the grandmother was alive-the surroundings were filled with the warmth of empathy. KamalaDas pleads with us to "listen" to the "frozen" air; that is impossibility. Neither is the air a visual medium, nor can air cause any displacement because it is "frozen". It is an example of synesthesia. In the final lines, the poet is in conversation probably with her husband or her readers. The poet says that one won't believe that she had some of the best memories of her grandmother's house and she is quite proud of it. Now that she has lost her grandmother, she begs at strangers' doors for love. She knows well that you won't be able to get that much love but she still hopes for at least a part of it. Hence the poet ends with hope and despair.

"My Grandmother's House" is a short poem from Kamala Das which focuses on love lost, nostalgia and emotional pain. Basically, the speaker is looking back to a time as a child when she could enjoy love in a comfortable and contented household. She contrasts this blissful existence with that of her current situation, which is loveless and dire.

This juxtaposition of then and now, past and present, creates the tension within this single-stanza poem and gives the reader a stark picture of how circumstances have altered for the speaker.

There is also the idea that the speaker is trying to make someone see just how low she has gotten – how desperate she feels in her current situation. That someone may be her partner, husband, or spouse, or it could be a close friend.

Kamala Das (1934–2009) is recognized as one of India's most influential female poets. She helped promote the cause of feminism in the 1960s and 70s, producing work related to family and home and giving it a modern twist by introducing sex and the body into the poetical narrative.

"My Grandmother's House" is written in English, but Kamala Das also wrote in Malayalam, a native Indian language from her state of Kerala. This ability reflects the colonial/personal split in some of her work, the former imposed by the British, the latter native. This poem was first published in the book *Summer Time in Calcutta* (now Kolkata) in 1965.

Summary

- Kamala Das (1934–2009) is recognized as one of India's most influential female poets. She helped promote the cause of feminism in the 1960s and 70s, producing work related to family and home and giving it a modern twist by introducing sex and the body into the poetical narrative. She is a poet of love and sexual relationship. Love and sex form the main theme in her poetry. Her poetry is largely an expression of her frustration in love. She always speaks of her unfulfilled love and expresses her need for love. In fact, the poetry of Kamala Das is devoted to her confessions of her sex life. Sexual humiliation becomes a central theme in her poetry. She goes to the extreme in her frank treatment of sex.
- *My Grandmother's House* is a poem written by Indian poet Kamala Das. The poem first appeared in an anthology of verse entitled 'Summer Time in Calcutta 1965). It is an autobiographical poem in which the speaker's nostalgic desire for home reflects through the inability to visit the happy past. The poem describes the speaker's happy life before her grandmother's death and sad life after her grandmother's death.
- The Poem has themes like nostalgia of childhood, longing for freedom; desire to get unconditional love and respect, confession and quest for identity etc.

Keywords

- Nostalgic: Feeling, evoking, or characterized by nostalgia.
- Desolate: Feeling or showing great unhappiness or loneliness.
- Evocative: Bringing strong images, memories, or feelings to mind.
- Sarvodaya: The economic and social development of a community as a whole, especially as advocated by Mahatma Gandhi.
- Totems: A person or thing regarded as being symbolic or representative of a particular quality or concept.
- Frozen air
- despair
- Brooding
- Strangers
- Darling

Self Assessment

1. Who has composed the poem my grandmother's house?
 - A. Kamala Das
 - B. Ramanujan
 - C. Sarojini Naidu
 - D. None

2. Who is the speaker in my grandmother's house?
 - A. Toru Datta
 - B. S. Naidu
 - C. Kamala Das
 - D. None

3. My grandmother's house was published in?
 - A. 1963
 - B. b.1964
 - C. c.1965
 - D. d.1966

4. My grandmother's house is?
 - A. A sonnet
 - B. An ode
 - C. A ballad
 - D. A lyric

5. During her childhood the speaker of my grandmother's house lived with her?
 - A. Grandmother
 - B. Aunt
 - C. Mother
 - D. None

6. My grandmother's house published in?
 - A. Summer in Delhi
 - B. Summer in Kolkata
 - C. The old playhouse
 - D. None

7. Kamala Das was born in?
 - A. 1933
 - B. 1934
 - C. 1935
 - D. d.1936

8. Which figures of speech has been used in my grandmother's house?
 - A. Metaphor
 - B. Personification
 - C. Epic simile
 - D. Simile

9. The speaker of my grandmother's house is proud of?
 - A. Parent's house
 - B. Grandmother's house
 - C. Uncle's house
 - D. None of these

10. When did the speaker of my grandmother's house live with her grandmother?

- A. During her childhood
 - B. During her adolescence
 - C. During her youth
 - D. None of these
11. The house went into silence because?
- A. Grandmother died
 - B. Grandfather died
 - C. No one loved
 - D. None of these
12. The speaker Kamala Das was unable to read the books because she was?
- A. Blind
 - B. Sad
 - C. Very old
 - D. Very young
13. The speaker Kamala Das wished to peep through the?
- A. Window
 - B. Door
 - C. Hole
 - D. House
14. Who is I in the poem my grandmother's house?
- A. Listener
 - B. Grandmother
 - C. Villager
 - D. Kamala Das
15. Kamala Das was a /an ----?
- A. American
 - B. Chinese
 - C. Indian
 - D. European
16. Summer in Kolkata is a collection of poems by.....
- A. Kamala Das
 - B. Keki N.Daruwalla
 - C. D.H. Lawrence
 - D. John Keats
17. Kamala Das is talking about her who is dead now.
- A. father

- B. mother
 - C. grand father
 - D. grand mother
18. Kamala Das remembers the happy days spent in the sweet company of her
- A. grand mother
 - B. grand father
 - C. father
 - D. mother
19. She noticed a behind the door of the bedroom.
- A. ox
 - B. cow
 - C. dog
 - D. cat
20. The house went into silence due to the death of the
- A. woman
 - B. man
 - C. girl
 - D. boy
21. "My Grandmother's House" is an poem by Kamala Das.
- A. biographical
 - B. auto biographical
 - C. bibliographic
 - D. none of these
22. The poetess in "The Grand Mother's House" begs at doors.
- A. friend's
 - B. family's
 - C. stranger's
 - D. enemy's
23. There is a house now far away where once I received love is from the poem.
- A. Song of Myself
 - B. Ode to Autumn
 - C. My Grandmother's House
 - D. Snake
24. "Behind my bedroom's door like a brooding" is written by
- A. Rupert Brooke
 - B. Kamala Das

- C. Keki N. Daruwalla
D. T.S. Eliot

25. "Summer in Kolkata" is a collection of poem by

- A. Kamala Das
B. Keki N. Daruwalla
C. D.H. Lawrence
D. John Keats

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. A | 2. C | 3. C | 4. D | 5. D |
| 6. B | 7. B | 8. D | 9. B | 10. A |
| 11. A | 12. D | 13. A | 14. D | 15. C |
| 16. A | 17. D | 18. A | 19. C | 20. A |
| 21. B | 22. C | 23. C | 24. B | 25. A |

Review Questions

1. Why did the house go into silence?
2. Why was the speaker proud of living in that house?
3. Why was speaker unable to read the books?
4. Why did the speaker often wish to go to that house?
5. Why does the speaker say that she has lost her way?



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Unit 08: My Grandmother's House by Kamala Das

CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

8.1 Life and works of Kamala Das

8.2 Symbol and Motif

8.3 Stylistic Features of the Poem

Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

Answers for Self Assessment

Review Questions

Practice Questions

Further Reading

Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- Explore the life and works of Kamala Das,
- Symbol and motifs in the poem *My Grandmother's House*
- Stylistic features of the poem *My Grandmother's House*
- Do critical appreciation of the poem *My Grandmother's House*

Introduction

My grandmother's house is a poem written by Indian poet Kamala Das. The poem first appeared in an anthology of verse entitled 'Summer Time in Calcutta 1965). It is an autobiographical poem in which the speaker's nostalgic desire for home reflects through the inability to visit the happy past. The poem describes the speaker's happy life before her grandmother's death and sad life after her grandmother's death. The speaker of the poem is a married woman. She is reminded of her parental home which is the symbol of immense love. The poem describes the clear difference between past and present. In past, the life was full of activity whereas now it has turned into deadly silence. The intensity of sadness is expressed by dark and negative imagery. Kamala Das is one of the three most popular Indian poets writing in English today, the other being Nissim Ezekiel and Ramanujan. Her poetry is all about herself, her deeply felt desire for love, her emotional involvement, and her inability to achieve such a friendship. In this poem, "My Grandmother's House," Kamala Das remembers her ancestral home and her deceased grandmother. This poem takes the form of a confession that contrasts her current fractured state with that of being unconditionally loved by her grandmother.

8.1 Life and works of Kamala Das

Kamala Das is a very popular Indo- Anglian poet. Her poetry is confessional and autobiographical. It is the poetry of introspection and self-analysis. Here we find the best expression of feminine sensibility. The poet expresses her need for love with astonishing frankness and openness. Kamala Das is a confessional poet. In this context she can be compared with Ramanujan, Ezekiel, R. Lowell, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath and J. Wright. As a true confessional poet she takes her readers into confidence about her private life. She shows with remarkable frankness

Post-Independence Indian Literature

the wrongs, injustice and the humiliation that she suffered in a male dominant world. She has candidly described her traumatic experiences of lovemaking and of the sexual act. We can easily find the tone of confession in her poems like 'The Sunshine Cat', 'The Invitation', and 'The Looking Glass'. In 'The Invitation' she has shamelessly described her sexual experience:

I want no other
On the bed with him, the boundaries of
Paradise had shrunk to a mere
Six by two and afterwards. ...

Kamala Das is a poet of love and sexual relationship. Love and sex form the main theme in her poetry. Her poetry is largely an expression of her frustration in love. She always speaks of her unfulfilled love and expresses her need for love. In 'The Sunshine Cat' the poet abuses her husband because he never loved her and never used her properly. She calls him a selfish and cowardly man who was a ruthless watcher of her sexual act with other men. This frustration of her love boils over in poems like 'The Invitation' and 'The Looking Glass'. In fact, the poetry of Kamala Das is devoted to her confessions of her sex life. Sexual humiliation becomes a central theme in her poetry. She goes to the extreme in her frank treatment of sex. In 'The Looking Glass' she says:

Gift him all,
Gift him what makes you woman, the scent of
Long hair, the musk of sweat between the breasts,
The warm shock of menstrual blood, and all your
Endless female hungers.

Kamala Das has added a new dimension to the poetry of love and sex. Her frank admission and bold treatment of her private life make her a great confessional poet. In this context she can be compared with Gauri Deshpande.

Kamala is a poet of protest also. She rebels against the conventions, traditions and accepted norms of society. Her protest is directed against injustices and exploitation. She made her poetry a vehicle for the expression of her resentments against male domination over women. In 'The Sunshine Cat' she writes in a strong tone of protest:

Being selfish
And a coward, the husband who neither loved nor
Used her, but was a ruthless watcher.....

Kamala Das's poetry is a frank and straightforward expression of feminine sensibility. She revolts against the exploitation of women. She expresses anger against the male dominance in the society. She attempted to establish her identity as women through her poems. At the same time she tried to impart an identity to Indian women. Thus her poetry signals the advent of new phenomenon in Indo- Anglican poetry.

Kamala Das's command over the English language is remarkable. She cultivated a style that is characterized by colloquial simplicity and clarity. Her poetry reveals a mastery of phrase and control over rhythm. In the choice of words, Kamala Das exercises a special care. The words effortlessly come to her and become one with emotion. She is a poet in the confessional mode. Thus her diction is most often colloquial. Her poetry abounds in imagery. Her images are suggestive and functional. She offers imagery in dealing with her favorite subjects like love and sex. Thus it is not boring and monotonous.

Kamala Das (1934-2009) is recognized as one of India's most influential female poets. She helped promote the cause of feminism in the 1960s and 70s, producing work related to family and home and giving it a modern twist by introducing sex and the body into the poetical narrative. Women writers owe a special debt to Kamala Das. She mapped out the terrain for post-colonial women in social and linguistic terms. And in her best poems she speaks for women, certainly, but also for anyone who has known pain, inadequacy and despair.' – Eunice de Souza, *Nine Indian Poets: An Anthology*, OUP, 1997. "My Grandmother's House" is written in English, but Kamala Das also wrote in Malayalam, a native Indian language from her state of Kerala. This ability reflects the colonial/personal split in some of her work, the former imposed by the British, the latter native. This poem was first published in the book *Summer Time in Calcutta* (now Kolkata) in 1965.

 Unit 08: *My Grandmother's House* by Kamala Das

Thus Kamala Das is a great poet. She directed the path of women poets in modern English poetry. She has certainly made a name for herself by virtue of her craftsmanship. No doubt, her poetry is autobiographical and confessional. She reminds us of Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath. The charge of obscurity and obsession with sex is groundless. Being a confessional poet she expresses her own emotions.

A brief outline of the poem

The poem starts with the reference of a grandmother as 'that woman' which is particular and who is no more now. The house is now far away and the past happy condition is irretrievable. The house represents the feeling of love which the speaker could get from her grandmother. But, now the house is silent. The poem moves through the happy past and sad present. The poet uses the image of snakes moving among the books now for which she was too younger in her childhood. Now very often she thinks to revisit the house but now it is very difficult now to peep through the blind windows. Here, the image of blind windows may represent the eyes which are now visionless. The air is frozen and now she wants to bring the handful of darkness. The poet uses the simile where she compares herself with the brooding dog who is helpless. The sudden reference to the reader as a 'darling' is striking. The speaker again mentions the love which she once received but now her condition is like a beggar asking the change of love. The poet in intense terms expresses the sadness. The use of language represents the strangeness and unhealthy relationship between people and this woman. Note the words- House, that woman, asking love as a change etc.

Analysis of the poem

"My Grandmother's House" is a short poem from Kamala Das which focuses on love lost, nostalgia and emotional pain. Basically, the speaker is looking back to a time as a child when she could enjoy love in a comfortable and contented household. She contrasts this blissful existence with that of her current situation, which is loveless and dire. This juxtaposition of then and now, past and present, creates the tension within this single-stanza poem and gives the reader a stark picture of how circumstances have altered for the speaker. There is also the idea that the speaker is trying to make someone see just how low she has gotten—how desperate she feels in her current situation. That someone may be her partner, husband, or spouse, or it could be a close friend.

Text of *My Grandmother's House*

"There is a house now far away where once
 I received love..... That woman died,
 The house withdrew into silence, snakes moved
 Among books, I was then too young
 To read, and my blood turned cold like the moon
 How often I think of going
 There, to peer through blind eyes of windows or
 Just listen to the frozen air,
 Or in wild despair, pick an armful of
 Darkness to bring it here to lie
 Behind my bedroom door like a brooding
 Dog...you cannot believe, darling,
 Can you, that I lived in such a house and
 Was proud, and loved.... I who have lost
 My way and beg now at strangers' doors to
 Receive love, at least in small change?"

Enjambment

Enjambment occurs when one line runs on into the next with no punctuation to bring about a pause, so meaning continues uninterrupted. This poetic device causes the reader potential confusion, as there is no need to pause or stop. The idea is to carry on reading and make sense alongside.

Post-Independence Indian Literature

This poem is full of enjambed lines, a ploy to cause an unusual break of line, a reflection of the contrasting state of the speaker. There are only three lines that end with punctuation where the reader has to pause.)

Kamala Das's childhood reminiscences are linked to Nalapat House, her family home in Malabar, and her grandmother, whom she loved dearly. These memories are often connected to feelings of nostalgia and wit. In *My Story* she writes, "from every city, I have lived I have remembered the noons in Malabar with an ache growing inside me, a homesickness." Her family home and her 'presiding deity'- her grandmother, symbolize the poetry of 'joy,' 'innocence,' 'respectability' and 'Traditional values'. The house is viewed in this poem with care and pathos, and the poet shares her poignant feelings of yearning for this house. She needs to get back to it. The terms 'windows' and 'air' are qualified by the two prefixes 'blind' and 'frozen.' There is a rich ambiguity of the expression which makes the suffering of the poetess very real. Her heart is itself like a dark window where the 'fresh air does not blow. Images working on several layers of response, or enrich the poem's texture. One of the favorite images is that of the window where she sits and enjoys the cool refreshing breeze of the past. This recurs to the extent of becoming an obsessive image. The image highlights the lingering longing of the poetess for a sentient peep into her past, resurrecting her hopes and desires. With the destruction of the old building, the windows were blind, only the heat of the reunion with the house would melt the ice, and the window would be returned to old life. The crumbling of the old house and the death of the old woman also leave their mark on the poet. With them, her own life of innocence and beloved ideals crumbles.

8.2 Symbol and Motif

The poetry of Kamala Das is the quest for the essential woman, and hence the woman, the individual of her poems, assumes the numerous roles of the unhappy woman, the unhappy lady, the mistress of the lustful men, the reluctant nymphomaniac, the mute Devdasi and the love-lorn Radha. Kamala Das was also named a confessional poet. Confessional poets struggle with emotional experiences that are usually taboo. There is a merciless self-analysis and a tone of total honesty. As E.V. Ramakrishnan appropriately points out, "In her poetry, Kamala has always dealt with private humiliations and sufferings which are the stock themes of confessional poetry." 'My Grandmother's House' is one of the finest poems in Kamala Das's maiden publication *Summer in Calcutta*. Though short, it touches upon many favorite themes of her favorite. It is a poem of nostalgia, up rootedness and the poet's eternal quest for love in a 'loveless' world. Relationship with her grandmother is the poet's favorite relationship and grandma is a symbol of harmony, affection and security in her poetry. In her poem 'Composition' Kamala Das discloses two of her guarded secrets:

I am so alone

And that I miss my grandmother

The poem also brings out the poet's loneliness and her fondness for her grandmother. Both the old lady and the ancestral home at Malabar brought to Kamala Das the feeling of belongingness. The poet has provided detailed information about the origin of this poem in her autobiography *My Story* (Chapter 33): After the sudden death of my granduncle followed by that of 'my dear grandmother,' the old Nalapat House was locked up and its servants disbanded. The windows were shut, gently as the eyes of the dead are shut... . The rats ran across its darkened halls and the white ants raised on its outer walls strange forms-totems of burial. After growing up, the poet shifted to another house which was far away from her beloved ancestral house. She still misses the place 'where I received love' with great intensity. The memory of those days when she was loved chokes her with emotion. The poet recalls the death of her dear ancestress - "That woman died" dwells on the difference the death made to the house and the poet's life. Grandma was the very life and soul of this house. When she passed away, even the house could not take the grief and 'withdrew into silence'. It was an atmosphere of all round mourning and desolation. At that time the poet was a very young child who could not read books but even at that age, she had a feeling of 'snakes' moving among books - a feeling of deadness, horror and repulsion. She recollects how the death of her grandmother had affected her as a child. It had a benumbing and chilling impact on her. Her blood lost all its invigorating power and its color came to resemble the color of the pale lifeless 'moon'.

Her grandmother's house always had a special significance for Kamala Das. During one of her serious illnesses, she had taken shelter in Malabar and was nursed back to health by her caring grandmother. The grandmother is no more, yet the poet often yearns to visit her beloved house. She

Unit 08: My Grandmother's House by Kamala Das

would once again look through its windows. The windows are 'blind' -shut, covered with colored windowpanes and with the overpowering sense of death. Death haunts the house and even the air is 'frozen air'. A visit to this house would revive memories of her childhood and grandmother in the poet.

Her grandmother's house has been a citadel of security and protection which is conspicuously missing from the poet's later life. For her, even the darkness of this house is not terrifying in its impact. It is rather a faithful companion providing comfort and security. The poet wishes to transport some of this comforting darkness and memories of this house to her new house. These memories will be her constant assuring companions in her married life. In his article on Kamala Das, O.J. Thomas has observed, "Memory of that house at Nalapat comes back to her as a soothing thought. The very thought created a sort of energy in her and inspiration to live and love."

As the poet remembers her present life, she is once again filled with grief over her loveless state. She badly misses her grandmother, the ancestral house and her secure and loved childhood:

You cannot believe, darling

can you, that I lived in such a house and

was proud and loved

That early stage is in painful contrast with her present state sans love and sans pride. The 'proud' and 'loved' child is now a beggar, begging at the 'stranger's doors' for love "at least in small change" i.e. a little measure. Since love is not to be found in the company of people close to her, she knocks at the stranger's doors and begs for it. In her quest for true love, she has 'lost her way' and wanders here and there. This wistfully nostalgic poem thus ends on a tragic note.

For Kamala Das, her grandmother was her mother-substitute. "She was the first I loved," says the poet in her poem 'Captive'. None of her later relationships could match the warmth and tenderness given by her grandmother. The oft-repeated desire to be with her, to be in her house, is an expression of Kamala Das's natural desire to be one with the mother in the womb. In its overall impact the poem is a forcefully moving poem fraught with nostalgia and anguish. The poet has intensified the emotion by presenting the contrast between her childhood and her grown-up stages. The fullness of the distant and absent and the emptiness of the near and the present give the poem its poignancy. The images of 'snakes moving among books', blood turning 'cold like the moon', 'blind eyes of windows', 'frozen air' evoke a sense of death and despair. The house itself becomes a symbol - an Edenic world, a cradle of love and joy. The escape, the poetic retreat is in fact, the poet's own manner of suggesting the hopelessness of her present situation. Her yearning for the house is a symbolic retreat to a world of innocence, purity and simplicity. Kamala Das has resorted to her favorite technique of using an ellipsis to convey the intensity of emotion. Ellipsis also serve another purpose of suggesting a shift in mood and tone. She has used a variety of sound patterns, assonance, alliteration and especially consonance. Consonance (e.g. line-1 house, once: /s/) and assonance (e.g. line-11 - bedroom, brooding: /u/) create the drowsy somnolence apt for the atmosphere. Frequent alliteration (e.g. behind, bedroom, brooding) gives emphasis to the poet's meaning. The rhetorical question spread in the last four lines underlines the emotional state created by the absence of love. The poem is remarkable for its utter simplicity of diction and intensity of emotion.

Reminiscent of the Poet's Ancestral Home

The poem is reminiscent of the poet's grandma and her ancestral home in Malabar, Kerala. Her memory of the love she had received from her grandma is associated with the image of her ancestral home, where she had spent some of the happiest days of her life, and where her old grandma had showered her love and affection. The house withdrew into silence with the death of her grandma. When her grandma died, even the house seemed to share her sorrow, which is poignantly reflected in the sentence "the House withdrew". The house soon became desolate, and the snakes crawled through the books. Her blood was cold like the moon because there was no one to love her the way she wanted to.

Yearning for the Past: Choked with Grief

The poet now lives in another city, a long distance away from her grandmother's home. But the memories of her ancestral home make her sad. She's almost heart-broken. The intensity of her emotions is demonstrated by the ellipses in the form of a few dots. Now, in another city, living another life, she's longing to go home. She knows that she can't redeem the past, but she wants to go back home, to look through her windows again, and to bring back a handful of darkness - sad and painful memories that she would have made her daily companion, a reminder of her past

happiness. For some time, the poet is unable to continue with his thoughts, as shown by the ellipses (dots). The poet now lives in another city, a long distance away from her grandmother's house. But the memories of her ancestral house make her sad. She is almost heart-broken. The intensity of her emotions is shown by the ellipses in the form of a few dots. Now, in another city, living another life, she longs to go back. She understands that she cannot reclaim the past but she wants to go back home, look once again through its windows and bring back a handful of darkness – sad and painful memories, which she would have made her constant companion, to keep as a reminder of her past happiness. The poet is unable to proceed with her thoughts for sometime as is indicated by the ellipses (dots). The poet is now choked with the intensity of his sorrow. She yearns for love like a beggar going from one door to another asking for a little change of love. Her desire for affection and acceptance is not met in marriage, and she follows strangers for love, at least in limited amounts. But even in small changes or coins, she doesn't get it. Her love-hunger remains unsatisfied, and there is a great loneliness, a void inside her, she tries to fill herself with love, but in vain. The window image is a connection between the past and the present. It means the poet's urge for a nostalgic peep into his history and to revive his dreams and desires.

The poem springs from her own disillusionment with her expectation of unconditional love from the one she loves. In the poem, the image of the ancestral home stands for the strong support and unconditional love she received from her grandmother. The imagery is personal and beautifully articulates her plight in a loveless marriage. Thus, the old house was for her a place of symbolic retreat to a world of innocence, purity and simplicity, an Edenic world where love and happiness are still possible.

8.3 Stylistic Features of the Poem

My Grandmother's House was published in the poetry anthology named Summer Time in Calcutta (1965). "My Grandmother's House" has only 16 lines and follows no definite pattern of rhyme. The tone of the poem is melancholic. The moods of melancholy and nostalgia dominate the overall atmosphere of the poem. This is a poignant poem where the poet is reminiscent of the old happy days of her childhood days. The dearth of emotion enforces her to take shelter in the psychological space which is attained by dwelling in the memories of her childhood and the failure of sexual life pushes her to cater to her appetite by making love with strangers. In general, the poem shows the anguished life of Kamala Das.

Summary

- Kamala Das is a most influential and pioneer poet of Indian English Poetry. He is famous as a confessional poet.
- The poem has symbols and motifs like death, solitude, alienation, quest for identity, despair, love, status of women in patriarchal society etc.
- Talking about the stylistic features of the poem it can be said that the present poem is a 16 lines short lyrical poem by Kamala Das. The poet has used figurative language like simile, personification and enjambment etc.

Keywords

- Nostalgic: Feeling, evoking, or characterized by nostalgia.
- Desolate: Feeling or showing great unhappiness or loneliness.
- Evocative: Bringing strong images, memories, or feelings to mind.
- Sarvodaya: The economic and social development of a community as a whole, especially as advocated by Mahatma Gandhi.
- Totems: A person or thing regarded as being symbolic or representative of a particular quality or concept.
- Frozen air
- Despair

Unit 08: My Grandmother's House by Kamala Das

- Brooding
- Strangers
- Darling

Self Assessment

1. My Grandmother's House has been composed by
A. Kamala Das
B. John Donne
C. John Keats
D. D.H. Lawrence
2. Summer in kolkata 'is a collection of poems by
A. Kamala Das
B. keki N.Daruwala
C. D.H. Lawrence
D. John keata
3. Kamala Das was born in
A. 1933
B. 1934
C. 1935
D. 1936
4. Which figure of speech has been used in ' my Grandmother's House?
A. Metaphor
B. Personification
C. Epic simile
D. Simile
5. The speaker of 'My Grandmother's House' is proud of
A. her parent's house
B. her grandmother's house
C. her uncle's house
D. None of these
6. When did the speaker of 'My Grandmother's House' live with her grandmother?
A. during her childhood
B. during her adolescence
C. during her youth
D. None of these
7. My grandmother's house was published in

- A. 1963
 - B. 1964
 - C. 1965
 - D. 1966
8. My grandmother's House is
- A. A Sonnet
 - B. An Ode
 - C. A Ballad
 - D. A Lyric
9. During her childhood the speaker of 'My Grandmother's house' lived with her
- A. Grandmother
 - B. Aunt
 - C. Mother
 - D. None of house
10. My Grandmother's House' published in
- A. Descendants'
 - B. Summer in Calcutta'
 - C. The old playhouse and other poems
 - D. None of these | Ans- (B)
11. Kamala Das was born in
- A. 1933
 - B. 1934
 - C. 1935
 - D. 1936
12. Which figure of speech has been used in 'My Grandmother's House' ?
- A. metaphor
 - B. personification
 - C. epic simile
 - D. simile
13. The speaker of 'My Grandmother's House' is proud of
- A. her parent's house
 - B. her grandmother's house
 - C. her uncle's house
 - D. None of these
14. When did the speaker of 'My Grandmother's House' live with her grandmother ?
- A. during her childhood

Unit 08: My Grandmother's House by Kamala Das

- B. during her adolescence
C. during her youth
D. None of these
15. My Grandmother House published in
A. 1963
B. 1964
C. 1965
D. 1966
16. 'My Grandmother's House' is
A. A Sonnet
B. An Ode
C. A Ballad
D. A Lyric
17. During her childhood the speaker of 'My Grandmother's House' lived with her
A. grandmother
B. aunt
C. mother
D. None of house
18. 'My Grandmother's House' published in
A. Descendants
B. Summer in Calcutta
C. The Old Playhouse and Other Poems
D. None of these
19. Who was composed the poem, 'My Grandmother's House' ?
A. Kamala Das
B. A.K. Ramanujan
C. Sarojini Naidu
D. None of these
20. Who is the speaker in 'My Grandmother's House' ?
A. Toru Dutta
B. Kamala Das
C. S.K. Kumar
D. None of these
21. Kamala Das has written the poem
A. Snake
B. Fire-Hymn

- C. My Grandmother's House
 - D. The Soldier
22. Kamala Das is an Poetess.
- A. American
 - B. Indian
 - C. African
 - D. Russian
23. Kamala Das is talking about her..... who is dead now.
- A. Father
 - B. Mother
 - C. Grand father
 - D. Grand mother
24. Kamala Das remembers the happy days spent in the sweet company of her
- A. grand mother
 - B. grand father
 - C. father
 - D. mother
25. She noticed a behind the door of the bedroom.
- A. ox
 - B. cow
 - C. dog
 - D. cat
26. The house went into silence due to the death of the
- A. woman
 - B. man
 - C. girl
 - D. boy
27. My Grand mother's House' is an poem by Kamala Das.
- A. biographical
 - B. auto biographical
 - C. bibliographical
 - D. None of these
28. The poetess in 'The Grand Mother's House' begs at doors.
- A. friend's
 - B. family's
 - C. stranger's

Unit 08: My Grandmother's House by Kamala Das

D. enemy's

29. There is a house now far away where once I received love is from the poem .

- A. Song of Myself
- B. Ode to Autumn
- C. My Grand mother's House
- D. Snake

30. Behind my bedroom's door like a brooding' is written by

- A. Rupert Brooke
- B. Kamala Das
- C. Keki N. Daruwalla
- D. T.S. Eliot

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. A | 2. A | 3. B | 4. D | 5. B |
| 6. A | 7. C | 8. D | 9. A | 10. B |
| 11. B | 12. A | 13. B | 14. B | 15. C |
| 21. C | 22. B | 23. D | 24. A | 25. C |
| 26. A | 27. B | 28. C | 29. C | 30. B |

Review Questions

- Discuss Kamala Das as a confessional poet with special reference to the poem prescribed in your syllabus.
- Identify the nostalgic elements in the poem *My Grandmother's House* and explain their importance shaping the career of Kamala Das.
- What do you mean by motif and symbols? Discuss the motifs and symbols used by Kamala Das in the Poem *My grandmother's House*.
- Supply the critical appreciation of the poem *My grandmother's House*.
- Comment on the stylistic features of the poem *My grandmother's House*.
- What do you mean by post-colonial literature? Discuss Kamala Das as a Post Colonial Poet.

Practice Questions

- How does the speaker describe the condition of her grandmother's house? Does it resemble to the house of any of your acquaintance?
- What type of love or relation do you find, between the grandmother and the speaker?
- What changes have taken place since the speaker's grandmother died?
- Point out the similes in the poem?

5. Give in short the summary of the poem, "My Grandmother's House".



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Unit 09: Difficult Daughters by Manju Kapur

CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

9.1 Life and works of Manju Kapur

9.2 Plot of the Novel

9.3 Character Analysis

Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

Answers for Self Assessment

Review Questions

Further Reading

Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- Explore the life and works of Manju Kapur,
- discuss the plot structure of the novel
- character analysis of the novel

Introduction

Manju Kapur is a contemporary novelist from India and her novel *Difficult Daughters* is a story of three generations of women: Ida, the narrator, who is a divorcee. Virmati, her mother, who marries an already married professor for love, and Kasturi, her grandmother, who come to terms with a difficult daughter, Virmati. This was not a fictional family, but the story of a real, middle class home with fathers, mothers and brothers and sisters that one had seen and lived with. Merging them together was the background of the Partition, which 50 years later seems to be the watershed event of modern India. In short, their popularity rested on their documenting accurately the life and times of this nation's early years, providing us with a picture that was like going through a family photo album where half-forgotten people and events leapt back into our consciousness. Virmati is attracted towards an English professor who falls passionately in love with her because his illiterate wife could never prove a soul mate. After his repeated overtures Virmati gives in, as she is also a soul thirsting for love. This illegitimate affair leads to many a trouble. Virmati has to bear the brunt alone. She is forced to abort the child of Harish as the professor is reluctant-rather afraid – to marry her. Finally at the insistence of a friend, the professor is forced into marrying her. But Virmati's hardships do not end here, they simply change colours. Most of her sufferings are caused by maternal apathy. Virmati does not have a sympathetic shoulder to weep on and this aggravates her agony. She suffers at the hands of the parochial society, her family and above all her paramour.

9.1 Life and works of Manju Kapur

Like her predecessors Shashi Deshpande and Githa Hariharan, Manju Kapur is a celebrated novelist. She is a popular novelist with a considerable impact of her writing on society. She was born on October 25, 1948 at Amritsar in Punjab. She is married to Gun Nidhi Dalmia who belongs to the affluent family of Dalmias. She has three daughters and a son - Kapur has taught English literature in Miranda House, Delhi University for fourteen years and took voluntary retirement to devote

herself completely to creative writing in English. Manju Kapur is a proficient Indian writer and novelist. She won the 1999 Commonwealth Writers' Prize (Eurasia Section) for her first published work, "Difficult Daughters," published in 1998. The novel was also a number one best seller in India. Her other famous published works include *Home, A Married Woman, Custody, The Immigrant* and, *Shaping the World: Women Writers on Themselves*. Her novel *Custody* was adapted as the Television show 'Yeh Hai Mohabbatein Yeh Hai Mohabbatein' on TV channel Star Plus. A Malayalam Tv Show 'PranayamPranayam' is also based on her novel *Custody*. Manju Kapoor was born in Amritsar, Punjab on January 1st, 1948. She did her masters in 1972. She went to Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada. Manju completed her M.Phil from Delhi University. Her first work was rebuffed by publishers several times. She amended her novel, cut down and refined it before finally publishing it. One of Manju's specific traits is that she works on different novels at the same time, which is quite remarkable.

It took Manju eight years to finish the first book, *Difficult Daughters*. Manju has a peculiar way of writing as she first draws her ideas and feelings before converting it into art. She claims herself to be a feminist. She feels that when depicting the relationship between a man and a woman, the viewpoint of a feminist is inescapable. Her first novel *Difficult Daughters* is a tale of a young woman, Virmati living in Amritsar in a stringent and somber house. The story revolves around her love interest with a professor and her battle for freedom. *Difficult daughters* is a sign to understanding that when a woman quests for her existence and identity, she is stigmatized as a rough daughter by the family as well as the society. Her second novel was 'A Married Woman' which is a story about a girl named Astha, an upper middle class, working women from Delhi. It is an alluring, genuine and provocative story of love, sentiments and profound attachment set at the time of spiritual chaos. 'Home' is her third novel. It's the story of a cloth businessman Banwarilal and his family living in Karol Bagh, Delhi. The story portrays a family's benchmarks overlooked by the young generation. It also depicts the image of women moving on from a conservative society and their norms. Manju Kapur is married to Gun Nidhi Dalmia and lives in Delhi. She has three children and three grandchildren. She teaches English literature at Miranda House College, Delhi University. Kapur's novels follow the popular trend of contemporary Indian women's writing in English. The central focus of her novels concentrates around woman characters within the territory of home and society. Like her illustrated contemporaries, Kapur too has foregrounded women's lives in her novels which depict both the external and internal dimensions of female-community. Out of her five novels, only three novels - *Difficult Daughters, A Married Woman, and Home* incorporate the theme of female bonding in varying shades and degrees. These novels offer a fascinating glimpse into women's consciousness and their interrelations. Her female protagonists forge bonds or make attempts to do so as a strategy of survival and empowerment in the contemporary society marked by unforeseen social change. Her novels orchestrate a wide range of theme related to women's live in context of patriarchal society: Women's Lives within the family, their relationships with the male and female members, their ambition for education and independence, their conflicts with other women and men and men in their journey towards self-realization, their desire to have and possess children and finally their bonding with other women as a means of emotional support, survival and empower.

9.2 Plot of the Novel

Kapur's debut novel, *Difficult Daughters* centers around a young woman Virmati, born into an Arya Samaji household in Amritsar. The story is narrated by Virmati's daughter Ida who seeks to reconstitute her mother's history. In this task, she visits people who were related to Virmati and those who had known her intimately. For more accurate and reliable details, Ida personally visits the places where her mother had lived. As Ida narrates Virmati's life-history, we learn how Virmati was torn between family-duty, the desire for education and illicit love. This is a story of sorrow, love, compromise and suffering.

Difficult Daughters is set around the turbulent years of World War II and partition of India. It depicts the women of three generation, Kasturi, her daughter Virmati and Virmati's daughter Ida. The central focus of the novel is on Virmati, the difficult daughter of the second generation. Virmati was the eldest among the eleven children of Kasturi and Suraj Prakash. As the eldest child, she is burdened with the duties and responsibilities because of her mother's incessant pregnancies. She lost her childhood while mothering her younger siblings, and her mother Kasturi never gave her the emotional security through affection and bonding. Thus, Virmati was emotionally starved from her childhood and whenever she tried to forge a bond with her mother, she was snubbed. Kasturi always told Virmati that marriage is the ultimate goal and destiny of a girl. Though Kasturi herself

Unit 09: Difficult Daughters by Manju Kapur

was moderately educated, she did not favour higher education for girls. Her daughter, Virmati has firm conviction that only higher education can grant her an individual identity and standing in the society. She achieves her ambition by obtaining B.A. from A.S. College Amritsar and B.T. from Lahore. While she was doing her B.A., an Oxford-returned professor named Harish entered her life. He lived as a tenant in Virmati's house. The professor cast his charms on Virmati and started to woo her on the pretext that his illiterate wife was not a suitable companion and he yearned for stimulating intellectual partner. The secret romance between them continues and Virmati attempts suicide when her family arranges her marriage with a canal engineer, Inderjeet. After this traumatic event, Virmati refuses to marry on the pretext that she wants to study further. To avoid any scandal and humiliation, Virmati's younger sister Indumati is married to Inderjeet on the appointed time and date. On Virmati's insistence followed by the approval of her father Suraj Prakash and her grandfather Lala Diwan Chand, she is sent to Lahore to study further for her B.T. degree. The professor is relentless in his pursuit of Virmati and arranges clandestine meetings with Virmati at the house of his Muslim friend. Their illicit love-making results in Virmati's becoming pregnant without the professor knowing it. As he was away, she could not communicate this to him. Instead she shared this problem with her room-mate Swarna who managed the abortion of the unwanted pregnancy.

Virmati's practical sense weakened when she was with the professor who always talked of romantic love and made love to her. Realizing the illicit and guilty nature of this love, Virmati insisted that the professor marry her but he was evasive, giving the excuse that he could not leave his wife and family because he was already married to Ganga. After her return from Lahore when she had completed B.T. Virmati waited for the professor to marry her but he was timid enough to undertake such a bold step. In the meantime, the Diwan of Sirmaur, a hill state in Himachal Pradesh visited Amritsar to seek a suitable woman candidate for the principal's post in the girls' school started by the Maharani of his state. He knew Lala Diwan Chand and discussed the matter of Virmati's appointment. The disappointed and broken Virmati saw a golden opportunity for herself and agreed at once. Her stay at Sirmaur as the Principal of girls School was the happiest and the most productive period of her life. But the professor followed her there too as her nemesis and his second furtive visit caused Virmati's doom as she was dismissed from her job. Virmati received a rather dry farewell from the staff of her school and she left Sirmaur for Shantiniketan where she had decided to spend the rest of her life.

However, difficulties still lay in wait to divert her from the chosen path. On her way to Shantiniketan, she decided to stay for a while at the house of a poet-friend of the professor. When the poet learnt about Virmati's final decision he immediately wired the professor to reach Delhi. On the fifth day of Virmati's stay, he arrived and was hastily married to her with the poet's parents performing the kanyadaan. Thus, a new chapter in Virmati's life began but marriage proved a disaster as the professor's first wife Ganga along with her mother-in-law waged a silent but perpetual war with Virmati who felt a stranger in the family. Ganga poisoned the minds of her children, and her sister-in-law Gudiya against Virmati. When she conceived, her mother-in-law changed colours and started to take care of her in the hope that Virmati might bear a son. Unluckily Virmati had a miscarriage which left her weak and distraught. Even the job she had taken up in a primary school failed to stabilize her mind.

Besides her misery and suffering in the professor's household, Virmati also felt the pain of being disowned by her parental family. Two successive tragedies in her parental home shook the entire being of Virmati. Her father Suraj Prakash succumbed to an assault by some unknown miscreant on the occasion of Hindu Mahasabha rally which was banned by the British government. Her mother Kasturi grew hysterical with rage at her sight when Virmati went to mourn Suraj Prakash's death. A few days later Virmati's grandfather, Lala Diwan Chand, who was completely broken by his son's death, passed away. Virmati found herself uprooted and felt disoriented as she belonged to nowhere. She was equally unwelcome in her parental family as well as in her husband's house who decided to send her to Lahore to do an M.A. in philosophy. This two-year stay at Lahore kept at bay the humiliation and suffering in the professor's house but the pain of being ostracized by her parental family persisted and she could never reconcile herself to it.

In short, Virmati realized that her education and love affair failed to give her a stable identity and autonomous existence. She had, in fact, paid a much too heavy price for her independence. All her life she longed for the love of her mother who never allowed herself to be emotionally together with her daughter. Her emotional needs were fulfilled only to a small extent when she was with her husband, the professor. Despite the obstacles and frustrations, Virmati's efforts at forging bonds with women had vented an oasis in the otherwise dreary desert of her emotional life. In her later days when she became the mother of a daughter called Ida, Virmati was so emotionally dried up

that she remained a sad and silent individual unable to forge an emotional bond with her own daughter.

In fact, Virmati alone is not to be blamed for her failure in female-bonding. She had an abundance of emotions like love, affection, care and a spirit of togetherness with other women. Her daughter Ida's statement in the opening line of *Difficult Daughters* carries a significant import: 'The one thing I had wanted was not to be like my mother'. (Difficult Daughters, 1) Ida means to convey the message that she would not suffer in silence like Virmati who bore the burden of her unhappy life. Ida is childless and a divorcee. She asserts her independence as a single woman who has equipped herself to fight the battles of life alone. Moreover, Ida's final decision to unravel and reconstitute the history of Virmati's life clearly explains her bonding with the mother with whom she could not be intimate as long as she was alive.

Ida narrates the story of Virmati, gathering its different strands from the relatives and acquaintances of her mother. Virmati's brother Kailash Nath offers his unconditional support and co-operation in the undertaking of unearthing the details of Virmati's past and connecting them together in a logical pattern. The story begins retrospectively with the seventeen-year-old Virmati supporting her mother Kasturi who gave birth to eleven children. But Kasturi was a stereotype of a traditional married Hindu woman who believed that a daughter is meant to be married off as soon as she reaches adolescence. Virmati's longing for emotional closeness with Kasturi stands as a prototype of traditional Indian female subject to the overpowering rule of patriarchy. As such, the possibility of female bonding is forestalled, by the influence of patriarchal norms. The noted theorist, Luce Irigaray, has pointed out, "In patriarchal system, man is the legal head of the family or state, a fact which coincides with the weakening of female-female bond and especially the dissolution of mother-daughter relationship." (Irigaray, 10)

However, despite the failure of a bonding between Kasturi and her difficult daughter Virmati, Ida has a passionate longing to connect to her mother, Virmati, a fact substantiated by Ida's own reflection, "Amritsar was a place I associated with my mother. Without her I am lost. I look for ways to connect." (Difficult Daughters, 4)

Ida feels the acute pain of loss she suffered as a daughter. She could not develop an understanding with her mother during her lifetime and after Virmati's death this realization brings about a feeling of loss and guilt in Ida. So she sets out on a journey into her mother's past to seek a woman she could know, understand and reach out to in retrospect. Ida undertakes to recover Virmati's past to connect with her and make for the loss which had a devastating impact on her life.

For Ida, the recovery of her mother's past was not an easy task. She tried and asked about Virmati, the way she was before she knew her. She came to learn that Virmati's parents had eleven children. The girls: Virmati, Indumati, Gunwati, Hemavati, Vidyavati and Parvati. The boys: Kailashnath, Gopinath, Krishnanath, Prakashnath and Hiranath. Ida noticed that her relatives were polite, respectful to the dead. As Ida was not satisfied, she continued her successive and insistent enquiry and they revealed reluctantly, "You know, our mother was always sick (due to successive child-births), and Virmati, as eldest, had to run the house and look after us. We depended on her, but she was free with her tongue and her hands. One tight slap she would give for nothing. She would lash out if we didn't listen. We used to run from her when she came. She was only our sister, but she acted very bossy. We were scared of her. She was so keen to study, bap re. First FA, then B.A, then BT on top of that. Even after her marriage, she went for an MA to Government College, Lahore... The Oxford of the East. She studied more than any other girl in family. Bhai Sahib - your father was very particular about education." (Difficult Daughters, 4-5)

Ida realizes that her relatives gave her one view whereas she wanted another - a real and full view of her mother's life. Virmati's childhood, as Ida tells, was not a usual happy childhood under the wings of her mother Kasturi. 'Ever since Virmati could remember she had been looking after children. It wasn't only baby Parvati [her youngest sister] to whom she was indispensable, to her younger siblings she was second mother as well.' (Difficult Daughters, 6)

Virmati was so heavily burdened with the care and responsibility of her younger siblings that she was almost always tired and harassed. She had almost forgotten tenderness as she received none from her own mother, "At times Virmati yearned for affection, for some sign that she was special. However, when she put her hand next to the youngest baby, feeding in the mother's arms, Kasturi would get irritated and push her away. 'Have you seen to their food - milk - clothes - studies?' Clearly enough, Virmati felt emotionally deprived of her mother's affection. She has to accompany Kasturi to Dalhousie where she went for a while to recuperate from ill-health. Physically, Virmati was now much closer to Kasturi and her youngest sister Paro but her 'attempts to spin webs of love' through devotion were met by exasperation.' That is, Kasturi reciprocated Virmati's gestures

 Unit 09: *Difficult Daughters* by Manju Kapur

of love with anger and foul temper. She always exhorted Virmati to do some domestic work in order to make herself useful. To add more to her hardships, Virmati's aunt, Lajwanti arrived these to have a change of climate and mood, writing to her daughter Shakuntala to visit them in the meanwhile. Shakuntala visited Dalhousie soon after Lajwanti's arrival. Shakuntala was the eldest child of Virmati's household. She was the daughter of her taji Chandra Prakash and Aunt Lajwanti. She had obtained an M.Sc. degree in chemistry from Lahore and taught there in a college. Virmati was highly impressed by her glamorous cousin's free air, sophisticated manners and her higher education. Virmati's stay at Dalhousie proved fruitful in the sense that it created an opportunity to meet Shakuntala who enlightened her about the broader spectrum of women's lives in Lahore. In Amritsar, the family considered marriage as the ultimate goal for girls. On the contrary, Lahore was resonant with the air of freedom as Shakuntala tells Virmati : 'These people don't really understand Viru, how much satisfaction there can be in leading your own life, in being independent. Here we are fighting for the freedom of the nation, but women are still supposed to marry, and nothing else.' (*Difficult Daughters*, 17)

In fact, Shakuntala opens up new vistas of women's lives in Lahore, where women conduct political meetings, demonstrate and join rallies. But she feels sad as her mother, Lajwanti considers marriage is the only choice in life. She tells Virmati about her activities in Lahore, "We travel, entertain ourselves in the evenings, follow each other's work, read papers, attend seminars. One of them is even going abroad for higher studies." (*Difficult Daughters*, 12) For Virmati, her cousin's words were the most vivid thing on the horizon. Shakuntala appeared to be the embodiment of all that Virmati aspired to be : an educated, independent woman with no inhibitions. By following Shakuntala around, Virmati made a close study of her cousin's personality and was fascinated by Shakuntala's free spirit, and firm conviction in herself, "She watched her ride horses, smoke, play cards and badminton, out without her mother's advice, buy anything she wanted without thinking it a waste of money, casually drop in on all the people the family knew. Above all, she never seemed to question or doubt herself in anything." (*Difficult Daughters*, 18)

No doubt, Shakuntala's brief stay at Dalhousie brought Virmati closer to her. When Shakuntala began to leave for Lahore, Virmati clung to her. She was so powerfully charged with a flux of emotions and ambitions ignited by Shakuntala's personality and her approach towards life. She expressed her ambition to study in Lahore and Shakuntala encouraged her by patting on the back. Virmati felt almost breathless with admiration and love. This clearly indicates the beginning of a female-bonding which grows further when Virmati goes to Lahore for her BT accompanied by Kasturi, her mother. There is a brief friendship with the professor's wife who lived as a tenant in the other part of Virmati's house. Virmati's youngest sister Paro (Parvati) always accompanied her as her shadow. The professor's wife was the first to extend a hand of friendship by inviting and treating the girls with eatables. After a few visits Virmati and the professor's wife became quite friendly, with Virmati taking her for a tour of Amritsar city in her father's tonga. This woman also becomes friendly with Virmati's mother and assured Kasturi that Virmati's future was quite safe in AS college. Of all her siblings, the youngest Paro is most closely attached to Virmati who is terribly busy with twin responsibilities : domestic chores and her studies. But young Paro often forced Virmati's attention and care to herself. This is exemplified by a small incident when Paro was hurt. While Virmati was busy with her studies, Paro complained of her hurt and Virmati tried to ignore the younger sister, telling her that the hurt was not so bad, Paro snatched the book from her hands and threw it on the floor. Virmati slapped Paro for this who burst into tears and fled. She did not stop crying and wailing until came and comforted her.

Virmati's love-affair with the professor and her impending marriage with the canal engineer, Inderjit had torn her apart. Suicide was the only escape-route she could contemplate. Virmati planned to slip out of her house unseen but the young Paro, who was so passionately attached to her, noticed it and pounced on her. Virmati could not help crying and tears rolled down her eyes. Paro too begins to weep while comforting her strong sister. Virmati prevaricates when Paro wants to know the cause of her sadness and grief. An excerpt may illustrate the bonding between the two sisters, "Where are you going ? I 'm also coming ! 'Not now, darling', said Virmati, looking at this youngest of her sisters, almost a daughter, trying to memorize every line of her little face. As Paro started to protest, she added quickly, 'I'll bring you a notebook and coloured pencils. All right ?'" (*Difficult Daughters*, 73)

Paro was distracted but doubtful, asking where Virmati was going and why couldn't she accompany her. It was this bond of affection which made Virmati buy the promised things for Paro and leave it with the Munshi of her grandfather's mill to be sent home for Paro before she went to end her wife by jumping into the canal. Luckily she was rescued by the two workmen of Lala Diwan Chand who felt Virmati's agitation and did not press her for any explanation. Her

grandfather 's gestures moved Virmati as no one had done, "Tears gathered in Virmati 's eyes as she felt her grandfather's love float around her. And then fear... Meanwhile as Lala Diwan Chand put his arm around her, he could sense that she was crying, and he caressed her damp head. This affectionate gesture was more than Virmati could bear." (Difficult Daughters, 85)

Besides this, there is a fleeting glimpse of women coming together in moments of crisis. When the news of Virmati's imminent suicide broke out in her family, her sisters and even her aunt, Lajwanti, began to comfort her mother, Kasturi, "Lajwanti had her arm around her sister-in-law, the girls were clustered around the too older women." (Difficult Daughters, 85) After her attempted suicide, Virmati became a fearless and courageous young woman. She refused to have an arranged marriage with Inderjit and expressed her resolve to study further. For this insolence and transgression of family-tradition, she was punished with confinement inside the godown of her father's shop. Her letter to the professor, her lover, shows the bonding Paro had with Virmati, "I can write to you because Paro got me paper, pen and ink tablet...I think Paro still has some feeling for me because she agreed. The first time Paro crept up to my window, she asked me why I was locked up, what had I done that was so bad ? What could I say ? I could only cry, which made her cry too. Now she doesn't ask. (Difficult Daughters, 88)

In fact, the young Paro acted as a bridge in the communication between Virmati and the professor. Moreover, she was innocent enough to understand their secret love-affair. Virmati feels guilty about involving Paro but her love compels her to do so, "At first I was afraid of involving Paro. She is so young, not yet five. I told her that she must not talk about me to anybody because they are angry with me, and everything I do earns their disapproval. Fortunately, she believed me, as why should she not ? She can see for herself how it is." (Difficult Daughters, 91) However, Virmati has mixed feeling of sadness, grief, loss and fear when she shares her feelings with the professor in her letter to him. After her refusal to marry, her family decided to marry her younger sister Indumati to Inderjit in order to avoid scandal and shame : 'Because of the family shame it was a small brief affair. I was allowed to help dress her, and during the time of the vida, they let me say goodbye.' (Difficult Daughters, 92)

Sadly enough, Virmati's longing to be with her sister on the occasion of Indu's marriage was only partially fulfilled as she noticed how well they managed without her and how strained their conversation was in her presence. Such a treatment leaves Virmati sad, broken and alienated woman whose family severed emotional ties with her. However, her confinement and suffering did not last long as her father, Suraj Prakash and her grandfather, Lala Diwan Chand interceded on Virmati 's behalf. The family agreed finally to send her to Lahore for BT degree, with Kasturi escorting her there. Lajwanti's daughter and Kasturi' s niece, Shakuntala was already in Lahore to help Virmati settle. At Lahore, Virmati forges a bond with Shakuntala who champions the cause of women's education and freedom. As Virmati noticed Shakuntala's gestures, she felt relieved, " 'Chachi', she said, turning towards her aunt. 'You will not regret sending Viru to Lahore.'" (Difficult Daughters, 113)

Virmati finds Shakuntala affectionate and supportive. When Kasturi departed to have a small private talk with the principal, Shakuntala looked at Virmati thoughtfully before putting her arms around her. Virmati was startled as 'Shakuntala had never been demonstrative.' (115) She consoles Virmati that, she might have some logic when she refused to marry. She enlightens Virmati about the broader outlook in Lahore, assuring her of her support, "'You will find Viru, that in Lahore people are not so narrow- minded. It is a pity the man was married, but you have done the right thing. Together we will face the family. After all, I have experience in resisting pressures. Don't worry, I am on your side.' Shakuntala squeezed Virmati closer and added, ' Now tell me all about it. What actually happened?'" (Difficult Daughters, 115) To Virmati, Shakuntala had been a source of inspiration, she wanted to be like her. Now she noticed the hunger in her eyes, the avidness on face. It was the only occasion when Kasturi made an affectionate gesture, "'When the goodbyes took place, moved by the tears in her daughter's eyes, unbent enough to give her an affectionate farewell.'" (Difficult Daughters, 116)

Shakuntala had managed the room which Virmati was to share with another student, Swarna Lata. The next day Swarna Lata, the room- mate came: 'Her name meant golden creeper, and she crept around Virmati without tightening her grip and shone on her as long as they were together, because she was generous and had plenty to give from a life that was full.' (Difficult Daughters, 117) As Virmati was eager and desirous to make friends, she offered eatables and delicacies to Swarna Lata. The bridge between them began to take shape as Swarna opens herself to Virmati, ' It's only because of my father that I am here. My mother wanted me to marry. She said I had done my BA and that was enough.' (117) Asked about the pressure of marriage from the family, Swarna Lata explained. ' I love Lahore, All my friends are here, all my activities. I had to stay here, so I decided

Unit 09: Difficult Daughters by Manju Kapur

to do an MA. I wrote and told my parents. There was not a moment to lose. They'd already begun to send me photographs of prospective husbands ! Each looking uglier than the last.' (117) Swarna's firm determination to study further made her parents agree with her though she had to fight for it :

It was quite unpleasant while it lasted. I prefer not to quarrel with my parents, but sometimes there is no alternative.' (118). A few days later Shakuntala cycled down to RBSL College during during visiting hours, to check on her cousin. Virmati greeted her cautiously and told her that everything was homely including the food. When Shakuntala questioned her about her room-mate Swarna Lata. Virmati was all praise for Swarna : 'Oh Pehnji, she is very nice. I am so lucky she is staying in this hostel even though she doesn't study here. Her parents also wanted to get her married, but she is doing an MA because she wanted to do something with her life first'. (118)

Perhaps Shakuntala could not digest such praise and when she met Swarna at Virmati's pleading, the meeting was not a success. Shakuntala called Swarna rather plain as she came out of Virmati's room. This startled Virmati for two highly educated and open-minded young women could not get on with each other. She reflected: Fancy Pehnji going so much by looks. Anybody would be impressed by Swarna's eyes behind her glasses, eyes that refused to smile because they were looked at. And what about the intelligence in her round face, and the friendliness that was frank and open ?' (Difficult Daughters, 119)

However, notwithstanding the disapproval of Swarna' s personality by her cousin Shakuntala, Virmati' s one year stay at Lahore turned out to be a period of bonding with Swarna. Her clandestine meetings with the professor led to their physical union and Virmati became pregnant unawares. In the meantime, Swarna was elected to the senior studentship of the RBSL college. Her election put an end to her friendship with a muslim girl Ashrafi who contested against her and lost. But Swarna had cemented her relationship with Virmati firmly and encouraged her to participate in Punjab Women's Conference being held at Lahore. There is an elaborate description of the deliberations of this conference in the XVIIIth chapter of the novel. Virmati was quite reluctant to attend the conference, but she did go on Swarna's insistence. She was lost in the professor's love - an illicit love-affair and found herself torn by conflict. She feels guilty at not having shared the secret of her love-affair with Swarna, Virmati voices her feeling of loss at not placing her trust in Swarna, "Am I free; thought Virmati. I came here to be free, but I am not like these woman. They are using their minds organizing, participating in conferences, politically active, while my time is being spent in love." (Difficult Daughters, 142) On her return from the conference, Virmati had fever and was sick for days. The fever left her pale, weak and thin. The professor came to meet her after two months, she discussed the fate of their 3 year-long love affair and accused him of delay and negligence; 'I break my engagement because of you, blacken my family's name, am locked up inside my house, get sent to Lahore because no one knows what to do with me. Here I am in the position of being your secret wife, full of shame, wondering what people will say if they find out, not being able to live in peace, study in peace...and why ? Because I am an idiot. (Difficult Daughters, 149)

On her arrival back at the hostel, Virmati still felt agitated and betrayed. Swarna noticed it at the meal time in the mess and tried to comfort Virmati, assuring her of support, "What is it Viru ?" she asked gently. 'You are obviously miserable. I usually don't have time for us to spend together, but I care about what is happening to you. Now tell me. Otherwise, I shall feel terribly guilty.'" (Difficult Daughters, 150) Swarna' s affectionate and sympathetic gesture softened Virmati and she shared with her the secret of her love- affair with the professor explaining her conflict caused by uncertainty. Swarna shakes Virmati out of her stalemate over the problem of marriage with the professor, "Most families look upon the marriage of a daughter as a sacred duty - or sacred freedom. We are lucky we're living in times when women can do something else. Even in Europe women get more respect during wartime. And here we have that war, and our Satyagraha as well." (Difficult Daughter, 152)

Despite Swarna enlightening Virmati about life and women's role, and encouraging her, Virmati suffered two setbacks. First, she did not do well in her BT exams. Second, she discovered that she was pregnant and, on her way, to becoming an unmarried mother. She was terribly shaken by the fact of pregnancy as fear and apprehension assailed her mind. She was desperate to come out of this mess but was unwilling to share it with the professor who had made her life so miserable. She found the real friend in Swarna who understood her and could both suggest a way out of it and support her in every possible way. The narrator Ida, who is Virmati's daughter, identifies and sympathises with Virmati because Ida herself had undergone an abortion. The old Swarna Lata recounts to Ida. 'Yes, we were good friends. But Viru knew, yes, she knew that what she had done would be seen by me as a social setback for women. Good ! This was the very thing the men were

afraid of, even mothers. Education led to independence and loose conduct... (*Difficult Daughters*, 155)

The narrator reflects sympathetically how poor Virmati must have suffered the unwanted and socially unacceptable pregnancy. During such a crisis, Virmati looked up to Swarna as her only support and shared the secret of her pregnancy. Swarna did not look shocked or surprised but careful. She tried her level best to help Virmati, discussing the matter with Miss Datta whom she called Auntie. She explained to Virmati that government hospitals did not permit illegal abortions. However, Swarna finally managed Virmati's abortion with Miss Datta's help who hired a male doctor to perform the task. This incident is a sufficient proof of the female bonding between Virmati and Swarna Lata though their friendship could not continue beyond one year. In her post-abortion depressive mood, Virmati reflects on the value, meaning and importance of Swarna's bonding with her, "Only with Swarna could she be comfortable, Swarna who knew what she was, and didn't condemn. (159)" Obviously, Virmati's one-year friendship with Swarna at Lahore sustained her through her conflicts and crises. Both these young women understood each other as no one else could have done. By losing Swarna as a friend, Virmati suffered a loss adding further to several other losses and deprivations which made her life miserable and desolate.

9.3 Character Analysis

Virmati: Virmati, a simple and educated woman is the central figure of the novel. Virmati, hails from an affectionate and well protected family goes to Lahore for further studies, accompanied by her mother. The limitation that women is weaker than man is foremost in India and the idea that she is a girl is reinforced by innumerable tragic instances in the novel. Virmati's father does not accept her going alone to Lahore questions 'who will go with her to Lahore'. Though the questions seems to be simple it mirrors the consideration of women to have no courage to make decision for herself and her future. Virmati refuses the engagement with Indrajit and marries Harish, a professor whom she falls in love with at Lahore. Her passionate attraction for the professor makes her haunted by an overpowering sense of failure. This failure results from her unconventional path of selection that she has decided to be the co-wife of the professor. Experiencing her position of a co wife, the real purpose of marriage for Virmati is lost.

Kasthuri: As Kasthuri, mother of Virmati is busy in delivering a baby year after year, it is Virmati who is in charge of the family and sacrifices herself to bring up her siblings. She remains as second mother for those children. Amidst this Virmati has no time to realize herself. She loses her days in taking care of the family. The family's old tradition of getting marriage is delayed for Virmati as she doesn't have any interest in it. Though her mother forces to get married she ignores, because she has interest towards education.

Shakuntala: Virmati's cousin is a symbol of modernity whom Virmati inspires a lot. Kapur portrays Shakuntala as an independent, defiant, and assertive girl. She does not have any limitations towards the tradition of getting marriage, and family relationship. This is shown through the voice of Shakuntala "These people don't really understand Viru, how much satisfaction there can be in leading your own life, in being independent. Here we are, fighting for the freedom of the nation, but women are still supposed to marry, and nothing else"

Ganga: Ganga, Harish's first wife very dedicated to him and his family. There is a lot of difference between Harish and Ganga, their match is totally inharmonious. Ganga's negligence about study and lack of awareness brings Virmati to her husband's home as a second wife.

Ida: The story is narrated by Virmati's daughter Ida who seeks to reconstitute her mother 's history. In this task, she visits people who were related to Virmati and those who had known her intimately. For more accurate and reliable details, Ida personally visits the places where her mother had lived. As Ida narrates Virmati's life-history, we learn how Virmati was torn between family-duty, the desire for education and illicit love.

Minor characters

• **Suraj Prakash:** Virmati's father

• **Inderjeet:** a canal engineer, Virmati refuses to marry , Virmati's younger sister Indumati is married to him.

Unit 09: Difficult Daughters by Manju Kapur

- **Indumati:** Virmati's younger sister.
- **Lala Diwan Chand:** Lala Diwan Chandirmati's grandfather.
- **Swarna:** Virmati's room-mate who managed Virmati's abortion of the unwanted pregnancy.
- **The Diwan of Sirmaur:** visited Amritsar to seek a suitable woman candidate for the principal's post in the girls' school started by the Maharani of his state.

Summary

Her first novel, *Difficult Daughters* was published in 1998 and won international acclaim with the commonwealth writers prize for the first book awarded to it. Her second novel *A Married Woman* came out in 2002 and was shortlisted for Encore Award. *Home*, her third novel, appeared in 2006 and it was also shortlisted for Hutch Crossword Award. Her fourth novel, *The Immigrant* appeared in 2009 followed by her fifth novel *Custody* a couple of years later in 2011.

Kapur's debut novel, *Difficult Daughters* centers around a young woman Virmati, born into an Arya Samaji household in Amritsar. The story is narrated by Virmati's daughter Ida who seeks to reconstitute her mother's history. In this task, she visits people who were related to Virmati and those who had known her intimately. For more accurate and reliable details, Ida personally visits the places where her mother had lived. As Ida narrates Virmati's life-history, we learn how Virmati was torn between family-duty, the desire for education and illicit love. This is a story of sorrow, love, compromise and suffering.

Manju Kapur is a feminist who lives in Delhi and teaches in Delhi University. Her novels are concerned with feminism and its impact on her female characters. Her first novel, *Difficult Daughters* focuses on the relationship between the mothers and daughters who belong to different generations. It is the story of a woman caught in between the sentimental situations of her family and her longing for education, affection, and freedom. There are different perspectives between the female characters about their exciting culture and norms. When Kasthuri, the mother of the protagonist, Virmati, compels her daughter to accept the marriage as a traditional norm, Virmati refuses to accept it; instead she seeks knowledge. The narrator of the novel, Ida, is Virmati's daughter. Through her voice the novelist distinguishes the women from three generations. Manju Kapur takes Virmati as a weapon of her writings and through her she highlights of marginalization suffered by women who are primarily concerned about their individuality and dignity. Ida is the daughter of Virmati. and as a remembrance of independence she names her baby as Bharati. But this is rejected by her husband saying that, "I don't wish our daughter to be tainted with the birth of our country. What birth is this? With so much hatred?" Though the country has got freedom, the man who speaks about the country's freedom, cannot provide freedom for his wife even for trivial matters in the family. When India was fighting for freedom from the British government, Virmati literally fought for her own identity and affirmation. Her life from beginning to end is full of sufferings, searching for 'self', her own identity, conflict between mind and heart. She loses all her hope. Even her daughter doesn't want to be like her mother. Thus the novelist has explored and traced the journey of many such young women in this award winning book. They truly reflect the complexity of the female psyche.

In the novel *Difficult Daughters* Manju Kapur depicts her voice through the characters, Shakuntala, Swarnalata, Ida and, Virmati, Kasturi, Ganga and Lajwanti. Through this novel, Manju Kapur proves that women suffer physically and mentally in the male dominated society. All the female characters of Manju Kapur are seen as women struggling against all problems. Manju Kapur makes society aware of women's education through this novel.

Keywords

Manju Kapur, women's dilemma, *Difficult Daughters*, *Home*, Identity Crisis family, marriage, reliability, relationship, self

Self Assessment

1. Manju Kapur was born in:
 - A. Delhi

- B. Kolkata
- C. Madras
- D. Amritsar

2. Manju Kapur's first novel was:

- A. Custody
- B. Difficult Daughters
- C. A Married Woman
- D. The Immigrant

3. Difficult Daughters, won the 1999 _____.

- A. Commonwealth Writers' Prize
- B. Booker Prize
- C. Pulitzer Prize
- D. Edgar Award

4. Manju Kapur was born in_____.

- A. 1941
- B. 1947
- C. 1948
- D. 1945

5. Difficult Daughters was published in_____.

- A. 1998
- B. 1990
- C. 1992
- D. 1980

6. Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughter is set in the time of:

- A. Partition
- B. Independence
- C. Colonial Rule
- D. None of the above

7. Difficult Daughter is a novel that talks about family duty, _____ and _____.

- A. Education
- B. Illicit love
- C. Both A and B
- D. None of the above

8. "The one thing I did not want was to be like my mother" who said these words:

Unit 09: Difficult Daughters by Manju Kapur

- A. Ida
- B. Virmati
- C. Kasturi
- D. None of the above

9. Kasturi and Virmati

- A. Loved each other
- B. hated each other
- C. had difficulty in relationship
- D. None

10. Kasturi was the mother of:

- A. Ida
- B. Virmati
- C. Lajwanti
- D. Shakuntala

11. Chander Prakash was the husband of:

- A. Kasturi
- B. Lajwanti
- C. Virmati
- D. Ida

12. Suraj Prakash was the father of:

- A. Virmati
- B. Lajwanti
- C. Ida
- D. None of the above

13. Suraj Prakash rented a house in the mountains for:

- A. Kasturi
- B. Virmati
- C. Ida
- D. Chander Prakash

14. Difficult Daughters is generally a story of:

- A. Suraj Prakash and Chander Prakash
- B. Lajwanti and Kasturi
- C. Kasturi and Ida
- D. Virmati and Ida

15. Whose brother-in-law made a long trip to Dalhousie:
- Lajwanti
 - Kasturi
 - Suraj Prakash
 - Chander Prakash

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. D | 2. B | 3. A | 4. C | 5. A |
| 6. A | 7. C | 8. A | 9. C | 10. B |
| 11. B | 12. A | 13. A | 14. D | 15. A |

Review Questions

- “Manju Kapur is a contemporary Indian novelist in English.” Elaborate in detail.
- Discuss the influence of post colonialism in the writing style of Manju Kapur.
- Justify the title of the novel *Difficult Daughters* by Manju Kapur.
- Supply the plot of the novel *Difficult Daughters*.
- Describe the character of virmati in Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*.
- Describe the character of Ida in Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*.
- Discuss the importance of minor characters in the novel *Difficult Daughters*.



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Unit 09: Difficult Daughters by Manju Kapur

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Unit 10: Difficult Daughters by Manju Kapur

CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

10.1 Thematic Analysis of the Novel

10.2 Gender Issues in the Novel

10.3 Critical Analysis of the Novel

10.4 Marriage as the Focal Point of the Novel

Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

Answers for Self Assessment

Review Questions

Further Reading

Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- do the thematic analysis of Difficult Daughters by Manju Kapur
- discuss the gender issue in Difficult Daughters by Manju Kapur
- do the critical analysis of Difficult Daughters by Manju Kapur

Introduction

It is well said that literature is the mirror of society. It reflects artistically, aesthetically and articulately the ups and downs of the society. The writers writing in a particular social environment or projecting a specific period from history try to record and analyze the happenings of that period from a perspective that is their own. This is equally true of Partition Literature also, penned down immediately or decades after the occurrence of that agonizing event. Manju Kapoor was born in Amritsar, Punjab on January 1st, 1948. She did her masters in 1972. She went to Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada. Manju completed her M.Phil from Delhi University. Her first work was rebuffed by publishers several times. She amended her novel, cut down and refined it before finally publishing it. One of Manju's specific traits is that she works on different novels at the same time, which is quite remarkable. It took Manju eight years to finish the first book, Difficult Daughters. Manju has a peculiar way of writing as she first draws her ideas and feelings before converting it into art. She claims herself to be a feminist. She feels that when depicting the relationship between a man and a woman, the viewpoint of a feminist is inescapable. Her first novel Difficult Daughters is a tale of a young woman, Virmati living in Amritsar in a stringent and somber house. The story revolves around her love interest with a professor and her battle for freedom. Difficult daughters is a sign to understand that when a woman quests for her existence and identity, she is stigmatized as a rough daughter by the family as well as the society. Manju Kapur is married to Gun Nidhi Dalmia and lives in Delhi. She has three children and three grandchildren. She has taught English literature at Miranda House College, Delhi University. Kapur's novels follow the popular trend of contemporary Indian women's writing in English. The central focus of her novels concentrates around woman characters within the territory of home and society. Like her illustrated contemporaries, Kapur too has foregrounded women's lives in her novels which depict both the external and internal dimensions of female-community. Out of her five novels, only three novels – Difficult Daughters, A Married Woman, and Home incorporate the

theme of female bonding in varying shades and degrees. These novels offer a fascinating glimpse into women's consciousness and their interrelations. Her female protagonists forge bonds or make attempts to do so as a strategy of survival and empowerment in contemporary society marked by unforeseen social change. Her novels orchestrate a wide range of theme related to women's live in context of patriarchal society: Women's Lives within the family, their relationships with the male and female members, their ambition for education and independence, their conflicts with other women and men and men in their journey towards self-realization, their desire to have and possess children and finally their bonding with other women as a means of emotional support, survival and empower.

10.1 Thematic Analysis of the Novel

Difficult Daughters, set against the bloody backdrop of Partition in the cities of Amritsar and Lahore, remains a powerful portrayal of the society. The novel spans three generations of women and exposes their sense of disillusionment. The three generations of women are Kasturi, Virmati and Ida who epitomizes the three stages of Indian independence. Kasturi, the mother, symbolizes pre-independence, and is shown as a victim of the offensive control of patriarchy. Through three female protagonists, Manju Kapur has revealed the life cycle of a woman who is devoted to her family responsibilities from the beginning of her life. As a child, Virmati has to take care of her siblings. Her whole life is dedicated to her whole family. A very keen statement brings attention, "How trapped could nature make a woman?" (DD 7) Virmati, the daughter, symbolizes the country's struggle for independence. Psychologically, she reveals her defiant nature against deep-rooted conventions of morality especially for a girl. Ida, Virmati's daughter, is the product of the post-independence period, and establishes herself as an independent woman. She starts her journey to find an insight into her mother's past, denies her and revolts against the ways and follies. Ida is the last character in this order of generation. Kapur employs her as a tool to look at Virmati through the eyes of others. *Difficult Daughters* is a novel on the theme of Partition of the Indian subcontinent. Partition echoes across the socio-political and cultural discourses through its empirical legacy. The city of Amritsar which constituted fifty one percent of Muslims was dominated by the Hindus and Sikhs; and education, finance, trade and commerce and all other important spheres were in their hands. This made the Muslims angry and envious towards the Hindus and Sikhs. As a result, some incidents of violence took place. People of Amritsar go to Lahore for higher education, and so also people from Lahore go to Amritsar for various purposes. It is in this background of the then undivided Punjab that the story of Virmati, the protagonist of the novel is narrated. She is the eldest of eleven sisters and brothers: Virmati, Indumati, Gunvati, Hemavati, Vidyavati, and Parvati. Kailashnath, Gopinath, Krishanath, Prakashnath, and Hiranath are brothers. Being the eldest daughter, Virmati has to look after all her siblings. Her mother Kasturi is pregnant for the last time when Virmati is hardly seventeen, and studying for her F.A. examination. Suraj Prakash, the father of the eleven children, does not worry about his daughters' higher education. It is Shakuntala, an M.Sc. in Chemistry, who leaves home and begins to lead her life in Lahore in the company of her friends. She is unmarried and takes part in conducting political meetings and joining rallies. Shakuntala's life has left an indelible impact on Virmati's mind. She too strongly yearns to be like Shakuntala. The matrimony of Virmati and Harish causes great tension in both houses. The first wife of Harish and his mother treat her very badly, and her life becomes a nightmare for her. When she goes to her mother's home she is disgraced, and her mother asks her not to show her face. As a consequence, she finds herself in a highly distressed state of mind. She experiences a strong feeling of being isolated from society. The husband, however, tries to keep her happy to the best of his capability. She decides to become belligerent in order to take vengeance upon Ganga, Professor's first wife. It is on this background that the communal poison begins to work, and the Hindus and Muslims become enemies of each other. Suraj Prakash, the father of Virmati and her grandfather become a victim of violence. Virmati is so much disturbed that she undergoes a miscarriage and loses all interests in her conjugal life. She goes to Lahore to study Philosophy. There, instead of studying, she meanders here and there in the company of her friends. She attends meetings of political organizations. This disheartens the Professor much who has now become Principal of his college and finds little time to go to Lahore to meet Virmati. In the summer vacation of 1945, Virmati saw the aftermath of the Direct Action Day. She is now frightened and worries if this can happen in Bengal and Punjab. In Amritsar too there are several incidents of violence, and the Professor decides to send his first wife, his mother and children to Kanpur, a safe place for them. The day they are sent to Kanpur, Virmati and Professor are all alone at their home. She becomes pregnant and gives birth to a daughter. They shift to Delhi where Harish becomes Principal in one of the colleges of Delhi University. They name their daughter Ida.

The violence of the Partition thus changes his attitude towards freedom and Harish names his daughter as Ida instead of Bharati. From the first chapter to the last chapter there has been a strong connotation of the politics of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent. In 1943 a split between the major communities is seen widening as the Muslims become aware of the possibility of freedom. The Sikhs too become aware of the possibility of Partition of the country. The Congress opposes any kind of Partition. It creates perplexity in the country, and the tempo of the Punjab is disturbed. There is violence and bloodshed everywhere. The day on which the house of Virmati's father is going to be attacked proves very helpful to Virmati. The novelist, like a historian, has recorded the truth told to her by some person like Kailashnath, Gopinath, Kanhiya Lal, Swarna Lata, Indumati, Shakuntala, Parvati's husband and so on. It is through their eyes that the novelist has thrown light on the cruelty of Muslims. The story narrated by Swarna Lata is even more atrocious in nature. These incidents are recounted by the novelist with a graphical rendering. She has a remarkable sense of objectivity and neutrality. When the writer narrates one incident happening in India, she immediately balances herself by saying that exactly the same things are occurring across the border. She very intelligently points out that all Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs are equally responsible for the violence and bloodshed that is seen in the Punjab. She also points out that the political leaders play their game, and the people have to face the repercussions. At Punjab Women's Student Conference Virmati was engrossed in her own thoughts about her existence. At this point she felt secluded by sitting there, and by listening to Mohini Datta's speech on why freedom was necessary for the development of the human spirit, and how war especially affected women: "Am I free...I came here to be free, but I am not like these women. They are using their minds, organizing, participating in conferences, politically active, while my time is spent being in love" (DD 142). Manju Kapur gives a perfectly convincing picture of the life of the Partition period. The realistic presentation of Amritsar and Lahore of the time comes as a pleasant surprise for the reader. The growing tension and distrust between the two communities find a true expression in the novel. It is easily perceptible in a dialogue between Suraj Rai, the father and Kailashnath, the son. A Muslim customer visits their shop for selling off a piece of gold considering it may help him survive in these difficult times and Kailashnath, looking at his need and helplessness, strikes a good bargain. The terrible events of Partition have been expressed through these poignant and moving words in the novel: "People die - roasted, quartered, chopped, mutilated, turning, turning, and meat on a spit - are raped and converted in rampages gone mad, and leave a legacy of thousands of tales of sorrow, thousands more episodes shrouded in silence" (DD 263). Hindus and Muslims have lived side by side in harmony for centuries. They lived to witness men giving way to their animal instincts, to experience life at its ugliest. Virmati is deeply moved by the predicament of people affected by these distressing events and decides to help them in any way. She donates all the unused clothes, keeping only a few for the family. The only positive outcome of the Partition for Virmati is that it reunites her with her mother and other family members. Her novel touches many issues like revolt against deep-seated family tradition, the search for selfhood, women's rights, marriage and more importantly the battle for Independence at both fronts- personal and national. What it seems to assert is that the forces of love and life are greater and more powerful than those of hatred and death. Virmati is a symbolic figure of a newly independent country whose family is divided as the country is partitioned with the advent of freedom. Multiple themes are introduced in the backdrop of Partition. *Difficult Daughters* has aptly been acclaimed as the feminist version of Partition.

Difficult Daughters is the story of a freedom struggle. While India fights for freedom from the British Raj, Virmati fights for the freedom to live life on her terms. She is torn in two halves, one of which is on the side she is fighting against. India attains freedom at the cost of Partition, of losing half its soul and hundreds of thousands of innocent lives. So many lives were lost in the conflagration of communal hatred. India's hollow victory is witnessed in Virmati's. In all this the professor who is fond of everything English exerts considerable influence, albeit in a catalytic sort of way just like Britain did in the tragedy of Partition. The story of Virmati can be interpreted as the feminist version of Partition as novel enables us to study three generations of women[1]Kasturi, Virmati and Ida. *Difficult Daughters* discusses the period during India's struggle for freedom and Partition. While reading the novel one gets the impression that a woman's life is like the life of a nation.

10.2 Gender Issues in the Novel

Manju Kapoor's novel *Difficult Daughters* is the story of a daughter trying to piece together her dead mother's past in order to understand why their relationship was always so troubled. The

novel begins with Ida's statement "the one thing I had wanted was not to be like my mother (P 1) and ends with "Do not haunt me anymore" (P 259). The daughter herself doesn't approve of her mother's way of life although aware of her sorrow, pain and agony and now having written about it she has cleansed her memory. Ida, writing of the mother, is critiquing her story. The novel is negative for Virmati as she grows up unable to rise above her sexuality. The beginning of the text introduces a negative model, an image of female attention which the text will strive to overcome. In *Difficult Daughters* one finds that it is basically Virmati's story during the 1930's but the landscape of the emotional and sexual life of the three women living at different times in history disrupts the linear time period. In short, the time period shift is within the text- the narrative moves from Virmati to Kasturi to Ida. Virmati, like so many other subcontinental women, is asked to accept a typical arranged marriage. She rebels against that destiny, to the lasting shame of her family, above all of her mother. Insisting on her right to be educated, she manages to leave home to study in Lahore. Nonetheless, she falls in love with an Amritsar teacher known as 'the professor', a married man who first appears in her life as her parents' tenant. After a number of vicissitudes, including a period as a school principal in a small Himalayan state, she finally marries the man she loves and returns to Amritsar to live with him. However, he refuses to leave his first wife, and the consequences for Virmati are harsh indeed, "she ends up marginalized by her own family and despised by her husband's." Virmati's tale is told, from a present day perspective, by Ida, her only daughter, who seeks to reconstruct her late mother's life-story, against the background of the Independence movement of the 1940s and the subsequent trauma of partition. Virmati's mother Kasturi, eighth-class pass from an Arya Samaj school, spending the entire day either cooking in the kitchen or performing ritualistic havan or sandhya, could envisage no future for Virmati other than being a wife and a mother like herself. No wonder Virmati's training in this area begins at the early age of ten. She, being the eldest in the family of eleven children is made to play a second mother to her siblings.

Virmati, is brought up to be a wife and a mother, on the consciously inculcated idea of the Indian feminine role. On being engaged to an engineer of her parent's choice, she accepts it passively as a normal event in a girl's life. Tired of the day-long drudgery and child-care, the attention of the professor makes her feel wanted, loved, and this transports her into a world of romance. Discussions of Keats's poetry, Wordsworth's descriptions of Nature and above all the Professor's intensely passionate letters are a new experience for Virmati. It is an escape from the mundane. Love changes her life, imbuing it with newness, freshness and excitement. The married Professor on the other hand is a totally self-centered figure. When Virmati is in Lahore, he first implores her through romantic and passionate letters and finally wins over her resolve not to see him. The love making sessions in his friend's house and finally her pregnancy makes Virmati reach a point of no return. Though Virmati is never free from the qualms of conscience, she nevertheless enjoys the biological consummation of her love. Sudhir Kakar in his article "Feminine Identity in India" while elaborating upon Hindu myths and how they play on the female psyche writes that the myths of women like Damyanti, Savitiri but most of all Sita "leave indelible traces in the identity formation of every Hindu woman" (P 44-68). But in this case Virmati does not think on the lines of 'Sita' and is bold enough to show her defiance and anger when the Professor continues to ignore her wishes regarding their marriage. For Virmati, love for the Professor who is not her husband, is neither a matter of pride nor does it mean safety and completeness. It is embarrassing. It gives her a feeling of insecurity and rootlessness.

The happiest and most creative period in Virmati's life is that which she spends in Nahan, the capital of Sirmaur, the small Himalayan state run by an enlightened maharaja which gives her refuge for a while as the headmistress of a girl's school. It is there that she achieves the greatest degree of control over her life: there are rules she has to obey, but she is able to teach inside an ordered framework, and her performance wins her a deserved respect. For the first and only time, she has her own place to live and yet she falls. She believes she needs a man, and she makes the wrong choice, returning to a relationship that had already brought her nothing but suffering.

Virmati becomes furious when the Professor puts off marrying her, only wishing to prolong her period of study so that he can continue to meet her periodically, without the fear of being seen by his family and friends. Her anger is quite natural as it is she who is putting her honor at stake. It is she who is playing the role of black sheep. The Professor enjoys his marital life and social status but it is Virmati who lands nowhere: she neither has a good social reputation nor is she able to save her job. The repeated clandestine visits of the fatally attractive Professor lose Virmati her employer's confidence, and she is compelled to quit her school, house and employment. The female marriage, a social and public statement, is a must for her. It is this which will establish her identity even if it is as the professor's second wife. Marriage for her means deliverance from the fear of being socially

condemned, a possibility which will perhaps bring her back into the fold and relieve her from the sense of insecurity and uncertainty. The earlier generation of her mother saw no reason to rebel against patriarchal structures. There was complete acceptance in life. Kasturi is an example of the typical feminine attitude to procreate in order to bring about life and pleasure. Like Kasturi, for Ganga, the Professor's wife, marriage is a religious and social institution, where love is not the basis of marriage. Like a meek being, she accepts whatever the Professor does and does not even think of going against the injustice done to her. Likewise, Ganga too makes every effort to make her marriage successful. Her cooking is enjoyed by her educated husband who, anglicized to a point, is otherwise very aloof. There is no recognition of her household skills, the pains she takes in dusting his books, re-arranging his records, maintaining them and everything and everything else that she does to make the house a home. She had thought that she was prepared for marriage but had no idea that she was vulnerable to attack and hurt from a weak link in her armor- her illiterate state. Having tried and given up learning, Ganga reflects that her husband seemed to be a man who didn't care for her household skills at all. And yet, 'he was impatient and angry when the food was badly cooked, and the house carelessly managed' (P 37). Even when her husband remarries, she accepts it patiently as a part of her fate. Just living with him and bearing his children is enough for her. However, in Virmati, there is a struggle between head and heart, the physical and the moral, in which Virmati gives way to her heart and body.

Dora Sales Salvador, in her note to her Spanish translation of the novel, appositely stresses, "Kapur emphasizes the efforts made at that time by numerous women who, while demanding equal opportunities, equal access to education and life-opportunities going beyond convention, were a visible force in the non-violent resistance to the British. The pages of *Difficult Daughters* speak not only of Virmati, but of other 'difficult daughters' who succeed better than she did in their parallel struggles for independence in their lives" (P 356).

At the center of the narrative, we are confronted with a woman who fights but falls by the wayside; but at its edges, as no doubt less representative but still symbolic figures, we encounter other women, whose relative success points the way to the future. Virmati's daughter Ida, who belongs to the post independence generation, is strong and clear headed. She breaks up her marriage as she is denied maternity by her husband. The forced abortion is also the termination of her marriage. Ida, by severing the marriage bond, frees herself from male domination and power and also from the conventional social structures which bind women. She has the strength that Virmati lacks. Thus, her rebellion is again a constructive one. Ida, an educated woman, divorced and childless, apparently leads a freer life than her mother in external terms; yet inside her she feels, even if not quite so acutely, some of the same anxieties as had plagued her mother: 'No matter how I might rationalize otherwise, I feel my existence as a single woman reverberate desolately' (P 3). It is clear from the book's pages that Ida, the narrator through whose voice Kapur speaks, has achieved more than her mother and that this is so even through the simple creative fact of 'writing down' her own family history. To quote Dora Sales again, "In *Difficult Daughters* we do not listen to Virmati's voice. She could not speak out, being certainly situated at the juncture of two oppressions; colonialism and patriarchy. What we have is her daughter's reconstruction and representation" (P 356).

There is, then, a qualitative leap between the life-histories of (narrated) mother and (narrating) daughter. It is true that Virmati does make a daring attempt by choosing education over an arranged marriage. Virmati does a professional course but is not career oriented. She does not think in terms of education and profession as a means to achieving individual freedom. Unlike Virmati, her cousin Shakuntala, from the same background, chalks out her own life. She makes the best use of her education and firmly resists the pressure for marriage. In this way, she rebels against patriarchal society. She is clear about what she wants to do and how, and in a way wins her independence.

Another difficult daughter is Ganga in this novel, the professor's first wife who is a sharp contrast to the women who fight for their own selves. Unlike Virmati who at least speaks for herself, Ganga is submissive and does not rebel at all against the injustice being done to her. She is too conventional to oppose anything that her husband does. She is totally passive and when her husband remarries, it is as if her life is over, but rebellion or opposition is not an option that is open to her. Though she is perfect in her household skills, she is yet unable to come up to the educated tastes of her husband.

The professor doesn't care about her, and she doesn't get any recognition for the pains she takes to rear the family. It is something taken for granted as a woman's duty and which is also seen as her salvation. After her marriage to the Professor, when Virmati asks him what his first wife does

around the house, he dismisses it airily with a, 'oh nothing much' (P 199). Virmati's married life with the Professor in Amritsar turns out to be a disaster. She wilts under the implacable and hostile gaze of Ganga, her husband's first wife, with whom she has to live. In the Professor's house, Virmati, the second wife, occupies the dressing room and the formal seating area is used by the guests while the first wife and children occupy the centrally located bedroom. During the summer, the family sleeps on the roof while Professor and Virmati sleep in the garden. This division of space is further highlighted when we are told that Ganga takes care of the needs of her husband like food and clothing and Virmati shares his bed. It is ironic that Ganga accepts everything as a part of her destiny. Her anger and disgust is only for Virmati and not for her husband. He is socially accepted and appreciated for the devotion towards his family and the stigma has to be born by Virmati alone. This thus reflects the double standards existing in our society where there are different laws of appreciation and condemnation for men and women, where women are always seen as the downtrodden class, meek objects who have no identity of their own without men and for all the wrongs done by either men or women, only women are considered culprits.

After the Professor marries Virmati and brings her home, his mother is angry for she knows that Ganga had been a good wife. Her precious son can however not be blamed and somehow the fault lies with Virmati. It seems very ironical that in this case also the wrongs of the man are accepted in a very plain and simple manner and his every action is further justified by his mother. It is only the woman in every case who has to mold, change and ultimately adjust as per the dual standards of society. The so called respectable 'he' has full rights to live life according to his desires and wishes but in the case of women, it is only duties, responsibilities and commitments and the moment she speaks of her rights, she is labeled as a rebel. Marriage is supposed to be a mutual bond of trust, faith, love and commitment but even so, in our society, the real liability is with the woman. It is she who has to make adjustments and reframe her life according to the likes and dislikes of her husband and in-laws. Kasturi, Ganga and Virmati also go through the phases of adjustment. When the professor remarries Virmati, she is expected to adapt to his tastes and desires. She is used to drinking milk in the mornings but as the Professor prefers tea, she too is expected to have tea. In Spite of being highly educated and sensible, she doesn't get her due in the Professor's family. It is again an example of the double standards of the society where a woman's wishes, and desires are set aside when she enters into a wedlock. She is expected to be perfect in every sense in her new role of being a 'daughter-in-law' of the house.

Virmati later comes to know that she has lost everything in her mad pursuit of marrying the Professor. She has lost her individuality and her sense of identity. She doesn't get anything from this wedding. In the end, her individual history disappears and becomes all but irrelevant, swallowed up in the greater and more resonant collective tragedy of Partition. It might be more appropriate to go with Jasbir Jain when he says: "This compartmentalized society is a post-cold war and post-feminist one. It is difficult to come to any definitive conclusion as far as it comments on the feminist positions. Freedom has its own anarchical components, while captivity calls forth rebellion. One learns to work towards short-term solutions in absence of hope" (P 62).

Perhaps that is what Virmati does and in the dilemma of staying single, independent, leading her life on her terms or getting married to the Professor as his second wife, she chooses the latter and finds her own identity completely shattered and lost. Thus, her rebellion cannot be called a constructive one. She ruins her life, her education, and her career for the love of the Professor. Her daughter Ida appears much more sensible than her and her rebellion is again a constructive one where she refuses to stay with the person who is not able to understand her feelings and sentiments.

In my conclusion, I would like to tell that this is a work that is engaged in transforming a felt agony which is born out of the social perceptions of women and their status, an agony which seeks to break the conventionally accepted roles assigned to women and legitimize the feelings related to wifehood and womanhood within a person-to-person relationship. So, these novel traces the journey of the women characters, the ways and modes of their protest against gender discrimination and highlight the struggle for assertiveness in society.

10.3 Critical Analysis of the Novel

Difficult Daughters by Manju is an intimate and gripping tale of three women, Virmati, Shakuntala and Swarna, set in the pre-independence era who choose to not conform to society's standards, and to rise above expected domestic ambitions; they "thought to be something other than a wife." They think for themselves, prioritize their life before others, go for higher studies, participate in the

Satyagraha movement, and choose not to ever get married. From the Hindu code bill, dowry, to abortion, and property rights, Virmati, Shakuntala and Swarna lay the foundation of the rights that women today enjoy. Set around the time of partition, Manju Kapur traces the life of her mother in undivided Punjab.

Plot Overview

Virmati, a 17-year-old Fine Arts student in Amritsar belongs to an open and high-minded Punjabi family. She falls in love with her neighbor Harish, an Oxford-returned English professor. He is already married and has children and that is where the story gets a bit hay-wired and complicated. Virmati is in a constant tussle between her illicit love and her desire for education. Being surrounded by some independent and progressive women, Virmati starts to question and deconstruct her preconceived thoughts on marriage, love, jobs, and country.

The desire for education in Virmati was first lit by Shakuntala, her cousin sister. She makes Virmati see the other side of the world by telling her how women in Lahore are independent and lead their own lives. She tells her how they are fighting for the freedom of the nation by conducting political meetings and joining and demonstrating rallies. "Virmati watched Shakuntala ride horses, smoke, play cards, and badminton, act without her mother's advice; buy anything she wanted without thinking it a waste of money. Above all, she watched how her sister never seemed to question or doubt herself in anything."

10.4 Marriage as the Focal Point of the Novel

Meanwhile, Virmati is also in awe of her roommate Swarna, actively engaged in the Satyagraha movement. Swarna's character is bold and opinionated. She makes Virmati understand that there are things which hold more importance than marriage and she tells her to wake up from her 'stale dream of marriage.' Virmati evolves with the story. From a simple middle-class Punjabi girl whose only desire in life was to take care of her family and get married, to her journey of forging her path of serving for the cause of the nation's literacy, she has come a long way. She gets to taste the different flavors of freedom in Lahore, but after completing her Bachelor of Teaching (BT) course there, she becomes restless and dissatisfied. With a hunger to work and broaden her horizons further, she feels uneasy to retreat to her old life when she is not the same person anymore.

Reflection of contemporary Society

Harish's character is annoyingly cowardly. He talks about bigger things but when it's time to fulfill those, he takes a back seat. Despite Virmati's regular insistence, he is reluctant to marry her. When a friend suggests, he eventually marries and takes her to his house where her first wife, his children, and his mother live. Their marriage results in Virmati's outster from her own and in-law's house. However, suddenly, her mother-in-law takes interest in her well-being when Virmati gets pregnant, and she even insists her to sleep with her. This novel mirrors the society's obsession with its conservative ideas of women, superstitions, male child, and the family's sacred duty of marriage.

Undivided India

Kapur vividly describes the heart and soul of Punjab, Lahore, which was also considered to be the Mecca for all Punjabis in *Difficult Daughters*. She writes, "Lahore is where students gathered on the river, around the mausoleums, through the mall, in the gardens, the shopping areas, the eating places, the theaters; where anybody with brains in their head went to study. To learn, to meet people, hear leaders, be in contact with social, political, fashionable trends."

Intergenerational trauma of women

Difficult Daughters offers a portrait of the lives of women of three generations and how intergenerational trauma affects them. For instance, when Virmati gets to know that she is pregnant (before her marriage), she silently suffers inside, and "her pride prevents her from asking for help from her roommate." As a result of the society's constant conditioning, women often think it is only normal to suffer alone and Virmati was too ashamed to talk about it to someone other than her partner, the professor. Manju too describes the forlorn episode of her abortion, which broke her marriage. Like her mother, she submitted to the society's conditioning and chose to suffer silently.

She never told her mother Virmati about her abortion because she used to think highly of her son-in-law and was most disappointed about her daughter's separation.

Summary

- The central theme of *Difficult Daughters* is struggle for freedom. On the one hand it is the freedom of one's country, the backdrop of the novel on which it is set and on other hand it is the freedom of self. It is a story of a woman, narrated by another woman, who is crisscrossed by contradictory and conflicting concepts, rippled by two disjunctive structures that systemize human life.
- The Novel *Difficult Daughters* has been set around the time of partition, yet it is not exactly a partition novel. It is essentially a feminist love story, which paints complex and powerful characters at the backdrop of those turbulent times. The novel sings the struggles of women who despite facing their personal battles, significantly contribute to India's independence; but is equally relatable today.
- The novel brings forth the issue of gender discrimination and the struggle of the suffering Indian women under the oppressive mechanism of a closed society. It is an issue based on the crisis in the value system of modern society and we cannot just shrug it off. As the novel moves on, various contradictory aspects of two oppositional factors of female and male, individual and society and to say broadly, between feminism and patriarchy. Virmati the protagonist of the novel was born and brought up in a family which is orthodoxically bound to patriarchal domination. As she grows, she struggles with the oppositional aspects of domination and resistance as well as freedom and bondage. She finds her space, in which she struggles to negotiate, compelled to accept but ultimately defies, transgresses and revolts to the patriarchal norms of family and the oppressive norms of the family and society. The story of Virmati is of transgression committed at diversified levels. Yet her story has many similarities with the stories of other characters of Kasturi, Ida, Lajwanti, Shakuntala, Inder, Swarna Latha and Ganga as well as other female characters. All of these women may be marked as *Difficult Daughters* in general as well as individual ways.

Keywords

- Manju Kapur
- *Difficult Daughters*
- Home
- Identity Crisis family
- marriage
- reliability
- relationship
- self
- Self-Identity
- Oppression
- Emancipation
- Exploitation

Self Assessment

1. Shakuntala was the daughter of:
 - A. Lajwanti
 - B. Virmati
 - C. Ida
 - D. Suraj Prakash

2. In Difficult Daughters, Suraj Prakash rented a house in the mountains for:
 - A. Kasturi
 - B. Virmati
 - C. Ida
 - D. Chander Prakash

3. Difficult Daughters is written by:
 - A. Manju Kapoor
 - B. Manju Kapur
 - C. Manjoo Kapoor
 - D. ManjooKapur

4. Difficult Daughters focuses on the relationship between:
 - A. Husband and wife
 - B. The mothers and daughters
 - C. Parent- Child
 - D. Father and daughter

5. Manju Kapur takes Virmati as a weapon of her writings and through her she highlights:
 - A. Marginalization
 - B. Subjugation
 - C. Oppression
 - D. All the above

6. The narrator of Difficult Daughters is:
 - A. Virmati
 - B. Kasturi
 - C. Ida
 - D. Shakuntala

7. Difficult Daughters is the story of:
 - A. Two generations
 - B. Three generations

- C. Four generations
 - D. None of the above
8. Who marries an already married Professor in *Difficult Daughters* :
- A. Virmati
 - B. Shakuntala
 - C. Ida
 - D. Kasturi
9. The name of the professor in *Difficult Daughters* is:
- A. Damle
 - B. Harish
 - C. Dev
 - D. Pinak
10. Manju Kapur was a professor of literature in:
- A. DU
 - B. JNU
 - C. BHU
 - D. AMU
11. Which novel is not written by Manju Kapur?
- A. *Difficult Daughters*
 - B. *The Immigrant*
 - C. *Custody*
 - D. *That Long Silence*
12. Kasturi is a character in:
- A. *Difficult Daughters*
 - B. *Nagamandala*
 - C. *Final Solutions*
 - D. *The Sari Shop*
13. *Difficult Daughters* is a novel on:
- A. Illicit love
 - B. Platonic love
 - C. Physical love
 - D. Successful love
14. In _____ system, man is the legal head of the family:

- A. Patriarchal
 - B. Matriarchal
 - C. Both a and b
 - D. None of the above
15. Virmati's mother was always sick:
- A. due to malnutrition
 - B. due to successive child- births
 - C. due to mental torture
 - D. none of the above
16. During the "female" phase (1920-present) of feminism, women:
- A. are increasingly focused on uncovering misogyny in male-authored texts
 - B. focus on women's texts and women
 - C. have largely given up writing true literature
 - D. have looked back to the "feminine" past but put a modern spin on it
17. The most prominent U.S. minorities among feminist writers are:
- A. 18th-century poets
 - B. Black and lesbian feminists
 - C. male feminists
 - D. Native Americans
18. Marxist feminists believe that:
- A. art is always conditioned by social beliefs and needs
 - B. "personal" identity is inseparable from class identity
 - C. art is a waste of time
 - D. both a and b
19. Feminist criticism in general has moved away from exposing male bias and towards:
- A. studying women's texts and women authors
 - B. advocating lesbian-only criticism
 - C. acknowledging women's inferiority to men
 - D. none of the above
- 20 Third-wave feminism seeks to include:
- A. wage-earners
 - B. white, upper-class women
 - C. lower-class, Third-world women
 - D. only racial minorities

21. French feminism is focused on:
- marriage
 - the body
 - myth
 - all of the above

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. A | 2. A | 3. B | 4. B | 5. A |
| 6. B | 7. B | 8. A | 9. B | 10. A |
| 11. D | 12. A | 13. A | 14. A | 15. B |
| 16. B | 17. B | 18. D | 19. A | 20. C |
| 21. B | | | | |

Review Questions

- “Manju Kapur’ Difficult Daughters is a mirror of Indian Feminism.” Elaborate in detail.
- Discuss the different themes employed by Kapur in Difficult Daughter.
- What do you mean by narrative technique? throw light upon the narrative technique used by Kapur in Difficult Daughters.
- Difficult Daughters is a revelation of personal freedom. Comment.
- Supply the critical Appreciation of Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters.
- Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters does not deal with the theme of Indian Struggle for Independence. Comment.
- Supply the analysis of Difficult Daughters on the ground of Gender issues.



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Unit 11: Mahesh Dattani - Final Solution**CONTENTS**

Objectives

Introduction

11.1 The Character of Hardika;

11.2 The Character of Ramnik

11.3 The Character of Aruna

11.4 Thematic Analysis

Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

Answers for Self Assessment

Review Question

Further Reading

Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- know Mahesh Dattani's shaping as a playwright
- do the Character Analysis of the play
- do the thematic Analysis of the Play

Introduction

Drama is such an art form which is inherently social. And it is a genre which thrives on social themes. It deals with problems of present-day society and attempts to create a futuristic society, which is governed by the then existing processes. The dramatists have aimed to present ways of the mundane world in many ways. They enlightened the audience through entertainment. They tried to bring about peace of mind and contentment to those afflicted by the ills of the world and its numerous problems. Drama comes in direct contact with the audience and its study is partially literary and partially sociological.

Since the early twentieth century, theatre has been one of the most powerful mediums for commenting on social and political issues in different parts of the world. Some prominent examples include German playwright Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1939) written in response to the rise in Nazis in Germany and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (1952) an analogy for McCarthyism in America. Acclaimed playwright August Wilson's collection of ten plays addresses the different degrees of racism that America's African American population has experienced in the past hundred years. In 2009 Rajiv Joseph wrote a play *Bengal Tiger* at the Baghdad Zoo, commenting on the devastating situation taking place in Iraq because of American occupation. Similar plays have been written across the world.

India also has a long history of socio-political dramatic theatre. Theatre before the independence of India, even though it brought the Indian theatre in direct contact with the western theatre, was primarily a weapon to protest against the British reign. Some well-known examples of Indian political theatre include the traditional theatre forms of Tamasha in Maharashtra, Bhavai in Gujarat as well as the street theatre companies such as Jana Natya Manch in Delhi. Before independence the Parsi theatre and the others were not only a mode of entertainment but also were reaching people and addressing their issues. And of course, it was one of the main elements in changing the social and political ailments of independent India. Broadly speaking a number of playwrights have given

a new turn in writing plays with social and political relevance. Prominent dramatists in the post-independence Indian theatre such as Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar, Rakesh Mohan, Mahesh Dattani and many others have used themes related to the contemporary social scenario to bring about the need to renovate the present social structure and to generate a renewed and better social system. They present complex issues of contemporary society to address important social ills and prejudices. The plays have prompted vital conversations that can be used to combat social problems. The theatre in a way liberates by giving voice to the suppressed classes of the society. The issues of communalism, casteism, racism, crime, inequality and many other such issues are very often addressed in the staged narratives.

Out of the above notable playwrights, Mahesh Dattani is considered to be one of the most comprehensive dramatists in the modern Indian theatre. He was born (1958) in the city of Bangalore, though his parents originally belonged to Porbandar in Gujarat. They had migrated to Bombay for business purposes and eventually settled in Bangalore where he found an opportunity of watching Gujarati and Kannada plays in the company of his parents and sisters. Dattani took his education from Baldwin High School and St. Joseph College of Arts and Sciences, Bangalore. The use of regional language was strictly prohibited in his school.

Dattani has a very strong passion for theatrical art. He longs to present multicoloured Indian life and sensibility. It is because of this he had set his eyes on the art of playwriting and stage performance. Otherwise, he wanted to spend a normal life, helping to run his father's business. He has an urge to evolve theatrical tradition competent enough to capture the spirit of soil. During his college days in early 1980s he joined Bangalore Little Theatre and participated in workshops, acting, and directing plays. He did his post-graduation in Marketing and Advertisement Management. So, his academic career has no direct connection with his career as a dramatist. He started his own theatre group named Playpen in 1984. His plays are performed at his studios, and he encourages novice artists to participate in dramatic activities. Dattani has also been teaching drama courses at the Summer Program of Portland State University.

Dattani has an unconventional approach to theatre. He looks at the theatre to manifest the causes of the unprivileged sections of our society. His plays externalize the problems and attempt to draw out the feelings of suppressed in a very authentic and realistic manner. His plays are originally written in English. He has written a good number of dramas which are diverse in themes, techniques and devices. He has greatly expanded new horizons in Indian Drama by not only focusing on the themes of conflict between tradition and modernity, communal tensions, identity crisis and inequality but also touching up radical themes ranging gay, child abuse, transgender, HIV positives and physically challenged. Being a multifaceted literary and dramatic figure, Mahesh Dattani has given a new height and dimension to Indian English Drama by writing more than a dozen plays. The American playwrights Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller have influenced him on the matter of stagecraft and other techniques and devices. But he had a very strong urge and affinity for Indianness. He has made sincere efforts for making stage befitting the Indian milieu. He also uses a good number of Gujarati, Kannada and Hindi words in his plays.

Dattani's entire dramatic corpus can be classified into three categories namely Stage Plays, Radio Plays and ScreenPlays which is a valuable contribution to the Indian English Theatre. He started his career with his *Where There's a Will* (1988) which dealt with mechanics of middle class Gujarati family. He continued writing plays such as *Dance Like a Man* (1989), *Tara* (1990), *Bravely Fought the Queen* (1991) and *Final Solutions* (1992) for which he won the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award in 1998. He even wrote plays such as *Do the Needful* (1997), *Seven Steps Around the Fire* (1998), *Clearing the Rubble* (1998), *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* (1998), *30 Days in September* (2001) and more recent *Brief Candle* (2009) and also many others. Dattani's theatrical genius is characterized by innovation, dynamism and diversity.

The play, *Final Solutions*, has a recognizable and realistic structure. Written in an easy language to which the readers can relate, Dattani has made imaginative use of space, and treats of not just the physical space but personal and political spaces as well. The positioning of the horseshoe-crescent encircling the stage and sloping towards the audience, that achieves the effect of making the audience one with the mob, is innovative. It is as if the "fourth wall" of the drama gets transformed, and gives rise to the feeling that the mob that features in the play is always present, that the issues just need to be vocalized on stage and even these stragglers will join in. Confined within this crescent is a space suggestive of a room that has but just a hint of furniture, only the kitchen and the puja room being 'detailed'. This detailing is symbolic of the importance of these two places in the home, being the symbols of culture and religion that act to either unify or divide people. These are the two physical spaces that have a unique power in bringing together not only the people and

creating memories but also of identity formation. Seen as a woman's space throughout literature, these are the two spaces where the tenets of culture and religion are propagated in a traditional Indian household. However, these two get appropriated and used as tools, as can be seen happening in *Final Solutions*, by different people men and women alike for their own purposes. There is an interesting intermingling of the past and the present in the play. The audience sees that the past is ever present and gives direction to the present, and that memories are what people make of them. This continuation of the past in the present is seen even in the characters in the play. The characters do not change, or are different from any of those in the past; they are just replaced by others who, though they appear different and modern in outlook, remain basically the same and have similar issues to deal with.

Basically, *Final Solutions* is the story of a Gujarati family that consists of four people – grandmother (Daksha/ Hardika), father (Ramnik), mother (Aruna), and daughter (Smita); and their encounter with two muslim boys – Javed and Babban (Bobby), who arrive at their house seeking refuge from a blood-thirsty mob during communal riots. How every character is jolted out of his/her sphere as a result of this meeting is shown in the play. They are forced to question their previously held views, memories of past incidents, and their personal conceptions of faith. Written in the aftermath of the demolition of Babri Masjid, this play essentially explores the 'communal'. Each character is seen trying to come to terms with his/her conception of faith and religion, for it forms the very basic characteristic of his/her nature and hence identity, and determines all the actions and reactions to various persons and situations.

Shaping of Mahesh Dattani as a Playwright

Mahesh Dattani was born in Bangalore to Gujarati parents. He went to Baldwin Boys High School and then went on to join St. Joseph's College, Bangalore. Dattani is a graduate in History, Economics and Political Science. He completed his post-graduate in Marketing and Advertising Management because he wanted to become a copywriter. He worked with the Bangalore Little Theatre, where his first role was in Utpal Dutt's *Surya Shikhar*. After reading Edward Albee's play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* early in his life, he became interested in writing. He was also influenced by Gujarati playwright Madhu Rye's Kumarni Agashi and developed an interest in play writing.

Mahesh Dattani began his career as a copywriter in an advertising firm. In 1986, he wrote his first full-length play, *Where There's a Will*, and since 1995, he has been working as a full-time theatre professional. He has also worked with his father in the family business. Dattani is also a film director. His debut film is *Mango Souffle*, adapted from one of his plays. He also wrote and directed the movie *Morning Raaga*.

Notable plays-

Where There's a Will (1988)

Dance Like a Man (1989)

Bravely Fought the Queen (1991)

Final Solutions (1993)

Do The Needful

On a Muggy Night in Mumbai (1998)

Seven Circles Round The Fire (Radio play for BBC) (*Seven Steps around the Fire*) (1998)

The Murder That Never Was (2000)

30 Days in September (2001)

The Girl Who Touched the Stars (2007)

Brief Candle (2009)

Where Did I Leave My Purdah (2012)

The Big Fat City (2012)

Awards-

Dance Like a Man has won the award for the Best Picture in English awarded by the National Panorama in 1998

Sahitya Academy award for his book of plays *Final Solutions and Other Plays*

Sahitya Kala Parishad selected *Final Solutions* (1997), *Tara* (2000) and *30 Days in September* (2007) as best productions of the year, directed by Arvind Gaur.

Character Analysis;

Dattani says in an Interview, "I am not interested in characters asking existential questions in a limbo. My characters exist in a defined space and time, in a social context that is what stimulates me. I do not focus on a message but the context is important." 'Any discussion on Dattani's art of characterization needs to consider the above statement. The characters in his plays are identified in a specific historical and cultural context. Asha Kuthari Chaudhuri observes that in constructing the identities of the characters who people his theatre, Dattani seems to contribute to the matrix of the processes that Erin Mee refers to as a way of decolonizing the theatre.

Dattani projects the world, where his characters move, just as what it is. The hypocrisy, prejudices, dilemmas, obsession nothing is spared and all the characters are given almost the same importance. That is why he says, " My characters are simply a personification of my perceptions."

11.1 The Character of Hardika;

Dattani shows a rare skill in characterization in conceiving the character of Hardika whose past is revealed through flashbacks that at once highlight the past relevant for understanding her character as well as the political and social background of the country. The character is thus portrayed both as a creature of flesh and blood and as a symbol of historical vision. The presence of Daksha (Hardika's former self) and Hardika at the same time on the stage has a rare effect. As Dattani says, through the device of the diary, Daksha begins a dialogue with the audience and that is the only space that is offered to Daksha because she can make fun of her in-laws, she could talk very honestly about her feelings, about her friendship with the Muslim girls etc. Directly to the audience and that space is denied to her with the other members of her household including her husband and these are memories that she has retained even in her old age and these memories are triggered off and feelings of prejudice that had developed over the years are brought out in the present-day situation. So, Daksha becomes a symbol of our historical vision, our sense of history, how prejudice is formed and how we deal with the situation today.

Daksha's diary reveals the fact that before the partition of India, mutual hatred did not develop between the two communities as it had developed forty years after the partition. Daksha had muslim friends among whom Zarine was the best. She was fond of songs sung by Muslim singers such as Noor Jehan. She went to Zarine's home to listen to Noor Jehan's songs and the two friends sang along with the great singer. " Three voices singing together in perfect unison. Every now and then our eyes would meet and we would smile as we continued singing as if, if we stopped, Noor Jehan would stop singing for us". This pure joy was destroyed by the religious fanatics, by greedy persons who wanted to be richer through exploiting the sentiment of the fanatics, and by the politicians who tried to catch fish in troubled water.

Young Daksha could never imagine that her husband, whom he described as a silly goat, and his father-in-law could get the mithai shop of Zarine's father burnt up only to buy it at half of its price. Hence, she did not understand why Zarine's family was reticent during her visit to their home. She was also rudely treated by her husband for going there. She got the impression that all of them were full of false pride and that her father - in-law actually tried to help them by offering to buy their shop. But those people were greedy enough to demand more price than what was due. Moreover, Hardika's father was killed on the road during the riot after the partition and their house was attacked.

Thus, though she was broadminded enough as a girl, her circumstances compelled her to be biased against the Muslims and her hatred for the Muslim community increased day by day. She even could not tolerate her son's attitude and opposed her son who let the Two Muslim boys in her house and even offered job to one. " I was angry that Ramnik was blinded by his ideals. Why did he offer that boy a job in our shop? What was he doing? How did he know that they were innocent? But the revelation of the fact by her son removes her hatred immediately and she asks him if the two boys will come again. This change in her outlook reveals that she is not at all a fanatic, but has been confined in the trap of misunderstanding. Her joys of life, as revealed in her love for songs, her rational approach to all the problems of life, her capacity to change herself as and when the shadows of misunderstanding are dispersed, make her a character of flesh and blood. She is also used as a symbol as she shows the way-out of the impasse of mutual hatred that has vitiated the minds of all the Indians.

11.2 The Character of Ramnik

The character of Ramnik is a proof of Dattani's hold on psychology. Ramnik has borne the burden of the sin committed by his ancestors all alone. Unlike his father and grandfather who were callous and greedy, Ramnik has a strong moral sense and that is why he has developed a liberal attitude. He does not like the way his mother and his wife impose their narrow views about religion on his daughter Smita.

Dattani has skillfully kept the suspense in his play as Ramnik's guilt-consciousness is exposed only at the end of the play. It is indeed an act of moral courage to open the door for the two Muslim boys when the mob outside the house demands the boys and threatens Ramnik and his family. The mob goes to the extent of saying that he is a mad man, that the two young men will stab them in the back and will rape his daughter. Ramnik yet, sticks to his decision that the two boys are to be protected.

His conversation with Javed brings out his sincere attempt to remove the causes of violence from the society. Taking Javed for a trouble-rouser, Ramnik asks him. "What did you get out of it? Javed replies that he believed it to be a cause for his people. When asked how much was paid to him, Javed sarcastically answers that he got thousands and lakhs. Ramnik does not mind the sarcasm and goes to offer him a job in his shop. Even when Javed rudely refuses the offer, Ramnik tries to change his mind through conversation.

When this conversation goes on, Ramnik's guilt-consciousness is not yet revealed and that is why his calmness appears saintly. After he transfers his resentment to his mother at the end of the play, he comes out as a man of flesh and blood and all his attempts to remove the ill will that has been vitiating the relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims in India are seen from a different perspective. Dattani portrays him not as an idealised untouched by mundane reality, but as a sensitive man tortured by a guilt-consciousness that has been haunting him for so many years.

11.3 The Character of Aruna

Ramnik's wife Aruna is portrayed as a religious fanatic who believes that Lord Krishna will protect all of them at the time of riots, whether they shut the door properly or not when the road outside is filled up by hooligans. She is happy with her daughter Smita as she obeys all her instructions in the worship room. She has little knowledge about Smita's way of thinking and is therefore crestfallen to find her 'rebellious' like her father. She receives a rude shock and her blind faith in rituals must have been shaken at her daughter's remark that she has all along been wrong. She is so much obsessed with purity that she is unable to see her flaw in the thought a Muslim's touch contaminates the utensils. It is her prejudice that explains her reluctance to offer drinking water to the two Muslim boys.

Dattani has successfully brought out the conflict in her mind, the conflict between the theory and practice of Hinduism. Even when she says that all religion is one, she forbids the Muslim boys to touch the drinking water with which her idols are bathed. As Javed goes to take the bucket from her hand to bring drinking water, Aruna steps back and asks him not to touch the bucket.

It is because there is discrepancy between what she believes as the essence of her religion and what she practices, she becomes a laughing stock. Ramnik cannot control his laughter as she utters what Ramnik used to tell her.

The tension between Ramnik and Aruna is not to be viewed as mere family tension. It is a conflict between two approaches to religion. While Ramnik is liberal, Aruna is obsessed with religious rituals and she is afraid that a mere touch of one non-Hindu will contaminate everything in her home. Her dealings have stifled Smita, but she did not protest earlier as she did not like to give her father an upper hand in family matters. When Aruna knows this, she starts thinking from a new perspective.

Dattani does not focus on the changes in her character. He only presents situations that are likely to bring changes in the character's approach to life. After Aruna is able to see her daughter from a new perspective she learns that Smita hates her rituals and also feels that she has saved her from being alienated and humiliated Aruna is likely to change her way of life.

The Character of Smita

Smita's character is important both from the structural and thematic point of view. Structurally, she has a pivotal position in the plot because, as it is revealed towards the end of the play, the two Muslim young men came to meet her in her house. Again, it is her intolerance with the inhuman way of her mother Aruna that compels her to raise a voice of protest which has been subdued so long. She also opposes male chauvinism.

A member of the young generation in India, she raises hope in the minds of the audience / readers through the rational way of her thinking. She does not reveal the truth that she has been well acquainted with Javed and Bobby, and her reticence is proof of her common sense. But her intolerance with the way riots are chalked out in India prompts her to expose what she learnt from her friend Tasneem. Tasneem confided in her that her brother Javed was thrown out of the family as he was hired by political parties for creating tension leading to riots. Smita has no idea that Bobby has already brought Javed to the right track and so she is ashamed after the angry outburst that hurt Javed.

Smita is an intelligent, rational, broad- minded and sympathetic to others, the qualities Dattani adored in a young Indian. The revelation that she had a love- relation with Bobby, a Muslim young man, may bring her at the centre of controversy. As she takes the relationships for a passing phase, her creator is spread of the charge that he suggests inter- religion marriage as a possible way out of the impasse created by communal tensions.

Through Bobby's query whether she takes the relationship as temporary to make matters easy for all, Dattani raises an important question; Does Indian society approve of inter- religion marriage? Smita, however, evades the situation with the remark that if she would really think of the relationship as a permanent one, she must have faced all sorts of opposition from the outer world.

The Character of Javed

Javed is a bold creation by Dattani who makes a psychological, sociological and political study of how riots are brewing up in India since the days of partition. Riots develop from communal tension at the root of which there is mutual hatred. Bobby's revelation of Javed's childhood days makes it clear that Javed was so hurt by the contempt of a neighbour, an old religious- minded Hindu, that he could never get over the trauma for the rest of his life. That old man was not only angry with Javed for entering his compound, but also wiped the places touched by Javed as if he had contaminated everything just through his touch. The hatred in the old man's eyes generated similar hatred in Javed's mind and that very night he threw bones in the old man's garden.

The hatred thus generated was utilized by political parties who are in search of persons like Javed for creating tension to satisfy their selfish interest. That is why when Javed was hired by political parties, he thought that he was doing his duty to his community and would not very much bother about what he earned. This happens everywhere and Javed is aware of this.

Dattani shows how Bobby's attempts to bring Javed back to normal course of life failed due to Smita's revelations of facts in regard to Javed in front of her father. Ramnik, however, offers Javed a job even after his identity as a trouble- creator is confirmed. Though Javed has no idea of Ramnik's guilt- consciousness, he refuses the offer as his pride is wounded. Whether Javed comes back to accept the job is kept undecided. As Ramnik says to his mother, they may come if she calls them and if it is too late, they may not come. Dattani leaves it to the audience to decide if Javed will come back.

The Character of Bobby

He is a Muslim young man whose real name is Babban, a typical Muslim name, but he chose to conceal his identity under the name Bobby when he came to the college. He developed a liberal mind- set and that is why he never joined the meetings where Javed would receive the teachings of how to protect his faith. Bobby is noted for his friendship. Through his path is diverted from that of Javed, he goes with Javed wherever he goes and protects him from all sorts of hazards. He even tries his best to bring Javed to the right track. He plays the role of a pacifist when Javed expresses his frustrated anger in front of Ramnik. He has a soft corner for Smita and is eager to know Smita's attitude to him before he goes to marry Javed's sister Tasneem. He has the honesty to confess that though he likes Tasneem, he has not yet forgotten Smita. He also asks Smita a vital question. He wants to know from her if she chose to cut short the relationship between him and her out of fear for her community.

Dattani makes the character the centre of attention when Bobby enters the worship room and puts the idol of Lord Krishna in his hand. To quote Asha Kuthari Chaudhuri, "Dattani has him (Bobby) performing the ultimate act of liberation handling and caressing the Hindu God, subverting all the

stifling structures of his given social identity". Bobby becomes the spokesman for his creator as he says to Aruna, "The tragedy is that there is too much that is sacred. But if we understand and believe in one another, nothing can be destroyed". To Hardika he says, "if you are willing to forget, I am willing to tolerate."

Dattani's characters are persons from real life with whom the readers and the audience identify themselves. They are the characters who question themselves to get at the truth and Dattani does not impose his choice on them. As he says, "Theatre is a collective experience and the audience have to finish in their own heads what the playwright began". To quote from Jeremy Mortimer's illuminating introduction to the second volume of Dattani's collected plays, "Mahesh Dattani does not seek to cut a path through the difficulties his character's encounter in his plays; instead, he leads his audience to see just how caught up we all are in the complications and contraindications of our values and assumptions. And by revealing the complexity, he makes the world a richer place for all of us". Characterization is thus an integral part of his scheme.

Women characters in the play

Dattani has always given importance to women in his plays. The women in his plays are sometimes meek, submissive, calm and cool in nature. Whereas sometimes they are intelligent, brave, courageous and protest when required. In this particular play Dattani talks about three different women who represent three different generations. Hardika represents the first generation, Aruna represents the second generation and Smita represents the third generation. Hardika, is also known as Daksha in the play, who has seen the partition of India and the communal tension as well. Hardika even talks about her father's dream of an independent India. Hardika is such a woman who did love the Muslims until they killed her father in a communal riot. Aruna, daughter in law of Hardika is a typical Indian house wife who is seen busy in doing Pooja and household chores most of the time in the play. She even teaches her daughter to learn the works of God and the household chores as well. Aruna is very particular about her God and she can never really compromise with anything when it comes to her God. Smita, daughter of Aruna and granddaughter of Hardika is a girl of the modern period. She believes in liberal ideology and she doesn't support her mother's activities from heart, though she helps her in all the household chores and work of her God. She loves her mother but at one point of time she feels stifled and expresses her feelings to Aruna. She requests her mother not to bind her with prejudices any more. She even did not have hatred for the Muslims as her close friend is a Muslim girl whose name is Tasneem.

Mahesh Dattani's *Final Solutions* is a problem play that talks about the socio-political aspects of a society in India. Two different types of community live in India, one is the majority and the other one is the minority. Each of the communities has hatred for each other and the reason of the hatred is actually silly and baseless. God is one and the same but people do fight on God and each and everyone claims that God is mine; God is ours, whereas God loves everyone like parents love all the children, if there is more than one child in a family. Dattani, the playwright, has shown the true colours of the politicians and the police department very well through his play. The politicians force the innocent people to work for them in the name of religion. Javed in the play, has been shown as such a character who works for the politicians who brainwashed him in the name of Jihad, The Holy War. Like Javed, there are many people who become puppets in the hands of the politicians and later suffer like anything as they become the victims. We all must understand each other and must stop hating each other as well. It is the responsibility of people of India, to make it a secular country in the true and real sense. The conflict of the minds must be stopped first, then only the conflict or the fight that takes place outside can be stopped. Dattani also focuses on patriarchal hegemony and gender bias, which is the other side of the play. He has tried to show with the help of the character Daksha, that gender bias and sufferings of women have not totally swept away from India. Though India has got its independence or freedom, the Indian women in most of the families, still live like caged birds with shackles in the legs. India shall receive its true independence or freedom only on the day when women will be receiving their due respect and freedom. Also, the people must start loving and accepting each other, rather than hating and misunderstanding.

11.4 Thematic Analysis

Dattani has attempted a neat balancing act when it comes to tracing the malady of communal disharmony to certain elements within both the communities Hindu and Muslim. The theme of the play is put in a nutshell in the first sentence of the note on the play by Alyque Padamsee; 'The demons of communal hatred are not out on the street, they are lurking inside ourselves'. In the domain of Indian English drama, Dattani's plays emerge as stunts that at once captivates the

audience with the novelty of their theme. Final solutions, however, hardly give a stunt as the theme is not at all a "fresh arrival", but rather widely dealt with in different forms in post- Independence Indian literature. Dattani takes the challenge of portraying such a sensational theme on the stage with the use of the new technique he has mastered.

The drama projects two Muslim intruders in a traditional Hindu family during a communal Hindu-Muslim riot. Much to the surprise of the other characters, Smita, the young daughter of Ramnik and Aruna Gandhi, reveals that she has been acquainted with the two Muslim young men. The old grandmother Hardika, who is also shown in flashback as a fifteen- year old girl- wife Daksha, recalls the Hindu- Muslim riots after India's independence and appears panicky because of the intrusion of the two Muslim young men inside the house.

Aruna is a typical housewife, tied to meaningless rituals and to the blind faith that Lord Krishna is the sole protector. Unable to think independently, she voices fanaticism. Hardika, on the other hand, is guided by her experiences during the 1948 riot when she was a newly married girl of fifteen. Dattani makes dramatic use of the fact that Hardika's husband and father- in law exploited a muslim shopkeeper (burning his shop in the name of communal hatred) to enhance their own business, a fact that was known to Hardika's son Ramnik, but not to Hardika. Ramnik's anger at his father's shameful act led him to analyse the causes behind the Hindu- Muslim riot from an unbiased viewpoint.

A mob of individuals outside the Gandhi house, who alternatively put on Hindu and Muslim masks to give out violent hatred for the other community, provides a fitting background to the drama going on inside the house. That mutual hatred only increases tension is made clear in the play which does not however project any final solution as such to the problem of communal riots, but poses some relevant questions; Can mutual hatred be removed from the minds of the Indians? Can historical situations ever be righted? Protest and Anger; Besides the main theme of Hindu-Muslim communal riot in Final Solutions, there are some other allied themes such as the theme of protest and anger and the theme of guilt consciousness. Subir Dhar explains the drama from the viewpoint of Dattani's instinct of protest; "it is the characters who articulate Dattani's protests". Identifying Dattani as a radical challenger of the construction of India and Indians, Dhar comments that Dattani's plays " display very characteristically the tones, hues, and stuff of protest in fin-de-siecle India. His plays articulate, hold up as to mirror, the very instincts of protest we vitally emote with, share in or identify, even if without any strict, rigorous commitment or provocative involvement.

Mahesh Dattani's Final Solutions focuses on the problem of communal disharmony between the Hindus and Muslims in India, especially during the period of the post- partition riots. The play starts with Daksha reading lines from her diary. The setting suggests that the period is late 1940's. Daksha is the mother of the central character of the play Ramnik Gandhi. She shuttles between her two identities, namely that of a girl of fifteen and that of a matured lady who has witnessed forty years of freedom. The chorus chanting at the back sometimes assumes Hindu masks and sometimes Muslim ones. The words rendered by the chorus are clear indicators of the communal disharmony and its painful consequences that are soon to be experienced by the characters in the play. The masks have negative effects on the minds of the characters who wear them.

Final Solutions talks of the problems of cultural hegemony, how Hindus has to suffer at the hands of Muslim majority like the characters of Hardika and Daksha in Hussain's hand, and how Muslim like Javed suffers in the set up of the major Hindu community. This all resulted in communal riots and culminated in disruption of the normal social life, and thus hampered the progress of the nation. The locale of the play is Ramnik's house and the central characters are his daughter Smita, wife Aruna and mother Hardika, besides himself and the two Muslim boys Bobby and Javed who entered into his house during communal tension occasioned by the attack on the Rath Yatra procession. In the beginning, Daksha recollects from her diary about the past when she was married at the age of fourteen. And now after forty years Daksha has become Hardika but her prejudice against the other community continues to be with her. Javed, as Bobby tells Ramnik, became a fanatic because he was ill-treated by persons of another faith and hired by the hooligans to spread communal violence. This creates the problem of communal divide in our country.

Dattani attempts a balancing act in tracing the malady of communal disharmony. The ground he treads is full of mines ready to explode, as this involves the fanatic elements within the Hindu and the Muslim communities. It is obvious to all that people are paid to create political instability and cause communal riots to fan distrust and suspicion that tear the social fabric. Inevitably the

politicians exploit the susceptibilities of the two communities on sensitive issues. In the play, the chorus is an expedient device used brilliantly to provide the commentary on the way communal provocation instigates mindless mob violence. There is always someone to light the fire of violence. The play illustrates how the notions of pollution, food, kitchen habits and fear of contamination by touch become repeated instances of communal clashes. The characters in the play motivate us to think that angry outbursts lead to chain reaction. As long as the characters are on stage as individuals, they are fine; but behind the masks they represent the faceless, mindless mob, thirsting for blood. Anger and violence take their toll on both groups. The chorus with Hindu masks bursts with angry words. There are indications of political mischief and deliberate instigation. Nobody thinks the land belongs to all Indians. One community hates another. One community is in the majority, the other is in the minority. Consequently, the two communities are at loggerheads, living in an atmosphere of conflict and acrimony.

The mob in the play is symbolic of our hatred and paranoia. Each member of the mob is an individual yet they meld into one seething whole as soon as politicians play on their fears and anxieties. The fears and anxieties of the two communities can be traced to the partition. There is Muslim sensitivity to music being played near a mosque. There is Hindu sensitivity in matters of general Muslim food habits that go against vegetarianism. There are fears of contamination. Politicians exploit most of these things and hire goons to help them. Sooner voices like Bobby's are drowned, ignored and brushed aside. Pent up feelings take a violent shape. Dattani exposes the fundamentalists and orthodox persons who use religion as a cover to realize their selfish interest. Religion is a mere ploy in their hands to further their interest in life and cherish their desired goal. Identity politics underlying the Hindu-Muslim tension in India has to be clearly grasped to explain the causes of communal riots as well as large scale killings that have taken place in recent years. There is a serious socio-political problem plaguing our nation today is the communal disharmony between Hindus and Muslims. Dattani, in this play, deals with the recurring rhetoric of hatred, aggression, the monetary and political exploitation of communal riots, the chauvinism and patriarchal mindset of the fundamentalist, in the context of India in the 1940s interspersed with contemporary India.

The play is about a simple Hindu family which is suddenly faced with a lot of questions when two Muslim boys seek refuge in their house during the communal riots. Thus begins the quest for the truth of their beliefs by their father, mother, daughter and grandmother. The story is juxtaposed deftly between two time periods - the present and the past and finally throws light on the beliefs of even those who consider themselves very liberal. Daksha closes her diary and Hardika appears on the stage. Past and present is fused on stage through the figures of Daksha and Hardika. Ramnik Gandhi seems to be a very liberal-minded person towards the Hindu-Muslim relationships and does not like Hardika's telling his daughter that "those people are all demons". Aruna is a typical Gujarati housewife doing 'pooja - path' everyday, praying constantly "our Krishna will protect us". She is a God-fearing woman and thinks that her Krishna will do everything smooth and peaceful one day. Her mother-in-law Hardika could not forget what happened forty years during partition and does not believe Muslims at all. She is an epitome of those hateful thoughts towards them, as any fanatic Hindu would be.

In *Final Solutions*, Dattani shows how the seed of riot is sowed and some vested groups reap its fruit. He also discusses the role of politicians, police and public at the time of communal riot. The common people who live together for years, at the moment of riot, suddenly cease to recognize one another and become enemies on the ground of religion. They never realize that they are losers and politicians snatch the opportunity to gain power. This special community utilizes the opportunity to make a profit. Dattani demonstrates that the major cause of difference endangered by the two leading communities in our country is their sense of superiority. The Hindus always think that they are superior to the Muslims and the Muslims think the same. This causes a big chasm in their relationship. The scarcity of religious tolerance is the leading factor for generating a breach in the society.

In *Final Solutions*, communal riot breaks due to disturbance of procession. In most of the cases the matter of dispute is very simple. But due to involvement of some unsocial elements, it takes the shape of communalism and later on it is distorted and the ultimate result is communal violence. During communal riots, mankind undergoes tremendous spiritual losses, during and after riots. Respect for life, dignity of humanity, love for truth and justice, fellow feeling and brotherhood are mercilessly butchered in riot. The propaganda, based on falsehood, has its heyday during riots. People lose not only their bodies but also their souls. It is a great catastrophe to humanity.

So it is not necessary that communal riot begins only when a group remarks badly on another group. But the way of working can also infuriate the other community. If any problem arises between different communities, it can be sorted out by talk. But still, some people fan the objectionable remarks on their community and its result is communal riot. The first stage of communalism lies in the ideology that the people of the same religion have the same ideology and the same interest. The vested people involve themselves in spreading such ideology and divide the society on the basis of religion. Such a feeling compels the other community to do the same and thus the cactus of communalism comes on the ground.

Daksha hates Muslims because her father was killed in a communal riot, and because her overtures of friendship to Zarine, a young Muslim girl, were rejected after other communal riots that razed Zarine's father's shop, and which incidentally, was bought by Daksha's father-in-law. Javed, the young Muslim fundamentalist and member of a 'gang' has long nursed a resentment against the world because of the 'otherness' and the demonisation of his community and religious identity by the dominant community. Ramnik Gandhi, Daksha's son is trying to atone for the sins committed by his father and grandfather, and therefore becomes a conscious 'secularist'. Daksha tells us about the riots in which her father was killed, how she and her mother took refuge from the flying stones in the pooja room, and how her faith in God, represented by the idol of Krishna, was suddenly gone, never to return. These things have not changed that much after forty years too, as the play has opened in the midst of another riot, and a curfew is on in the small town of Amargaon where the Gandhis live. Daksha's diary has the usual retellings of communal hatred and desecration of religious signifiers.

Daksha's last visit to Zarine's place is an example of hospitality that asks names. She went to see her friend without knowing that her husband and father-in-law had secretly planned to overtake their business and reduced their shop to ashes. Zarine commits violence by inviting Daksha to their dining table, knowing full well that the sight and smell of beef would injure her. Daksha throws up and is helped by her domestic servant who surmises that she has eaten beef : domestic violence and captivity follows. In all her life she never got to know of the secret deal that changed her life forever.

Final Solutions has a powerful contemporary resonance as the central issue of communalism is of the utmost concerns of our society. Presenting different shades of communalist attitudes prevalent among Hindus and Muslims, the play attempts to underline the stereotypes influencing the collective sensibility of one community against another. Moving from partition to the present day communal riots, Final Solutions examines the attitudes of three generations of a Gujrati business family. The events in the play unfold at a swift pace, weaving the post-independence partition riots, with the communal riots of today in a common strand.

In the context of the play, the fears and anxieties of the two communities are largely an aftermath of the partition, but in conservative Hindu homes there has always been a tacit dislike for and disapproval of everything associated with Muslims to the extent that everything touched by the latter is considered to be contaminated. Muslims too, are conscious of the antipodal position they assume in a Hindu community and are equally averse to the Hindu. This mutual aversion of the two communities for each other in India is not overplayed but is depicted with a rare fidelity which spells absolute conviction. Dattani's great contribution to Indian English drama can be depicted in the play, Final Solutions. It is a very significant play by Dattani especially in the present scenario of India and critics have suggested that this play should be translated into every Indian language and performed throughout the country.

Summary

- Mahesh Dattani (born 7 August 1958) is an Indian director, actor, playwright and writer. He wrote such plays as Final Solutions, Dance Like a Man, Bravely Fought the Queen, On a Muggy Night in Mumbai, Tara, Thirty Days in September, The Big Fat City and The Murder That Never Was, starring Dheiraj Kapoor. He is the first playwright in English to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi award. His plays have been directed by eminent directors like Arvind Gaur, Alyque Padamsee and Lillete Dubey.
- Final Solutions is a problem play, for it deals with the communal tension of our society. The violence perpetuated by the communal people in our society affects family life and that is

dramatized in the characters of Smita, Ramnik Gandhi, Aruna, Bobby and Javed. The same character Daksha with two names (Daksha and Hardika) shows how the attitude of the same person to communal tension has changed over the years. Two Muslim boys, Bobby and Javed take shelter in Ramnik's house during communal violence in the town. The dialogue between these two boys with the members of Ramnik's family reveals the deep-rooted distrust between two communities. Aruna, Ramnik's wife argues with her husband and daughter, Smita against giving them shelter in their house when Aruna forbids Bobby and Javed to touch the water with which she bathes the Gods. It shows the attitude of Aruna to her religion. The relationship among the members of Ramnik's family is affected by the communal feelings prevalent in our society. But Dattani works out a solution by making people understand the evil inherent in such kind of communal hatred between two major communities in our country.

- Dattani's Final Solutions is a three-act play which handles the theme of communal riots and forced resentments. It was first performed at Guru Nanak Bhavan, Bangalore on 10 July 1993. In India, the co-existence of multi-religions and multi-cultures has been a curious topic for the world. But the confrontations of Hindus and Muslims has been a dynamic issue more than the other religions to each other. Hindus and Muslims depict their own statement to prove their superiority and Dattani depicts this in Final Solutions. The play opens with two Muslim young boys Bobby and Javed seeking shelter in the house of the Hindu family of Ramnik Gandhi, from the chasing mob, during a hostile atmosphere and curfew followed by Hindu- Muslim riot in the city. With the entry of two Muslim young boys within the house, the familial drama begins. Here, the different religions, cultures, food habits, attitudes, resentments to each other, personal whims and psyches confront each other. Dattani takes the opportunity to move freely into the time and closely scrutinize all such riots in the past and their influences to shape the characters and communities.

Keywords

- Stimulate; Encourage or arouse interest or enthusiasm in
- Characterization ; The certain or construction of a fictional character
- Cultural; Relating to the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a society.
- Partition (verb); Divide into parts
- Fanatic ; Filled with or expressing excessive zeal.
- Chorus; A group of singers in a play
- Communal; related to a religious group
- Hindu; a religious community of India who believes in Hinduism
- Integration; to unite with something
- Muslim; a religious community of India who believes in Islam
- Mob; a crowd of people
- Riot; conflict between two different communities on religious issues
- Final Solutions; ultimate remedy
- Memory; pertaining to past experiences
- Identity; the distinguishing character or personality of an individual
- Religion; a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices

- Rift; Division
- identity-crisis; a period of uncertainty and confusion in which a person's sense of identity becomes insecure, typically due to a change in their expected aims or role in society.
- Prejudice; partiality
- circuitous hatred; Indirect hatred
- solutions; answers
- Psychosis; Phobia
- Marginalized; Downgraded
- Vegetarianism; the practice of not eating meat or fish, especially for moral, religious, or health reasons: "vegetarianism, they claim, will save the world from hunger"
- Communalism; socialism
- Demonization; Condemnation, disapprobation - an expression of strong disapproval; pronouncing as wrong or morally culpable; "his uncompromising condemnation of racism"

Self Assessment

1. Which character in the play maintains a diary?
 - A. Daksha (Hardika)
 - B. zarina
 - C. Noor jahan
 - D. Javed

2. Name of the city where the Gandhi family lived before India became Independent?
 - A. Amargoan
 - b. Kannur
 - c. Ambur
 - d. Burgoan

3. Who was Daksha's favourite singer?
 - A. Zarina
 - B. Javed
 - C. Noor Jahan
 - D. None of the above.

4. Name the friend at whose house Daksha listened to her favourite songs on the Gramophone?
 - A. Javed
 - B. Noor Jahan
 - C. Zarina
 - D. None of the above

5. Mention the real reason Bobby had come to Amargoan?
 - A. In search of job for Zarina

- B. In search of job for him
C. In search of job for Javed
D. None of the above
6. Whom does Daksha refer to as "Gaju" in the play?
A. Daksha's mother-in-law
B. Daksha's mother
C. Daksha's Uncle
D. All of the above
7. What business was Ramnik engaged in?
A. Ramnik had a saree shop in Kapada Bazar.
B. fruit shop
C. Book stall
D. All of the above
8. What was Bobby's real name?
A. Babban b. Kuttan c. Appu d. All of the above.
9. Mention the real reason Javed had come to Amargoan?
A. To meet his friends
B. To kill Aruna
C. He came to kill pujari in the procession
D. None of the above
10. Who demands that Javed and Bobby be handed over to them?
A. Aruna b. Kamala c. Hardika d. None of the above
11. Who is referred to as "Wagh" in the play?
A. Daksha's mother-in-law
B. Daksha's father-in-law
C. Daksha's Aunty
D. None of the above
12. Who are called "traitors" by the mob?
A. Ramnik Gandhi and his family
B. Aruna and her family
C. Hardika and her family
D. Javed and his family
13. What does Booby pick up in the puja room?
A. Krishna's Idol
B. Sivan's Idol

- C. Muruga's Idol
- D. All of the above

14. Does Javed accept the job offered to him by Ramnik?

- A. Yes
- B. No

15. How is Bobby related to Tasneem?

- A. Colleague
- B. Friend
- C. Bobby was Tasneem's fiancé
- D. None of the above

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | A | 2. | A | 3. | C | 4. | C | 5. | C |
| 6. | A | 7. | A | 8. | A | 9. | C | 10. | A |
| 11. | B | 12. | A | 13. | A | 14. | B | 15. | C |

Review Question

1. Elucidate Final Solutions as a play of social maladies
2. Examine the significance of the title Final Solutions
3. Explain Final Solutions as a political play.
4. Explain the theme of Final Solutions by Mahesh K. Dattani
5. How does Dattani use the role of chorus in his drama Final Solution?
6. What does the play final solutions by Mahesh Dattani embody?
7. Who is Hardika in the play Final Solution?
8. Write a note on character of Ramnik in Final Solutions
9. Write the character sketch of Hardika in Final Solutions



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a.

Unit 12: Mahesh Dattani: Final Solution

CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

12.1 Plot of the Play

12.2 Narrative Techniques

Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

Answers for Self Assessment

Review Question

Further Reading

Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- Understand the plot of the play
- Examine the cause of communal disharmony
- Explore the narrative technique

Introduction

Mahesh Dattani is a well-known English playwright, actor and director of India. He is the first playwright in English to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi award for Final Solutions in 1998. The theme of the play Final Solutions is to highlight human weaknesses, selfishness, avarice, and opportunism. Woven into the play are the issues of class and communities and the clashes between traditional and modern life style and value systems. The problem of minorities is not confined to only Hindus and Muslims; it eats the peace of any minority community among the majority. Final Solutions has a powerful contemporary resonance and it addresses the issue of utmost concern to our society, i.e. the issue of communalism. The play presents different shades of the communalist attitude prevalent among Hindus and Muslims in its attempt to underline the stereotypes and clichés influencing the collective sensibility of one community against another. What distinguishes this work from other plays written on the subject is that it is neither sentimental in its appeal nor simplified in its approach. It advances the objective candor of a social scientist while presenting a mosaic of diverse attitudes towards religious identity that often plunges the country into inhuman strife. Yet the issue is not moralized, as the demons of communal hatred are located not out in the street but deep within us. The play moves from the partition to the present day communal riots. It probes into the religious bigotry by examining the attitudes of three generations of a middle-class Gujarati business family, Hardika, the grandmother, is obsessed with her father's murder during the partition turmoil and the betrayal by a Muslim friend, Zarine. Her son, Ramnik Gandhi, is haunted by the knowledge his fortunes were founded on a shop of Zarine's father, which was burnt down by his kinsmen. Hardika's daughter-in-law, Aruna, lives by the strict code of the Hindu Samskar and the granddaughter, Smita, cannot allow herself a relationship with a Muslim boy. The pulls and counter-pulls of the family are exposed when two Muslim boys, Babban and Javed, seek shelter in their house on being chased by a baying Hindu mob. Babban is a moderate while Javed is an aggressive youth. After a nightlong exchange of judgments and retorts between the characters, tolerance and forgetfulness emerge as the only possible solution of the crisis. Thus, the play becomes a timely reminder of the conflicts raging not only in India but in other parts of the world. Mahesh Dattani's 'Final Solutions' is that rare look at a socio-political problem that defies all final solutions.... Arvind Gaur's competent direction... intense, topical and artistically mounted, Asmita's 'Final Solutions' brought back memories of Habib Tanvir's rendition of 'Jis Lahore nahi

Dekhya' and Saeed Mirza's 'Naseem. 'Final Solutions' touches us, and the bitter realities of our lives so closely that it becomes a difficult play to handle for the Indian Director. The past begins to determine the outlook of the present and thus the earlier contradictions re-emerge.

Although no concrete solutions are provided in the play to the problem of communalism, it raises questions on secularism and pseudo secularism. It forces us to look at ourselves in relation to the attitudes that persist in society. Final Solutions has taken the issues of the majority communities in different contexts and situations. It talks of the problems of cultural hegemony, how Hindus had to suffer at the hands of Muslim majority like the characters of Hardika/Daksha in Hussainabad. And how Muslims like Javed suffer in the setup of the majority Hindu community. This all resulted in communal riots and culminated in disruption of the normal social life, and thus hampered the progress of the nation.

Since it is an experiment in time and space and relates to memory, it is a play, which involves a lot of introspection on the part of the characters in the play and thus induces similar introspection in the viewers. It is an attempt to experiment with the chorus. It has been used in a style, which is called 'realistic stylization'. The chorus represents the conflicts of the characters. Thus the chorus in a sense is the psycho-physical representation of the characters and also provides the audience with the visual images of the characters' conflicts.

There is no stereotyped use of the characterization of the chorus because communalism has no face, it is an attitude and thus it becomes an image of the characters. The sets and properties used in the play are simple. This has been done to accentuate the internal conflicts and the subtext of the play. Theater for 'Asmita' is a method of reflection, understanding and debating the contemporary socio-political issues through the process of the play and hope the play will also have a lasting impact on the audience.

12.1 Plot of the Play

The play opens with a Shaw-like elaborate stage direction. He puts masks on the Mob/Chorus to make the frequent change of identity look natural. When the Chorus puts on Hindu-Muslim masks, the schism is hinted at. When the Chorus whisper or shout along with a character, its function is to articulate the inner feelings of that particular character. Ramnik's mother, Hardika, too had a sorrowful past which made her averse to the other religious sect. While trying to migrate from the neighbouring country [Hussainabad] to India got ghastly butchered [by whom?]. Her friend, Zarine's father's dry fruits and sweetmeat shop stood burnt [by whom?] and he came to her father-in-law, Wagh, in search of a job. But his entreaty was not complied with. Thus, the underlying tension, resulting in a schism between the two sects continued. Even this day, when Javed and Bobby ran for shelter into Smita's house, the age-old customs got the better of Aruna, Smita's mother. Ramnik tried to make the two Muslim boys, who happened to be known to Smita, his college-going daughter, feel comfortable in his house, setting the mob's demand to hand the boys over to them, at naught. Even he went to the extent of offering Javed a job in his shop, which Javed declined to accept. The shop, which Ramnik's father took from Zarine's father, could, no doubt, solve Javed's financial uncertainty. But, ages of alienation, feeling of otherness found voice through Javed's spurning the offer: Javed: I didn't ask you for a job! So you can keep your fucking job! Bobby [to Ramnik]: It's not true what he says! Please Sir, believe me, he is not..... Javed [screaming at Bobby]: Stop defending me! Do you think he cares? Ramnik: I care. Yes! It is you who are indifferent. You don't believe in anything except yourself! Javed: I believe in myself. Yes! What else have I got to believe in? It's people like you who drive me to a corner and I have to turn to myself and my faith. I have a lot to thank you for!

In Act III, the conversation between Ramnik and Javed rises to such a crescendo that Javed speaks his heart out in vehemence and inflicts the attack on a community which appears inimical to him:

Ramnik: Why do you distrust us? Javed: Do you trust us?

Ramnik: I don't go about throwing stones!

Javed: But you do something more violent. You provoke! You make me throw stones! Every time I look at you, my bile rises!

Such communal hatred calls for a close scrutiny of relationship between the two communities referred to. History, no doubt, will put forth a sanguinary document of constant friction and animosity between the two communities, resulting in partition! Thus, the seed had been sown since many years, which has simply grown into a tall tree now!

In Act I, Bobby and Javed are seen to be nabbed by the Chorus when they start to leave for Jeevnagar that night when the curfew got clamped at Amargaon following a communal riot. As and when they are found to be Muslims, they are attacked by the Chorus. They run for life and takes shelter in Ramnik Gandhi's residence. The Chorus come baying for the boys' blood and keeps thundering Ramnik's door. When Ramnik comes to their rescue, his wife, Aruna, gets flung to fury as all his prejudices regarding religion get a major blow and Hardika keeps lamenting, "How could he let these people into my house?.....They killed his grandfather.....They will hate us for protecting them. Asking for help makes them feel they are lower than us. I know!.....They don't want equality. They want to be superior." Thus, the homely ambience gets ruffled. Aruna even fumbles to give them a glass of water to slake their thirst. Aruna flies to hat extent that she asks her husband to open the door and hand the boys over to the infuriated mob. Aruna cringes in hatred when Ramnik asks to offer them food as they might have been hungry and exhausted. The Chorus keeps shouting, "Throw them out!" and Hardika chimes in unison, charging Ramnik, "Why did you let them in? Why?" It is Smita who used to know them since long and hence they can stay back. In fact, the light, the Chorus – all are synchronized in such a way that the play comes alive on the stage. Smita takes a deep breath to say, "I know who they are....This is Tasneem's brother, Javed and this....is Babban -Bobby – Tasneem's fiancé." It also becomes clear that Bobby will marry Tasneem shortly. And, it comes out to the open too, that Smita had crush on Bobby for some time. But, the question of religion stopped her from advancing any further. It also emerges from the conversation that Javed is a restless, indecisive person who does not stay with his parents and is jobless. Javed flies to the tangent crying, "We do love our own blood. Unlike you who treat your own like shit which can't be touched." Aruna does not lose her temperament but protests calmly, "Who gave you the right to criticize us. We who have given you protection." An exchange of views follows, which calls for immediate submission from Bobby and Javed, who get shelter at Ramnik's house. Bobby and Javed get shelter at Smita's house for the night. The reason that kicks off the riot drives Ramnik to think everything anew. He sorts a sundry issues with Bobby and Javed. The conversation brings out the truth to the open—Javed has been rendered a scapegoat by the fanatics of his own community who have simply used him! But Hardika cannot come to terms with the fact that her son, Ramnik, has offered Javed a job in their shop. She cannot forgive the people of that community, who brutally killed her father. Hardika keeps musing to herself, as seen in Act II: "That night I couldn't sleep. I listened. I was angry that Ramnik was blinded by his ideals. Why did he offer that boy a job in our shop? What was he doing? How did he know they were innocent? Couldn't he see there was more violence in that boy's eyes than those stone throwers' threats? He wasn't just saving two boys from getting killed. This was something else Ramnik was trying to do." Smita came to learn the secret of Javed's source of living. He acted as a hired hooligan to earn his livelihood. And for that reason only, his father threw him out of the house. Javed got puce in anger and Bobby tried to pacify him by retorting: "I had won him overI had....almost won him over." But even at the end of Act II, no solution to the problem of the great divide between the Hindus and the Muslims is seen to be tabled. Use of theatrical devices is perfect in Act III where three stage-spaces are used by Bobby and Javed [the floor], the Muslim Chorus [highest level of the ramp] and Daksha [the other side of the stage where the light focuses after skimming past the Hindu and the Muslim Chorus]. The dilemma, the heart-shattering guilt-feelings of Javed, Daksha's reminiscing of the past—all throw considerable light on the relationship between the two communities which stand on precarious crossroads. The Chorus philosophizes: Chorus I: Should we be swallowed up? Till they cannot recognize us? Should we meld into anonymity so they cannot hound us?A drop of oil cannot merge with an ocean of milk. One reality cannot accept another reality. Bobby and Javed are conversing and it appears that Javed is in for a change, Bobby: Nobody will believe that you have changed. Javed: Have I....changed? Bobby: Why do you doubt it? Javed: I cannot think anymore. But how far the change is towards a positive end, that is far from predicting. Ramnik again offers the job and Javed raises the issue of mutual trust between two communities thus picking up a quarrel afresh. Ramnik, too, calls him 'hired hoodlum', 'riot-rouser'. However, Bobby relates to Ramnik the reason of Javed's turning into a zealot: "A minor incident changed all that. ...We were playing cricket on our street with the younger boys. The postman delivered our neighbour's mail. He dropped one of the letters. He was in a hurry and asked Javed to hand the letter over to the owner. Javed took the letterand opened the gate. Immediately, a voice boomed, 'What do you want?' I can still remember Javed holding out the letter and mumbling something, his usual firmness vanishing in a second, 'Leaving it on the wall' the voice ordered. Javed backed away, really frightened. We all watched as the man came out with a cloth in his hand. He wiped the letter before picking it up, he then wiped the spot on the wall the letter was lying on and he wiped the gate!..... We all heard a prayer-bell, ringing continuously. Not loud. But distinct....." Javed, thus, turned into an arch-enemy of a particular community. Then, was it his fault to nurse hatred against this community? When asked about his reaction, on hearing the prayer-bell after the incident, Bobby too said that he felt equally 'angry' as Javed. After learning the background of Javed's 'hooliganism', Ramnik saw reason and blurted forth, 'And we are to blame.' Even sensible Ramnik

tries to make Aruna see reason: "There is no magnanimity in not allowing a Muslim boy touch our God or the water with which our God is bathed ." And, Javed feels remorseful that he did not listen to Bobby when he 'tried so hard to talk him out of it' tried to dissuade him from coming to Amargaon. A solution is catered cleverly, - a 'hired hoodlum' gets back to senses, feels repentant for his wrong-doings, keeps changing into a better leaf gradually. Smita, whose love- affair with Bobby did not materialize, comes up with numerous queries which clamour for befitting rejoinders. In Act III, Smita charges Aruna, her mother straightaway, "I can see so clearly how wrong you are. You accuse me of running away from my religion. How wrong you are. You accuse me of running away from my religion. Maybe I shouldn't be. What if I did what you do? Praying and fasting and purifying myself all day....." Aruna feels shocked and asks her daughter whether 'being a Hindu stifles her!' Smita blatantly, rather unabashedly, replies, 'No, living with one does.' Thus, Smita needed opening up her heart and putting forth opinions regarding her mother's prejudices and wrong-beliefs in the name of sanskar. After taking refuge at Ramnik's residence, when Bobby and Javed are about to leave finally, Bobby breaks all norms by lifting the tiny image of Lord Krishna from the altar in Aruna's pooja-room and declaring in front of all, "See! See! I am touching God!....Your God! My flesh is holding Him! Look, Javed! And He does not mind!...He does not burn me to ashes! He does not cry out from the heavens saying He has been contaminated!...Look how He rests in my hands! He knows I cannot harm Him. He knows His strength! I don't believe in Him but He believes in me. He smiles! He smiles at our trivial pride and our trivial shame....He feels me. And he welcomes it! I hold Him who is sacred to them, but I do not commit sacrilege. [To Aruna] You can bathe Him day and night, you can splash holy waters on Him but you cannot remove my touch from His form. You cannot remove my smell with sandal paste and attars and fragrant flowers because it belongs to a human being who believes, and tolerates, and respects what other human beings believe. That is the strongest fragrance in the world!" Aruna screams against the sacrilege while Bobby rejoins, "The tragedy is that there is too much that is sacred. But if we understand and believe in one another, nothing can be destroyed." Is it not a call for a final solution to a burning problem? But, the fact is that, it is only a suggestion that needs practice and immediate implementation. Even after the two Muslim boys leave, numerous queries keep floating in the air demanding answers. Ramnik decides not to go to his shop as it assails him till date to accept the fact that, "It's the same burnt-up shop we bought from them at half its value.' He confesses candidly, 'And we burnt it. Your husband. My father. And his father. They had burnt it in the name of communal hatred." He doubts whether he will be able to step into the shop once again. He felt a need to expiate now by handing it over to Javed. He seems determined to call Javed and pass it on to him as a legacy he [as a representative of the sect] is supposed to inherit: "When these boys came here, I thought, I would.....I hoped I would be able to set things right. I-I wanted to tell them that they are not the only ones who have destroyed. I just couldn't .I don't think I have the face to tell anyone. [Pause] So it wasn't that those people hated you. It wasn't false pride or arrogance. [A Noor Jehan song can be heard very faintly]It was anger. [Italics mine] " His mother, old Hardika, gets a shock of her life to learn the truth [or, shame?]She was unaware of so long. But, her son consoles her, 'You have to live with this shame only for a few years now.' Doesn't it sound as a hollow solace especially when he is assailed by the misgivings whether the boy would 'come even if called to take charge of their shop.' Or, 'it might be too late now.' However, a humane solution is proffered to iron off all points of misunderstanding or confusion the two sects might have between them! This play is a response to Mahesh Dattani's reaction to the sporadic communal riots, breaking forth here and there, at different times. When asked if he was upset to see the problems – social, political or unconventional, he says, "They invariably do. Social issues move me and I like to examine an idea from different angles.

The plays where the content came first are *On a Muggy Night* and *Final Solutions*. As for the latter, I was asked to write a play about communal tensions and I said, 'what can one write about that other than platitudes?' But out of that churning emerged *Final Solutions*." [From excerpts of a newspaper interview] Though Shashi Tharoor's 'Twenty-two months in the Life of a Dog: A Farce in Two Acts' does not deal with exactly the same ordeal, it reflects the complexity arising out of Emergency in 1975. Ezekiel's 'Don't Call it Suicide' which was earlier titled *Soft and Sad Music* is about the plight of sensitive individuals in this harsh world of stark realities. In *The Statesman*[dated 25.02.09]in a detailed cover-page report titled 'Lest We Remember' published under the section "Riot Act" ,while writing about a communal riot in Lucknow almost 19 years ago, which claimed more than 130 lives, the reporter observes, "At the time of the riots, Muslims had put up posters that said: 'Hindustan mein rehna hain to Allah-o-Akbar kehna hain[if you want to live in India, you must praise Allah],remembers using the term loosely-a leading light of the Hindu community. 'Bharat mein rehna hain to Vande Mataram kehna hain if you want to live in India, you must say Vande Mataram' is what the provocative posters pasted by Hindu activists screamed, ripostes his Muslim Doppelganger." If we take a few Indian English novels at a glance, we are sure to find this issue of communal hatred portrayed, quite faithfully. Amitav Ghosh , in his well-

 Unit 12: Mahesh Dattani: Final Solution

acclaimed novel, 'The Shadow Lines', touched upon a similar sensitive issue of schism between the two religious sects but dared not cater any 'final solution' to the burning problem, resulting into partition. In a recent bestselling popular fiction, 'The 3 Mistakes of My Life' by Chetan Bhagat, the reference to the hair-raising portrayal of communal riot after the Godhra incident in Gujarat, is horrifying. Omi's uncle, Mama, the leader of a communal party, tries to kill a boy of the opponent sect just by way of revenge of the murder of his own son: "I want the boy. I want that Muslim boy," Mama said. 'What?' Ish said. 'Eye for an eye. I'll slaughter him right here. Then I will cry for my son. Get the fucking boy,' Mama said and thumped his chest. His struggled to stand straight. The blow torches lit up the dried grass on the entrance of the bank. A thick lock kept the gate shut and the mob outside." Such communal riots, however, cannot be pooh-poohed away as we stay in a country which has a history drenched in the blood of the people of these two religious communities. Chetan Bhagat, too, tries to cater a solution through mutual understanding and amity, as he shows Omi sacrificing his own life while saving Ali, the little cricket talent. At the bottom, we all are friends, having no enmity. It is only the fanatics, the bigots, who kick up horrendous altercations to make firm the schism between the Hindus and the Muslims, which we have already witnessed in Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges*, where the vetting of the male sex-organ went on, to detect the religious identity of everyone on the train entering Pakistan. If found a non-Muslim, the rioters did not hesitate to hack the innocent victims to death. Hence, a solution was the crying need of the hour, where Mahesh Dattani has boldly stepped in. Mahesh Dattani successfully shows a ray of hope by rousing the conscience up from slumber, through curing the ailment of communal hatred, causing momentary rage, culminating into violence. 'Final Solutions' by Mahesh Dattani is an answer to a long-pestering issue, without an iota of doubt. Communal attitudes are deeply embedded within the characters and the symbolic interchanging of Hindu and Muslim masks in the Mob/Chorus is extended on to the characters. Ramnik is as much a staunch Hindu as a liberal he professes to be, Javed and Bobby are as much staunch Muslims as helpless protection seekers they appear to be. It only needs an innocuous pretext to spark off the seeds of communal violence and religious hatred which is already located within the individuals. And this characteristic has been handed down by history which is subtly suggested through the narrative's frequent movements back in time. For Dattani, the contemporary nation is one where religious attitudes have been a product of history. Through the device of the diary two distinct phases of the same character, separated by forty years, is merged, subtly suggesting that the narratives of hatred too have not changed much.

Theatrically, visually, this is of immense significance. In a performance of *Final Solutions* the age difference between Daksha and Hardika would appear so stark that the ideology of 'things have not changed that much' would be shockingly pertinent. It is this effect that Dattani wishes to create in his readers/audience and the effect continues throughout the play. The Daksha-Zarine friendship is replicated in Smita-Tasneem; Javed's hatred is the same as that of Zarine's. All the years of independence have not been able to differentiate between Javed's and Zarine's sense of being 'less in number'. Daksha is Hardika's memory and at the same time her warning to be on guard as history seems to repeat itself. Daksha's life has taught Hardika to suspect. Hardika is overcautious and apprehensive as she foregrounds the entry of Javed and Bobby even before they have appeared on stage. The two boys remind her of some permanent scars in her mind created forty years back: "It was those two boys running away who frightened me. Those two who were begging for their lives. Tomorrow, they will hate us for it. They will hate us for protecting them...All those memories came back when I saw the pride in their eyes! I know their wretched pride! It had destroyed me before and I was afraid it would destroy my family again!" Memory hence emerges as a central theme in *Final Solutions*. It is through memory that Dattani points to the circuitous course of hatred. The sense of merging of the generations of Hardika and Javed is brilliantly suggested: Hardika: Your sister deserves it! Zarine deserves. (Pause) What did you say your sister's name was? Javed : Tasneem Hardika : Oh. I thought it was Zarine. Indeed Dattani's careful manipulation of memory as an index to questions of identity and power is crucial to his entire oeuvre. As Alyque Padamsee asks: "Is life a forward journey or do we travel round in a circle, returning to our starting point?" In her essay on *Final Solutions*, Angelie Multani also poses a set of similar questions: "What then is the 'final solution'? Is one even possible? Would it be better for us to stop trying to find the final answer, and just try to make our own peace with ourselves and those around us? Is it possible to atone for the past?" It is in this context that we need to take a closer look at the title of Dattani's play. The very word 'final' subverts the possibility of a 'solution' since Dattani deliberately sticks to the plural - 'solutions', thereby questioning the justification of 'final'. Angelie Multani points out that in this deliberate subversion lies the repetitive nature of communal violence, guilt and hatred - "The title of Dattani's play on communal violence and tensions in contemporary urban India itself calls to attention the apparent insolubility of this situation....It is indeed, this very search for a final solution, which in many ways perpetuates the cycle of violence and hatred." The cycle of hatred and as Alyque Padamsee terms it; 'transferred resentments' seem

to continue. Ironically, ten or twenty years after the Babri Masjid demolition, the country was subjugated to yet more phases of communal violence's: the Godhra carnage, 2002 or the riots in Assam, 2012—making the ironic quality of Dattani's title disturbingly pertinent.

12.2 Narrative Techniques

One thing that stands out about Dattani's work is that, while he writes about everyday life, he avoids attempting impossible realism. In fact, he is enthralled by the possibilities that the stage (as well as the fictional mode) provides him with. A playwright who begins his career with a ghost appearing almost halfway through the play clearly has no interest in recreating the world's drawing rooms. Dattani has the ghost speak directly to the audience, with the actor portraying the ghost picking up a victim in the audience and informing him or her that his or her shoes need to be polished (Act II, scene ii). There are rapid shifts in *Dance Like a Man*, not only in space and time, but also in the roles of the actors. In the first flashback in Act One, the actor portraying Jairaj changes into his father by wearing a shawl. Viswas is renamed Jairaj, and Lata is renamed Ratna. Their ages are the same as the previous characters they played in Dattani's dramatic world. With the addition of a shawl, lighting, and a lightning change in the setting, we are transported to the 1940s. The younger Ratna exits, calling for the younger Jairaj, Amritlal removes his shawl and transforms into the older Jairaj, and the older Ratna enters, calling out to him. Throughout the play, there are rapid and effortless shifts in time and space. Past and present collide in *Bravely Fought the Queen*, just as office and home do in Act 1. Even though the location has changed to the Trivedi brothers' office, the level that represents Baa's room in Act I remains in Act 1. Even the previous act's well-stocked bar has been retained as part of the office. The interaction between Baa and the women that took place almost off stage in Act I is seen in this act. You can hear them both during and between the men's conversation, and Baa's comments on her sons and husband can be heard while we watch the men in action. Baa's voice from the past intertwines with her sons' current conversation, framing it in ways that would otherwise be impossible. Hardika and Daksha, the old grandmother and her younger self, exist on the same plane in *Final Solutions*. When the play begins, Daksha, a fifteen-year-old girl, is reading from her diary, while Hardika, a sixty-year-old woman is seated at the same level. Dattani's stage directions are worth noting once more: There's a room on another level. This belongs to the young Daksha, who is actually the grandmother and is sometimes depicted as a fifteen-year-old girl. Hardika, the grandmother, and Daksha, the young bride, appear on this level at different times, despite the fact that they are the same person. Hardika should be positioned and lit so that the audience sees the entire play through her eyes. Both the past and the present coexist, and while the past shaped the present, the present assists the characters in rereading the past. As a result, the play must be viewed through Hardika's eyes, it must be viewed as Hardika's education and tragedy. The social processes of oppression and hatred as they operate on Hardika are supposed to be visible to us. Dattani's stage techniques are aimed at making the audience intimate with the life of a family, its trials and tribulations and debilitating secrets even in a play that was supposed to be about the construction of communal hatred, a play that was supposed to be on a large scale, choric in character. This may explain why, while Alyque Badansee's production of *Final Solutions* was spectacular and choric, Dattani's (who is also a director) was small-scale and intimate, according to John McRae's *Introduction to Final Solutions and Other Plays* (p 8) You may have noticed that Dattani likes to divide his stage into different levels in the stage directions we discussed earlier, as well as in the directions to other plays. This allows Dattani to mix the past and the present, as well as stretch the space available to show multiple locations at once. This could aid both narratorial linearity and simultaneity. For example, in the scene we discussed earlier from *Bravely Fought the Queen*, the brothers are shown talking to each other in the office, while their mother is shown interacting with the women at home. As the action builds up to the moment when the mother and brothers speak through each other and some of the past is revealed, this simultaneous action in two different locations aids us in evaluating the characters. Through the device of having their mother's bedroom at a higher level and keeping it visible throughout the play, the influence of their mother's life and views on them and their lives is seen as a constant presence. As we've seen, Dattani takes great care to ensure that readers and potential directors understand everything through his detailed stage directions. This division of the stage allows for clearly delineated space for specific characters, time periods, and locations. For a similar purpose, he specifies the use of lighting. This allows Dattani to jump from one character to the next, from one time frame to the next, and from one location to the next, as well as fusing everything together when necessary. This aids Dattani's drama in both building tension and moving the action forward. The stage also represents the multi-layered nature of our lives. In *Final Solutions*, Dattani deviates from his usual style by including a chorus. And, as we've seen, the same actors play different roles in *Dance Like a Man*. Dattani is an ever-evolving playwright who isn't afraid to try new things. We've established that, while Dattani appears to prefer the well-crafted play as a vehicle, he isn't afraid to mess with it, bending and twisting it to his will. The well

- written play is tailor-made for Dattani because it essentially fits his style of theater, in which the protagonist is prominent and key events are revealed in climaxes. This structure allows him to gradually build tension and reveal information until the tempo reaches a climax. But there are at least two more things to say about Dattani's work. Do you have any idea what they are? We haven't yet discussed his sense of humor or the way he uses language. Dattani is primarily a comic book writer. His plays contain a lot of humor, ranging from subtle to slapstick. The tone of Dattani's "Essentially a Comic Muse" writes Kusum Haider in a review essay titled "plays is light, there is bright comedy within often somber bounds." (The Book Review, Vol. XXII, No. 3). Dattani's central theme of human behavior provides the basis for the comedy. People's interactions with one another, as well as how they present themselves to and perceive one another, are frequently amusing. However, the lighthearted banter eventually gives way to bleak realities. Dattani, I'd like to believe, forces you to examine the spring - wells of your own sense of humor. Laughter and humor are also ways of dealing with the world and its unpleasant realities. Dattani's most important contribution is likely his use of language. If his first play, *Where There's a Will*, is performed in a classroom, he writes, "I sincerely hope that English language teachers ... will not dismiss my syntax as bad English, or worse yet, incorrect." While understanding grammar rules is important, the richness and variety of the spoken word is a fascinating subject in and of itself. I'm sure the characters would prefer to communicate in Gujarati, but they were created by an English-speaking mind. This is not an apology, but rather a statement of fact. Indeed, it is this misfortune that raises the stakes for all such works, posing difficulties for both the performer and the serious student. Dattani defends his use of English as it is spoken in India, but also makes a serious statement. His characters "would love to speak in Gujarati" he says, and his challenge as a writer is to convey their Gujaratiness in English without distortion. As a result, his *Where There's a Will* is a Gujarati play set in Bangalore. Dattani's characters speak English in the manner of most middle - class Indians. And they'd obviously use it in the same situations as we would. Dattani's challenge is to avoid giving the impression that his use of English restricts his or his characters' range. As a Gujarati playwright writing about the middle class, he must strive for the same sense of authenticity, range, and nuance. Do you believe Dattani succeeds in this, or do you believe his Tam characters end up speaking a homogenized convent English? Is there still a perpetual limitation! Dattani, in my opinion, succeeds in meeting this character. He's becoming more confident in his use of language, even cracking inter - lingual jokes. His theater became visible (audibly?) more representative and accessible and acceptable as his characters began to move freely from English to Gujarati and Kannada (do not forget that he is a Bangalore - based playwright), much like middle - class Gujarati residents of Bangalore. Dattani, I believe, has managed to broaden the scope of his language over time, making it more useful.

Summary

- India is a country with a wide range of religious groups. The existence of such a society necessitates religious sects cooperating. However, the harmonious chord has strained on several occasions, and a series of communal riots have desecrated her history - the rot has been particularly quick in recent decades. Where does one find the answer to such societal issues? Mahesh Dattani, the first Indo-English playwright to win the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award in 1998, was likely thinking about one. The purpose of this paper is to examine Dattani's play "Final Solutions" (1992) and to uncover the touching issue of relationship schism caused by misunderstanding between the two major religious factions, Hindus and Muslims. Mahesh Dattani's play 'Final Solutions' frames the time and its pressing issues. The issue of communal harmony is raised in this play, and what elevates it to a new level is the playwright's attempt to find a solution to the problem by bringing the followers of the two religions on a level playing field. Whether it remains a conjecture or not is a different matter entirely, but Dattani undoubtedly tries.
- The play *Final Solutions* opens with Daksha (or Hardika), a recently married young lady, thinking of her diary (on March 31, 1948). In the diary, she expounds on her involvement with her new house (in-law house). In the course of time, they turned out to be closest companions. An icon of Hindu God is destroyed. Smita's dad Ramanik (child of Hardika) takes the telephone from her girl and guarantees the security of Tasneem to her family

(Ramanik informs Tasneem's father that she was fine) and finishes the call. As there is a significant strain outside, Hardika prompts her girl in-law, Aruna (Smita's mom) to appropriately check entryways (doors) and windows as the canines have been let free. In the interim, Javed and Bobby, two Muslim young men are in some contention out and about in a close by zone. Finding a skull-top in the pocket of Javed, they understood these two boys were Muslims. As they attempt to murder them, Javed and Bobby flee and the horde pursues them. They arrive at the entryway (door) of Ramanik's home and begin thumping at it. Ramanik, finally, opens the entryway. The angry mob shows up at the entryway of Ramanik. They caution Ramanik to either handover Javed and Bobby to them or they will break the entryway and come in. The horde begins tossing stones and sticks on the house and furthermore manhandles Ramanik. Aruna doesn't care for Muslims in her home and powers her significant other to toss them out of it. Ramanik harshly won't. Ramanik begins conversing with Bobby and Javed. Bobby is amiable while Javed is very brutal in the discussion. Ramanik gets some information about them and after discovering that Javed is a school drop-out begins speaking awful about him. Smita comes and perceives them two. Aruna inquires Smita how she knows both of them. Smita tells that Javed is the sibling of Tasneem and Bobby is her life partner. When Ramanik and Aruna begin offending Smita for knowing them. Smita protects herself intensely by saying, there's no damage in knowing those boys. It is additionally uncovered that Javed doesn't live with his parents. Ramanik then asks how he can meet his sister. Aruna gets shocked and Javed apologizes. Crowd tosses stones at the place of Ramanik. Javed reproves Ramanik saying, "Those are your kin." Ramanik attempts to safeguard himself. He likewise tells how his granddad was slaughtered by Muslim crowd not long after the parcel. Ramanik offers them milk. Javed, being in contemplation shouts, "It must feel great being the dominant part, they have full freedom to do whatever they like with them (Javed and Bobby). Ramanik, still thoughtful, clarifies how the contention began. There were gossipy tidbits that during the Rath Yatra of Hindus, a few Muslims tossed stones on the chariots that made the icons of God to fall and break into pieces and even Pujari was wounded to death. Smita accompanies pads for Bobby and Javed. Ramanik extends to him an employment opportunity at his material shop yet Smita cautions her dad from doing as such. When Ramanik asks about the issue, she uncovers that Javed was employed by a fear monger association and was subsequently ousted from his home. Javed denounces her for selling out her companion (as she guarantees Tasneem that she won't uncover the truth of Javed). Smita recognizes her error and, being stunned, flees. Javed gets incensed and hollers hot words. Ramanik furiously slaps Javed and Bobby hurries to quiet them down. Bobby at that point tells when they were youthful, Javed happened to contact a letter of his Hindu neighbor who had mishandled the previous gravely. Javed blew up and after certain days tossed bits of hamburger meat in his home. That individual went to Javed's home and manhandled him cruelly. Recounting to the story, Bobby includes that Ramanik's people group is incompletely liable for making him so on the grounds that preceding that episode, Javed was the legend of his region. Bobby and Javed choose to leave. Ramanik wanting to make Javed acknowledge his position at any expense undermines them by saying that he will call the police. Javed initial burst into the giggle and afterward advises that he was requested to murder the Pujari for the sake of Jihad. Ramanik is moved and calls Javed valiant. Smita comes and apologizes for uncovering him. Smita recommends taking the assistance of Bobby. Aruna being severe in her strict issues censures Smita for such a proposal and consequently both mother and little girl fall into a contention. Smita uncovered Aruna's visually impaired beliefs and difficulties.

Aruna being dumbfounded for the strange conduct of her little girl is very stunned. Smita, Bobby and Javed go out to bring water. Later Bobby turned into the life partner of Javed's sister Tasneem. In the interim, Hardika (Daksha) who was retaining how she was beaten by her significant other for visiting Zarine's home (as there emerged some contention between the two families), admonishes Javed and wishes that like her dad (who was slaughtered by Muslims) his sister ought to likewise endure. Ramanik demands his mom not to accuse them.

- Talking about narrative techniques used by Dattani in Final Solution it can be said that Dattani has used a fantastic device of presenting both present and past together in case of Daksha and Hardika both the names are of same persona, but Daksha is a fourteen years old young girl while Hardika is the caricature of same persona who is sixty years old in the present time. Dattani has also used chorus to narrate the story particularly the communal sentiments of both Hindu and Muslims.

Keywords

- Plot; the series of events which form the story of drama, a novel and a film, etc.
 - Communal; involving different groups of people in a community
 - Disharmony; lack of harmony or agreement
 - Stimulate; Encourage or arouse interest or enthusiasm in
- Characterization ; The certain or construction of a fictional character
- Cultural; Relating to the ideas, customs, and social behavior of a society.
- Partition (verb); Divide into parts
- Fanatic ; Filled with or expressing excessive zeal.
- Chorus; A group of singers in a play
- Communal; related to a religious group
- Hindu; a religious community of India who believes in Hinduism
- Integration; to unite with something
- Muslim; a religious community of India who believes in Islam
- Mob; a crowd of people
- Riot; conflict between two different communities on religious issues
- Final Solutions; ultimate remedy
- Memory; pertaining to past experiences
- Identity; the distinguishing character or personality of an individual
- Religion; a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices
- Rift; Division
- identity-crisis; a period of uncertainty and confusion in which a person's sense of identity becomes insecure, typically due to a change in their expected aims or role in society.
- Prejudice; partiality
- circuitous hatred; Indirect hatred
- solutions; answers
- Psychosis; Phobia
- Marginalized; Downgraded
- Vegetarianism:the practice of not eating meat or fish, especially for moral, religious, or health reasons: "vegetarianism, they claim, will save the world from hunger"
- Communalism; socialism

- Demonization; Condemnation, disapprobation - an expression of strong disapproval; pronouncing as wrong or morally culpable; "his uncompromising condemnation of racism"

Self Assessment

1. Hardika mentions which month in her diary:
 - A. March
 - B. August
 - C. January
 - D. None

2. In which event is the priest stabbed to death in *Final Solutions*?
 - A. Ganesh Procession
 - B. Rath Yatra
 - C. Aarti
 - D. None

3. _____ along with Bobby seeks refuge at Ramnik's house in *Final Solutions*.
 - A. Jamshed
 - B. Jatin
 - C. Javed
 - D. None

4. Who is banned from singing the songs of Noor Jahan in *Final Solutions*?
 - A. Aruna
 - B. Ramnik
 - C. Bobby
 - D. Hardika

5. Hari's family is against Daksha's singing in *Final Solutions*:
 - A. Film songs
 - B. Melodies
 - C. Both
 - D. None

6. In *Final Solutions*, Javed came to the village to create:
 - A. Peace
 - B. Celebration
 - C. Disturbance
 - D. None

7. The title *Final Solutions* is:
 - A. Paradoxical
 - B. Ironic

- C. Satirical
 - D. Barbaric
8. Aruna is a character in:
- A. Difficult Daughters
 - B. Naga mandala
 - C. Final Solutions
 - D. The Sari Shop
9. Who recognizes Javed as the brother of Tasneem in *Final Solutions*:
- A. Smita
 - B. Ramnik
 - C. Daksha
 - D. Aruna
10. Who warned Smita not to trust Javed in *Final Solutions*:
- A. Daksha
 - B. Aruna
 - C. Tasneem
 - D. None
11. In *Final Solutions*, Smita falls in love with:
- A. Javed
 - B. Bobby
 - C. Hari
 - D. None
12. Who exposes Javed to Ramnik in *Final Solutions*:
- A. Tasneem
 - B. Smita
 - C. Aruna
 - D. Daksha
13. Mahesh Dattani writes plays on:
- A. Social issues
 - B. Gender Discrimination
 - C. Communal riots
 - D. None
14. Dance Like a Man is written by:
- A. Manju Kapur
 - B. Girish Karnad
 - C. Rupa Bajwa
 - D. Mahesh Dattani

15. Mahesh Dattani did his schooling from:

- A. Baldwin Boys High School
- B. St Lawrence High School
- C. St Stephens High School
- D. St Xavier School

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. A | 2. B | 3. C | 4. D | 5. A |
| 6. C | 7. B | 8. C | 9. A | 10. C |
| 11. B | 12. B | 13. A | 14. D | 15. A |

Review Question

1. Discuss the plot of *Final Solution* in your words.
2. What is the role of Chorus in the play? Supply illustrations in support of your answer.
3. What are different narrative techniques used by Dattani in the play *Final Solution*?
4. Justify the title of the Play *Final Solution*.
5. Supply the act wise summary of the play *Final Solution*.
6. Discuss Dattani as a post colonial Indian Dramatist.
7. What do you mean by Communal Disharmony? Discuss the cause of communal disharmony in the play *Final Solution*.
8. What is the climax of the play? elucidate in detail.



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Unit 13: Girish Karnad; Nagamandala

CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

13.1 Thematic Analysis

13.2 Narrative Technique

Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

Answers for Self Assessment

Review Questions

Further Reading

Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- Explore vibrant picture of Indian Society
- Understand the play's contemporary relevance with today's male-dominated society
- Examine the misery of a newly married bride explore the narrative technique
- Understand the structure of the play
- Examine the technical elements of the play

Introduction

Girish Karnad, a prominent Indian-English dramatist, is the author of the play Naga-Mandala. Karnad learned about Kannada mythology from his tutor, Professor A. K. Ramanujan, who inspired the play. Girish Karnad is one of the most eminent figures in the chronology of Indian dramatists, who has clamored through his extraordinary endeavor. He is not only a thespian, but a play writer and a filmmaker. He is reckoned as the doyen of concurrent Indian theater. Most of his plays are a credible introspection of social predicaments and ways to reconcile with them. He dauntlessly portrayed the municipal stigmas, raising his voice against them exceptionally. His plays mostly encompass political, democratic, and economic issues. He even subsisted against hot topics like patchy and sexual assaults. His crusade is ingrained in Indian mythology and yore. He is an ambassador of legalism and modernity. He indeed has proved his revolutionary and insurgent thoughts by his erudite works. He incredibly utilizes folktales, fallacies, and ancient parables to convey emotions linked with human life.

Nag mandala is one of the unprecedented plays by Girish Karnad in which he amazingly exposes a sarcastic variety of male chauvinism. He raises cognition against the daily intimidation females have to confront in a patriarchal population. He denies the concepts of gender hegemony and resists male supremacy (which indeed is very monopolized in Asian civilizations) infidelity, and orthodox practices. Nag mandala is based on fidelity tales. These folktales and lore together forge a domestic drama that aspires to liberation and empowerment of women.

Characters of the play

Appanna (a spoiled male who entertains his wife miserably).

Rani (wife of Appanna).

Naag (a black cobra, which can revamp to human morphology).

The play is founded in a pastoral setting and the anecdote mainly revolves around the life of Rani, who is a trivial Asian woman who was walked down the aisle by her parents, without her coalition, to an affluent man named Appanna. Rani, a naive virtue, goes to Appanna's house, yearning for a joyous and content life, as every woman aspires. But the circumstances she endures are despicable. Her husband, an orthodox character, who surmises in masculine preeminence, locks her on the first night of their nuptials and leaves to see his paramour. This intimidation and coercion become a daily routine in Rani's vitality, which condones this as her felicity. As Rani's sentimental and carnal longings aren't met, she envies for an eagle, which might carry her to Appanna's life, giving her affection that she invariably had strived for. Despite her needs, she restrained her urges and stayed serene. As a scapegoat of radical solitude and subjugation, she stumbles upon Kurudava, who bestows her an enchanted plant, which eventually will provoke Appanna to love her, stimulating him to disregard the mistress. While cooking this magical plant, Rani discovers the red pigment that it develops and she consequently disposes of it. However, a Naag glances at it and devours the potion, ultimately stumbling in love with Rani. At night Naag alters into Appanna and raves her protracted hairs, eavesdropping to her long tales, and filling her venereal desires. Being enchanted by the love of Naag, she falls for Appanna. However, she was flabbergasted at the disparity in the demeanor of Appanna day and night. But being a dame, she never implores him. Soon Rani is parturient. However, her husband declares her a whore, repudiating that he's the father. He snatches her to the town lets panchayat for an abstinence test to prove her celibacy. Her hand is plopped in a serpent pit (if virtuous, the snake won't poison her but if culpable of infidelity, she would be slain by venom). As soon as Rani puts her hand, the snake (it was the same Naag who was devoted to Rani) wiles to her shoulder. The panchayat, stunned by the panorama, declares Rani not only innocuous but also a Divinity as well. Her husband Appanna also comprehends her deity and impetrates for her exoneration. The play concludes with the rectification of Rani with Appanna and the suicide of Naag on seeing their reconciliation. The play Naag Mandala amazingly depicts the detention and exploitation of women in a patriarchal society. He also disparages the idea of virginity tests, raising the flags for the empowerment of women. The play incredibly sheds light on dilemmas females have to encounter in a patriarchal society.

The protagonist of the play is Rani (meaning "queen" to her parents) who is married to a wealthy villager, Appanna (a common name). Appanna, a male-chauvinist, ignores Rani and is unconcerned about her desires and feelings. He keeps her hidden and spends the nights with a concubine. Kurudavva, a blind woman, gives Rani the love potion in order for Appanna to fall in love with Rani. Because Appanna only comes to the house during the day, Rani decides to mix the potion with the food and serve it to him. But she is afraid of the potion's red colour and pours it on an anthill. The Naga (Cobra) then drinks it and falls in love with Rani. He enters the house through the drain and sleeps with Rani as Appanna. Rani is unaware of Naga's disguise. She can't tell the difference between Appanna's rude behaviour at lunch and Naga's caressing at night.

Appanna is enraged when Rani becomes pregnant. He drags Rani to the elders of the village. The village elders, who remain silent and never raise their voices in protest of Appanna's extramarital affair, force Rani to go through the ordeal of proving her innocence by catching a hot red iron bar or a cobra from the anthill. Rani chooses to go through the trial of catching the cobra on the advice of Naga (as Appanna).

The cobra slides above her shoulders and spreads its hood like an umbrella over her head, much to the surprise of the elders. Rani is declared a goddess by the village elders. Appanna's emotions are obvious, and he is aware that he has never slept with Rani. He starts to doubt his own sanity. "What should I do?" Is the entire world conspiring against me? Have I sinned so much that Nature should mock me? ... Any miracle can make her a goddess. But I do!" (Nāga: 60)

The story has three endings. The author narrator considers the first ending of the story, in which Appanna begins to love Rani while forgetting his concubine, to be loose.

The second ending is offered by the story's narrator. Naga sacrifices himself for Rani's love after Rani realises she had slept with both Appanna and Naga. He dies by hiding in Rani's hair. The Flames, on the other hand, are not pleased with the cobra's demise. The third ending is a rehash of the previous two. The Naga falls from Rani's hair as she and Appanna reappear. Appanna intends to kill it, but Rani saves it by requesting that it hide in her hair and informing Appanna that the snake has escaped.

Outline of the play

The plot of the play is centered around Rani, one of the main characters in the play Nagamandala, was given the name 'Queen' by her parents because she was considered extremely valuable. But

they had no idea that after her marriage, she would be treated as anything but a Queen. She married Appanna, a brute who used to lock his wife up like a caged bird. He did this because he didn't want anyone talking to her. This could be interpreted as overprotectiveness or possessiveness. He imprisons someone who is so innocent, and he also engages in adultery, which many people in their village are aware of. Forcibly confining Rani in her own home would have been a traumatic experience for her.

Rani's well-wisher, Kurudavva, reveals to her that her husband has a concubine, whom she believes has bewitched him. She allegedly assumes and attributes Appanna's infatuation solely to the bazaar woman, which is an unjust assumption because, if the scenario is examined without prejudice or bias, we see that both are equally at fault. Such assumptions, that it is a woman's fault that they attract men to themselves without the man's fault, or where the woman usually bears the brunt of the matter, are quite common to see. This demonstrates the painful double standards and gender biasness of society.

Appanna and his doppelganger Naga had completely different personalities, and their interactions with Rani were markedly different. They were similar in one way, aside from physical appearance: they both controlled and subjugated Rani. Naga was a devoted lover, but he imposed many restrictions on Rani's life, confining her to her room to prevent Rani from discovering his true identity. He told her, "At night, wait for me here in this room. When I come and go at night, don't go out of this room, don't look out of the window- whatever the reason. And don't ask me why." (Karnad 45) He didn't think it was necessary to explain his strange demands to her because it was expected of her as a wife to obey him without question or opposition. He never gave her the opportunity to choose because he always made the decision for her. Rani couldn't influence or control him because he was dressed as the man of the house. Naga bound Rani to the house, but he was free to come and go as he pleased. As a result, Naga is exhibiting double standards.

Appanna later attacked Rani and attempted to kill her after learning of her pregnancy. He would have seriously injured her if Naga hadn't intervened in time. Appanna was enraged by her infidelity, but he had forgotten about his betrayal of her since the first day of their marriage. "Aren't you ashamed to admit it, you harlot? "I locked you in, and yet you managed to find a lover!" (Karnad 52) He had no qualms about his betrayal while attacking the helpless woman. To his mind, she committed an unforgivable sin, but he is guiltless, and thus he displayed extreme hypocrisy through his rash actions.

Appanna's frequent visits to his concubine were common knowledge throughout the community. No one questioned Appanna's infidelity, though. When Appanna reported Rani's infidelity to the village elders, they resolved to test her chastity and punish her if she was discovered to be unfaithful. The village elders describe the virginity tests undergone by other women accused of adultery with their husbands: "The traditional test in our Village Court has been to take the oath while holding a red-hot iron in your hand," the village elders say of other women accused of betraying their husbands. The accused has occasionally chosen to immerse his hand in boiling oil." (Karnad 55) The village elders elected to ignore the man's infidelity but judged the woman's infidelity to be a horrific crime. Women were required to adhere to rigorous chastity codes, whereas men were free to participate in adultery. This double standard exhibited by the village elders is still prevalent in contemporary society.

The village elders awaited her examination and condemnation as an immoral lady with bated breath. They believed she had committed sin and demanded punishment. But when she survived the cobra test, which no woman had ever dared to do before her, they were stunned. Instantaneously, it became apparent that she possessed abilities and was not a typical woman. Due to their lack of knowledge, they hastily concluded that she was a goddess. "She is not a woman!" cried one of the elders. She is a Divine Being!" (Karnad 59) They even tried to convince the bewildered Appanna about his wife's divinity- "Elder I: Appanna, your wife is not an ordinary woman. She is a goddess incarnate. Don't grieve that you judged her wrongly and treated her very badly. That is how goddesses reveal themselves to the world. You were the chosen instrument for revealing their divinity." (Karnad 59)

The elders further demonstrated their hypocrisy by converting a woman they were prepared to condemn into a goddess deserving of devotion and reverence. In addition, they viewed Appanna's suspicion of infidelity as a way to demonstrate the Goddess' holiness. Previously, they had condemned her because they had greater control over her, but now she seemed to have hidden powers.

In *Naga-Mandala*, Girish Karnad incorporates Indian custom, myth, and folklore. In the context of cultural dilemmas and patriarchal ideology, the setting, themes, and plot all serve his intention of depicting the plight of an Indian woman and her ultimate struggle for freedom. In terms of people's beliefs, the play reveals an abundance of Indianness. The plight of the Writer/Author Narrator and his fear of death illustrate the decline of standards in Indian theatre and the need for its revival in terms of the production of quality plays.

13.1 Thematic Analysis

A woman and the Snake Myth;

The play *Naga-Mandala* based on a folktale involves a woman and a serpent, and this is interesting as the serpent forms an important ingredient in most folk narratives all over the world. Martin S. Day is of the opinion that snake myths are extensive all over the world, and are found in Brahmins, Buddhist and Lamenstic writing to name a few.

Strictly speaking, the play is a single focused narrative that does not have any interruptions. But the Kurudavva- Kappanna pair can be taken as compromising a rudimentary subplot. They form a part of the main plot and also have a story of their own. Kappanna's experiences help highlight Rani's own. Just like Rani, Kappanna has a mysterious person in his life but while Rani shows a better control over her unconscious, Kappanna, the unprepared victim, disappears leaving his mother blind, mad and forlorn. It is as if Kappanna's experience illustrates the difficulties a person would encounter if he indulges in a lot of daydreaming or has many wish- fulfilling dreams.

Karnad has proposed two endings to the play, the first toys with the permanent elimination of Naga and the second with his relegation into Rani's unconscious. But it is this second ending that closes the play and Karnad seems to imply that no woman, or no man for that matter, can exist in a fantasy- free world. So the Naga or Nagin in people's lives cannot be strangled or cremated (as suggested in the first ending) because at that time of crisis, such as the one explored in this play, the individual does need to look to the unconscious to fulfill the need generated by the reality of his/her condition. Rani's act of tying up of Naga in her tresses is a symbolic representation of this idea.

Though the events of the play are spread over a period of time, they are narrated in the course of one night. Moreover, the story and the flames, the active participants disappear and the listener introduced in the beginning is left alone once more. Thus *Naga-Mandala* depicts another plane of reality. The use of fantasy helps create a dreamy atmosphere.

Myth and folktale thus merge and come together and weave a rich tapestry of meaning that explores the modern predicament. Myth can never be dismissed as belonging to the past, because a great deal of its charm lies in its principal quality that of repeating itself. Thus the age- old myth reappears in disguised form to confront us. Through this form, Karnad has opened up a dialogue on certain key issues that have plagued mankind since primeval times; they are issues such as fidelity, the appropriateness of parental authority, and the tussle between the Apollonian and Dionysian approaches to life. No solutions are suggested since no one solution is possible, but the plays nevertheless include in the audience contemplation of these issues.

Cobra Motif

It is significant to note that the title of the play comes not from any human character, but from a snake Naga. The story of the cobra suggests that the play not merely dramatizes the folktales in modern interpretation, it also implies a deeper meaning at various levels. In Hindu mythology, the Naga represents several images. In South India, many houses have their own shrine which is often a grove reserved for snakes, consisting of trees, festooned with creepers, situated in a corner of the garden. Snakes are also the symbols of human maleness and strength. Nagas are sometimes portrayed as handsome men, or as half-man and half-snake, the top half using the torso of a man, the lower of a coiled snake.

Karnad in *Naga-Mandala* has made use of the folktales and the "mixing of human and non-human worlds" as a distancing device which brings in the element of alienation in the play. The folktale element of *Naga-Mandala* and the magical power which the cobra possesses remind us that we are watching a play. Moreover, the role of the man and the story is as the narrator-character. So, the play is interspersed with their analyses, observations and narrations which continually remind the spectator that he is only 'watching' a play.

No Emotional Identification

In Naga-Mandala, Karnad has rejected the value of emotional identification. According to him, "The energy of folk theatre comes from the fact that although it seems to uphold traditional values, of making them literally stand on their head. The various conventions the chorus, the mask, the seemingly unrelated comic episodes, the mixing of human and non-human worlds permit the simultaneous presentation of alternative points of view, of alternative attitudes to the central problem. Rani, in Naga-Mandala can be seen as a metaphor for the situation of a young girl in the bosom of a joint family where she sees her husband in two unconnected roles as a stranger during the day and as a lover at night. The empty house Rani is locked in could be the family she is married into.

Kurudavva, the blind woman, plays a significant part in Naga-Mandala, though the only way she is connected with the plot of the play is that the cobra falls in love with Rani because of the magical influence of the root given by Kurudavva to Rani. We can easily identify similarities between Goddess Kali of Hayavadana and Kurudavva in the sense that as Goddess Kali helps Padmini in relieving Devadatta and Kapila, in the same way, Kurudavva provides a solution to Rani's problem. But an error of destiny leads both of them and, subsequently, the entire story towards a literal disaster. Can we call this disaster a part of human destiny, or a result of human error, or owing to a thirst, is a matter of debate?

The Cobra as a Totem

In a Naga-Mandala, if the cobra is regarded as a totem possessing magical powers, the play is a folk drama. But if the Naga alludes to Rani's paramour, the play arouses our critical faculty members, set our mind to thought, and poses many problems. It leaves the audience to reflect on the efficacy of the social law which discriminates a woman from a man and which demands a wife's faithfulness even to her callous husband. Rani is required to undergo the trial by ordeal to prove her innocence. But Appanna can afford to indulge in adultery with impunity. Since neither Rani, nor Appanna, nor the cobra is chaste, we may ponder over the idea that this world which is dominated by 'compromise' happiness, is incompatible with purity.

It uncovers the injustice of the patriarchal moral code which demands the faithfulness of a woman to her husband but not the faithfulness of a man to his wife. The name Appanna means 'any man' and it is a wry comment on any man who tries to enforce chastity on his wife, while he himself indulges in extra-marital relationships. Appanna and Naga the two faces of one man, one seen at day, the other at night symbolize the exploitation and double standards of man, while Rani is the symbol of a woman's eternal endurance of this oppression.

Chorus and Music

The notable features of this drama are the use of a chorus and music. In Naga-Mandala all the songs are sung by the flames. At night the man hears female voices outside the temple. He hides himself behind a pillar. Several flames enter the temple, giggling, talking to each other in female voices. The Man, addressing the audience, says; "I had heard that when lamps are put out in the village, the females gather in some remote place and spend the night together, gossiping. So this is where they gather! Here, the flames are the metaphors of the women of the village who have gathered at this time of night to tell tales and sing songs. The story of the flames comments on the paradoxical nature of oral tales in general; they have an existence of their own, they are independent of the teller and yet live only when they are passed on from the possessor of the tale to the listener. Similarly the status of a tale becomes akin to that of a daughter, for traditionally a daughter too is not meant to be kept at home too long but has to be passed on.

Shape Shifting

Shape shifting is another device very cleverly and effectively used by Karnad. Shape Shifting in Karnad is not merely a central structural strategy but a means of reviving the ancient and sacred function of drama as ritual. Naga-Mandala has several examples of shape shifting. The main one is the cobra assuming the form of Appanna to make love to Rani. Earlier, the flames take on human shapes to gossip at the temple after they have been 'put out' in the houses. In the new flame's story of the old woman, who knew a story and a song, the story becomes a young woman and the song a sari. Wearing a sari, the story walks out of the old woman's house. The point is that stories must not be stingily confined to oneself as the old woman did, but shared. As flame 1 puts it, "So if you try to gag one story, another happens." And later, the woman Rani, after her cobra ordeal, is apotheosized into a living goddess, an extraordinary woman.

13.2 Narrative Technique

Girish Karnad is contemporary Indian Dramatist who is regarded as a pillar among great writers. His plays deal with both ancient and modern themes and the techniques for narrating the plot and weaving the story is also amazing. In the Nagamandala, Karnad has used following narrative techniques which make it an ever-popular play.

A Therapeutic Device

Girish Karnad explains the reason behind the 'nature' of the drama; whereas in public our middle-class has accepted the western bourgeois notions of secularism, egalitarianism, and individual merit, while at home it remained committed to the traditional loyalties of caste, family, and religion. He further says; "only a society which is honest enough to face the implications of this division squarely could produce meaningful drama of it.

Even Karnad seems to be torn between his western mind and his affinity towards his religion, his mythology, which is very well reflected in Naga-Mandala, as well as in Hayavadana. It presses upon the mind of the reader that he has written the plays not as a matter of self-clarification alone, but as a therapeutic device also. In the plays he is seized with the theme of incompleteness, as he makes it explicit. He seeks to exercise himself of this demon of incompleteness by dramatizing the predicament, which is also the predicament of the class to which he belongs.

It is obvious that in Naga-Mandala Karnad has cut below the surface to reveal the burning core of mental or spiritual reality. The main concern of the playwright here becomes centered on human beings in combination, interacting, entering into one another's lives, becoming part of one another. What Karnad seems to be primarily interested in is a real contact, a real meaning of the selves, depending on mutual knowledge. The abandonment of realism in this play takes us to a world that appears to be weird and even metaphysical. The primarily psychological treatment of character seems to embody a philosophy of life which emphasizes that events have meaning only in relation to the characters. And yet there is a patterning of human affairs by an agency which remains inscrutable. Karnad here presents a world where things happen inexplicably, and the schemes and intentions of people do not seem to control the action.

Illusion of Reality

Though Karnad does not fully exploit the Brechtian artifice of Epic theatre in Naga-Mandala, he claims that the play strikes a departure from the emotion-based world of traditional values. He observes; "The theatrical conventions Brecht was reacting against character as a psychological construct providing a focus for emotional identification, the willing- suspension -of disbelief syndrome, the notion of a unified spectacle was never a part of the traditional Indian theatre. There was therefore no question of arriving at an 'alienation' effect by using Brechtian artifice. What did he was to sensitize us to the potentialities of non-naturalistic techniques available in our own theatre".

Role of the Narrator

In an Epic theatre there are scenes of narration and commentary. In it a neutral area near the wings are occupied by the narrator character, which analyses the action or comments on it. Epic theatre presents a series of loosely connected episodes in a simple way and in a kind of linear narration. It dispenses with the tradition of "Dramatic" excitement and uses songs as an integral element. Neither the play nor the stage production maintain any consistent illusion to actuality. On the contrary such illusion is to be destroyed by fragmentation of scenes and settings and by the interruption of action. According to Brecht this new technique and style of production may not be completed and that experiments must continue.

Play within the play

Naga-Mandala, a play within the play, begins with the prologue. The characters of the prologue are the narrator-characters of the play proper, and their story constitutes the sub-plot of the play. The setting of the prologue is the inner sanctum of a ruined temple. A man, in a "morose stance", is sitting in the temple. He is sad because a mendicant has told him, "you must keep awake at least one whole night this month. If you can do that, you will live. If not, you will die on the last night of the month". The man has been dozing off every night, and tonight is the last night of the month. "His guilt is that he has "written plays", says the mendicant, and thereby caused so many good

people "to fall asleep twisted in miserable chairs". Hence there is "the curse of death" on him. He swears that if he survives tonight, he will "abjure all story-telling, all play-acting".

Chorus and Music

The notable features of epic drama are the use of a chorus and music. In Naga- Mandala all the songs are sung by the flames. At this time of night, the man hears female voices outside the temple. He hides himself behind a pillar. Several flames enter the temple, giggling, talking to each other in female voices. The man, addressing the audience says; "I had heard that when lamps are put out in the village, the flames gather in some remote place and spend the night together, gossiping. So this where they gather!" Here the flames are metaphors of the women of the village who have gathered at this time of night to tell tales and songs.

There also enters the story, in the form of a woman dressed in a new, colorful sari. She goes and sits in a corner, and the flames gather around her to listen to her. The man is also keen to listen to her, because he does not want to doze off this night in order to remain alive. "Throughout the rest of the play, the man and the story remain on the stage. The flames too listen to attentively though from a distance". In the rest of the play the man and the story play the part of the narrator-characters. The play is interspersed with their analyses, observations and narrations which continually remind the spectator that he is only watching a play.

Rani's problem

Rani's problem in Appanna's house could be the problem of any bride in a Hindu family. Appanna treats Rani very rudely. He comes home only for his lunch, locks the house from outside and goes away. Rani tells Appanna that she feels frightened alone at night, but he pays no attention to her. The story, in her brief speech, narrates, "And so the days rolled by". Thus the play offers a study in the patriarchal structures of the traditional families. Karnad says; "The position of Rani in the story of Naga-Mandala, for instance, can be seen as a metaphor for the situation of a young girl in the bosom of a joint family where she sees her husband in two unconnected roles as a stranger during the day and as lover at night. The empty house Rani is locked in could be the family she is married into".

Linear Narration

As in an Epic theatre, so in Naga- Mandala there are loosely connected episodes in a kind of linear narration. Though Kurudavva, the blind woman, plays a significant part in Naga- Mandala, her marriage to a boy distantly related to her, her intense love for her son, Kappanna, and her subsequent insanity form the sub-plot of the play. The only way in which Kurudavva is connected with the plot of the play is that the cobra falls in love with Rani because of the magical influence of the root given by Kurudavva to Rani. Kurudavva has been the best friend of Appanna's mother. Kurudavva feels very much concerned for Rani's miserable plight that Appanna has "got himself a bride and he still goes after that harlot? She gives Rani the piece of a root, which was given to her by a mendicant, saying, "Take it! Grind it into a nice paste and feed it to your husband. And watch the results.

Naga and Rani

The events which take place in Act two may be seen both from the temporal as well as the spiritual points of view. Rani is sleeping in her bedroom. Naga moves nearer her and caresses her. Rani, not recognizing Naga disguised as Appanna, submits to Naga's advances. Naga tells Rani that he wants her to be fresh and bright when he comes home every night from now on. He spends the night with her in her bed, and as it dawns he goes to the bathroom, turns into his original self and slithers away. In the morning Appanna comes, unlocks the door, steps in, has his lunch and goes away. It goes on like this for many days.

Thus it may be seen that there is a dichotomy in the Naga's relationship with Rani. On the supernatural level the cobra is a totem for the Hindus. It falls in love with Rani, and it takes the human shape and form in order to extend happiness to her. But on the temporal level the cobra alludes to a lover who is enthralled by Rani's beauty and visits her in the night. Rani is puzzled to think as to whether she has been dreaming or she has gone mad. The diametrically opposed behavior of Naga and Appanna confound her.

Exotic Love

In spite of the tangible proofs that Naga is not Appanna, it is not clear in the play whether Rani at all discovers the reality. In Act two the love of the Naga and Appanna is presented in an exotic

manner when they embrace and dance as the flames surround them and sing. One day as the Naga and Rani are lying together on the bed, Rani tells the Naga that she is pregnant. She is very happy because she feels that all her anxieties are over. Now she has the definite evidence to prove that she has not been fantasizing. But the news does not make the Naga happy and he asks her to keep it a secret as long as possible. The audience is aware of the dramatic irony in the play, when Rani says to the Naga in an agony.

Rani's Trial

The scene of Rani's trial reminds us of Sita's trial in the Ramayana, and it shows its affinities with the traditional Indian values. The traditional test in the Village court has been to take the oath while holding a red-hot iron in the hand. But Rani insists, "I must swear by the king cobra". She steps up to the ant-hill, plunges her hands into it.

The cobra does not bite Rani. Instead it slides up her shoulders, spreads its hood like an umbrella over her head, moves over her shoulder like a garland, and then slips back into the ant-hill. There are hosannas and cheers from the crowd. The elders fall at her feet and the crowd surges forward to prostrate itself before her. The couple, being seated in a palanquin, is taken in a procession to their house. The Elders tell Appanna that his wife is a goddess incarnate, and that he should spend the rest of his life in her service. All disperse, except Rani and Appanna. Appanna falls at her feet and begs her forgiveness. Rani gently takes him in her arms.

The Helpful Kurudavva

One day Kurudavva, an intimate friend of Appanna's mother, comes to Rani. Since she is blind and old, she is brought by Kappanna, her son. She talks to Rani and feels her through the window. She learns that Appanna still visits his concubine though he has a beautiful wife. So she gives Rani a piece of aphrodisiac root and instructs her to grind the root and mix it in Appanna's food. Rani for the first time has someone to speak to her sympathetically and moreover she is granted a miraculous thing to solve her problem. So she feels very happy. When Appanna comes, Kurudavva expresses her wish to talk to Rani. He says; "She would not talk to anyone. And no need to talk to her". Later he brings a watch-dog to prevent people from talking to his wife. It is clear that Appanna does not want Rani to come into contact with other people and to know more. While he enjoys extra-marital sex, he does not allow her to enjoy even the affection of others. He mercilessly keeps her starved of affection and love which are indispensable for the growth and sustenance of the human mind. This solitary confinement of Rani by Appanna in the house symbolizes the chastity belt of the middle ages, the reduction of women's talents to house work and the exclusion of women from enlightenment and enjoyment.

Rani mixes the paste of the aphrodisiac root in the curry. As the curry turns red and looks sinister, she throws it on the ant-hill in front of the house. Then Appanna slaps her so hard that she collapses onto the floor. "There is not a trace of anger in anything he does. Just cold contempt". Rani as a typical wife does not want to cause her husband any harm which she fears will be caused by the root though her husband has been treating her badly since she came. Appanna, as a typical husband, punishes her severely even for a small thing like her going out though she has been serving him without any grudge since he brought her. He as a male chauvinist thinks he has a right to do whatever he likes and whatever he does is always right. He is intensely interested in the feelings of others. Of course he, like many men who are slaves of patriarchal culture, is only playing the role expected of him. He will be so until somebody or something opens his eyes to reality.

Summary

- "Nagamandala" is a ceremonial (cobra worship) practiced in the southern Karnataka coastal areas. In 1988, the play was published. The legendary implications and folklore traditions utilised by Girish Karnad in the play assist the audience in comprehending the societal intricacies, evils, and the protagonist's desire for emancipation and fulfillment. The play has a contemporary outlook and mood. The play is also referred to as "Story Theatre." Girish Karnad, a skilled story, employs the technique of story within a story. The plot of Naga-Mandala has four narrative levels. At the first level, the Author who commits the crime of writing boring plays that put the audience to sleep is sentenced to stay awake all night. The Flames (personified) of the village gather at the ruined temple where the Author is wailing on

the second level and continue to gossip. At the third level, the Flame who is the latecomer knows the story but refuses to share it with others, and the story escapes from her mouth while she is sleeping, becomes the Story narrator. The Story tells the story of Rani, who is the central character in the plot. The structure of the temple and the relationships between the characters, which form upward and inward triangles, serve as the foundation for the entire Naga-Mandala. The temple represents Mandala and the snake represents vital energy. Rani's relationship with the Naga alludes to Rani's liberation and fulfillment from the clutches of patriarchy from a feminine standpoint.

- Girish Karnad's play 'Nagamandala as a split personality and Identity Crisis' interprets the ancient theme in modern context. Like Yayati, the common man of today is grouped in the darkness of material and sensual pleasures. He finds himself in a world in which old spiritual values have been entirely swept away and the new spiritual values are yet to be discovered. Karnad's interpretation of the old myth on the exchange of ages between father and son puzzled and angered conventional critics, but the enlightened readers and critics appreciated it for its modernity. One theme is about women's independence. Women should not be dependent on their husbands. They should not follow what their husbands want them to do. Women should not be treated like slaves. This story shows how a woman can live on her own and be independent. Another theme is the love between a husband and a wife. Rani is very attached to Nagamandala. He is the only one who is able to understand her feelings. He is very attached to her and his love for her never dies. But Rani's love for him is different from Nagamandala's love for him. The way Nagamandala loves Rani is by being the only one who can understand her feelings. Nagamandala does not love Rani because of any physical beauty or charm of hers. In the beginning of the film, Rani was a very beautiful girl. As time passes by, her beauty starts fading away. But Rani does not accept it. She says that she has always been beautiful and will always be beautiful. Her beauty is not due to any external factors. It is her inner beauty that is reflected on her face. The play has some other very prominent themes like A woman and the Snake Myth; Cobra Motif; No Emotional Identification; The Cobra as a Totem; Chorus and Music; Shape Shifting etc.

Keywords

1. Harlot: A woman who has many casual sexual encounters or relationships.
2. Heinous: (of a person or wrongful act, especially a crime) utterly odious or wicked.
3. Traditional: Existing in or as part of a tradition; long-established.
4. Metaphor: A thing regarded as representative or symbolic of something else.
5. Gallivant: Go around from one place to another in the pursuit of pleasure or entertainment.

Self Assessment

1. Where does Rani pour the curry in which she mixed the magical root?
 - A. Outside of the house
 - B. Inside of the kitchen
 - C. Into the ant-hill
 - D. None of the above
2. Cobra enters the house through ----?

- A. The drain
 - B. The window
 - C. The door
 - D. All of the above
3. Which magical root is used by Rani to make curry?
- A. Large
 - B. Small
 - C. Medium
 - D. None of the above
4. Who gets ensnared towards Rani with the magical power of the roots?
- A. Cobra
 - B. Lion
 - C. Tiger
 - D. All of the above
5. Who said; " I am not a stag. I am a prince?"
- A. Kappanna
 - B. Appanna
 - C. Rani
 - D. All of the above
6. The Naga assumes the shape of ----?
- A. Kappanna
 - B. Kurudavva
 - C. Appanna
 - D. All of the above
7. Which ordeal proves the chastity of Rani?
- A. Lion ordeal
 - B. Snake ordeal
 - C. Tiger ordeal
 - D. All of the above
8. Who said " I must be going mad --?"
- A. Rani
 - B. Appanna
 - C. Kappanna
 - D. Kurudavva
9. Who is exhorted to spend the rest of his life in Rani's service?

-
- A. Appanna
B. Naga
C. Kurudavva
D. All of the above
10. How does 'Nagamandala' ends?
A. Appanna killed Rani
B. Naga killed Rani
C. Appanna accepts the pregnant Rani
D. None of the above
11. Who advised Rani for a snake ordeal?
A. Naga
B. Appanna
C. Kappanna
D. None of the above
12. The theme which we can see in most of Karnad's plays?
A. Revenge
B. Dignity
C. Gender
D. All of the above
13. The flames assembled in the temple too?
A. Gossip
B. Power
C. Imagination
D. None of the above
14. Which root was used by Kurudavva to fulfill her love?
A. Large
B. Medium
C. Small
D. All of the above
15. A play that deals with the Narcissism of the self-involved hero who undergoes a test, put to him by the wife in order to survive?
A. Hayavadana
B. Yayati
C. Nagamandala
D. All of the above

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 2. A | 3. A | 4. A | 5. B |
| 6. C | 7. B | 8. A | 9. A | 10. C |
| 11. A | 12. C | 13. A | 14. B | 15. C |

Review Questions

1. Why does Appanna bring a watchdog?
2. What happens to the curry when Rani pours the paste into it?
3. Where does Appanna go away from his house?
4. What does Rani do with the curry?
5. Who is the beautiful woman in the colorful sari who enters the temple at the beginning of the play?

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Unit 14 Girish Karnad; Nagamandala

CONTENTS

Objectives

Introduction

14.1 Plot Summary

14.2 Character Analysis

Summary

Keywords

Self Assessment

Answers for Self Assessment

Review Questions

Further Reading

Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- Explore the life and works of Girish Karnad
- Understand the plot of the play Nagamandala
- Examine the blend of history and myth
- Explore the characters of Nagamandala
- Understand how myth takes over reality
- Examine the life of a submissive rural Indian woman

Introduction

Girish Karnad, a prominent Indian-English dramatist, is the author of the play Naga-Mandala. Karnad learned about Kannada mythology from his tutor, Professor A. K. Ramanujan, who inspired the play. Girish Karnad was one of India's most prominent intellectuals. He is difficult to categorize because he was active in numerous cultural arenas—he was a writer and a playwright, an actor, a screenwriter, and a director.

He was born on May 19, 1938 in Matheran, Bombay Presidency (now Maharashtra), India to middle-class parents. When he was fourteen, the family moved to Dharwad in Karnataka, south India. There he attended Karnataka University and began studying Yakshagana theater. Karnad then attended Oxford University, where he was a Rhodes Scholar studying politics, economics, and philosophy. While at Oxford he wrote his first play, *Yayati* (1961). His second play was *Tughlaq* (1964), one of his best-known works. His plays were written in the south Indian language of Kannada, and translated into English and other Indian languages. Karnad often did the translations into English himself.

Having since moved back to India from England, Karnad made his foray into the film world in 1970 with *Samskara*, writing the screenplay and playing the lead role. That film won the Golden Lotus Award, the national prize for Kannada cinema. Even as he worked in film, he kept writing plays, such as *Hayavadana* (1971), *Nagamandala* (1988), and *Agni Mattu Male* (1995), and created a one-act radio drama, *Ma Nisada* (1964). Karnad received numerous awards during his lifetime. In 1974, he was awarded the Padma Shri, a top civilian honor. In 1992, he won the Padma Bhushan for his contributions to the arts. And in 1998, he was awarded the Jnanpith Award, which is India's most prestigious literary award. In the late 1990s and 2000s, he primarily focused on film, directing

movies like *Kanooru Heggadithi* (1999) and acting in *Iqbal* (2005) and *Life Goes On* (2009). His final literary work, *Rakshasa-Tangadi*, was published in 2018.

His other positions included: Director of the Film and Television Institute of India in Pune (1974-5), President of the Karnataka Nataka Akademi (1976-8), Visiting Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at the University of Chicago (1987-8), Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akademi in New Delhi (1988-93), Fellow of the Sangeet Natak Akademi (1994), and Director of the Nehru Centre, High Commission of India, in London. Karnad died on June 10, 2019. His *Guardian* obituary states, "A secularist who condemned the rise of nationalism in India, he took advantage of his position to campaign for the rights of the LGBT community, women, the Dalit caste and religious minorities. He was critical of the 2002 Gujarat riots which saw the murder of many Muslims by Hindus when the current prime minister, Narendra Modi, was chief minister of Gujarat. Karnad continued to be critical of Modi after his election and in recent years had spoken out against the house arrests of activists by the government across the country, and of the murders of prominent journalists."

"Girish Karnad has emerged as the most significant playwright of post-independence Indian literature", according to the Indian critic P. Dhanavel. This critic emphasizes Karnad's humanism, derived mainly from his profound concern for the "oppressed" and the "downtrodden", his compulsive return to and reinterpretation of the mythical past and oral tradition, and his "determined demystification of the dominant beliefs and practices" (2000: 16). Other Indian critics, in their analysis of contemporary Indian theatre, focus on its ambivalent relationship both to its classical and colonial past, and to the contemporary problems of Indian society. Indeed, Karnad has felt challenged by the tension that exists nowadays between these two realities in India, the traditional and the modern, and has thrived in developing a credible style of social realism.

Speaking of his own work, in the introduction to *Three Plays: Nāga-Mandala, Hayavadana, Tughlaq*, the playwright tells us how the cultural tensions which remained dissembled up to the moment of India's independence visibly surfaced afterwards and required authors to deal with those tensions openly (1999: 3). In each of his plays the tension caused by the drama's major conflict progressively disappears, and in the case of *Nāga-Mandala* different levels of knowledge are superimposed and different theatrical techniques are used, which permit us to discover, or at least surmise, the possibility of transcending the conflict to achieve wholeness.

As a playwright, he thus combines conventional and subversive modes, as is clear in *Nāga-Mandala*. This play is labeled as "story theater", that is, theater whose action is based on folk stories. Karnad found his source of inspiration for this play in stories that he heard from the poet and academic A.K. Ramanujan. Karnad explains that this type of story is told by women while they feed children in the kitchen, but that very often these stories serve as a parallel system of communication among the women in the family (*Nāga*: 16-17). Consequently, the purpose of this analysis is to discover the meaning conveyed by the protagonist of the story and to study the way in which the author structures the play and presents and solves the conflicts.

The second and third narrative levels contain magical elements. The second is formed by the gossip-type tales that a group of personified flames tell each other when they gather at night, after their work has ended. The flames choose to go to the same ruined temple where the Author is bewailing his plight. When he sees them arrive, he hides behind a column from where he closely follows their stories. On the third narrative level, there is the tale told by one of the flames who wants to be forgiven for arriving late. Her singularised tale is about a woman who knew a beautiful story but refused to tell it and share it with other people. One day, that story, taking advantage of the fact that the woman was sleeping with her mouth open, escapes and is transformed into a young lady. And the song that accompanies it turns into her beautiful sari. The story thus personified on the fourth narrative level relates the life of Rani, the main character of *Nāga-Mandala*. The need for the story to escape illustrates the paradoxical nature of oral tradition, according to Karnad. Stories are autonomous and independent of the person who tells them, although they live by being told and shared (*Nāga*: 17).

The moment when the main story, Rani's, begins is interestingly complex from the point of view of structure, because there is interaction between the narrator of this story, the personified story, and the narrators of the previous stories, the unfortunate Author and the flames. The Author-narrator of the first level, who has been listening to the second and third narrative levels, establishes a dialogue with the story-narrator of the third level and he suggests a name for the main masculine character in the central story, Appana, which means "any man". Furthermore, they reach an agreement by which the Author promises to retell the story, thus keeping it alive, if

it is interesting enough to keep him awake for the whole night, which would amount to saving his life.

“Nagamandala” is a ceremonial (cobra worship) practiced in the southern Karnataka coastal areas. In 1988, the play was published. The legendary implications and folklore traditions utilized by Girish Karnad in the play assist the audience in comprehending the societal intricacies, evils, and the protagonist’s desire for emancipation and fulfillment. The play has a contemporary outlook and mood.

The play is also referred to as “Story Theatre.” Girish Karnad, a skilled story writer, employs the technique of story within a story. The plot of Naga-Mandala has four narrative levels. At the first level, the Author who commits the crime of writing boring plays that put the audience to sleep is sentenced to stay awake all night. The Flames (personified) of the village gather at the ruined temple where the Author is wailing on the second level and continue to gossip. At the third level, the Flame who is the latecomer knows the story but refuses to share it with others, and the story escapes from her mouth while she is sleeping, becomes the Story narrator. The Story tells the story of Rani, who is the central character in the plot. The structure of the temple and the relationships between the characters, which form upward and inward triangles, serve as the foundation for the entire Naga-Mandala. The temple represents Mandala and the snake represents vital energy. Rani’s relationship with the Naga alludes to Rani’s liberation and fulfillment from the clutches of patriarchy from a feminine standpoint.

14.1 Plot Summary

Prologue

The scene is set in the holy place inside a temple which is in ruins. The idol that used to be worshiped at one time is broken. So one can make out the god or goddess that used to be worshiped there long ago. It is night and the rays of the moon filter through the cracks in the doors and walls of the dark temple.

There is a man sitting in the temple. After a long silence, he opens his eyes wide and then closes them. He uses his finger to open his eyelids and goes back to his gloomy posture.

The Prophecy

He yawns involuntarily, reacts to the yawn by shaking his head violently and then turns to address the audience. He says that he may be dead within the next few hours. After a long pause, he clarifies that he is not talking of acting like a dead person; he might actually die there on the stage in front of the audience. A beggar had once told him to keep awake at least one whole night in a month. If he could do that, only then will he live. If he could not, he would die on the last night of the month. He had laughed out loud at the beggar’s prophecy and thought that it would be easy to keep fully awake at least on one night in a month to ward off death.

But he was wrong. The very thought of death has probably made him sleepy. He has been dozing off every night this month without being actually aware of it. He is convinced that he is seeing something with his eyes, only to wake up, and find that he was dreaming. And this is the last night of the month. He must keep awake if he is to survive. If he cannot this might be the last night of his life. He is not certain whether he can awake or, like the previous nights, sleep might overtake him without his being aware of it. He may doze off right there and die in front of the audience.

The Curse of Death

After a pause, he recalls having asked the beggar what he had done to deserve such a fate. And the reply was “ you have written plays. You have staged them. You have caused so many good people, who came trusting you, to fall asleep twisted in miserable chairs, that all that abused mass of sleep has turned against you and become the Curse of Death”.

He never realized that his plays could bore people so much as to make them fall asleep while watching them. As he had put so many people to sleep with his plays, he must be deprived of it. He must keep awake at least one night in a month if he wants to live. Otherwise, his sleep would be his death.

Renouncing His Avocation

The playwright, realizing that it might be his last night to live on this earth, has run away from home and sought shelter in the ruined temple. He has come there "nameless and empty", leaving his identity and ego behind. For years he has ruled his family as an eminent writer but he could not bring himself to die before them as a writer who bored the audience and put them to sleep with his plays.

After another pause, he swears by the god who has deserted the ruined temple (this absent god) that if he survives this night he shall give up his avocation. I shall have nothing more to do with themes, plots or stories. I abjure all story-telling, all-play acting.

Talking Flames

He is surprised to hear female voices outside the temple. Then he sees lights and wonders. "Who could be coming here now?" He does not believe his eyes; "They are naked lamp flames! No wicks, no lamps. No one holding them. Just lamp flames on their own floating in the air! Is that even possible?"

He then hides behind a pillar to see what happens when flames take on human forms and gossip among themselves as women do. Three or four such flames enter the temple. They are talking among themselves. Flame 3 greets flame 1; "Hello! What a pleasant surprise! You are here before us tonight. Flame 1 replies that she is there because the penny-pinching master of the house where she resides had run short of oil to light a flame and keep it going. Since he and his wife went to bed early, she has come to the temple before other flames.

Amidst laughter, flame 2 comments that she comes from a prosperous household. Her family uses only coconut oil as they come from the coast and do not use kusbi or peanut oil in their lamps. Flame 1 protests that, unlike the kerosene flame assures her friends that she would now be there every night. She had to keep vigil all through the night in her master's house all these months as his old mother was seriously ill; Her stomach was bloated, her back covered with bed sores. The house stank of cough and phlegm, pus and urine. No one got a wink of sleep at night. Naturally, I stayed back too. She died that morning, leaving behind the master and his plump and passionate wife. They blew the flame to start making love to each other. She continues among giggles from her friends that she would henceforth be with them every night. Flame 3 is, however, not so lucky. Her master must look at his wife from limb to limb before getting down to making love to her.

The flames keep talking among themselves gaily as new flames join them. They form small groups and keep gossiping. A new flame joins them and they enthusiastically greet her. Flame 1 tells her that she is late as it is well past midnight now. She replies that there was a lot to do in her house that night. She burns in the house of an old couple.

Tonight the old woman finished eating, swept and cleaned the floor, put away the pots and pans, and went to the room in which her husband was sleeping. And what should she see, but a young woman dressed in a rich, new sari step out of the room! The moment the young woman saw my mistress, she ran out of the house and disappeared into the night. The old woman woke up her husband and questioned him. But he said he knew nothing. Which started the rumpus.

Everyone is keen to know who the young woman was and how she had got into the house. The new flame explains how her mistress, the old woman, knows a story and a song but she has kept it to herself all these years. She has not told the story or sung the song to anyone. So the story and the song felt suffocated within her; they were "imprisoned inside her". That afternoon when the old woman took her usual afternoon nap after lunch, she started snoring.

The moment her mouth opened, the story and the song jumped out and hid in the attic. At night when the old man had gone to sleep, the story took the form of a young woman and the song became a sari. The young woman wrapped herself in the sari and stepped out, just as the old lady was coming in. Thus, the story and the song created a feud in the family and were revenged on the old woman.

The Untold story and the song

Flame 1 concludes that if one tries to suppress one story, another takes its place. Everyone wonders where the untold story and the song are now. "How long will they run around in the dark? What will happen to them?" The new flame assures them they will all be there in a moment and there they are! "The story with the song!"

The story appears in the form of a woman dressed in a new, colorful sari. She acknowledges the enthusiastic greetings and welcome accorded to her by the flames with a listless wave of her hand. She goes and sits gloomily in a corner. The flames gather around her and ask her the reason of her gloom. They assure her of their undivided attention as she unfolds herself; "We are here and free the whole night. We will listen to you. But she tells them that it is no use because they cannot pass it on to anyone. As the flames express their inability to do so and make sympathetic noises, "the man jumps from behind the pillar and grabs the story by her wrist". He says that he would listen to her. The flames flee helter-skelter in terror as the story struggles to free herself from the Man's grip. But the man offers to listen to her; I promise you, I will listen to all night! Maybe that would help him ward off sleep and keep him awake. He would thus escape the Curse of Death. The story stops struggling. She is relieved that at least one human being is there to listen to her. She asks the man to let her go as she needs her hands "to act out the parts". There is, however, a condition before she narrates the story to him.

But the man suddenly remembers that he has just sworn never to tell a story; I have just now taken a vow not to have anything to do with themes, plots or acting. If I live, I do not want to risk any more curses from the audience. But he obviously has no choice since the story seems to be interesting. At least it promises to keep him awake and that would save his life. It is a matter of life and death for me. He calls out to the musicians and shouts; "the story and the song!"

The performance commences. Throughout the rest of the play, the man and the story remain on stage. The flames also listen to attentively, though from a distance.

14.2 Character Analysis

The play, according to Girish Karnad, is based on two oral tales from Karnataka he heard from A.K. Ramanujan. These tales are narrated by women normally the older women in the family while the children are being fed in the evenings in the kitchen or being put to bed. The other adults present on these occasions are also women. Therefore, these tales, though directed at the children, often serve as a parallel system of communication among the women in the family.

"Many of these tales also talk about the nature of tales. The story of the flames comments on the paradoxical nature of oral tales in general; they have an existence of their own, independent of the teller and yet live only when they are passed on from the possessor of the tale to the listener. Seen thus, the status of a tale becomes akin to that of a daughter, for traditionally a daughter too is not meant to be kept at home too long but has to be passed on. This identity adds poignant and ironic undertones to the relationship of the teller to the tales".

Part of Folklore

Karnad stresses that these tales are not left-overs from the past. In the words of Ramanujan, "Even in a large modern city like Madras, Bombay or Calcutta, even in western-style nuclear families within 2.2 children folklore is only a suburb away, a cousin or a grandmother away".

Playwrights love to draw from folk tales, the storehouse of rich symbolical narratives. Many Indian playwrights have used folkloric material as the back drop of their dramatic analyses of contemporary life, and this play is a fascinating example of that. Using the apparent simplistic structure of a folktale, the play opens with a conventional device of explaining the reasons why the failed writer must keep awake the whole night. The flames from the village homes assemble in the temple and share stories. One such is the story of Rani whose husband is enamored of another woman and is reluctant to spend time with her, much less consummate their marriage.

Karnad has deployed all devices used with the folktale and/or mythic patterns, like the imputation of super human qualities to humans and non-humans, the use of magic elements, extraordinary ordeals. The flames, the Naga taking Appanna's form, the magic roots, the imputation of divinity to a woman all conform to the needs of folktale and myth. Indeed, within the folkloric framework of the play, Rani's attainment of divinity does not jar. Her adultery seems the

proper lesson for her adulterous husband. As a powerful popular mode of expression, drama integrates within it, the fantasies of the human mind. The psychological complexities of sexual relationships are woven subtly into the play. Credulity and intelligence are in conflict as Karnard highlights the absurdity of the situation. Like Hedvig of Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*, Rani cannot bear too much reality. She is happy to fill her life with half-truths and partial knowledge, or what Ibsen would call, life lies.

The craft of making up tales or fantasizing to endure mundane lives is a psychological mechanism of the human mind. In the world of folktale and myth where fiction and reality meet and where the human and the non-human coalesce to emphasize certain truth of life, make-belief rubs shoulders with subliminal truths.

The effect of Kurudavva's Love potion

One story the flames share is the story of Rani whose husband is enamored of another woman and is reluctant to spend time with her, much less consummate their marriage. An old woman gives her a magic root that is a potent love potion. Rani mixes the root in the food and cooks it. The solution turns blood red and Rani throws it away in fear. The mixture happens to fall upon an ant-hill within which lives a King cobra, Naga. He tastes the love potion and falls in love with Rani. He assumes the shape of her husband and starts visiting her every night.

Rani's Plight

The tales told by women to children in the evenings, says Girish Karnard, express a distinctly woman's understanding of the reality around her a lived counterpoint to the patriarchal structures of classical texts and institutions. According to him, "The position of Rani in the story of Naga-Mandala, for instance, can be seen as a metaphor for the situation of a young girl in the bosom of a joint family where she sees her husband only in two unconnected roles as a stranger during the day and as lover at night. Inevitably, the pattern of relationships she is forced to weave from these disjointed encounters must be something of a fiction. The empty house Rani locked in could be the family she is married into.

Rani makes Love to Naga

A sleepy Rani blushes. Naga comes and sits very close to her. When she tries to move away, he quickly grabs her and asks her to put her head on his shoulder. As she puts her head on his shoulder, he gently puts his arm around her. He assures her of his love for her and asks her to relax.

Laying her down gently, Naga praises her long tresses; What beautiful, long hair! Like dark, black snake princesses! After making love to her, Naga gets up, goes to the bathroom, turns into his original self and slithers away. When Rani wakes up in the morning, she is surprised to find that her "husband" is not by her side. She comes to the front door and pushes it, but it is still locked. She is confused. She washes her face and starts cooking.

The dog starts barking when Appanna arrives. He pats the dog and unlocks the door. Rani comes out running and asks him; But when did you go away? I'm.... she leaves the sentence incomplete and freezes when she sees the stern expression on Appanna's face. He heads for the bathroom as Rani stares at him, wide-eyed. She goes to the kitchen to prepare food for him, muttering all the while; "I must have been dreaming again".

Naga visits Rani again

Appanna bathes, then eats as usual and leaves. When it grows dark, Rani lies in bed, wide awake. After a long silence, the Cobra comes out of the ant-hill and enters the darkened front yard of the house. The dog starts barking and the sounds of the dog growling and fighting mixed with the hisses of a snake are heard. The noise ends when the dog goes silent after a long, painful howl; it has been bitten to death by the Cobra. Rani rushes to the window to see what is happening, but it is dark. When all becomes quiet, she returns to her bed.

The cobra enters the house through the drain, as it had done earlier, and becomes Naga. In the bathroom he washes the blood of the dog off his cheeks and shoulders, and goes to Rani's room. When she hears his steps on the stairs, she covers her head with the bed sheet. Naga comes, sees her, smiles and sits on the edge of her bed. She peeps out, sees him and closes her eyes tight. When Naga tries to talk to her, Rani bites her forefinger to ascertain whether all that is happening to her is real. She cries out in pain as she rubs her finger and says; "I must be going mad". She continues talking to herself. His visit last night I assumed I must have dreamt that. I am certainly not dreaming now. Which means I am going mad. Spending the whole day by myself is rotting my brain.

No reflection in the Mirror

As Naga takes her into his arms, Rani feels the blood on his cheeks and shoulders. Then she detects some tooth marks where the dog had bitten him. She asks Naga; Did you run into a thorn bush or a barbed wire fence on your way here? But he asks her not to worry. Rani goes to look for the ointment her mother has given her for wounds. When she opens the mirror- box in which she has kept it, she does not see Naga's reflection in the mirror. She is scared and cries out. But Naga quickly pulls her away from the mirror and embraces her while the superstitious Rani continues crying. He then shuts the mirror box and pushes it away. Rani turns and looks at where he had been sitting.

Naga and the Mongoose

The story takes over the narration now, telling us how the dog's death enraged Appanna. He next brought a mongoose, which died the next day struggling with the King Cobra when he came to visit Rani. But it had evidently given a tougher fight than the dog; "its mouth was full of blood". They were bits of flesh under its claws and bits of snakeskin were found in its teeth.

Rani fainted when she saw the dead mongoose and Naga did not visit her that night. He did not come to her for the next fifteen days. Rani spent her nights crying, wailing, and pining for him. And when he started visiting her again, Naga's body was covered with wounds which had only partly healed. Rani applied ointment to his wounds and looked after him. But she never asked him how and where he had got those wounds.

Rani's pregnancy

As it gets dark on the stage, Rani hurriedly lights the lamps in the house. As she does so, some of the flames get into position. She tells them to wait a little longer for the love of her life, which she realizes by now is not her legally wedded husband Appanna. She yearns for Naga.

Naga arrives and as they embrace, the flames surround them and sing. Naga and Rani dance in ecstasy. As they lie in bed and Naga plays with her hair, she tells him that her anxiety has now come to an end. She has not definitely been "fantasizing" about his visits to her. She gleefully announces that she is pregnant. The news, however, leaves Naga dumbfounded. He stares blankly at her. Rani wonders why the news of a baby does not make him happy. She was not sure of his reaction. So she has kept the news a secret from him all these months. Naga tells her that he is glad she hid the news from him all this time. He advises her to keep it a secret from him even now, adding sadly; "I realize it cannot remain a secret for long". Rani blankly repeats what he has been telling her all along and laments.

Appanna's Reaction

As it is almost morning, Naga turns to go. As he turns, they both freeze. The lights change sharply from night to mid- day. It is time for Appanna to come home. Suddenly, Naga and Appanna merge into one single entity.

When he comes to know that Rani is pregnant, Appanna pushes her to the floor and kicks her; Rani professes her innocence, but Appanna is implacable. He accuses her of shaming him before the whole village and calls her names. Appanna beats her up as the Cobra watches it through a window, but he is helpless.

Appanna drags her into the street and picks up a huge stone to hit her on the "bloated fummy" so that the child in her womb is aborted. The Cobra moves forward, hissing loudly, drawing attention to itself and Rani screams; "Oh my God! A snake! A cobra!" Appanna throws the stone at the Cobra which instantly withdraws. Taking advantage of this diversion, Rani runs into the house and locks herself in. Appanna runs behind her and bangs on the door. He threatens to go to the village Elders with his complaint; "If they do not throw that child into boiling oil and you along with it, my name is not Appanna".

Kurudavva's Entry

In the confusion that ensues, Kurudavva enters. The blind old woman is looking for her son, Kappanna. He disappeared a week ago. Rani tries to rush to her for help, but is stopped by Appanna. Rani seeks Kurudavva's help; "I am innocent, Kurudavva. I have not done anything, what shall I do"?

Kurudavva is panickly as she seeks everyone present there about Kappanna, who disappeared one night because he was tempted by a Yaksha woman, or perhaps a snake woman. It was certainly not a human being who took her son away from her, she is confident. The woman was not even breathing. He slipped away and melted into the night with her. Ever since then, she has been looking for him. The crowd becomes restless now.

The Cobra Ritually Cremated;

Rani now seeks a favor from her husband. It must be cremated by observing the prescribed rituals and the fire should be lit by their son. "And every year on this day, our son should perform the rituals to commemorate his death'. Appanna reluctantly agrees. "Of course, there is no question of saying no. You are the goddess herself incarnate. Any wish of yours will be carried out".

Appanna leaves and Rani sits there staring at the dead snake. She starts crying. To the accompaniment of music, she bends down, picks it up and presses it to her cheeks. As she freezes, it gets brighter and the flames disappear one by one. Story has already left by now.

Summary

- Girish Karnad was born in Matheran, near Bombay, in 1938 and grew up in Sirsi (Karnataka). He writes his plays in Kannada and he himself translates them into English. In a recent publication of Girish Karnad's Collected Plays, Dharwadker states that Karnad belongs to the "formative generation" of Indian playwrights who "collectively reshaped Indian theatre as a major national institution in the later twentieth century" (2005: vii). The Nāgas in Indian mythology are considered deities, half human and half snake, and are carriers of fertility, especially in the south of India. The Natya Shastra, written by Bharata Muni around the 2nd century B.C., is the earliest and most elaborate treatise on Indian theatre. In it, various traditions in dance, mime, and drama were consolidated and codified. According to legend, God Indra, with the rest of the gods, approached Brahma, the Creator of the Universe, and begged for a mode of recreation accessible to all classes of society. Brahma acceded to this request and decided to compose a fifth Veda on Natya (drama). From the four Vedas he extracted the four elements of speech, song, mime and sentiment and thus created Natyaveda, the holy book of dramaturgy. He asked Indra to pass the book on to those of the gods who are skillful, learned, free from stage fright, and given to hard work. As Indra pleaded the gods' inability to enact a play, Brahma looked to Bharata and revealed to him the fifth Veda.
- The play is also called "Story Theatre." Girish Karnad as a good story teller uses the technique of story within the story. There are four narrative levels in the plot of Naga-Mandala. At the

first level, the Author who commits the crime of producing the boring plays that make the audience sleep is condemned to remain awake the entire night. At the second level, the Flames (personified) of the village gather at the ruined temple where the Author is wailing, and keep on gossiping. At the third level, the Flame who is the latecomer knows the story but refuses to share the story with others and the story escapes from her mouth while she is asleep becomes the Story narrator at the fourth level. The Story narrates the story of Rani which forms the central part of the plot. The structure of the temple and the relationships among the characters forming upward and inward triangles form the basis of the entire Naga-Mandala. The temple is the symbol of Mandala and the snake, the vital energy. Rani's relationship with the Naga is suggestive of Rani's liberation and fulfilment from the clutches of the patriarchy from the feminine perspective.

- Characterization: Girish Karnad has done the characterization of the play by blending the myth and reality of his contemporary society by creating the following characters -

Rani: the central character/protagonist, Appanna's wife, Naga's love

Appanna: Rani's husband, a male-chauvinist

Naga/Cobra: Rani's lover

Kurudavva: a blind woman who gives the love potion to Rani

Kappanna: Kurudavva's son

Appanna's concubine

The Village Elders

Keywords

1. Ensnarled: Cause to become caught up in complex difficulties or problems.
2. Dilapidated: (of a building or object) in a state of disrepair or ruin as a result of age or neglect.
3. Flame: A hot glowing body of ignited gas that is generated by something on fire.
4. Mystical: Relating to mystics or religious mysticism.
5. Ordeal: A very unpleasant and prolonged experience.
6. *Nāga-Mandala* means "snake circle".

Self Assessment

1. Nagamandala was published in-----?
 - A. 1988
 - B. 1978
 - C. 1989
 - D. 1979
2. What is the subtitle of Nagamandala-----?
 - A. Play with a tiger
 - B. Play with a lion
 - C. Play with a cobra
 - D. None of the above

3. Girish Karnard dedicated this play to?
 - A. A.K. Ramanujan
 - B. R.K. Narayan
 - C. Wordsworth
 - D. All of the above

4. The drama starts within a ----?
 - A. Auditorium
 - B. Dilapidated temple
 - C. Village side
 - D. None of the above

5. In the temple the playwright is waiting for ---?
 - A. Pleasure
 - B. His son
 - C. Death
 - D. None of the above

6. How many acts are there in Nagamandala?
 - A. 2 acts with a prologue
 - B. 3 acts with a prologue
 - C. 4 acts with a prologue
 - D. 1 act with a prologue

7. What is the function of flames in Karnard's play?
 - A. The function of Greek chorus
 - B. The function of Latin chorus
 - C. The function of Canadian chorus
 - D. None of the above.

8. Who is the protagonist of the play?
 - A. Naga
 - B. Vani
 - C. Rani
 - D. None of the above

9. Rani is married to?
 - A. Kappanna
 - B. Kurudavva
 - C. Appanna
 - D. All of the above

10. Even after his marriage, Appanna usually visits ---?

- A. His friends
B. His concubine
C. His relatives
D. None of the above
11. Who gave Rani the mystical root?
A. Appanna
B. Kurudavva
C. Kappanna
D. All of the above
12. Who is Kurudavva?
A. A friend of Appanna's mother
B. A friend of Rani's mother
C. Protagonist of the play
D. All of the above
13. Kurudavva is a/ an ----?
A. Priest
B. Singer
C. Old and blind
D. None of the above
14. Kappanna is the son of ---?
A. Kurudavva
B. Appanna
C. Rani
D. None of the above
15. Who is considered as the queen of long tresses?
A. Vani
B. Kani
C. Rani
D. All of the above

Answers for Self Assessment

1. A 2. C 3. A 4. B 5. C
6. A 7. A 8. C 9. C 10. B
11. B 12. A 13. C 14. A 15. C

Review Questions

1. Supply the act wise summary of the play Nagamandala written by Girish Karnad.
2. What do you mean by the art of characterization? Discuss the art of characterization done by Karnad in Nagamandala.
3. "Girish Karnad is one of the pillars of the foundation of contemporary drama in India" elaborates the statement.
4. Which ordeal proves the chastity of Rani?
5. Whom does Appanna visit most days?
6. Why do the flames assemble in the ruined temple?
7. What does Kurudavva gift Rani?
8. What does Appanna do when he brings Rani to his house?



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