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WOMEN MARGINALISATION IN MANJUKAPUR'S A MARRIED WOMAN

R.ANANDHARAJ¹, S.RASAKUMAR²

¹Research Scholar, PRIST Deemed University, Thanjavur

²Research Supervisor, PRIST Deemed University, Thanjavur

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with Women marginalisation depicts that the new, educated Indian woman has extent to determine her preference for self-introduction. *A Married Woman* is a graceful representation of a country's inner development its strength and its failures and at a woman's unrest, which is as complicated as the social and political going on around her. Feminism is broad socio political movement specifically advocating women's welfare in society. Thus marginalisation of women, their predicament, undertaking for identity, finding their own space are the main study of this trend.

The following abbreviations are used after quotation:

A Married Woman-AMW

Manju Kapur has depicted in *A Married Woman*, the intellectual starvation, economic expression, domestic domination, physical abuse, sexual harassment and lack of personal freedom of the women. Through her fiction, she has also successfully and skilfully brought to the surface, new issues like dilution in relationships, pre-marital and extra-marital affairs man-woman relationships, fears, oppression and suppression faced in and outside their home. The marginalisation has much significance. These are people deprived of socio-economic opportunities for their sustenance in the process falling prey to male popular web and becoming mark of social, cultural, and political exclusion. Being marginalized refers to being separated from the rest of the society, being forced to occupy the fringes and edges and to not occupy the centre stage in any sphere of normal human life. They want to be recognized as separate but equal human beings.

The background of this novel is set up in Delhi against the controversial Ram Janma Bhoomi

and Babri Masjid (mosque). The novel carries the study of life of Astha from her childhood to her forties through various hopes and despairs, complements and rejections, and recognition and frustrations. She brings up in middle class values and seems to enjoy her mental joy for a long time but she feels that there is something lacking in her life certainly. She suffers from a sense of incompleteness depression and despair which is further aggravated by her involvement into the outer world of rebellion and protest.

Kapur introduces the readers about the upbringing of Astha through the following lines-

Astha was brought up properly, as befits a woman, with large supplements of fear. One slip might find her alone, vulnerable and unprotected. The infinite ways in which she could be harmed were not specified, but Astha absorbed them through her skin, and ever after was drawn to the safe and secure, Astha obediently closed her eyes to delicious images of a romantic, somewhat

shadowy young man holding her in his strong manly embrace.(AMW 1)

Astha is brought up in a traditional homely environment in a typical middle class family. She is the only child of her parents. And they think that her education, her character, her health, her marriage, all these are burdens to them. She is their future, their hope, and though she does not want them to guard their precious treasure so carefully. Particularly her orthodox mother wanted to install in her tradition, religious piety practiced through to proper rituals. Her father is a bureaucrat but he doesn't matter to Astha.

He is very much concerned with her education and wants to indicate good habits, tastes and manners in her. She has felt with romantic love in her heart also right from her teen age and she shares her feelings with Bunty, an Army Cadet at NDA, Kharagwasla. They write to each other, and for her this is like a precious possession to be displayed and boasted among friends. Astha's mother comes to know this relation and she complains to Bunty's parents. Then she comes in contact with Rohan in the final year of her graduation. She begins to meet Rohan in his car at the dark corners of the streets.

When she did her M.A., a proposal is come from the son of a bureaucrat in the commerce Ministry. Hemant is M.B.A. from America and doing a job of an Assistant Manager in a bank in Delhi. He seems to join her life of an ideal and honest husband in the beginning of their married life. He usually calls her my baby and shows the usual Indian traditional husband's attitude of patronizing, caring and considerate. He performs well in assisting his bed with Astha. It is due to read a sex manual to know the different types and poses to perform his sex duration. He believes and knows that a woman bleeds on the first night that proves her virginity.

When Hemant tells her mother-in-law, she says –

Beta, you are right. May it be a boy, and carry your name for ever. A great son of a great father. Astha thought her mother was overdoing it. But Ma, I want a daughter, said Hemant. That's true Ma, repeated Astha,

He wants a girl. In America there is no difference between boys and girls. How can this country get anywhere if we go on treating our women this way?(AMW 57)

At first Astha does not pay much attention to Aijaz. He is an expert at the weaker nerves of the women and begins to show his praise on her script, poetry and painting. She feels that he is only one who can really understand her and value her. She loves to look at him when he is performing on a stage, and allowing her frequent cover glances. His personality is shown in the words of the writer,

He was of medium height, his body compact. His face was the clear delicate luminous brown of freshly rained-on earth. His lips were a darker brown than his skin, and his eyes were black and narrow. While working he rolled up the sleeves of his shirt, allowing Astha to view at her leisure his round arms, hairless, smooth and muscular. He had prematurely grey hair, which, thick and springy, fell about his face and neck in ways that suggested a good barber. (AMW 112-113)

A few months later she hears that he is going around with a woman working in an NGO named Pipeelika Trivedi. She lives alone in Delhi, sufficiently isolated from conventional society to believe her choice of partner concerned only herself. Her mother is horrified when she learns of her engagement with a Muslim. Her mother has been a widow of two children Ajay and Pipeelika. Ajay succeeds in his studies and goes US for his premises and Pipeelika, the daughter is left to fulfill the hopes of her mother on native soil.

Astha feels her more confident and stronger in company of Pipee. In spite of all oppositions, on Pipee's insistence, she leaves her children and family and goes on the Ekta Yatra from Kashmir to Kanyakumari for the sake of the company of Pipee. They become more craving for each other and their proximity makes their relationship stronger during this Yatra.

Astha comes to know of Pipee's lesbian relationship with Neeraj and Sameera while talking

to each other. She is disillusioned by Pipee's demanding passion and her past associations. She is trapped in a horrible dilemma if she should stay in the sheltered existence provided by her dearest family and tradition or she should run for freedom and unthinkable love. In this regard she tells Pipee:

I love you, you know how much you mean to me, I try and prove it every moment we have together, but I can't abandon my family, I can't. May be I should not have looked for happiness, but I couldn't help myself. I suppose you think I should not be in a relationship, but I had not foreseen..... Oh Pipee, I'm sorry I am not like you. (AMW 242)

Astha also thinks that if husband and wife is one person, then Pipee and she were even more so. She has shared parts of herself she had never shared before. She feels complete with her. Astha's family alarmed when Hemant has a heart attack, and it is up to Astha, because Hemant is not going to change his own. Every morning she makes sure they go for a walk. All those years ago, exercising and resentful with her husband, with feelings so much more complicated with the years that has passed.

In this regard Kapur writes of Astha's thoughts:

Was these where her life had led her, this space she had travelled between those walks and these? Striding briskly to still the thoughts in her head, speaking to mask the feelings in her heart. She looked at Hemant, swinging his arms, concentrating on getting his heart rate up. Perhaps he was disappointed too; perhaps he had looked for something different in marriage. They didn't talk about such things, she would never know. (AMW 283)

Astha spends lot of time thinking about herself. She is a traditional wife as Pipee had alleged. She finches at the idea, but she is certainly doing what devoted wives does, putting a great deal of effort into protecting their husband's insides. Astha is in heroic effort when she heard that Pipee goes to

US for her Ph.D. Finally she is going to US and Astha remains alienate again.

The only trouble is there are so many aspects, all of such relevance that it is a bit hard to choose a specific area. And for a moment Astha feels an intense stale of envy, not just for Pipee, but for anyone who has the possibility of a new life. She has to remind herself sternly that if she wants, she too had choices.

Explore deep into history, women are considered more marginal of the lot in a male dominated society. And to add insult to injury, in the patriarchal society of India, women's marginalization continues shamefully unabated even today. All these writings are painful narratives of resistance of the marginalized women, who wage a relentless struggle against alienation and subordination if not outright oppression and to seek their identity and their rightful place in a hostile society. Needless to say, the age old prevalence of oppression, despair, and suffering is common in the lives of marginalized women.

Feminism emerged as a worldwide movement to secure women's rights on the one hand and love, respect, sympathy and understanding from males on the other. It focused on women's struggle for recognition and survival and made them realize that the time has come when they should stop suffering silently in helplessness.

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