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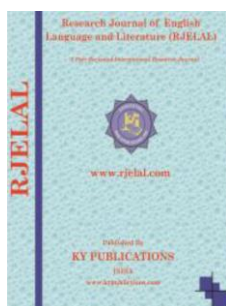
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THE GENDERED SUBALTERN IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF INDIAN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The article talks about women and their problems by the patriarchal society i.e., men with self-cantered and callousness who does not bother about women's inner self that aspires for self-fulfilment. As a consequence of this male chauvinism, women gets into temporary exile, fettered by domestic injustice and tyrannical custom. Lack of educational and economical opportunities made patriarchy even stronger among the working class.

Key words: Suppression, Male Chauvinism, Sexual Harassment, Sufferings, Psychological upset, etc.

*Yatra Naryastu Pujiyante! Ramante
tatra devataha!
Yatraitastu Na Pujiyante,
Sarvstatrafalaha Kriya !!*

(Where women are respected, Gods make their home; however, those societies always suffer from grief & failures where women are oppressed!)

The feminist's writings structure the desirability and the need for recognition of the claim & the rights of the Indian women in general. According to our Indian culture women are not free enough to express their feelings and sufferings. Sufferings do not necessarily mean physical pain but mental agonies experienced by many women who seem to be happy at the peripheral level, but are really suffering in the depth of their hearts.

Many women's life moves around the unrecognised suppression. Those suppressions and sufferings enter their life in various forms like sexual harassment, psychological troubles, etc... Suffering is borne silently by Indian woman. They are hedged in by the constraints treated by the Manu minded male dominated society. Sethi shows the remarks of

Mulkraj Anand where he says: "The docility of the woman, the acceptance of suffering by her, is an important fact of life. Ever since patriarchal period before women have been suffering. (5) Woman was unable to liberate herself from the social taboos. Their suppression leads to longingness in them. In *I am a Great Fool*, Mamta Kalia voices out the unromantic feelings of married life undergone by most of the women in general & herself in particular. She says: "I am a Great Fool To think that marriage is bliss" (P.22) The law of Manu says that woman does not deserve freedom. The father protects the woman during childhood, the husband during her youth, and the son during her old age. She is crushed under the weight of a male dominated and tradition-bound society. This is shown in the novel *Subarnalatha*, where Subarnalatha, the protagonist was condemned to suffer in an incompatible marriage life.

Many feminist writers subtly portray how the sexual violence against women subjugates them into passivity. For women, the interpretation of compassionate love with its substantial,

sentimental, rational and exalted fulfilment is perfect love. Without Love life is like a curse. Instead they are loved only for their body. Since, the beginning of time, it had always been taken the granted that marriage provided a means for man to satisfy his sexual urge and to help in the task of procreation. A woman was only a tool to be used towards that end. Desh Pande's Mira represents woman, the victims of marital rage, where Miras, silently subjects herself to the nightly assaults of her husband. Mira in *The Binding Vine* feels her body has been violated by her crass and insensitive husband. By reading Mira's diary, Urmi noted "The observes that it runs through all her writing a story, clear thread of on intense dislike of the sexual act with her husband, a physical repulsion for the man she married. (63). He loves more her body then her inner self. In Kamala Das' *An Introduction*, The Protagonist says:

He did not beat me.

But my sad women-body felts to beaten.

The weight of my breasts and womb crushed me and shrank pitifully. (29-31)

Her Husband does not care to understand her, but to win her over, to establish an emotional rapport with her. He is always rather in hurry to take her body in possession. Thus she stands as an object of sexual gratification.

Woman stands as a lifelong victim of masculine tyranny. Her firm resolve not to be stereotype and not to undertake the drudgery of the domestic chores that are all manifested in a statement by the protagonist of Kamala Das, where she says: "I kept myself busy with dreamy house work while my spirit protested and cried, get out of this trap, is cape...." (98)

Sarah Grimke Observes:

Man has subjected Women to his will, used her as a means to promote his stylish gratification, to minister to his sensual pleasure, to be instrumental in promoting his comfort, but never has be desired to elevate her to that rank she was created to

fill. He has done all he could do to debase and enslave her mind. (77)

Self revelation and self expression itself is a kind of protect which indicates her quest for selfhood & identify. This is shown in the novel *Subarnalatha* where the protagonist's quests towards reading of books are never quenched. She seeks book reading as an outlet for her frustration. But Subarna was forced to give up her ambition as a writer, by reading books. In the Poem "Stone Age" by Kamala das a husband symbolises old fat spider weaving web of bewilderment around his wife. He has created a domestic stone ages for her & has destroyed her feminine personality. She says:

You turn me into a bird of stone, a granite

Dove, you build round me a shabby drawing room,

And stroke my pitted face absent minded while

You read. With loud talk you bruise my pre-morning sleep,

You stick a finger into my dreamy eye (3-7).

This is a mild protest against the provocative behaviour of the husband.

Marriage subjugates and enslaved women. It leads her to aimless days indefinitely repeated, life that slips away gently towards death without questioned its purpose. In the words of Beauvior "Marriage, is the destiny traditionally offered by society". A marriage life fails because it is joyless, loveless and bridgeless. A woman is all the more critical of mechanical and loveless routine life. Shobha De makes Rita remarks sarcastically. "We demand communication, attention...Arrey baba, forget it, we at should be happy if they (Husbands) don't beat or turn us, torture us, discard us. That is all." (252)

Apart from loveless life suspicion is considered to be an intolerable thing for a woman. In the Gujarat Dalit Novel *Ghost* by M.B.Gaijan, Purandar allows Madhavi for her painting. He, who had brought Madhavi near Rajendra Nakawana, a Dalit boy. But he doubts about the relationship of Rajendra & his wife. Emotionally her mind craves for

attention but the denial of which leads to dire consequences. Moments of love and warmth are the small remedies of life. Madhavi's fascination for Rajendra is not sensual but platonic. He is a well wisher of her, friend and guide to her. She wants love which is Utopia for her. Similarly in case of Subarnalatha her friendship with Ambika is also misunderstood by her husband, Prabodh.. Her husband bans her reading skills thus she feels suffocated, torn and becomes an abnormal being. In *Roots and Shadows*, Indhu's reunion with Naren offers her an opportunity to vent her frustrations. In *That Long Silence* Jaya feels totally at ease in the company of Kamat, because he treats her as an equal. Suspicion is not only seen in the modern days but it is also seen in the period of the Avathar Rama who suspects Sita for her purity when she is in Ashokavana. Thus a man worshipping woman as a goddesses as Lakshmi, Saraswathi, Parvathi. But it is of no use when he harasses his wife, another form of Goddesses Sakthi.

Women in all cases are victims of male chauvinism. Besides sexual aggression, beatings, scolding, taunts and anger are some other ways to control women. Not delivering a male child is an equally heinous offence. Nayana in *That Long Silence* is one such woman whose husband threatens to marry another woman for a male child. In *Subarnalatha*, Subarna is insulted with abrupt words when she gave birth to a female baby. Though loud in her protests, she continues to suffer.

Silence, Self aggression, search for emotional security, compromise and conformity- make them space for further partiality domination. Shobha De's one of the characters Nisha cannot tolerate the nonsense on the part of her husband who had an affair with his secretary. So strong are the bonds of traditions in Indian Society that she still makes compromise and continues to live with her husband under the same roof. She is intensely aware of the injustice heaped on her. Women are aware of the injustice done to them, habit makes them willing victim of exploitation & injustice. For a woman, it creates more complications because she has to smile while her heart wages. She is always born between fulfilment and frustration. She swallows the exploitation silently against as a

traditional, loving, docile, wife. In *Roots and Shadows*, Padmini's acceptance of her marriage life shows the tolerance of woman in a marriage life through the words of end her. "A woman's life, they had told me, contained no choices. And all my life, specially in this house, I had seen the truth of this. The women had choice but to submit to accept. And I had often wondered. have they been without wills or have their wills atrophied through a lifetime of disuse?(24) The women writers try to disclose the psychological turmoil of a middle class woman is shattered between the voice of her inner conscience and the conventional ideas where all the holy books insist on the acceptance of women for their husband's folly. According to the Hindu law – giver Manu, even though the husband be of bad character and serves pleasure elsewhere he must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife. The Bible exclaims "wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord" Tradition demands that a perfect wife should possess the following qualities:

Karyesi Dasi – Serve her husband like & Slave

Karyeshu Mantri – give him proper advice

Roopecha Laxmi – must look as beautiful as goddess laxmi

Kushmaya Daridi – forgiving his terrible sins.

Shuktesu Matan- feed live a mother

Shayanesy llushya –serve him like a prostitute in bed.

These lines show the duties of a woman who must give top priority to their husband's pleasure.

A woman is behind for the success of every man. But the vice versa has to take place. Without the support of a man, a woman cannot succeed in her life. Let the women be the women expected by Mahakavi Bharhathiar's i.e., with full freedom (freedom to express her thoughts, freedom to choose her life, freedom to speak).

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