

Harsh Reality of Chauvinistic Biased Society : Marginalisation of Women

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The present paper throws light on the treatment of women by the society. Women possess a unique and divine quality of giving birth to a baby. Thus, being the pivot of the society she should be given equal rights just as are given to men. However, the paper presents how unjustly women are treated by this male dominated biased chauvinistic world. It also highlights the struggle of a woman fighting for her rights but in the end she gives up all hope and surrenders herself to her husband.

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The play 'Kamala' written by Vijay Tendulkar is a very famous play which highlights a very deep thought. This is a two act play and the main theme of the play is flesh trade. Dr. Pramod Pawar in his research article comments, "In Kamala, Vijay Tendulkar presents a complex relationship between Jadhav and Sarita, his wife. It is a

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gyno-centric play because the character, Sarita, becomes an aggressive and a mature wife from being a domestic one earlier" (Pawar, 2015).

In this play, story of two women have been presented. One is Kamala who is sold in human flesh market and other is Sarita who is wife of Jaisingh Jadav. Jaisingh Jadhav is a journalist who is very daring. He is afraid of nothing and can go to any limit to get fame and success. Outwardly, he pretends to be working for the social cause however, in his mind, he keeps on making plans how to use others for his success. To get name, money and success in career and to increase his popularity, he buys a tribal lady, Kamala, from the human flesh market to prove to the world that he exposed human trafficking so that he can gain fame. But in his blind race of success, he forgets the emotions of a human being.

Vijay Kumar Sinha rightly comments in his article about Jaisingh Jadhav's nature. He says, "This sensational Journalist, claiming himself to be the champion of Adivasi woman's rights and posing to bring about a revolution in the outlook of society through his articles, is utterly selfish, cruel and insensitive to the feelings of his wife. Jaisingh treats his wife as a slave, puts her on duty as his P. A. to receive phone calls. He doesn't care for her pain and pleasures; insults and distrusts her. Jaisingh represents male egoism and domination causing exploitation and mistreatment of woman" (Sinha, 2008 : 177).

We can say, he is devoid of all human emotions. He is very selfish person. He orders his wife, Sarita, as if she is his slave and not a wife. This is clearly reflected in his words when he orders his wife Sarita :

JAISINGH : Oh, and bring me some tea. And that suitcase has four days of dirty clothes in it. Take them out and give them for a wash. But hold your nose while you do it. They must be stinking. Don't tell me I didn't warn you (8).

Sarita obeys all his orders as a dumb cattle follows his master's order. The play throws light on the behaviour of Jaisingh towards his wife whom he treats like a mere object.

Later, in the play when he presents Kamala in front of all people in the press conference and people ask her cheap questions and pass dirty comments, he does not feel ashamed of his act and feels proud as if he had done some wonderful task. Kamala and his wife, Sarita,

both are mere objects for him. Shibu Simon quotes rightly, “The play ‘Kamala’ deals with the problem of women being treated as a commodity in the modern world. Both Kamala and Sarita are commodities that can be sold off” (Simon, 190). Jaisingh Jadhav is so inhumane that he does not even think about Kamala’s respect and dignity. After the press conference is over and his work was done, he not even cared once for what will happen to Kamala now. This is very clearly visible in his statement :

JAISINGH : [...] She hadn’t understood a thing. And I didn’t expect her to. I just wanted to present her as an evidence. And that was done (30).

Beena Agarwal aptly comments in her article, “The cruelty implicit in this statement is so intense in the innocent laughter of Kamala and violent move of Jaisingh, the image of seduction symbolized through Eve and serpent becomes alive” (Agarwal, 2012 : 55).

In this context, Arundhati Banerjee observes, “Like Kamala, Sarita is also an object in Jadhav’s life, an object that provides physical enjoyment, social companionship and domestic comfort” (Banerjee, 2004 : 59).

It would not be wrong to call him a cheat, a fraud person because he lied to Kamala. His purpose was to present Kamala before all people in press conference but for innocent Kamala, Jaisingh Jadhav was like her husband. Vijay Kumar Sinha in his article quotes, “A critic says, he duped Kamala who had come prepared to become his bonded keep with all the associated feelings of sex, motherhood and living” (Sinha, 2008 : 177). ‘Kamala’ is a realistic play, in which Kamala and Sarita have to face gender discrimination. Though, both are fully devoted towards Jaisingh Jadhav, yet he makes fool of both by playing with their emotions and feelings.

When Sarita comes to know about Kamala, she feels pity on her condition and torn saree that she was wearing. When Jaisingh was taking Kamala to the press conference, then Sarita suggests Jaisingh to let her change her torn saree. But Jaisingh did not even allow Kamala to take bath because he wants to present Kamala in the press conference in the most miserable condition so that all feel pity for Kamala and praise him to save Kamala’s life. This is clear in these statements :

JAISINGH : That's exactly what I am telling you. She will come to the press conference in the same clothes she is wearing now.

SARITA : She's a woman, after all. And her saree is torn.

JAISINGH : I know, I know, you don't have to tell me, understand? (22).

This shows Jaisingh's dominant nature towards her loving wife, Sarita and inhumane, shameless nature towards a woman Kamala. In the press conference, people ask Kamala many vulgar questions and he listened to them without objecting. This attitude of Jaisingh Jadhav shows that he has no respect for women in his heart and mind.

Shailaja Wadikar says, "He accepts such a dangerous task not with a view to reforming Kamala's life but as a part of his professional commitment. Kamala for him, is a means by which he can get a promotion in his job and win reputation in his professional career. He never stops to think what will happen to Kamala after this expose" (Wadikar, 2008 : 24).

Later on, in the play when very innocently Kamala asks a question to Sarita, the single question of Kamala that how much money did Jaisingh Jadhav pay to buy Sarita just turns the table and play takes a new turn.

KAMALA : Can I ask you something? You can't be angry?

SARITA : No, go on.

KAMALA : How much did he buy you for?

At this question of 'Kamala' Sarita is stunned at present, thinking what Kamala is asking, but when she deeply ponders over the question, she is forced to think about her position in the house where she came after marriage. She realizes that she is a free of cost servant of her husband Jaisingh, in fact, her father paid to Jaisingh the dowry to marry Sarita. At this point, Sarita is blank for few moments. She is confused, sad and angry at the same time for being used by her husband like a commodity since marriage. Shibu Simon rightly says in his article, "In a country like India, the fate of a woman- whether tribal or urban or educated - is basically the same" (Simon, 2008 : 190).

This is the time when Sarita realizes her importance and decides to ask Jaisingh about her importance and her position in his

life. When, in the play; Jaisingh asks Sarita to come to the party for his success Sarita denies bravely and questions Jaisingh. This can be seen clearly in the conversation of Sarita with Jaisingh Jadhav.

JAISINGH : You don't want to come? Why?

SARITA : That is my will.

JAISINGH : (Rather surprised) Your will ?

SARITA : Aren't I allowed to have a will of my own?

JAISINGH : (Sarcastically) Never noticed any signs of it before. If you didn't want to come, you could at least have told me earlier. Then I wouldn't have accepted for both of us.

KAKASAHEB : [...] Is your head aching?

SARITA : If I had one, it would.

KAKASAHEB : You don't have a head? Then who does ?

SARITA : The gentleman who just left.

Sarita refers Jaisingh as a gentleman in the above conversation. This is a clear sign that Sarita is very much hurt and she does not want to keep any contact with her husband, who just utilized Sarita for his own comforts and used her as a dumb puppet who is expected to follow the orders of the master without complaining and without questioning.

She is wounded mentally. She also tells Kakasaheb that she will keep a press conference where she will tell everyone about Jaisingh's behaviour with her.

SARITA : I am going to present a man who in the year 1982 still keeps a slave, right here in Delhi. Jaisingh Jadhav. I am going to say, this man's a great advocate of freedom. And he brings home a slave and exploits her. He doesn't consider a slave a human being- just a useful object. One you can use and throw away. He gets people to call him a sworn enemy of tyranny. But he tyrannizes his own slave as much as he likes, and doesn't think anything of it - nothing at all. Listen to the story of how he bought the slave Kamala and made use of her. The other slave he got free - not just free - the slave's father shelled out the money - a big sum. Ask him what he did with it [An uncontrollable sob bursts from her. She controls it] (190).

A woman is always discouraged, whenever she tries to take her life's decision by her ownself. She is criticized and taunted. If by luck she decides something then, her upbringing comes in her way. In

India, a woman is never left free, at home before marriage she is taught to obey her father, after her marriage, woman is expected to follow her husband and obey him, at her old age, she is in a state that she is forced to follow her son. This same thing happens with Sarita in the play at this crucial moment of taking own decision. She comes to know about her husband that he is fired from his job and will be arrested. This time all her childhood teachings and values become obstacles in her path and she decides not to leave her husband in this serious situation when he needs Sarita the most. Finally, she decides to punish her husband some other time in future...that future which is never going to come until and unless a woman becomes selfish and thinks of her own happiness first.

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