



Predicament of women in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand and Premchand

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ABSTRACT

Of Indian society half of population are much engaged in the evolution of nation and have fixed their participation in the various areas of activities, yet they have been repudiated full justice-social economical, political and constitutional largely ignored as daughter, daughter-in-law, widow, dowry, child marriage tea plantation labourers etc. They are agonized victims of the capitalistic exploitation, poverty, squalor, class hatred, race hatred and inhuman cruelty. They have now emerged for their social status in the world. In india women are tortured and tormented by the gender-discrimination are also a burning issue, rooted deeply in our society. The cause of circumstances leading to the age-old existence of oppression of the lives of these above mentioned classes may be enunciated.

Key words:- widow, harlots divorcees, child marriage, dowry, social, economical, political etc.

Introduction

Woman belonging to half humanity can do everything what man can do and are not less competent and sincere then their counterparts. All talks of national reconstruction are hollow without the education of women. They remain marginalized in the dictatorial male dominated society. Our society sometimes throws up old orthodox and superstitious perception in the form of evil practices. In the past they enjoyed the position of. regards. Even it is believed that no sex discrimination in the divine creation is in the sight of almighty father. So the first son of God, Adam points out : “At last he is one of my own kind. Bones, taken from my bone, And Flesh from flesh, women in her name because she is taken out of Men”

During the vedic period women enjoyed a position of equality with men in all respects and were offered equal opportunities for education. The Mahanirvana Tantra Suggests, ‘A girl also should be brought up and educated with great effort and care. But the Quaran, the secret book of the Muslim, has focused on the superiority of men over women. Even Buddhists also express, the company of a woman was considered to be an obstacle in the development of higher pursuit in man. During 18th and 19th century the plight of women became worst. They were being treated as sub ordinate beings in the male dominated society and were suffering as widows, harlots, divorcees, labourers and so on.

Both the great writers of india Mulk Raj Anand in English Literature and Premchand in Hindi Literature have observed the social misfortunes of the feminine folk in their beautiful ways and such types of fact are found in the novels of both the writers. They have raised their voices



against the social evils which is prevalent among the poor and the needy and also opposed the grievous injustice done against the weaker sex.

Anand, in his “The old women and the cow” writes that Gauri’s father is not found of ‘Gauri’ because she is a girl. But perhaps if she had been a boy, he would have been liked her (Gauri). Anand writes a girl is treated like a downtrodden during her periods, isolated and given food away from the kitchen. She resumes her normal slavish life and her husband continues to be rude to her. ‘Panchi’ in “The old woman and the cow” is felt like an old bull going off to marry the little cow ‘Gauri’. She is a helpless rustic woman. Her husband, whom she worships so long doubts her chastity and drives her out even in the critical condition of pregnancy. Moreover he calls her mother a whore-‘Go, go, get out of my sight go to your mother the whore she can perhaps earn enough to feed you. Hearing all these she could not protest him on the contrary she falls at her husband’s feet saying not to send her away. Yet her husband’s heart does not soften and kick her away.

A woman herself is not less blameworthy for her community. If she is mother-in-law she does not miss to torture her daughter-in-law and her daughter herself. ‘Laksmi’ the mother of Gauri and Anand her step father sells ‘Gauri’ to buy a cow Chandari. There is no effect of crying ‘Gauri’ on her parents. Panchi is coward but he pretended to be a lion among the men of the village. He says:-

“Ram (Lord Rama) turned Sita out
because everyone doubted her
chastity during her stay with Ravana.”¹

Gauri is pure just like Ganga yet she is scolded and is threatened. After asking Hoor Babu, a character, she replies gently, “There is nothing to tell him- with tears in her eyes. He turned me out and I have come back to him—as pure as I went away. Panchi roars angrily:-

“what is proof of your purity?
Not Your tears and your whining.”²

In Anand’s ‘Untouchable’ Sohini, the sister of Bakha, the hero is teased by the woman at the well and molested by the priest in the temple courtyard. Sobbing she says her brother:-

“He-e-e teased me-----
And then when I was bending
Down to work, he came
and held me by my breast.”³

In “Two leaves and a Bud” of Anand ‘Gangu’ is shot dead in his attempt to protect his daughter from being raped by Reggie.

Besides Anand Premchand is a Paramount Protagonist in weaving the predicament of a woman who in his ‘Sevasadan’, surpasses the challenges of the evilness of society like poverty, inequality, the religious bias exploitation etc. In his novel Premchand is equally influenced with



social, political, religious and even economic problems. 'Suman,' the heroine of 'Sevasadan' thinks herself in imprisonment in the hands of Gajadhar. She says:-

“There is chain around my feet.”⁴

After the end of feast at Padam singh's house at midnight 'Suman' returns home thinking the comfortable life of 'Bholi,' a prostitute but walks lifeless towards her home like a shadow because of her being late for her husband. So Premchand writes:-

“The most Dalit part of the society is women”⁵

As Mulk Raj Anand in his “The old woman and the Cow” Pictures the poor conditions of Gauri, the heroine in the same way Premchand in his 'Sevasadan' Pictures the Predicament of woman in the name of 'Suman' the heroine. Kishanchand, the father of 'suman' is a conscientious and honest sub- inspector of police. Facing with the requirements of a dowry for his daughter's wedding, he forgets his honesty and takes bribe which causes him imprisonment. Here the difference between 'Gauri' of Anand and 'Suman' of premchand is that 'Gauri' belongs to a wretched situation from the beginning where as Suman of Premchand belongs to a royal one in the beginning. With the passage of time both fall in a trench of life

Conclusson

Thus some characters of these two writers are similar and some are dissimilar at different points where about all the novels of Premchad give pathetic and heart-breaking cry of the author against the social cruelty of the males over females. The presentation of 'Rukmini' in the road, 'Janki' in “The Big Heart” widowed 'Maya' in 'The Village' and 'Gauri' in the 'Old woman and the cow' reveal Anand's deep concern for the predicament of Indian woman confined to cleaning and washing and cooking and cleaning again.

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