

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHAOS IN INDIAN WOMEN LIFE WITH REFERENCE TO VIRANI PINKI SELECTED NOVELS

Dr PYLA RAVI KUMAR

Asst. Professor (C), Dept. of English, DR. B R Ambedkar University, Srikakulam.

Abstract

Women who constitute half of the world's population are paradoxically not treated on par with men in all spheres of human activity. They are oppressed, suppressed and marginalised in the matter of sharing the available opportunities for fulfilment of their lives, despite the fact that every woman slaves for the development of her family, her husband and children. This disturbing picture of woman is not something new or unique only to India.

Introduction

Undoubtedly, the modern and educated young woman's struggle against the age old slavery, suffering and suppression is a welcome development. But, this striving of the modern woman to be free and self-reliant is often debilitated by her timidity and diffidence. In the course of this crusade, she suffers from certain weaknesses and complexes which have been very honestly highlighted by the Indian women novelists.

With the growth of educational and vocational opportunities, the educated middle and upper-class women, particularly in urban areas, have become conscious of their rights. More and more educational opportunities and employment avenues were thrown open to women. Exposure to reformist movements, economic independence, influence of western feminist movements, -all helped women to go a long way in bringing about drastic changes in their position and attitudes. Impelled by a desire to realize their aspiration for a new way of life, women began to voice their feelings freely. As Meena Shirwadkar expresses from *English Literature of Shirwadkar* (2012) observes:

As women received education they began to feel an increasing urge to voice their feelings. The awareness of individuality, the sense of compatibility with their tradition-bound surroundings,

resentment of male dominated ideas of morality and behaviour problems at home and at place of work (EL201).

The status of Indian women has undergone considerable change. Though Indian women are far more independent and aware of their legal rights, such as right to work, equal treatment, property and maintenance, a majority of women remain unaware of these rights. There are other factors that affect their quality of life such as age of marriage, extent of literacy, role in the family and so on. In many families, women do not have a voice in anything while in several families the women may have a dominating role. The result is that the empowerment of women in India is highly unbalanced and with huge gaps. Those who are economically independent and literate live the kind of life that other women tend to envy about. This disparity is also a cause for worry because balanced development is not taking place.

The Koran also stresses superiority of men over women. A woman's duty is to provide the male with sexual gratification and progeny. It says (Quran.4:15):

Men are superior to woman on account of the qualities with which God had gifted the one above the other...virtuous women are obedient, careful during the husband's absence because God hath on them been careful (Quran4:15).

They question the traditional values but at the same time feel that the culture, which they belong to, has become intertwined with and inseparable from their lives. They also strive for an identity of their own which was not accessible to women in a culture that marginalized them. Quest for identity is basic to the human being. This identity crisis has intensified during the post-war era resulting in a decline of grandeur and dignity of human life. Man's faith in God, religion, nature and philosophy has been shattered and he faces the crisis of alienation. He fights desperately for roots and identity, and the expression of this finds place in literature.

The author, Virani Pinki on 'Shadows of a Dying City' is aware of the changing Indian society; her descriptions are quite realistic. Her woman characters are staged under the broad light of family. However, Pinki Virani chooses a wider canvass to portray human relationships. Her focus is centred on social life and Virani admirably depicts its tensions and pretensions, over possessiveness, insecurity, ideals and prejudices.

Bombay, The City of Dreams which was once called as, ruled by Mouryans, Satavahanas, Abhiras, Kalachuris, Vakatas, Chalukyas, Rastrakutas and lightened at its own heights of glory, being a hub of trade and commerce, called as city of seven islands, being a holder of first modern institution of higher education which offered many opportunities to the learners, had a gradually change as a hub of Terrorism, Mafia, Smugglers, Communalism, Riots and other anti social activities.

The novel is about the decay of Bombay, its loss of continuity and spirit, equating this process with the rise of the criminal underworld. The year 1992-93 will stay incredibly engraved in the minds of most of Bombay's residents for a very long period of time to come. The reminiscences of those days had an everlasting impact of brutality and harassment on the minds of majority of people directly or indirectly, which can never be erased completely.

It is obviously a loss of purity and sense of unprecedented deception for those who experienced those murky days and nights. The riot of 1992-93 faded away by leaving a feeling of the moment, was it would not probably to ensue the Mumbaites. The sense of pride on its forbearance and on its plain move towards to existence and work, the belief that Bombay was and would stay forever resistant to the tensions that were splitting the rest of the country separately, are gradually becomes paler. It dragged down from the platform of self creation, it showed where one can exactly be confirmed work his connivance, implicitly sometimes, in what taken place actually.

Martinson (2003) discusses the writers of diaries who include some aspects of their lives, conflicts, and traits in their works. The diary writers usually deny any connectivity between their works and their personal lives since that may enable others to intrude into their lives. Martinson says: "Anna, like Lessing, declines a simple autobiographical or fictional reading of her text" (DM123).

Mumbai is one of the leading parts of India's mafia which is an organized body of criminals. The size and the extent of mafia are unknown to the world though it is popular in its own way. The elements of mafia's have its origins from the gambling, bootleg liquor dens established by Karim Lala in forties. He was succeeded by Varadharajan Mudaliar, a Tamil migrant, who migrated to Bombay with group of migrants from Tamilnadu. The socialist regime of those days restricted Indian economy which lead to increase in the activities under world, resulted in vast expansion of different Dons and their Adda.

The themes of poverty, inequities, corruption, beggary, religious fundamentalism and Parsis in Bombay have been dealt by both the writers but unlike Mistry, who has dealt with the caste system encompassing the Indian society, Virani's writings expose an unbridgeable class discrepancy. The split existing between the rich and the poor in the 'city of dreams' is quite evident in Pinki's novels.

Thrity Umrigar's debut novel *Bombay Time* (2001) is a well knitted novel, which mirrors the contemporary life, society and situations. The author depicts the changing society of India, its attitudes and beliefs, values and behaviours, morality and hypocrisy. The author is aware of the changing Indian society; her descriptions are quite realistic. Her woman characters are staged under the broad light of family. However Thrity Umrigar chooses a wider canvass to portray human relationships. As Diana Jackson-Dwyer in her book *Interpersonal Relationships*, 2014 opines:

Humans are essentially social beings. As countless novels, films, songs, plays and poems testify, our ultimate happiness and despair is founded in relationships (DwyerI).

Rohinton Mistry also depicts the Indian socio-economic and political life as well as Parsi Zoroastrian life, customs beliefs and religion. His description of characters like Virani's develop gradually from particular to general, depicting their idiosyncrasies, follies and foibles, from individual to family and gradually widening into the social, cultural and political world. His novels have a leisurely pace without ever losing the reader's interest and attention. The characters change and develop subtly and totally engrossed the reader.

Virani as a journalist has such a kind of nature that she is so bold and questions everything, whatever she finds as unfair to her. She gently exhibited the defects of system with experiences of her own family, in the name of Loud One as she questions everything happening in the society.

No religion particularly, not certain whether they use this amount in the name of God or not but everyone must give it. Babli Seth gives money to whoever comes on the name of religion though he knows that they are not religious people and not going to use it either for the purpose of god or for any other good purposes. And those who have family members do as he does. The Jews, Chinese dentists, Christians, Hindus, Parsis even Muslims give them, not just to because of they could not question but because of the fear of safety of the family. The opposition would likely lead to communal riots, and can be easily shatters the common

men's lives. Virani's queries as a daughter of Bablieth are the queries to the ordinary masses, addressing the sensitive issues directly to the readers to think on them.

Virani, thus blended the violence as a common regular activity along with the story line and has presented her characters as very common people fill with excess of reality and inescapable horror occasioned by its horrendous circumstances of one of the world's most popular cities which often known for fashions, glitters and late night parties.

Isolation, the emotional crisis of humanity and powerlessness to make human touch became the social indicators of the novel. Bombay is fragmented into gloomy, gruesome spaces with features surrounded in a illumination and shadowy region. The eccentricity of the novel revolves around the portrayal of lawlessness and decay.

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