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Abstract

The Psychological relationship between husband and wife engineered by suspension, silence and misunderstanding. The novelist picturises her character with a power which keeps them energetic to fight the dark corners of the life. It manifests the interest of the novelist in the Indian culture and religion and which she promotes through her characters indirectly.

Key Words: Indian Women, Strength, relationship, Superstitious belief.

Indian literature plays an important role in portraying the typical Indian women from classical period. Literature in India started with male authors. These male authors who give less importance to women, characterizes women as mother, wife, maid, daughter, widow and divorcee. The male authors, fails to portray the typical Indian women. With emergence of many female authors in India depicts women with different perspective having strength, empowerment and vigor.

A Silence of Desire is a novel which the novelist dramatizes the psychological relationship between husband and wife. Kamala Markandaya moves a step farther than what Iyengar calls her "Nectar in a Sieve" a tragedy engineered by economics" and her "Some Inner Fury" a tragedy engineered by politics." (Iyengar-p.440) Of course A Silence of Desire is a tragi-comedy engineered by suspension, silence and misunderstanding. The protagonist of the novel, A Silence of Desire, Dandekar is projected as a man fully western by education and thought, but an Indian by birth and colour. He works in a government department as a clerk. He believes on the maxim "eat, drink and be merry". His wife, Sarojini, is an Indian with the core of the heart who believes in idol worship as the whole Indians do. One can say it is the relationship between science and religion, Western ideals and Eastern ideals, rationality and spirituality. This kind of relationship demands compromise on which the husband and wife are not compromising initially when their relationship was faced with tempest of suspension. Anita Mahajan observes: "The world of A Silence of Desire is the world of science and superstition carefully balanced. Kamala Markandaya's attitude is that of reconciliation between the two, science must co-exist with human faith".

However, they were enjoying their happy married life till 15 years, their joys faces shipwreck when Dandekar found her wife Sarojini absent at home one evening. Dandekar dares not to ask her about her absence. Next morning as usual Dandekar moves towards his office and his mind is not working properly, the situation goes worse when her colleagues starts gossips over the nature of the woman in the office. It makes Dandekar more suspicious about her wife even after the fifteen years of marriage with three children. No man tolerates the missing of her wife from his home at evenings; a man marks himself incompetent and faces criticism in the society as well. Dandekar returns from office and asks Sarojini for the keys of the trunk" Dandekar found a photograph in the box of an unknown man without asking Sarojini says it is the photograph of her years old music teacher but the paper of the photograph itself indicates that it is of latest version. "Women are natural storytellers" (Iyengar-p.435) the statement of Iyengar proves itself here. It makes Dandekar more suspicious and eager to know about her absences.

N.Ramachandran Nair observes: "Kamala Markandaya seems to stress the point that there are times at which one has to keep silence and times at which one has to speak. Indiscretion in this regard may be detrimental to the preservation of joy and peace. Dandekar and Sarojini are victims of

such an impasse. The root cause of their prolonged uneasiness is their inability to speak out.”Here arises a number of questions that if their relationship was in better position why Sarojini makes lie after lie to increase the instinct of suspension in the Dandekar. She could easily take him into confidence, because Dandekar was happy with her and her management of home, as he praises her: “she was a good wife, good with children, an excellent cook, an efficient manager of his household, a woman who still gave him pleasure after fifteen years of marriage, less from the warmth of her response than from her unflinching acquiescence to his demands”(A Silence of Desire-p.11). Markandaya probably answers it that Sarojini’s mother’s death occurred because of the scientific treatment and such a terror restricts her to communicate with her husband about the tumor in her womb. She desires to treat it with the healing power of the Swami.

The fear of her mother’s death restricts her, and not Dandekar. It may be the situation that he cooperates with her. She couldn’t take a chance to do so. However the, “ fear of the Dandekar’s ‘rational belief’ comes in the way to cut down the bridge of the smooth journey of husband and wife. It deserves a mention here that ‘trust is the first step of love’ which Sarojini lacks because of his western notions. Sarojini was a religious woman who sees nothing outside her world of mysticism. For her ‘tulsi’ is not an ordinary plant, it is the plant in which she observes her god but for Dandekar it is just idolatry and superstitious beliefs of a person like Sarojini. The walls of her kitchen reveal the religious faith of Sarojini which was full of decoration with the pictures and portraits of gods and goddess, “These were all of gods and goddesses singly and in groups, tableaus that showed them holding court in their heavens, or worrying, or being miraculously born of the earth or the sea” (A Silence of Desire-p.11).

Kamala Markandaya wants to convey her audiences that culture never leaves an individual free even if an individual aspires to leave it. Dandekar is the product of western by education not by birth he can’t ignore the culture of her motherland India. Markandaya portrays the psychological depression of the Indians to consider themselves Indians or westerners after independence. As Ralph Linton in a psychological study of culture patterns says, the “automatised fully developed response” of an individual is almost the exact equivalent of a real cultural pattern. Although all the members of any society may not have firsthand experience of all the patterns within its culture, all of them will be brought into contact with many of the same Patterns within its culture, and these patterns can be treated as constants in studies of personality formation.”

Dandekar is truly “part western and part eastern.” Sarojini frequently visits to Swami, Dandekar uses the spy over her, observing her husband’s attitude she becomes angry and breaks her silence “I have a growth in my womb” (A Silence of Desire-p. 86). This statement ashames and erects soul beneath the feet of Dandekar and replies in the humble tone: “If only you had told me... why you could not tell me?” (A Silence of Desire-p.87)

Sarojini says further that you abused me, suspected upon me; consider me soiled woman now I will be cured with the faith healer. A traditional woman like Sarojini bears anything but not the suspect upon her chastity or even she compromises with it on any cost, it is that which hurts Sarojini much and says: “the man whom I worship as a god, she said looking at him directly. You are very nearly right in that one thing, just that one thing”. (A Silence of Desire-p.72) Dandekar offers her treatment with scientific ways to which Sarojini fears. Sarojini firmly rejects the proposal of treatment of her husband when she admits;“I can,t, I will be cured, in my own way.“„By this-this faith healer?“„Yes, I have faith in him and he will cure me.” (A Silence of Desire-p.108)

As Dandekar was a middle class working man he has collected things for the wedding of her daughter in a small store.Dandekar found them missing there and he want them back immediately. The peace and security of Dandekar’s home distorted. He goes to Swami and conveys him about the matter as; “we are not rich people, we can’t afford to give away so much...” (A Silence of Desire-

.155). Kamala Markandaya wants to highlight that a man always remains in the race of earning more and more not caring the aspirations of the wife as Dandekar gives priority to wealth over her wife by telling the Swami, she “gives and gives” means wealth to the Swami to which Dandekar loves and you are not stopping her. Swami replies Dandekar as; “if I were to compel her not to give I would also be free to compel her to give. That is the other face of the coin, the other half of what you ask. Can you not see it?” (A Silence of Desire-p.155)

Kamala Markandaya uses Swami as a tonic which makes Dandekar awaken from the deep sleep of his mind. The novelist makes the use of the Swami in both her novels A Silence of Desire and Possession a power with her characters which keeps them energetic to fight the dark corners of the life. It manifests the interest of the novelist in the Indian culture and religion and which she promotes through her characters indirectly. However, Dandekar feels that Swami is not an ordinary man; it is not easy to rule the intensions of other individuals even that may be the wife of any individual. And Dandekar learns the lesson that only modernity is not the way to follow in the life but the culture, tradition and rituals of a society are necessary to follow to live the peaceful life.

Though Sarojini’s acceptance of the treatment by the scientific ways does not manifest the adaptation of modernity as well with the traditionality intentionally but to resolve the matter which was necessary. The story ends with the transformation of a man from incomplete ideals to complete ones. Sarojini rebels and wash the brain of her husband with the perfume of Indian culture and religious beliefs.

There Swami gives him the lesson when Swami says him “compulsion is the beginning of corruption.” (A Silence of Desire-p.166) This statement throws out the dirt of Dandekar’s mind to somehow. He makes the conclusion that it is not easy to restrict the Sarojini from visiting the Swami unless the Swami departs. He took his office colleagues into confidence and plans to fetch out the Swami from the town. May be the tenure of Swami ends itself because a „man of god keeps much strength“ and leaves the Sarojini free from the fear of death with the small store of silver and gold cups and chains. As Sarojini adds it; “if the Swami chose to go it was his decision.” (A Silence of Desire-p.217) And Sarojini accepts the Dandekar’s proposal of treatment on the scientific basis. Dandekar welcomes her with open arms and longs for peace in the end;perhaps my life will be as peaceful too, hereafter. It was the quality he longed for above all. (A Silence of Desire-p.220)

Kamala Markandaya’s protagonist’s maturity comes and resolves all the disputes. Dandekar and Sarojini start their life to live as they were living, there home restore all the business and Dandekar learns the sense of duty both at home and at office, he learns that only visiting office is not enough to keep the secure and peaceful home. He starts devote time to her family. As UshaPathaniacommments:“The peace and happiness of the Dandekar’s family is restored. The unhappy interlude is over and the good old days return with the encouraging change that Sarojini and Dandekar have now achieved interpersonal fusion on both the places physical as well as mental. A sort of compromise has been struck between scientific views of Dandekar and religious belief of Sarojini; the ties between them are stronger than before.”

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