

## “Subjugation Of Women In Bayen And The Swing Of Desire”

Lata Bhardwaj<sup>1</sup>, Dr Swati Chauhan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD Research Scholar, Department of English

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of English, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies

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### ABSTRACT

In earlier times, a girl was normally a subject to the impulses of her spouse or father, because of the social norms. It asserted that females were physically and mentally less competent and skilled than men and so they are needed to be "taken care of." The prototype of best woman as mother, wife, and homemaker was a vigorous belief in 19th-century society.

It is said that even formal submission of one sex to the other is unfair in itself and so it must get replaced by scenario of a perfect equality that gives no power and freedom of one on the other.

My aim in this paper is to tell the story of a powerful woman who doesn't bend downward in life but takes every step proudly. She stops her will to require her rights as a mother and a wife for the sake of her child and husband. It shows the logical description of the struggle of women who have limited time to cry over their emotional and subjective hardships but sob uncontrollably and beat chest to grieve over the demise of the wealthy to earn a living.

The same thing can be seen in another instance that has been taken from “The Swing of Desire” that deals with a woman protagonist who has left her desire as an artist behind, just for the sake of her family and especially her husband, and “Bayen” that is about oppressive reality and its dehumanizing effect on women.

**Keywords:** prototype, subordination, dehumanizing

### FULL PAPER

Religious patriarchy is working as a carrier for compelling females to completely approve gender intimidation through theology and religion. It is done so as to take care of the cohesion of the male-dominated social hierarchy in India. Assessing the spiritual patriarchy, it provides the groundwork to discern the notion of subjugation faced by women in larger parts of the country and world.

Women have confronted racism, intolerance and biasness in social, political and domestic life since many years. The fight for rights and liberty from societal standards has been an abiding one. Once the emperor, Augustus got power and later things changed considerably. He endeavoured to operate the conduct of women that favoured ethical grounds. Adultery was a criminal offense. It was so only if a wife has committed such infidelity. A husband was always free to commit any illegal, unlawful sexual act. Childbirth was motivated that time and the role of women was quite restricted by the standards of the society.

Mamta G. Sagar (“The Swing of Desire”) has brought the important characteristics of a feminist argument that is on the infringement of women’s privileges to her body.

The play “The Swing of Desire” by Mamta G Sagar represents the conflicting interests of husband and wife who are part and parcel of the domestic space where conflicts are normal features of human relationships. Mamta G Sagar who is a voice in Kannada theatre, focuses on the issues faced by the talented woman artist.

Playwrights have made an endeavour to render visible the pain of females. But they faced criticism for this. After they performed their plays, many men used to say that they're spoiling other women and disturbing the peace of home. Those who appropriately attain the roles as interpreted from man’s viewpoint are attached to be the models of commitment and adherence. Those who refuse to do so because of certain reasons are criticized and denounced. But the reward for both wife’s virtue and the consequences of rebellion are identical in these plays. The sister of Pratap in “The Swing of Desire” is submissive is disliked and hated by her husband.

The playwrights have allowed each of their protagonists to draw on their inner vision to attain autonomy. It is here that resistance rather than shattering the socio-cultural structure holds the transformative promise. It certainly shows the march from silence to assertion, from speech to action. Though patriarchy is the collective legacy, but a lot can be done by what these playwrights have passed on to the next generation.

Pratap, the male protagonist has defined household turmoil as “*any act of commission or omission by family members and any condition resulting from such acts and inaction which deprive other family members of equal rights and liberties and/or interfere with their optimal development and freedom of choice*”.

Manasa’s economic independence provides her agency to take a required step and she ends the abuse furthermore as her conjugal relationship. Her overt behavioural and verbal responses to abuse and her resisting acts of agency are reactive. Her actions may be constructed as her self-preservation. Within the play, Sagar has emphasized the feminine will and agency. She makes her protagonist Manasa to boldly question the commodification of her as a body, devaluation of her individuality and violation of her dignity. Manasa strongly resists the thought of being a mute person of her husband.

She says, “*The age between twenty and thirty is a precious time for a woman. If one wished to do something in life, one should do it then or never. But for me, all gone, all lost because of a selfish man ... he loved me not my talent, not my success, just my body*” (232).

Frustrated and humiliated, she develops an extramarital relationship and bears a child from it. She doesn't feel guilty about this. She tells openly about it to her husband which further entangles their relationship. She asserts herself by popping out of the house and gives dance performances. She is not able to give a second chance to Pratap who comes and poses to her for forgiveness. She cleverly sees through his intentions and his cunningness. Manasa used to allow her husband to manage her programs. She proactively subordinates herself for the sake of her family and children. Within the absence of man’s traditional economic dominance, the wife despite everything tries to preserve her husband’s power to form decisions. Thus, a lady with the privileges may simultaneously be subordinated in her matrimony. Manasa as an artist, mother and wife tries her best to evolve balance between the standard demands of being a decent wife and mother; and her own compulsions to be a dancer. Without the cooperation and support of Pratap, she finds it impossible to bear his abuse and leaves the home.

Manasa moves off from her efforts of trying to take care of the relationship to actively creating an agenda for leaving. She expresses her resentment at the oppressive domestic and sexual regime and walks out from it, in a resistant gesture. She exhibits the potential to attain a self-determined identity. The method is marked by the need of Manasa to regenerate herself as a dancer. She steps out of the patriarchal control and finds her voice, to supply Pratap's resistance, to fling facts on his face. She revolts but Pratap is neither alert to her problems, nor of his own sadistic drives. Judged individually, Pratap is not vicious in fact is the victim of a cultural construct. But whatever is his reason, the sufferer ultimately is the lady. At this point, she feels it exigent to talk, to expose and to shout. She is successful in constructing her own identity and receiving the applause which she desired for her art from the people. Manasa defies her husband saying, “*However much you try to stop me, no matter what you do, I am ready to face anything for my art! I am desperate now, I'll do anything*” (234).

The play posits the fact that Manasa ultimately established herself as an autonomous being free from the constraints compelled by society, culture, nature and also from her own suspicions, beliefs and guilt of evolving an extra-marital connection and giving birth to a child out of that affair. When she realizes that Pratap’s love for her has changed into “*a possessive demonic lust*” (232) she asks fervently, “*Was I the only one there to quench his lust? Couldn't he find anyone else?*” (232).

Mahasweta Devi (1926-2016) was another writer and an avid fighter. She was famous for her fiction and political writings. She is prominent for her creative compositions. Her remarkable body of composing comprises fictions, short stories, kid’s stories, and activist prose that she publicized between 1981 and 1992. She does not have a research background, even so she managed to do a detailed research while she wrote her stories.

Mahasweta Devi, through her fictional narratives and stories, tries to ascertain two important facts: continuity of the unbroken tribal history and also the importance of the oral tradition in writing history. “History fascinates me”, says Mahasweta Devi. Out of her 'fascination', she goes for an in-depth study of varied historical data, statistics, government gazetteers and various laws regarding tribal and human rights. It absolutely was a pity that in independent India, no serious attempts were made to determine the tribal theme which is extremely interesting and compelling. The tribal were unable to document their own life. Hence, Mahasweta Devi filled that vacuum by taking on the task of documentation and compilation.

Devi has an intention of using drama and execution in her stories. It was done to convey the pressure that a subaltern woman faces. This has paved different paths to study subaltern studies in depth.

Her familiar understanding of what happened on the ground has enabled her to intertwine stories. This understanding has brought these struggles into the mainstream. Her art has been interpreted into different languages like Marathi, Assamese, Telugu, Hindi, Malayalam, Punjabi, and many more including a tribal language. Once, she was wandering to the tribal areas of Bihar and West Bengal, she felt the need to speak to a larger audience about what was going on to people living in countryside in the name of growth and improvements. She had starting writing in magazines, papers and journals during the era, because fiction was not considered as an apt tool to express the political and social battles that she had witnessed during her journeys and her exchange with marginalized communities.

Mahasweta Devi wrote influential stories about tribal existence. These stories are invariably located in an extremely specific area. This is a geographic truth, like Tohar, Palami or Lohardaga. The confrontations in her fictions involved local, ethnic, class, gender and language bitterness. "Bayen" is not any distinct because it deals with the problems of gender imbalance. This gender inequality and social problems are fuelled by lack of knowledge, studies and illiteracy. Bayen is a story of a family of Dom community. The family is led by Malindar. He, no doubt, is the follower of strict patriarchal norms. He has a wife, Chandī and a son, Bhagirath. As the saga unfolds, Bhagirath inquired his father about Chandibayen in their village. He was curious to know about her and how she became a "Bayen". Malindar sough downheartedly and narrated the whole story of Chandibayen. Chandibayen was formerly a beautiful lady. She was Bhagirath's mother. Malindar recited how he began his prosperous businesses of cleaning of skeletons. He was, according to him, was doing so because he learned the to sign his name. Just because knowing to sign the name, it was simple for him to ensure a job at the sub-divisional morgue. Malindar also told Bhagirath about the existence of his mother and the way his mother "became" a bayen.

The play is all about Chandī Dasi who is from a Dom community. It is considered as the Mahadalit community. People from this society are appointed by a strict and upper-class hierarchy to burying the dead animals. The duty is performed by the males of the population. After the death of Chandī's father, she takes up this duty as there was no male member in her home. There is Malindar, who works in a mortuary and gets rid of the flesh from dead human bodies and then he has to transform them into skeletons. He marries Chandī and both live cheerfully. After years, Bhagirath was born to them.

Disastrous and unfortunate incidents have started occurring within the community. And the illiterate and superstitious members have started holding Chandī responsible for the dreadful events. In their harsh voices and intense anger, they have named her a bayen, means a witch. She was a mother, a wife, a woman who was performing her duties as a grave digger for dead children and animals. But the illiterate society has labelled her as a bayen. The society was not in mood to listen to her voice that has a lot more than truth to express. It was one night, when it was raining heavily when Chandī was roaming around the place to save the graves from jackals, but people saw her and rumoured that she eats dead children. The heavy twist came and the irony was that the one who has loved her and married her has started believing the same. Her husband, Malindar even believes that Chandī is an evil force and so she should not be part of the society. She is compelled to leave the community and whenever she tries to return, people were warned to stay away from her.

The play opens with Chandī's cheerful and emotional song that she is singing for her son. She is living a life of a pariah. She fails to keep her son, Bhagirath with her. There is an adoration in the story, it is honouring her maternal concerns. Chandī sings: "*Come, sleep, come to my bed of rags, My child god sleeps in my lap ...*".

In gender studies, the term gender studies itself is the drive and feminist thought has made a rare change and impact within the past twenty years in the social sciences and humanities. Though the feminine writings which have been geared towards attacking the male-dominated society and suggesting avenues of females' emancipation have been done, none of them seems to be really path-breaking.

Contribution of women in every field is prominent in itself. They are active on stage, in print culture and on streets. In Fact, theatre for women is growing day by day, marking their immense presence in society. The problems faced by women have taught them self-effacing, independence and worth.

Playwrights like Mamta G Sagar and Mahasweta Devi have opened a rich heritage of women's literature. Women protagonists have developed different strategies to survive the indifference of men, their oppressive attitudes. The playwrights have used the stage to present a new woman protagonist who

is against resistance as she feels numb under the oppression. They have defined women's new self to the world. These studies have shown how distortions against a woman have made her feel adverse in society.

The plays concerning women protagonists reflect the concern of the playwright towards the subjugation of women. They have transformed their protagonist in a similar way so they can fight against their families for their rights. These plays have feminist message in them. The playwrights are bringing females on forefront who were ignored previously. They have shown women power. They have used the genre in order to address the issues of women.

There is an irony that works satisfactorily in *Bayen*. Chandi feels sickened concurrently with her duty of putting dead kids in the grave. Still, she can't resign from the job of being a grave digger. Chandi is an innocent, naive and mentally second-rate lady. The grains of assertion, showdown between femininity and the courage of male-overwhelmed community are sown inside her.

In this play particularly, the playwright encapsulates the tormented life of a woman who attempts to transgress the social norms that are lifted disintegrated in the patriarchal order. This analysis is completed considering the dissociated self and the way she admits that enforced image which is built for her. The subjecthood of Chandi Dasi features a close connection to her sexuality and her lactating ability, one of the powerful elements during this play. The response of a society towards a lady, who takes up her responsibility of burying dead children as an ancestral job has been examined in this paper. The main protagonist is forced by society to become a bayen with supernatural powers.

The dramatist takes the readers back to the present problem with the support of this lesson of *Malindar*, and this is the reality. Chandi is not pleased and she feels awful that her community assumes her of having an evil eye. Also, Chandi Dasi experiences difficulty in being careful about the requirements of her new-born child because of her unsatisfactory grave protecting job. Completely, a new face of woman has been shown in "*Bayen*". Readers can see a new face of male dominance, where males of the society stop the lady, i.e., the bayen to enter her own society. Superstitious beliefs of rural people have been displayed in the play. These beliefs are the reasons that Chandi Dasi has lived her life as a Bayen.

Tragic events have happened in the community. Members of the society were not literate thus they have held Chandi Dasi responsible for the calamities that are happening in the village. They have altogether tortured a woman physically, emotionally and mentally. At the end of the play, she has been seen fighting against the dacoits who have come to rob the train in which her own son is travelling. She surrenders her existence for the sake of her son and other members of the community. The playwright speaks about Chandi Dasi's subjugation in patriarchal society where even her husband is against her.

The differentiation of gender can happen in the case of families too where even the ladies who are focusing more on feminism are kept out of society. Their plays have focussed on the areas of domestic spaces as well. They have shown the ideas by portraying debates about women's right to choose and have children. It also portrays the social role that has been assigned by the society for women. They have showcased the fundamental issues of female existence and identity. Mamta G Sagar has dealt with the significant characteristics of feminist discussion that indicates the infraction of woman's liberty to her body. They ask their heroines to break the norms to replace patriarchy.

Indian society has many versions of rules that are supposed to be followed by women in their marriage and society. The status of women is governed by patriarchy. Therefore, males of the house lead a woman according to their sensibilities. There are dress codes that have been assigned to a woman. A particular time limit has been set for girls. Men want to exercise their powers on women. They are forced to be dependent so they can be governed by males.

Women are only asked to take care of the house. They are expected to nurture everybody known to them. But these playwrights have asked them not to surrender in front of males. They ask them to refuse to bend down further. They are able to render education so they ask them to study and evolve independently who stand against the class of men.

The playwrights have stressed the need to stand against the subordination and to break their traditional positions assigned by their men. New potentiality of ladies has been portrayed by these playwrights by showing the condition of them that they face.

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