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A silent torture in the plays of Mahesh Dattani

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Abstract

This paper deals with the silent violence against women. It shows the critical conditions of women in the society and family. This paper tries to elaborate on the conditions of women stepwise from birth to her last age. It highlights the complexity of gender-based violence from time to time. Its main purpose is to highlight the underlying cause of persisting gender inequalities. This research paper identifies all the points of pain that cause violence to women in the womb, domestic violence, honor-based violence, negligence for women in sufferings, etc. It also represents what the efforts we are doing as a human being to combat the violence against the women. Examples of the affected women are also quoted.

Keywords: Violence, girl, torture, boy

Introduction

A Girl child suffers pain from the womb. When a woman comes to know that she is pregnant, the members of the family and society expect the first baby boy. For which they use important techniques for pregnancy test like Ultra-Sonography, The family members want abortion of a girl child in the womb which is a serious crime, It seems that people are not afraid of crime. Even now women are getting an abortion for the want of a boy child. There is no value for girls' child and science is used in the wrong way for the girl child. Dr. Thakkar has given the organ of a girl child to a boy child.

When family members don't get succeeded in the abortion of a girl child. They have no respect for the girl child. The birth of a girl child is not celebrated. The birth of a girl child is considered a curse. They think that they will have to give dowry in her marriage. The birth of a girl child does not give happiness to the people because these are considered a burden on the family. Hence there is no celebration on the birth of a girl child. Mother is blamed responsible for the birth of a girl child. On the other hand, on the birth of a boy child, there is a celebration in the family. Chhatti Pooja is celebrated on the sixth day on the birth of a boy child. Maternal Uncle brings many gifts on the birth of a boy child. The father of the boy gives the party on birth. It makes a much difference.

On the birth of 2nd girl child, the family also starts naming the girl in such a way that they do not need the girl anymore. Girls' names are kept in this way i.e. AAKHRITI, KAFI, TARA, Bhateri, Last Queen, Bhauti, Antim Rani, etc. I compare the names of the boys in this way, Anmol, Chahat, Chandan, Mannat, Chetan, Pritam, Taraspal, Chirag, etc. It shows the love towards boy child in society. These lines refer to :

“ Patel. Chandan is going to study further and he will go abroad for his higher studies.

Bharati. And Tara?

Patel. When have you ever allowed me to make any plans for her?

Bharati. I'm stopping you from making plans for my daughter?

Patel. Don't lie, Bharati! You don't want me to, and you know it. You have told me a so, a dozen times.

Bharati. That's not true!

Patel. You have to face it. You want her to believe you are the only one who loves her!” (CP 352 “TARA”)

Girls are fed less than a boy in their upbringing. Most of the girls are malnourished. Girls are deprived of higher education. In the Play “TARA”, the talking of Patel and Bharti the parents is for their daughter Tara. She is thin. Her weight is Half Pound lost. The lines written below refers to:

“Bharati (TO Tara). Finish Your Milk.

Tara. I won't! Stop shoving it down my throat.

Bharati. Tara!

Patel (to Bharati). Why d'you serve her so much if she doesn't want to...

Bharati. But she must put on more weight!

Patel. She's fine.

Bharati. No! She's much too thin! She... She must put on more weight. This morning at the clinic, Dr. Kapoor checked their charts. She's lost half a pound in one week.

Patel. Half a pound isn't much....."(CP 325-326 "TARA")

In his article Vikas Lathar has asserted the fact that gender discrimination is socially constructed. He writes:

"Dattani deconstructs the myth that Nature and God have made male superior to female. This myth justifies the subordination of woman against man. Dattani tries to assert that male and female are equal in the eyes of Nature and the God, but it is the patriarchal society which has artificially created gender inequality. Dr Thakkar represents the scientific knowledge which has also become a tool in the hands of patriarchs for oppression and subjugation of women. Dattani shows how various social institutions contribute in perpetuation of gender inequality and discrimination making them pervasive and deeprooted." (Lathar 28)

According to custom, the girl has to leave her house after marriage. Now a girl is married. After marriage, a girl had to leave her family and acquaintance and stayed in another house according to customs. The family decides to marry the girl on stopping her education. Parents have to prepare for dowry. There is a search for the groom. Women have no their own identity. They are known as with the other identities. Uma is married to Superintendent Suresh without completing her education. Uma is doing research for Ph.D., In the play, *Seven Steps around the fire*.

"Sanskrit mantras fade-in, the ones chanted during a Hindu wedding. Fire, The sound of the fire grows louder, drowning the mantras." (CP 7)

"Munswamy. Quiet! Quiet!! (A whack on an arm followed by a yowl.) Quiet, I say. You sons of ... loafers. Do you know who this madam is? She is the daughter-in-law of the Deputy Commissioner and the wife of our Superintendent! Silence." (CP 7)

Anarkali. So You are the really the wife of the Superintendent.

UMA. Yes, I teach at Bangalore University.

Anarkali. Oh.

UMA. I teach sociology.

Anarkali (Smokes). Very good.

UMA. I am doing my paper on class and gender-related violence.

Anarkali. What do you want me to do? Shall I come to sing and dance when you pass exam? (CP12 "Seven Steps Around the Fire")

After that, she has to depend on her husband and make a living. Parents or bothers of a girl have to come to a new family at several festivals. She has to take her husband's permission for shopping. The expenditure of the woman and the family is also decided by the man. When she doesn't do according to her husband then she becomes the victim of domestic violence, regardless of husband and family. In case of not wanting a child, the operation is done to the woman. In spite of this, it could be done to the male.

"KIRAN. I Should have hated him. Like I Should have hated my father, my brothers and my husband. But all I felt for him was a pity.

HASMUKH. Enough! I say enough! I paid you to do my work. Not ridicule me!

KIRAN. Even his attempts at ruling over you after his death, through his will, are pathetic. (Hasmukh sticks his fingers into his ears and shuts his eyes.) The only reason he wanted to do that is because his father had ruled over his family. All his life he was merely being a good boy to his father." (CP510 Where There's a Will)

The female remarriage is also considered wrong in society after the male death. In the widow life, the woman's normal life is too interpreted. She is not able to live according to herself. She has to wear clothes according to social customs also. Widow woman is not given prominence on auspicious occasions. It hurts a woman's value.

"AMRITLAL. You are mistaken. Gaining independence was part of our goal. And someone has to be in charge. It's what we do now that counts. As you know, our priority is to eradicate certain unwanted and ugly practices which are a shame to our society.

Jairaj. Like dowry and untouchability.

Amritlal. That too. And... you know perfectly well what I mean.

Jairaj. You have no knowledge of the subject. You are ignorant.

Amritlal. We are building ashrams for these unfortunate women! Educating them, reforming them...

Jairaj. Reform! Don't talk about reform. If you really wanted any kind of reform in our society, you would let them practice their art.

Amritlal. Encourage open prostitution?" (CP 416 "Dance Like a Man")

Conclusion

In this way, a woman has to bear suffering from birth to death. Even after the Independence of India women are suffering much. Dattani has depicted the silent tortures in his plays very aptly.

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