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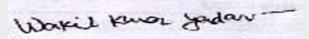
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EDITED

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26. WOMAN: AN ANALYSIS OF "GIRLS"

Mrinal Pande

Abstract

Woman plays an important role in the society .In another words, their role is as important as the role of a man. Today it is considered as woman enjoy almost all privileges of a man. But still she is in the prison. Though some enjoy freedom, many women leaves as a subject to man. The situation of woman were very tragic many years before. Mrinal Pande, a well known Indian author paints the picture of the life of women through her short story *Girls*. Through this story the author is mocking at the hipocracy of rituals and at the same time tells us the attitude of the society towards women.

Key words: Girls, MrinalPande, Suppression, Gender Inequality

"She rose to his requirement, dropped
The playthings of her life
To take the honourable work
Of woman and of wife."
-Emily Dickinson

Today, In this twenty first century, women are considered to be the lamps of the home. It is a statement, that everyone, every wherespeak of women. But ,if we think deeply about the status of woman in the home, society or wherever it is, we felt a kind of imbalance. Though she acquired everything, achieved great success, there is still a kind of gender discrimination. She is considered to be or rather considered as a 'Subject' to man.

History speaks of her as an inferior thing. If we analyse the annals of the history, we can see that this is a truth. There are some stereotype of images set for her. She is the one who has the responsibility to look after the kids and old ones in the family. Cooking, cleaning, washing and that sort of things are assigned to women. She is supposed to be sit in the home. It is the others thatset the rules of behaviour for her. She has no choice of her own. She has no right to speak loudly, she has no right to question others. She should 'accept' everything. This is the situation of woman many years ago.

As the time passes, this notion about woman also began to change slowly. She just steps outside the four walls of the house. Began to get educated and became the earning member which were associated to men earlier. She decorated prominent positions. 'She' made great successes. Many feminist or woman activists emerged. They argued for the gender equality. They fight against gender discriminations. Now she has a voice. Though all these are a truth, there is still that old notion in the air i.e, woman as a subject or inferior to man. The increasing number of women abuses and cases related to this shows that, though woman claims to be equal to man ,still she is under the shadow of a man. That is, the stereotype of images set for her is still continuing .

'Girls', a short story by MrinalPande, is a perfect example of the situation of women in the society. Narrated by the protagonist, the story begins the day when they started for their meternal home for her mother's delivery. As the middle one of three sisters, she is little naughty and explains that for her mother 'everything in life is a problem' (Pande,1983,p.65). The mother herself told to the protagonist that "you are the cause of all my problem" (Pande,1983,p.66) and complaints that "She was born only to plague my life" (Pande,1983,p.70). Here the mother herself consider her girl child as a burden. It is very clear when she expect a baby boy. "I hope it's a boy this time. It will relieve me of the nuisance of going through another pregnancy" (Pande,1983,p.66). Most probably everyone in the family expect a boy, because they want to continue the lineage .or rather they considered women as some petty things only for looking after the home. It is the boy who manage the home financially. Even the grand mother prays: 'Oh goddess, protect my honour. At least this time let her take a son

back from her parents' home. (Pande,1983,p.67) For her it is a matter of pride to have a baby boy. The protagonist think, 'Do mother birds too think their girl birds are inferior?" (Pande,1983,p.70) it is thoughts provoking. An eight year old one to think like this. Here the attitude of the family towards girls made her to think so.

When she enter the home and bend down to naani'sfeet to asks for her blessings, someone from the family said "Not like that ... bend properly. You are born a girl and you will have to bend for the rest of your life" (Pande, 1983, p.67) This suggest the behaviour patterns that set for women. It is the others that create some set of rules for 'her'. 'She' is supposed to be like this or like that. Naani didn't allow her to sleep with her, just for a silly reason. She prefer the boy in the family rather than girl child.

The mockery of the story is that on the day of Ashtami, girls are considered as Devi. The elders do aartion girls, putstikka on their forehead and gives sweets and money. For a single day they worship girls unless they are the burden for the family. The protagonist questions them: "when you people don't love girls, why do you pretend to worshipthem?" (Pande,1983,p.71). The elders wonders by seeing her rage. "what a temper for a girl to show" (Pande,1983,p.71) was their reply. This again shows that some sets of rules are created for her. She is not supposed to go beyond that limit.

Thus the story depicts the attitude of society towards women. She is considered to be in the subordinate position always. Though the world has changed or developed, the situation of women is still the same. In the story even the name of the girl is not mentioned. It shows the unimportance of a girl child. Female infanticide is a common thing few years back though it is punishable crime now. Still, many people wishes to have a boy child. Because they consider a girls as a burden. If it is a girl, they need to find a dowry as it is parent's responsibility to get her married. Even if they get her educated, she is going to live in another home. If it is a boy there is no such problems. People expect a boy because they expect that he will be a helping hand in their old age. Though we think these were outdated thoughts, it is still in the wind.

People give importance to male child as they are supposed to be the bread winners and neglect the girl child. Today many parents are very liberal. They maintain a sense of equality among their children. But few in numbers. Most of the parents look for a boy child. This is a backward thought. Each one must have their importance. Like a man, girls also has an individuality. They have their own identity . We must respect a girl, and teach our sons to respect girls. Because they are also important in the society. Without women, this world is nothing.

Book cited:

Pande. (1983). Girls. In Anila(Ed.). Gender in Blossom (pp.65 - 71). Ane book Pvt. Ltd.