

Contemporary Relevance of Dinah Mehta's Play: Brides Are Not For Burning

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Abstract -The control of patriarchal society on women can never be eradicated from our country. Women are always seen as malleable and powerless who are always treated as objects (be it in their own house or their in-laws). There are very few women who stand up for their rights keeping feminist theory in mind while others are still confined to the oppression under men. Marriage is seen as an important factor in our country and so is "dowry". Though, our country has framed certain prohibition acts related to this year's back, it is startling to believe that unfortunately even now women become a victim of this perilous issue.

This paper intends to analyze Dinah Mehta's play, "Brides are not for burning "from an outlook of patriarchal society and the consequences of feminist theory that could have changed the life of the character "Lakshmi " which is pertinent to the lives of many girls in our modern world.

Keywords : Dowry, Feminism, patriarchal society .

INTRODUCTION-Can we call our country a male –dominated society ? Are women still oppressed in our nation ? Well , the answer is quite simple ,women were never set free from a patriarchal society. Years back also they were treated as slaves under men and even in the contemporary world too we don't find much difference. Despite of the educational system or the laws that our nation has framed ,women are still subjected to many problems such as dowry, rape and not given equal rights like men are given.. The novel starts with a conversation between Malini and Laxmi's father who feel sorry for Laxmi's death. Malini finds her sister's death little strange and goes on to find what really had happened .. Laxmi's in-laws were pressurizing her to give more dowry despite of giving at the beginning . Truth finally gets revealed to Malini and she becomes really angry to know that her sister was

forced to commit suicide. Cases like these are not one in a million, women are still subjected to these kind of issues. It is our patriarchal social configuration which has marginalized women totally. Women face certain restrictions everywhere, be it their household, in-laws house or their work place. What would be Laxmi's condition if she would have fought for her rights, taken a stand for herself? What if she would have backed from her marriage or filed a complaint against her husband, she would have been alive. Laws pertaining to dowry had been framed years back but nothing helped women secure their lives. Women should be capable of fighting for themselves without any law enforcement or any help. The best example can be taken from the play (i.e.) Malini. When nobody was in her favour, she took a decision to find out everything by herself. If Malini would have been in Laxmi's situation she would have fought back. The following section will explain that how patriarchy had made an innocent girl to commit suicide and what would have happened if Laxmi was a feminist? Mehta's play deals with the common social issues that still occur in our country, and why only women become a part of it.

EXPLANATION-The play uncovers how the gendered subaltern unfortunate casualty latently acknowledged the abusive positions of society as control worked out by her dad and sibling before marriage for getting away from the so-dreaded social disrespect of the family and after marriage the scoffing and affront of in-laws as she can't satisfy their unending requests. She is treated as a manikin, an untouchable, a slave lastly a futile object of toss. Mehta brings up an issue mark on the obligation of guardians, in-laws, kin and most clearly that of the married accomplice. What can be more awful than overlooking the holiness and pride of a relationship that claims the focal point of human presence with regards to family, society alongside the individual life? The social issues identified with a lady's life really start in her youth for the basic explanation that her folks are unmindful of how to raise a young lady kid as to make her solid and strong enough to face all obstacles in her life. Laxmi is persecuted by both, guardians and her in-laws. She had to leave her learns at a youthful age and was not appropriately taught on the grounds that with mother consistently pregnant and ailing. In her in-laws house Laxmi was tormented for not bringing enough share and she was an 'object' rather than a 'subject'. Marfatia family never requested share legitimately yet "they tormented what's more, mortified her. She is blamed for barrenness while the reality of the

situation was Vinod, her significant other, in hate of difficult such huge numbers of medicines couldn't fix his barrenness. In any case, this reality was smothered from open eye. Her in-laws have safeguarded Laxmi's life for a total of Rs.80000/ - , by anticipating the future, where regardless of whether something unnatural happens to her they can make benefit from that. She is the casualty of the severe share framework. In a conversation with Malini , her father says , *"Marriage is 12 tolas of gold, 2,000 rupees for a hall, utensils of steel, saris of silk... Their expectations were endless because they imagined a government clerk makes so much on the side. They thought I had feathered my nest with bribes and kickbacks... And I let them think that because I wanted to do my best for Laxmi."* This clearly states their conduct towards Laxmi . On the other hand ,Laxmi never told her family as she didn't want to give financial burden to them neither could she bear their torture and hence no other option remaining she decides to commit suicide ,thinking it would solve all her problems.

Dowry can be tagged as a perilous act which causes emotional as well as financial pain to the victim and her family , in some cases it may even lead to deaths ,as seen in the play. The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 article 3 determines that the punishment for giving or taking share doesn't make a difference to presents which are given at the hour of a union with the lady of the hour or spouse, when no interest for them have been made. Indian laws against shares have been as a result for quite a long time, they have been generally reprimanded as being ineffective. The act of endowment passings and murders keeps on occurring unchecked in numerous pieces of India and this has additionally added to the worries of implementation. We are living in the 21st century ,but still we see issues like these. According to the NDTV report of 26th August,2019 , a woman named Chandi Bi was thrashed by her husband named Ashfaq in Bareilly ,Uttar Pradesh. Her father had already given a sum of Rs.10 lakh before marriage and now they were demanding for extra 5 lakh after Chandi Bi gave birth to a female child. The patriarchal society is so demanding that eventually women end up becoming a victim of it .Married ladies are defenseless, in arranged relationships in formal Indian society deeply worried about the issues of status, position, sub-standing, class and religion and so on. Budgetary back up is, of course, fundamental to the „transactions“ between the groups of the lady of the hour and groom. It is a significant history to show and

observe what amount is given" by the bride"s family and how fantastically the groom"s family (desolately, actually) commended the „receiving" right of the husband to be. After marriage, the spouse is to assume all jobs like a worker, nurture, guardian of the house and cook for eternity. Additionally on the off chance that she works, she is a wellspring of salary, however she cannot guarantee any extraordinary hugeness in her associations with the individuals from her new household as she isn't situated in this house by birth. Around 60 percent of ladies are hitched before the legitimate age of 18. Lack of education among ladies is high, in every country region up to 75 percent. This clearly indicates how women are subjected to only household activities ,confined within their four walls whereas on the other hand men are privileged to do whatever they want .If women want freedom , they need to stand up for themselves . When women have full access to their privileges – from equivalent compensation and land proprietorship rights to sexual rights, opportunity from brutality, access to training, and maternal wellbeing rights – will genuine fairness exist. Only when women have their own authority ,have an equivalent political voice will economies and nations be changed. That is when we can set many young women free from societal norms and abolish patriarchal society to some extent.

The situation of Laxmi would have been totally different if she had the character of Malini . Malini, the representative of Mehta, isn't uninvolved like Laxmi. She is a dissident who challenges the framework. She is the 'furious young lady' who needs answers for the issues of the world. Malini is exhibited as epitome of dissent. She accepts that savagery is activity and that her sibling Anil's vision is incapable. She challenges the subjection of women. She prevails with regards to drawing out the bare truth of her sister's homicide, yet neglects to carry equity to her as she isn't bolstered by anybody in her adventure. She loses her temper when she comes to realize that law also has demonstrated Laxmi's passing as a mishap . We understand that it would have been really difficult for Laxmi to tell her family , but committing suicide is not a solution to these kind of issues as she had thought rather it portrayed her as a vulnerable women rather fighting against all the social evils faced will set her as an example of a strong women. It is Dina Mehta's duty to the reason for female strengthening that has made her dissent against the male centric treatment dispensed to ladies. Her character like Malini, is a case of the engaged ladies who oppose being type thrown into

the cliché picture of lady. They decide not to be accommodating to the requests of the general public and assume responsibility for their life into their own hands. They understand that they need go against their qualities as well as their shortcomings.

CONCLUSION- Women are therefore supposed to fight against the social evils and remove the tag of ‘vulnerable’ from them. Mehta’s play makes her readers pass a very strong message of not to fall under the hands of patriarchal society. Women should be like Malini, fierce and ready to take any challenge not like Laxmi, who sacrificed her life when she couldn’t find a solution to her issue. Women were always treated as inferior to men, no doubt in that, but time changes only with people. If women continue to accept the way they had been always living then things can never change. All women should be encouraged to get their basic rights and fulfill their ambitions just like Laxmi had of studying but was forced to sacrifice even that because of family pressure. Oppression of women will limit and maybe someday abolish only when women fight for themselves. As Jane Austen had mentioned a quote in her novel “Persuasion”, “*I hate to hear you talk about all women as if they were fine ladies instead of rational creatures. None of us want to be in calm waters all our lives.*” Women are termed as emotional, soft and vulnerable beings who would obey to whatever men command, this mentality should be changed. A small step can change the entire lives of not only one but many women.

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