

PATRIARCHAL SYSTEM IN GIRISH KARNAD'S NAGA-MANDALA

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ABSTRACT

Woman is exploited in patriarchal system. The patriarchal system allows man to have physical relationship outside marriage. It is normal in the view of society. But, even if a woman is suspected of having relation outside marriage, the men view it as if the calamity has fallen on their family. This is injustice to women. It is almost a kind of treatment that a female slave gets from her master. Her desires have no value. She is treated like an object.

KEYWORDS: *Patriarchal System, Social State of Woman, Superstitions*

INTRODUCTION

Naga Mandala is originally written in Kannada language by Girish Karnad which is translated into English by himself. This is a short two-act play titled after a cobra with supernatural power. The writer represents the patriarchal system under which the desires of a woman are crushed. Naga (cobra) plays the role of fulfilling these desires. It gives how men treat a woman in all the conditions the woman lives in.

Woman as Mother and Daughter

In Indian society woman as mother is respected and as daughter loved better. Kappanna carries his blind mother on his shoulders. She scolds him for his foolishness. She even slaps him at his back when he does not listen to her order. He respects and takes care of her; though, she says she can go by herself. Kappanna says: "Do you know what I ask for when I pay to Lord Hanuman of Gymnasium every morning? For more strength Not to wrestle. Not to fight. Only so I can carry you around. (Naga- Mandala, 8). He never leaves her alone. He tells her everything whatever happens in the surrounding.

As a daughter, Rani is loved much by her parents. She dreams of her past life with her parents where she could sleep quietly between her father and mother. She felt safe with them. It was the heaven to her which disappeared after the marriage. As a daughter Rani's life is safe and happy in the cocoon of her parent's love. But, it turns in a hellish life, when she becomes a wife. It shows that woman as a wife is not viewed as a human being in society.

Kappanna's character shows that every human being is not like Appanna. Though, exceptionally, there are few men like Kappanna, who does not only respect his mother - but any woman. As Kappanna finds that Appanna has locked his wife in the house, he expresses his feeling; "That Appanna should have been born a wild beast or a reptile. By some mistake, he got human birth" (Naga Mandala, 8). Though, Kappanna says to his mother not to interfere with Appanna's family matter, he follows to his mother when she wants to help Rani.

Maltreatment by Husband

In Naga-Mandala, the name of the protagonist is symbolic. His name Appanna means anyman. His role in the drama shows how, generally, all the men are tyrant toward their wives in a more or less extension. Appanna's wife, Rani, is a beautiful girl; but Appanna is already after another woman named Concubine. He does not spend time with his newly married wife. At the very start of their married life he lives her alone at the night. He does not give the reason where he goes in the night and returns only at noon of the next day. He does not say for what work he goes out in the night; because he goes to another woman, Concubine. The newly married girl is confused seeing her husband leave her alone. Appanna has nothing to do what her wife thinks of him. He does not give attention to her. He comes only for lunch in day and returns after it. He locks her in the house for the time when he is out with another woman. His wife is a typical Indian woman who does not question whatever her husband does. As she hesitatingly asks that she fears at night being alone, he irresponsibly responds: "What is there to be scared of? Just keep to yourself. No one will bother you. Rice!(Naga.Mandala, 7). He has nothing to do how she suffers being alone. He concerns only if she has prepared his meal or not. As his wife tries to account, he oppresses her, saying: "Look, I don't like idle chatter. Do as you are told, understand? (Naga-Mandala, 7). He does not speak any word with the exception of scolding and warning her. He eats the meal and goes out, saying that he would come back for lunch. It became daily life of Rani. She becomes accustomed to it. She dreams for better life. She is living a life of a prisoner. Her real life is a hellish one, she sees it better only in her dreams.

Patriarchal System

Appanna has kept his wife locked for he does not want her see anybody out which may lead others to help her. He wants to keep his wife ignorant and obedient. Kurudavva, a blind woman, is the first person whom she sees after the day of her marriage. At the time, Appanna finds Kurudavva meeting his wife, he approaches her, asking what she is doing there. He warns; "She won't talk to anyone. And no one need to talk to her." (Naga - Mandala, 14). He arrogantly says, audible enough to Kurudavva, that he cared that the people should not see his wife; but what he can do when even a blind meddles in his personal life. Next day, he brings a dog to keep the meddlers away from his house.

Rani dares not to cross the door, of her house. She does so only in an essential situation. Kurudavva gives her some roots to turn Appanna into a good husband. Rani mixes the paste of the root in curry. She is terrified as the curry turns into red colour; and, she must throw it away without her husband's notice. But Appanna finds her crossing the door. He asks her where she has been out. He lets her come in. 'But the moment she steps in, Appanna slaps her hard. Rani collapses to the floor. He does not look at her again. Just pulls the door shut, locks it from outside and goes away.' (Naga-Mandala, 17). He does not think that it is considerable whatever treatment he gives to his wife. He is not angry with her, but he does it contemptuously.

In this play, Karnad makes use of a supernatural device. The root-mixed-curry, thrown by Rani, makes effect on Naga (cobra). Naga falls in love with her; and, he starts to meet her in the form of Appanna. Appanna notices that something has gone wrong, when he finds her pregnant. He is extremely angry with her. He speaks bad words to her for managing to have physical relationship with some man despite his locking her in the house. Rani pleads her not to blame her like that for, in her view, Naga and Appanna are the same person. She has no idea of Naga's supernatural power. She thinks that Appanna is loving husband in the night and becomes cruel in day. Appanna says that she has darkened his face in the village. He starts to beat her. He drags her out into the street. He picks up a stone to throw at her; but, Naga comes

ahead to save Rani. As Rani runs in the house and locks herself in, Appanna runs behind her. He shouts at the door. He threatens her that he would go to the villagers and make them throw her with her child into the boiling oil.

Karnad shows how the villagers (men) are insensible toward a woman. They are hypocrite to make show that they are sensible and kind elders. Appanna calls the villagers to his house. The elders say to Rani that it is very bad whatever Appanna has complained against her; and, they must judge her to know the truth. But it is not a human and logical judgment. They put two options before her that she can prove her chastity by holding a red-hot iron in her hand or holding her hand in the boiling oil. According to the advice of Naga, Rani insists on to hold king cobra by her hand. Curiosity increases in the villagers, but no man comes ahead (or, no woman dares to do so) to say that these ways of testing one's chastity are inhuman and foolish.

The villagers, who treat her no more than an object, fall on her feet, when she swears of her innocence by holding cobra in her hand. They take her as goddess, when the cobra slides on her body and spreads its hood over her head. The hypocrite and superstitious elders say that she is not a woman (but, a divine spirit). They advise Appanna to serve and worship his wife. They lift Rani in Palanquin and take her with her husband in procession. At home, Appanna falls on her feet, pleading for forgiving him for his sin, that he could not see her real spirit. The hypocrites can make an ordinary woman a goddess; otherwise, they would not even treat the same woman as human being.

CONCLUSIONS

Woman's desires are underestimated in the manner as if she is not human being. Woman has to live dumbly under the pressure of man (men). She thinks of her husband as her only world. If she is found as wrong doer, she has to be expelled from the social strata. The superstitious, men who ill-treat a woman, falls on her feet. It means a woman is not even human being in the view of such people but when they find supernatural power in her, they call her goddess.

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