

WOMEN AS VICTIMS OF GENDER INEQUITY : A STUDY OF SHIVANI'S *BHAIRAVI*

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ABSTRACT

Despite manifold developments in the strata of human civilisation, gender-based discrimination and marginalization of women remains sensitive even in the contemporary India. Be it security in general, freedom of conduct, speech or growth opportunities in the field of career, women have to face rigorous hurdles to get through what they deserve for. Often, the novel ends up with a bad taste of defeat for the women having subdued and left with no courage for herself. In rest, and the majority of the cases, - compromise is the only choice left for women. Literature, in true spirit, shows a candid mirror to the society, as it's built on the factual scenes and observations on human life. Enriched by the apt sense of literature and sound observations on complex issues prevailing in the society, fiction also serves to be a fantabulous critique for the society, thus qualifies to be a valid source of study. This paper aims at analysing gender-based marginalization faced by female in the North Indian Societies as reflected in the novel *Bhairavi* (Translated into English as *Bhairavi: The Runaway* by Priyanka Sarkar), wherein a dark side of discrimination and trauma faced by woman has been presented so vividly.

Keywords : Discrimination, Marginalization and Patriarchy, etc.

Overview

Bhairavi : The Runaway, an English translation by Priyanka Sarkar, represents a rich and emotionally moving piece of fiction which is originally written by Gaura Pant aka Shivani in Hindi.

Known for her classic depiction of North Indian Societies, her work remarkably orchestrates the confrontations faced by women on many fronts, be it pursuit of self- recognition or their struggle for empowerment and freedom.

Shivani's feminist leaning shows up so vibrantly in her work in *Bhairavi*. Everlasting trauma faced by three women of succeeding generations has been depicted so vividly that it leaves a dark enough print on the readers. Mrinal Pande, Shivani's elder daughter, also places *Bhairavi* as, "Perhaps the darkest of my mother's novels" (x) in the foreword to the book.

Enticing the scariness of a mystic Guru keeping a pet snake and waving predilection towards two of his female disciples, Shivani introduces the story from an Aghori Ashram somewhere near Kolkata. Deadly injured, fallen out of a running train, Chandan 'the main cast of the story', realises herself to be alive to endure for survival amidst the Aghori Guru and possessive Maya Di. The plot, then lofts into her past rolling across Chandan's childhood, her mother's story from the hills of Kumaun, her marriage and marital home leading to the tragic train journey with her husband. Rapidity accompanied by the heart tearing circumstances faced by these characters keep the novel *Bhairavi: The Runaway* appealing and sensitive all throughout.

The main cast 'Rajrajeshwari' carries a very poignant sense of remorse for her youthful mistake which led to all her suffering in life. This further drives her over-

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