



Woman and Motherhood: A comparative study between Dhiruben Patel's works Aandhali gali (Blind street) and Kadamburini maa (Kadamburi's mother)

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Patel's current novella Kadamburini maa (Kadamburi's mother) remarks – "A mother criticizing the immoral character of her own son can be called the eighth wonder of the world!" (Patel 29).

Motherhood not only represents only womanhood, but it also represents the woman's existence as a human being. Motherhood is incredibly significant for a woman.

In her essay "Feminist Critics and Literary Mothers: Daughters Reading Elizabeth Gaskell," the author Deanna L. Davis argues that motherhood is an institution where, women have to sustain their existence as a mother. Motherhood is regarded as the most laudable position of women in patriarchal society (4). According to her, motherhood gives rise to the concept of contradictory desire. She claims that a mother is not the same as a woman (5). Mother's life is not referred to as her own. Furthermore, she contends that the mother-daughter relationship is bound up in patriarchal tradition, and the daughter must accept the traditional role of motherhood (6).

As previously stated, Patel's writing reveals previously unseen aspects of women's lives. Of course, childbearing is inextricably linked to the female body. At the same time, the novella shows how feelings of motherhood differ from the process of childbearing.

It is to be noted that in the culture of the social system, a mother never criticizes her son. If a mother discovers vices in her son, she must remain silent or avoid it. Because a son is known as the shadow of his father, a mother cannot refer to her adult and married son as her son. As a result, a married son's licentious actions may endanger the life of his wife. Something similar happens to Kadamburi, the protagonist of the novella Kadamburini Maa (Kadamburi's Mother). When the protagonist Kadamburi is beaten and mistreated by her wealthy husband Anil, her mother-in-law Vijiya comes to her aid. Vijiya's feelings for her daughter-in-law make her a unique example of motherhood who not only criticizes Anil but also properly guides Kadamburi.

It depicts Vijiya's difficult life in addition to the deplorable conditions of Kadamburi's life. Following Vijiya's marriage, Girdharilal, her husband developed paralysis and is now confined to a bed. Leaving aside the luxuries of Ratan Manor, Vijaya shares a room with her husband. She looks after and serves her spouse all the time. She is committed to her husband during such a trying time. There are no limits to her love and compassion for him. She takes the situation head-on.

The following lines claim the same—

"I forgot about all of those things... I assumed he would be fine in my care. I spent all of my waking hours for him, as if I didn't have a personal life of my own. I am not a woman, nor am I a mother. I am nothing more than a wife... the better half of a half-dead, paralytic corpse." (Patel 161).

In the essay, "I Am Not a Women's Libber Although Sometimes I Sound Like One: Indigenous Feminism and Politicized Motherhood" the author Sarah A. Nickel argues that during 1950s and 1980s, indigenous women consistently became active. They also began to participate in real and significant political changes by leveraging their unique positions and experiences with colonialism and gender discrimination (299). The author claims that to achieve their goals, indigenous women drew on feminist discourses at times to confront patriarchy both within and outside of their communities, but they continued to prioritize motherhood ideals and, at times, visibly muted feminist ideals. Despite the fact that women's political strategies, alliances, and identities changed over time and space, indigenous motherhood, which focused on family and community well-being, remained a central yet flexible concept grounding and propelling women's political activities (300).

Vijiya is aware of the events at Ratan Manor because she lives in the same house. At first, she only witnesses Anil's tyranny, injustice, and exploitation of Kadamburi. However, when Kadamburi's situation worsens, she returns to her parents' house. Vijiya appreciates Kadamburi's gesture and advises Aruna not to send her back to her own house. Vijiya wishes to teach

Anil a lesson. However, Aruna has reservations about Vijiya (Patel 157). Vijiya looks after Kadamburi. She not only supports her daughter-in-law but also opposes Anil's vices. Aside from that, Vijiya allows Kadamburi to share her room. When Anil storms into Vijiya's room looking for Kadamburi, Vijiya stops him at the door. The following lines describes her concern for her daughter-in-law –

"This world is enormous. There are a lot of people in it with different personalities. There is a lot going on there. It is peculiar, miraculous, and magnificent. You have yet to see and comprehend that world. You must have fun in life. You must celebrate your birth." (24)

As previously stated, Vijiya not only saves Kadamburi's life, but she also gradually attempts to teach her a lesson of bravery. Kadamburi, according to Vijiya, needs to understand her life. She should not have to feel threatened by Anil and Arunaben.

The following excerpt supports this view –

"Kadamburi, don't explain anything. I can't stand it. You are not required to explain yourself to anyone. You must live, and live with dignity. Don't follow Anil or Arunaben's orders. You must live your life as you see fit." (Patel 15).

The novella Kadamburi's Mother is the story of the birth of a new woman. There is no revolting force, but one woman stands firm and silently opposed to the suppression of another woman. Kadamburi's biological mother is Aruna, who gave birth to her, but her true mother is her mother-in-law,

Vijiya, who instils in her the spirit of self-respect. Her mother, Aruna, is a typical timid woman finding her happiness in money and jewels. She wants to return Kadamburi to her wealthy husband's home, despite the fact that he is mistreating her. Aruna sent her daughter into the darkness due to societal misconceptions. She believes that her daughter's happiness can only be found through wealth. She is perplexed by her daughter's predicament. At the same time, Vijiya holds Aruna responsible for Kadamburi's continued suffering. Patel writes –

“Duryodhan might not have been so sinful if Gandhari hadn't closed her eyes with a strip of cloth.” (Patel 30).

Gandhari, as we all know, is a female character in the great epic Mahabharat. She, too, was a victim of injustice. Gandhari, despite being a princess, had no right to choose her life partner. Gandhari, of course, was not to blame for Duryodhan's vices. However, she is blamed for Duriyodhan's ambitious nature. As a result, every woman in society is treated as if she were a Gandhari. Likewise, Vijiya is not to blame for Anil's vices. Furthermore, she bears no responsibility for Kadamburi's timidity either. Since Panna is also Vijiya's daughter, Panna's demeanour obviously reflects Vijiya's sense of self-assurance. She arrived in India after leaving her husband behind in Australia. Additionally, she wants to care for her kid Shashank by herself.

Similarly, the novella Aandhali Gali (Blind Street) demonstrates the importance of a mother in raising a daughter. Mothers constantly consider her daughters' marriage at the

appropriate age, in addition to teaching them to cook, clean, and love others. In the society, there are mothers like Arunaben who raise their daughters like Kadamburi. The following quote depicts Arunaben's reflection over Kadamburi –

"She was perplexed to discover why Kadamburi tolerates her husband's cruel behaviour. Why doesn't she object? Is the woman's timidity due to a sense of security and greed for wealth?" (Patel 18).

Additionally, a mother like Vijiya treats her daughter and daughter-in-law equally and teaches them the value of respecting oneself. Kundan, from the novel *Andhali Gali* (Blind Street), regrettably lacks a mother like Vijiya. As a result, Kundan is unable to apply her schooling or develop the art of cooking. The Kundan position is highlighted in the following lines –

"Kundan, the heroine, is unemployed. She does not need to work because she is wealthy. She is interested in Paresh's life. 'You are a B.A...', Paresh says to Kundan. 'At the very least, you can educate someone.' Kundan's life is transformed when she summons the nearby children and begins teaching them. She does this activity not to make money, but to escape her mundane life." (Patel 9).

The aforementioned quotation demonstrates how her life has changed from the gloom of estrangement.

Kundan, a well-educated woman, struggles to comprehend her father. By exhibiting a spirit of camaraderie, Ratilalbai gained her trust; yet, her life was ruined. She became imprisoned in her own home. Kundan could not even think about

questioning the character of her “ideal” father (11). Kundan's desires had been stifled, and she eventually had to rely on others throughout her life.

According to Hina Patel, Aandhali Gali (Blind Street) is divided into three chapters, with Kundan discussing motherhood in the first. She believes that marriage should take place at the appropriate age because women face maternal problems after the age of 35. (4). At first glance, she appears to be open-minded, but her situation becomes clear later on. Unmarried daughter has been rendered powerless. Furthermore, she explains that, despite narrating two stories in one novella, Dhiruben Patel places a strong emphasis on women and motherhood. On the one hand, motherless Kundan is duped and misled, while Subhangi grows closer to her husband as a result of her pregnancy (16).

The novella Aandhali Gali (Blind Street) is about the importance of motherhood. At the same time, it discusses the distinction between mother and stepmother. Patel's short novella discusses the same treatment of women. Kundan, her late mother, and her stepmother all suffer from the curse of loneliness. Ratilalbai, as discussed in the novella, left enough money for Kundan. However, aside from her silent photograph, there is no memorial to Kundan's mother in this Kundan Villa. Furthermore, Ratilalbai's hidden affair draws our attention to Kundan's mother. Patel has not included a clear picture of Kundan's mother and stepmother, who left her property to Kundan. Their silence emphasizes their life's misery. Kundan, on the other hand, represents the

woman's shadow. Perhaps, she is a replica of her mother.

This current book attempts to convey this global issue in a quite simple and expressive manner. Where neither the daughter nor the mother is expected to have the same rights as men. A father like Ratilalbai has not changed his daughter even in the late twentieth century. Kundan becomes lazier as a result of Ratilal's false praise. Ratilalbai used to refer to her as Saraswati's form (Goddess of Education). Kundan, according to Ratilalbai, resembles the Goddess of Education whenever she wears white clothes. As a result, Kundan was forced to dress in white. Furthermore, Ratilal's sweet words restricted Kundan's access to the world outside of Kundan Villa. However, she is never able to decipher his intentions and self-interest. Without the guidance of a mother, Kundan sacrifices her life and decides to live as an obedient daughter. (20)

Simone de Beauvoir argues in her book "The Second Sex" that in the twentieth century, motherhood can give married women respect, but unwed women are not supposed to have children (508). According to her, unmarried women are frequently the object of scandal. Furthermore, she contends that in order to receive love and care, women begin to seek the support of their husband (508). Motherhood is not only respected by women, but the birth of a child creates a new woman (622). Furthermore, she claims that while women are easily able to accept responsibility for their child, their desire is killed in the material world (622). Moreover, she Beauvoir states that dissatisfied

women occasionally have children for companionship and frequently forgo their own desires in favor of the welfare of the child (627).

Kundan is single and has never been in a relationship. Even though Kundan has earned her B.A. but the novella makes no mention of any of her acquaintances or friends. The love tale between Paresh and Subhangi, as narrated in the same novella, profoundly transforms Kundan's life. After Ratilal's passing, Kundan encountered Paresh for the first time. She, however, is moved to tears by his love story. She also informs Paresh of the ideal period for having children. According to Kundan, 32 is too old to start a family. Moreover, Kundan also looks after Subhangi after learning of her pregnancy. Subhangi's beauty forces Kundan to recognize the loneliness of her single life. Kundan too decides to get married. (8) While telling the tale of a motherless daughter, the novella also conveys the brutality of patriarchy. Kundan's existence is rendered meaningless in the name of love and *sanskar*. The following sentences describe Kundan's life as a motherless daughter –

“We were like friends... I called him Ratilal and he called me Kundanlal.” (10).

Therefore, it can be observed that the novella *Aandhali Gali* (Blind Street) focuses on every aspect of a woman's life. Motherhood is a very different stage in a woman's life. Dhiruben Patel uses her novellas *Aandhali Gali* (Blind Street) and *Kadamburi ni Maa* (Kadamburi's Mother) to illustrate this concept of motherhood.

Work cited

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