

# THE MARGINAL VOICE IN THE GUJARATI DALIT NOVEL 'SHOSH' (THIRST) BY DAXA DAMODARA



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Time passes by, generations come and go, new age is coming, things go on changing, the jamana of remix is coming ; old ideals perish, new ideals take their place, old values decline , new values prosper. But from ancient age up to the recent age one thing remains the same and may remain the same for the next generations if their mentality will not change. In the modern age, the 21<sup>st</sup> century, man may change his style, his clothes, his personality, his vehicles, his destination ( home – bungalow) but he cannot change the one thing that is the inequality of man and woman.

As the cultural history of nation, outside the country also, the status of woman and her function has remained unchanged. In the country, as the socio-cultural history brings to light, women have been suppressed, exploited and confined to home and its walls. Her identity is dependent, her desires and ambitions are given secondary position or neglected. From her birth she is neglected, disliked by her father, husband and her son also. The general picture provides a real account of women's life, in the great India, a large section of women are suffering even today. "We have women going about with ghungat on their faces. And women who have no choice to decide about having children. We have many people still advocating sati who consider dowry a necessity, who count it a loss when a girl is born and profit when a boy is born. It is this abysmal difference that I want to do away with, as a feminist"<sup>1</sup>

Present paper definitely focuses on the marginalization of woman in the society by portraying the character sketch of Madhavi in the Gujarati Dalit novel 'Shosh' by the young Dalit writer Daxa Damodara. This is her first novel, the first Dalit novel by Dalit women autor. In my present paper, I have made an affempt to write the marginal, neglected, subordinated condition of Madhavi. For an unwanted lady childbirth becomes a curse and she suffered the whole life as an inferior object. As a consequence at the end of the novel Madhavi goes in comma. For the preseat paper, the Gujarati Dalit novel 'shosh' is taken in to consideration. It is awarded sister Nivedita First prize for 2004 by Gujarati sahitaya parishad. This is the first Dalit novel written by young Dalit woman author. As the story of the novel develops, we see the pathetic, pitiful charac-

ter of a female child named as 'Madhavi' suffering from her birth. The author made two parts of the novel though she didn't give name to each part. In the first part, the story of Madhavi that means her marriage and the struggle of Madhavi for inner love from her husband ends. In the second part the very abnormal mentally sick condition of the mind of Madhavi is described. In this part, the story reaches to the climax. The novel presents the marginal, neglected condition of Madhavi. Naturally every woman wants love whole heartedly, by her parents ( father – mother), her life partner (husband). But when she didn't get such type of love from her parents and husband then she totally collapses, otherwise she will make suicide. In the preseat novel, the protagonist of the novel 'Madhavi' get her parents love nor her husband. Her lovgings remains unnoticed, uncared. And as a consequence her thirst becomes her life. At the end she becomes mentally sick searching for her inner love and at last she went in comma.

In the first part of the novel, we see that Mahavi is from a Hindu caste, her father is well-educated, reputed person. By profession is C.A. His father wants a son for the second time But Invain Madhavi is the second unwanted female child, of her parents. Her father gets disappointed after her birth.

But he doesn't show it to others. He accepted the arrival of the second female child, though inanely he didn't like it. Her father always says externally, " If proper education and cultural trainings are provided then even a daughter can stand by her parents,"<sup>2</sup> But Madhavi knows the truth so she replies ; " you are telling lie ..... a daughter and a son .... We want your love papa ..... your love.... If you cannot give it to is, take your compassion, sympathy for us ,"<sup>3</sup> Madhavi's father a sophisticated, modern, educated man. But only visibly, invisibly he always make comparison between a son and a daughter.

Madhavi, the second child, wants parental love from her father which she could not get. She is always sincere, obedient to her father. Always ready to do any work for her father. But father never pays attention towards her. So, she gets attracted towards arts i.e. painting and poem making. Tragedy starts in Madhavi's life when unfortunately her elder sister, secretly get

married to the other caste boy and ran away. And for that Madhavi get punishment because for her father the runaway daughter is like a dead person.

In college days, when she was in H.S.C. she gets attracted by a Dalit boy Rajendra Makawana, who is not so intelligent but an average student. She is fond of making beautiful poems and desires she will show them to Rajendra. But unfortunately, her father read them and warns her to concentrate on her study. Her father wants that Madhavi should become a CA like him sometimes she also thinks about her father's status and of her love i.e Rajendras low status "where my father is ..... where our cultured family is and there this lower caste Rajendra is ... Shit." <sup>4</sup> Madhavi paints various types of pictures. Her painting is really beautiful. For her it is the only medium through which she can express her love. But her father also banned on it.

She passed her H.S.C. exam with minimum marks. Then she want to join B.A. First year At that time her father becomes very angry and she scolds her. At that time, Madhavi totally collapses and she feels herself guilty about not satisfying her father's expectations. She blames to herself, she could not rise from that condition and becomes an abnormal. She wants love from her father, but her father always scolds her. At every moment whenever her father get chance dehumanised her. Never cares about her, her anxieties, her dreams etc.

This is the real saga of every unwanted female child in Indian society. She expresses her misery.

"I want to cry somebody's name ..... but name I forgot ..... I want to cry from the depth of my Heart on somebody's name ..... thirst stuck to .... Where I should go? My inner self is dry and wants love." <sup>5</sup>

Madhavi's mother, another female character from the novel, has no voice. She doesn't have any existence of her own. But manytime she consoles her daughter. Madhavi's love for Rajendra also finished. Because she totally becomes disturbed and abnormal. Once, she painted a beautiful picture of a woman, who is very 'thirsty' like her thirst of love. She is fascinated towards Kutch, the land swallowed up the once highly advanced civilization .... But at the present condition known as the land of calamities and deserted zone. Later on her father takes her care but in vain. Nothing happens. When psychiatrist advised painting is the best way for expressing her feelings at that time her father gives all the painting instruments to her. Later on Madhavi's father decides about her marriage. When Madhavi is completing her B.A. studies, in second year, her father arranges her marriage. She married to Purandar, the football player, a manager, working in a private firm. Purandar's mother is a serious patient. She doesn't have any her choice in her own home. But she cares for

Madhavi so, purandar's aunt child widow rule all the house which Madhavi didn't like. Madhavi wants love from purandar whole heartedly. She desires the inner love (spiritual love) from her husband but not the physical love. But she didn't get the spiritual type of love from her husband. He sees towards her just as a wife and for his sexual desires. Madhavi does not hate sex but does not want only sex from her husband. She says ; "Love and sex are the two sides of the same coin which can never be one." <sup>6</sup>

But her husband Purandar could not understand her feelings, her emotions. Whereas Madhavi surrenders her body to himself for fulfilling his sexual desires. Madhavi does not like husband wife's only sex relationship. Thus their life is going on. They have a son, Rahul. Days going on. Madhavi desires inner love from her husband but she didn't get it. Her husband never understand her real feelings. And in the meantime, again Rajendra, the famous painter enters in the city, he devoted his whole life to painting. Again Madhavi want in her previous life, that means life before marriage. So, the arrival of Rajendra disturbs her life. Madhavi does painting at home with her husband's permission because he wants so. And Purandar brought them, Madhavi and Rajendra together and he again doubts about their relationship. But Madhavi's love for Rajendra is not sensual type because Rajendra is a good friend, companion, a teacher cum guide to her.

The marital life of Madhavi and Purandar does not going without clashes. So, Purandar demands divorce from Madhavi. But Madhavi doesn't want it. For that she leaves painting. Her son Rahul also makes good paintings. She loves her son from her heart. But her husband, emotionally and mentally tortures her by saying bad things about Rajendra. So, Madhavi again becomes mentally sick and abnormal. Rajendra is a good fellow so he takes the decision of leaving the city, and this thing could not bear by Madhavi she was totally tormented and destroyed due to her husband's doubts on her. Then Purandar takes Madhavi to Kutch, for making her fresh and normal. From her childhood Madhavi disturbs. She laments on her pitiful condition, she says to herself.

"I want to weep !"/"But can I not weep." <sup>7</sup> / Sometimes she becomes out of control/ "Who Am I ?"/ "Where Am I ?" <sup>8</sup>

In Kutch, they visited so many places. Bhadreshwar is one of them. It is the place of Jains' pilgrimage. It is a belief behind it that it was built by Dudo shah, a a Dalit ship – owner of middle age. He was a rich merchant whose ships went abroad for selling goods. During the time of vikram savant 1313 – 1315 Kutch became the victim of drought. People lost their lives without a drop of water. At that time Dudo shah had

built the step- well for the Untouchables. In the beginning Dudo shah could not complete the step well because his ships had not returned to shore – so it was not possible to build the step – well but Desal the young booming Dalit youth who sacrificed his life and gave the money to Dudo shah to complete the step – well.

The author has presented the inter caste love story for describing the mental condition of the protagonist, Madhavi. It is the inter-caste love story of Desal and Rajal, a maid from royal class. The prince of Bhadreshwar goes to propose to Rajal. But Rajal who is beautiful as well as brave and also a poetess. She kindly refuses the proposal so, the prince feels insulted and decides to teach her a lesson so, he sends Desal, the Dalit youth as a poet and hero. It a secret contract between them, prince and Desal. So, Desal accepts the challenge, he gets money from the prince and he gave that money to Dudo shah to complete the construction of step-well Rajal loves Desal. But when she came to know about the Dalit caste of Desal, she rejects his love and complains about her cheating. Death punishment is given to Desal. But Rajal couldnot tolerate it because she loves him so much. After the death of Desal, Rajal feels herself guilty.

Madhavi sees the step-well, the real story of Dalit (untouchable's) misery, sufferings. She couldnot bear it. Madhavi feels the miseries for herself also. Madhavi compares herself with Rajal and considering herself as Rajal speaks the kutchi dialogues with Desal. So, Rahul and Purandar get bewildered, Rahul disturbs so much, he didn't get any answer of why his mother is behaving in this awesome manner. He cries, weeps and asks question to his mother ; what happens to you Mama ? ”<sup>9</sup> Madhavi considers herself as Rajal and Rajendra as Desal. Once, madhavi lonely went to Kanthakot, to meet her lover Rajendra i.e. Desal

Kanthakot is the 14<sup>th</sup> century built fort situated on the top of hill by vaghela dynasty of Gujarat but now remains the desert place. No one allows to go there. Madhavi feels that Rajal belongs to Kanthakot so he goes there. In Kanthakot how Desal was beheaded, is presented. Rajal ( Madhavi) feels guilty for doing injustice to Desal. Madly she runs in search of her true love, Desal ( Rajendra ). She collapses but Purandar saves her. After seeing Madhavi's condition gone out of control, Purandar slaps her. But when she becomes normal, went in comma. Thus, the novel, 'shosh' ( thirst) ends on a note thirst for love, love of parent, love of husband. Madhavi's pitiful condition. In her childhood, she doesn't get parental love. After marriage she doesn't get the spiritual love, from her husband. She remains thirsty forever for inner love. And this is her tragedy.

None can understand her, nor her parents, nor her husband, even her son. And at last she becomes puppet, a soul without any body consisting of feelings. Here, Madhavi is a character who is not conscious about ' self ' or her existence, her identity. But his revolt is really humanistic one. She wants to live as a human being. So, at last, through this paper I want to say that caste factor in India causes emotional suppression. And emotional suppression causes mentally disturbance, and when it suppresses it causes to self disaster and others life also. So, our society and parent should understand child's feelings specially of daughter.

According to Mahatma phule, there are 50% women in India. But they are in neglected position i.e. illiterate suppressed position. So, our country didn't made much progress. Female is a 'sarjanshil' human being she has the power of creativity something beautiful and beyond the zenith, if an opportunity she will get. So honor them. Give them opportunity of progress. Only then our country in 2020 will become a Mahasatta.

## REFERENCE

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