

## *CHAPTER-IV*

*CONCLUSION*

## CHAPTER IV

### Conclusion

“You can tell the condition of the nation by looking at the status of women.”— Jawaharlal Nehru

Women in any society constitute the most important segment of the country's population. Their role in moulding the younger generation cannot be underestimated. The future of any society depends on the way a woman as a mother brings up her children and influences the process of their personality development. The harmony of family relations and its stability depends upon to a greater extent on the status and behaviour of women as wives and housewives.

In Indian society, woman is assigned a secondary position in relation to man. According to Manu Samhita,

It is believed that a woman should depend upon a man from cradle to grave and should never live as an independent entity. . . . a woman must never govern herself as she likes . . . and therefore curbs the growth and development of woman as a free and autonomous human being.  
(Prabhakar 16)

Appachana portrays a picture of contemporary Indian society especially marriage and man-woman relationships and has explored different aspects of it. Women are victims of the irrational social vision, which signifies, that they are just pieces of trembling humanity, persecuted by the society. They are deprived of their rights, and do not feel free to express their feelings and emotions. Marriage suppresses their femininity and their human demands. The women have sacrificed

their identity and given up all their needs. They have followed the course of self-abnegation and whittled all their wants out of fear. They are not their true selves. Society excludes women's active participation in public spheres on the assumption that women are by nature inferior to men intellectually and physically. Consequently the real potentiality and talent of women go unrecognised and unutilised.

Appachana's vision envisages the establishment of the equality of opportunity between men and women based on justice and humanism. The writer provides insights into the predicament of women in all her ways. Her writings mainly deal with male-domination that provides only sufferings and subjugation to their female counterparts. The portrayal of the predicament of middle-class Indian women, their conflicts and quest for identity, issues pertaining to parent-child relationship, marriage and sex and their exploitation and disillusionment are the main concerns of Anjana Appachana. Her short stories mirror women's grievances through the protagonists who are true to life. The stories explore and expose the long smothered wail of the incarcerated psyche, imprisoned within the four walls of domesticity.

Most of her women characters like the mother characters in "My Only Gods", "Her Mother" and "Incantations", Mrs. Srivastava, Sita ki amma in "When Anklets Tinkle", Sangeeta and Geeti in "Incantations" and Hemalatha in "Prophecy" are typical women of tradition, destined to become shadows of their husbands. It points out the fact that women are often looked at and treated as property of men. Woman's position is reduced to that of a commodity meant to be

used and disposed by heartless men. Women take the traditional roles as faithful housewives and child-bearing machines.

Looking at the realities faced by women, the writer contributes new perceptions and perspectives. She questions and challenges the women's status quo. Her concern has been with the weak as against the strong; the victim versus the victimizer. She is intensely preoccupied with the women fighting against the female norms of life – sexuality and dichotomy between career and the claims of the family. The female protagonists are sandwiched between tradition and modernity. Hence they disown a realistic, ritualistic and traditional life in order to explore their true selves. They stress the imperative need to fight against gender biases and discriminations.

Through her writing, Anjana Appachana participates in the female struggle against the male authority. She sincerely broods over the fate and future of women more particularly in male chauvinistic society and their annihilation at the altar of marriage. She challenges the futility of marriage as an institution. Matrimony is a weapon in the hands of patriarchy to deprive women of their individuality. Marriage brought two people together after a cold-blooded bargaining to meet, mate and reproduce so that the generations might continue. It is a trap. It is a cage with two trapped animals. She also questions the dependency of women and lashes out at the social hegemony of the males who make the unjust rules and conditions to subjugate women.

Appachana in her analysis considers men to be rational and women to be sensitive and emotional. Women culturally and conditionally are dependent on

men and in case of any disruption of attachment or affiliation, it is not just a loss of relationship but a total loss of self. She wants her women to break out of the shell.

Chapter II "Subjugation of Women in Silence" deals with the radical changes in the gender relations in the society. Appachana ironically tries to convey that women are deceived and looked down upon by the Indian society where the age-old subjugation of women and the indescribable humiliation still persist.

Usha Bande elaborates on it as J.Krishnamurthi opines, "We kill people's reputation with a word or gesture; we wipe people out through gossip, contempt and defamation. The cruelty, the hate that exists in ourselves is expressed in the exploitation of the weak by the powerful and the cunning. . ." (xv). When the individuals are deprived of society's benefits and are rendered more vulnerable to sufferings than others it is the case of violence and consequent victimization. This violence causes mental pain or suffering to an individual, or harming one's reputation.

Appachana's stories have great relevance in the present age. Human kind is oblivious of the fact that now-a-days woman is the creator of life upon this earth, that woman and motherhood ought to be respected and revered deeply and sincerely. The men of her stories are egoistic, self-centered, shallow, ignorant and narrow-minded. The humane lesson of equality, liberty and fraternity should be taught to them.

In "Bahu" marital dissonance is the pivotal focus of the writer. It exemplifies how the patriarchal oppression holds the entire freedom of women. Mrs. Srivastava and Sita ki amma in "When Anklets Tinkle" are submissive in nature. They take up the roles of mere wives and mothers. Domesticity ties their individuality to the constraints of patriarchal society. Sangeeta in "Incantations" is the victim of sexual exploitation. She remains silent till her death. She never raises her voice against her problem. The mother figures who are portrayed in "My Only Gods", "Incantations" and "Her Mother" voluntarily submit themselves to suppression and subjugation.

These female characters continue to be subservient to men. In free India, women are still bound by customs, traditions, which play an important role to keep their status low. The society has traditionally determined the role of the woman as a daughter, wife and mother, confining and constricting her to a family.

Chapter III entitled, "Silent Transformation of Women" gives a note of warning that a woman should not enter matrimony if it is at the cost of her self-respect and individuality. It should be on equal partnership. Appachana has deviated from the traditional idea of ideal women and portrayed them as realistic characters of contemporary society. They do not want to be trapped where both their identity and individuality are likely to be mercilessly crushed. They feel the need for freedom to grow and develop their personality. They show their valour and potentials by coming out of their passivity and refusing to be victims.

Bahu and Siddharth's marriage is a miserable failure. They live under the same roof with no real bond between them. Bahu tries hard to win his love and

affection but it is all in vain. The intimacy between the couple gradually widens. As a modern educated woman Bahu questions the dowry system and the traditional Indian society that restricts women to choose their own path in finding out their own individuality.

The protagonists such as Mala Mousi in “Incantations”, Namita in “When Anklets Tinkle” and the daughter figure in “Her Mother” mentally map out possible routes to escape from the oppressive confinement of the Indian society. They emphatically reject and overthrow the veil of self-effacement.

Suryanath Pandey in *Contemporary Indian Women Writers in English: A Feminist Perspective* prepares the woman and builds confidence saying, “the woman’s path to authentic personhood is full of thorns and unexpected pitfalls, and that is in her power to extricate herself and find her own happiness”(86). If women develop a sense of who they are and cultivate this conscious identity, they doubtlessly would achieve autonomy.

Understanding and equality in relationship and the fact that both the men and women have these qualities in abundance, pave way for a happy life. A world must be built on the foundation of justice, equality and humanity. V.L.V.N.Kumar in his book *New Perspectives on Indian Writing* marks “the emergence of the new type of woman who can present her own terms on which harmonious and dignified . . . life may be possible now and in future” (73).

Man-woman relationship has undergone a sea change. With the advancement of education, women started taking up jobs and thereby gaining a start to enjoy greater importance. The upshot in all these changed conditions is

that women started realising their individuality and learnt to establish their separate entities not only in society but also in domestic circles. This social and economic uplift in their status resulted in a change in their behaviour pattern.

The hidden meaning lies in the short stories such as “Bahu”, “When Anklets Tinkle” and “Her Mother” conveys that Indian women have begun to realise that marriage acts as a deterrent — it is not a loving and equal partnership. Marriage cuts a woman off the main stream of life and prevents her from achieving her goals. A successful marriage is supposed to be one where the woman restricts herself to the household affairs. Man is the boss of the house, his every whim has to be catered to.

Beyond the threshold of traditional norms, the woman finds life insecure due to her social and cultural seclusion. Whenever women have stepped out of their confines, they struggle against the fixed image of women in the minds of men and women; more over a woman struggles against prejudices and dual standards prevalent in society.

A woman strives to lead the life of a normal human being with normal desires. She does not wish to succumb to the pressures of patriarchy, marginality and helplessness. Women must break free from the bondage of conventions and subordination inbuilt in patriarchal societies. An equitable man-woman relationship can be established only when women get rid of the traditional image. Appachana has shown how modern women like Bahu, Namita, Miss Das, Mala Mousi and the daughter figure in “Her Mother” attempt to free themselves sexually and domestically from role bondage sanctioned by the past.

Appachana has focussed upon the lack of emotional fulfillment in man-woman relationship. Marriage gives sanctity to man-woman relationship. The writer reveals that this institution is collapsing. As a result both man and woman are emotionally unstable. Appachana's stories of women are heart-touching. The urge of the woman to be accepted by man on equal footing whole heartedly is evident in the stories. Man and woman should work on a collaborative basis and lead better lives. Their relationship will be profoundly altered, for the better, if their relations are based on equal footing.

Traditionally, a good woman is synonymous with a good wife. This image has been reflected by many writers. But the modern writer like Anjana Appachana has tried to transform the traditional image of woman by portraying her in a realistic manner. She has given women different roles to play. The roles are quite different from the roles played by women in traditional literature.

In our society a woman is treated more as an object than a subject and in this process, she is denied freedom and dignity. Heaping insults on a woman is the accepted past time of men in our society and they go at it hammer and tongs. The evaluation of the role of an Indian woman within the institution called marriage, considered to be the holiest of holy in our society definitely provides a novel point of view showing that women are still mere slaves to their male owners.

Amongst contemporary Indian writers, Appachana is renowned for her complex and perspicacious handling of the social concerns and also for her engagement with the palpitating pulse of female identity. This has helped in creating an impact on the Indian social scene.

Appachana has always been focussing her attention on the problems and conditions of the middle-class. She highlights the typical world of experiences of the middle-class Indian women. The stress is on the middle-class mentality and the value-system. Siddharth in “Bahu” is much more disturbingly concerned about his wife getting adjusted to the changed situation rather than anything else. Here she presents a case of domestic victimisation in and through the character Bahu. She conveys that their wedding is based on physical passion and circumstantial convenience for the male.

Appachana succeeds in depicting the status of a woman, in the present day society ruled by male chauvinists. She gains her success by portraying them differently raising the status of Indian woman from a weak person to a powerful one. Anjana unlike other women writers is not inclined to talk about feministic issues in her novel. Her interest is to project individuals' complexities in their lives and the futility of their existence perceived totally from Indian point of view.

Empowerment of any section of a society will prove to be a myth until there is a complete recognition of the inherent dignity, freedom and of equal rights to all the members of the society. Gender inequality has always been an issue of great concern for the people with a humanitarian approach. Gender based discrimination has been a deep rooted social malice in India and this ‘social malice’ has hampered women’s way towards progress not only socially but also politically, economically and legally. To cope up with the malice of gender inequality, there is a need to fight against the powerful forces of the society which oppose women empowerment. As there are always two facets of the coin, the

issues of gender and empowerment also have their positive and negative sides. Over the past few decades there have been many conspicuous changes in the status of women in India. After much deterioration of the position of women, after many ups and downs, there came a time when many reformers started raising their voices for equal rights for women and, as a result of their fruitful efforts. Women today are holding offices at topmost level. It cannot be denied that women are still underprivileged.

This concept of women political empowerment is not recent. According to the early texts, women had a chance to perform their political duties even outside their houses. There was a time when women were confined to the four walls of the house. On the religious level, women were kept in varying stages of confinement and restrictions. There used to be many cultural impediments in women's participation in high level political institutions. Patriarchy seemed to be the norm through the history. For a long time women faced problems of violence, property rights, legal status, political participation etc.

The most powerful stereotyped belief that curtails women in the Indian context is the belief that women are constitutionally weak and they need protection. The action of the individuals in a society is shaped, appraised and evaluated by the cognition of roles. The rapid urbanisation, education and job opportunities have changed the status of women in India to a certain extent. Women are vocalising their rights and their privileges.

Simone de Beauvoir expresses her disgust with humanity in *The Second Sex*:

This humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him, she is not regarded as an autonomous being...she is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject; he is the absolute-she is the Other". (86)

Appachana believes that a woman can fulfill herself wholly in the loving and harmonious relationship with a man. Her short stories are of women's attempts to establish and assert their selves. Through her short stories she not only demands demolition of the gender system, the real source of women's oppression, but also envisions a new world in which men and women are equals at every level of existence.

As a woman belonging of Indian society, she gives a note of affirmation. Women have to assert their individuality and also be path takers in the endless cycle of life. They have to see life with the possibilities of growth. Thus they discover the meaning of life in their journey to individuation. She advises women to rebel against oppression so as to find their identity.

Seema Suneel recommends Sahgal's view that "Women seek to establish a new order with changed standards where women can be their true selves, where there is no hypocrisy. . ." (11). Women must assert their individuality by challenging the taboos and destructive social norms. They transcend the limitations of their cultural set up in order to make their voices heard and also to be fit in the mainstream of the world. They deliver all their potentials, skills and knowledge to develop the family, the society and the nation.