
THE DISPLAYAL OF SUPPRESSED WORKING WOMAN ON ANURADHA SHARMA PUJARI'S NOVEL 'KANCHANA'

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ABSTRACT

'Kanchana' is a popular Assamese novel, written by Anuradha Sharma Pujari. 'Kanchana' revolves around the tragic story of a young lady who was a victim of patriarchy prevailing in the society. 'Kanchana' has not been portrayed as an ideal woman. In fact, the author has shown her as a simple woman, who was forced to let loose her body to men who are regarded as 'high class' people of the society. Her only love betrays her by leaving her with many lust hungry men. Kanchana finally becomes a mental patient with a serious psychological disorder. She forgets everything about her life, and returns to her childhood where there were no worries. It is an inspiring story of moving forward by letting go of the heavy burden of her past and live for her present and hope for a better future.

Key words: Kanchana, patriarchal, lust, psychological disorder

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1. INTRODUCTION

Anuradha Sharma Pujari is a famous Assamese novelist, short-story writer and an influential journalist. Her books are widely read all over the state, and are meant for a teenager to an old man. Her first novel 'Hriday Ek Vigyapan' published in 1998 became an instant hit among the youths of Assam. Her other novels such as, 'Ejon Ishwarar Xondhanat' (1998), 'Kanchana' (2001), 'Sahebpurar Baruxun' (2003), 'Naharar Niribili Sa' (2003) and 'Baragi Nadir Ghat' (2004) also became bestselling books with multiple editions. Her short story collections include 'Baxantar Gaan' (1999), 'Ejan Oxamajik Kabir biography' (2001), and 'Ketherinar Xoite eta nirjan duparia' (2005). Her autobiographical non-fiction include 'Kolkatar sithi' (1999), 'Diary' (2001), and 'Autograph' (2004). Her novel 'Sahebpurar Baraxun' Won the Kumar Kishor Memorial Award of the Asom Sahitya Sabha in 2003. The spectrum publication

published Dr. Abha Battacharya's 'Heart's a showbiz' which is an English adaptation of Anuradha Sharma Pujari's first novel 'Hriday Ek Vigyapan' in 2004.

Her famous novel 'Kanchana' was first published in November, 2001. She says about the novel, "*Kanchana*" is not a new novel. It was first published in the 1998 Durga puja edition of 'Natun Samay' 'Kanchana' is a real character. This novel is the autobiography of Kanchana. The story of Kanchana, the character of Kanchana, working women, they all opened the door of a mysterious world to me. I think the prevailing 'Office-culture' in Assam is what gives birth to the character Kanchana. I have met 'Kanchana', She understands the present, but has surprisingly forgotten the past."¹

This article is about the calculative analysis of the novel 'Kanchana' of Anuradha Sharma Pujari and the way it expresses the serious matter of oppression of women.

2. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Although no one speaks about it, but it is a well-known fact that many working women are harassed, either mentally or sexually, abused working women. The main character of Anuradha Sharma Pujari's novel Kanchana is also a working woman who was raped by many high posted officials. The book shows how constant sexual abuses and tragic betrayals can result in chronic psychological disorders of the victim. Sexual harassments can alter the whole personality of the victim. The victim, who requires mental support, desires the support from her family members and colleagues. But, instead of help, she gets neglect and verbal abuses on her face. On the other hand, her abusers are being given the status of 'good people' by the people of the society.

Anuradha Sharma Pujari's novel sheds light on this topic and points out the sorrows of those working women whose tears are ignored by the society. For the afore mentioned reasons, this topic can be considered important.

3. OBJECTIVES

- To learn about the issue of suppression of women as presented in the novel 'Kanchana'.
- To know how the 'office culture' is a silent killer in today's society.
- To learn about how low people can stoop to fulfill their own dirty desires.

4. DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

A descriptive method has been adopted in the analysis of the study. Representation of the subject matter has been done in the numbering method. Research has been carried through the help of library research.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The novel 'Kanchana' is about the tragic and mysterious life story of a girl named Kanchanbala Das. Kanchana is a symbol of the oppressed woman in the patriarchal society. Kanchana was born in a poor family in a village. Her father was the only earning person in the family. Her younger brother died in malaria. His death shook the entire family. As time went by, the family normalized again. Though they were poor, Kanchana's parents were completely aware of the value of education. Kanchana's youngest brother, Thaneswar, was sent to Guwahati to study in the Medical college. Her father mortgaged their piece of land in which they lived in order to send him to study in Guwahati. Thaneswar became sick for a few days. His parents, who have already lost a child, did not want to lose another one. During this critical situation, Noni Nath, a rich man of their village, offered to help them. But days did not go well for long. Kanchana's father was badly injured while cutting a tree. After a few days, he died. His last words were to his daughter Kanchana "You, are the only hope of our family"²

In such horrific times, Kanchana passed her matriculation examination with a second division. Noni gathered her a job. But in exchange of it, Noni robbed Kanchana of her virginity. He even promised to marry her. Meanwhile, Kanchana was appointed as a peon in Barsahab's office in the Dhemaaji Arunachal region. She had to sleep with Barsahab after a few days of work. She managed to get promoted by handing her body to the senior officers. All her colleagues were jealous of her promotions. They often insulted her in her back. All these incidents in Kanchana's life created a deep hatred for men in her mind. She herself said, "All the men are same, just like stray cats. They love to drink milk without feeding a cow, they love to consume fish without digging a pond.... Sometimes, I feel like if I had a husband, he would be bored of me and would desire for another"³

In her office, Kanchana was insulted and even verbally abused by being called a "Whore" by characters such as Barbabu Vishwanath.

There was only one man who Kanchana truly loved and trusted the new engineer of her office Aakashjiyoti Phukan. She was attracted to him, and openly told him her life story. He was the only man to whom Kanchana willingly gave every corner of her body. But the real tragedy came when Aakashjiyoti betrayed her by letting several high posted men to rape her, for his own selfish needs. This betrayal shook Kanchana entirely.

The author gives a tragic description of how this horrible incident changed Kanchana. She became a victim of pshycogenic amensia and panic disorder. Vishwanath Babu, her colleague who often insulted her earlier, now willingly helped Kanchana in normalizing her. Surprisingly, the whole office who insulted her stepped into help her. However, Kanchana never became the girl she was. She turned into a playful little girl who casually painted, sang and played in her office. One year later, news came that Aakashjiyoti Phukan had married one Rita Baruah of Dibrugarh. Kanchana did not show any reaction when she heard about it. Vishwanath Borah's lines towards the end perfectly describes the condition of Kanchana, "Kanchana has forgotten everything about her past. This is a blessing for her. God has given some diseases just to keep human beings alive. Kanchana would have suicide if she had not suffered from Phycogenic Amensia."⁴

The author ends the novel saying, "... with Kanchana, they travel back to the innocent world of childhood for one moment. Like Kanchana, they too want to suffer from 'Psychogenic Amensia'.⁵

6. FINDINGS

With the descriptive study of Anuradha Sharma Pujari's novel '*Kanchana*', we find the horrific way in which women are suppressed in the patriarchal society of the current world. We find that not every good behaved person should be trusted. We find how a mental disorder can sometimes become an unexpected boon for people. We also find how the "Office-culture" has contributed in suppressing the working women. The 'respected' people in the society can also be involved in heinous crimes such as rape. Most importantly, we find that women are still not safe in today's world.

7. CONCLUSION

Anuradha Sharma Pujari's novel '*Kanchana*' shows how the patriarchal society destroys working women's lives. The author shows how a dangerous mental disorder can be a blessing. In the novel, she not only shows the negative side of men. With characters such as Badar peon and Vishwanath Borah, she shows that not every man is a rapist. There are men who want to help women in attaining a safe place for herself. Thus '*Kanchana*' is one of the greatest novel of Anuradha Sharma Pujari.

FOOT NOTE

1. Pujari, Anuradha Sharma: Kanchana, twentieth edition, May 2017.
2. Pujari, Anuradha Sharma: Kanchana, page – 50
3. Pujari, Anuradha Sharma: Kanchana, page - 52
4. Pujari, Anuradha Sharma: Kanchana, page - 118
5. Pujari, Anuradha Sharma: Kanchana, page - 119

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- [2] Pujari, Anuradha Sharma, Kanchana, twentieth edition, May 2017.
- [3] Thakur, Nagan, Esha Basarar Asomiya Upanyas, second edition, july 2012.