



SUFFERING OF WOMEN IN THE PLAY OF MAHESH DATTANI: BRAVELY FOUGHT THE QUEEN

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Abstract: *Bravely fought the Queen* presents a clear picture of women suffering in the role of wife, daughter-in-law and a daughter. The play emphasises how the lack of love affects the husband-wife relationship inside the family. The author presents a more horrifying image of women who are stuck in unhappy marriages with insensitive partners who are unwilling to make positive changes. The drama places a lot of attention on domestic violence and marital incompatibility due to which women are the sufferers as in the character of wife. Also, Mother-in-law harassed her daughters-in-law as she wishes the same suffering to be experienced by her daughters-in-law as she did in the past. Women's dependency and safety is also explored through the play '*Bravely fought the Queen*.'

Keywords: suffering, wife, daughter-in-law, violence, patriarchy.

I. Introduction: *Bravely fought the Queen* is a three-act play written by Mahesh Dattani. Literature field is blessed to have authors like Dattani, who was born on 7th August, 1958 in Bangalore and he presents the issues related with society of contemporary time-period. Sahitya Akademi awarded him honour for his books like *Final Solutions* and many others. In the play '*Bravely fought the Queen*', male domination, female suffering in the role of a wife, violence and financial issues are the issues of exploration related to the society. This study explores the female suffering in the role of wife from the play '*Bravely fought the Queen*.' The drama was first performed in 1991 in Mumbai. An empirical drama takes centre stage in *Bravely Fought the Queen*, revealing the superficiality of what appears to be a "regular" urban family. Jiten and Nitin, two brothers who own an advertising firm and are married to sisters Dolly and Alka, make up the family in the spotlight. Moving back and forth between the two homes is their mother Baa, who is more rooted in her recollections of the past than in any current reality.

II. Baa's suffering as a wife: Baa recalls her husband's mistreatment of her and how it affected her. She advised her husband to severely hit her so that her kids may witness how their father treated their mother. She recalled her husband hitting her.

"You hit me? I'm just telling the truth, and you hit me? Go on. Hit me again. Children should see what a demon you are. Aah! Jitu! Nitin! Are you watching?"

(Dattani Bravely fought the Queen 57)

Due to her suffering in the past and her previous wounds and scars which are deeply imbedded in her heart, is still making her shiver in pain till today. Violent attack by her husband on her makes her feel fearful and she sees a shadow of her husband in her elder son, Jiten and her younger child, Nitin seems to be a bit like her. That's how, Baa is more comfortable with Nitin and asks him the question related to his father in the following lines:

Baa. Do you like your father?

Nitin. He is dead. Baa.

Baa. How can you say such things? Nitin? Do you like your father?

(Dattani Bravely fought the Queen 85)

Due to the past violence, which is on Baa's mind, she wants her younger son to be sympathetic towards her and wants to listen that Nitin hates his father.

III. Dolly's pain as a wife: Jiten is impulsive and aggressive, much like his dad. Because his father treated his wife, Baa very harshly, similarly, Jiten was fairly harsh with his partner, Dolly. Baa herself was a sufferer of violent attacks by her husband, so she wishes her sons to treat their spouses in a similar manner. Baa told Jiten that the baby, which is in the womb of Dolly does not belong to Jiten. On the basis of this point said by Baa, Jiten believed her. He thought that Dolly has a kid belonging to someone

else's in her womb. So, He beat Dolly hard when she was already expecting their kid, and as a consequence, Daksha (Jiten's own daughter) was born with abnormalities. Jiten later on accepted that he was provoked by Baa in the following conversation:

*Jiten. Baa provoked me. It was her fault!
Dolly. You didn't have to listen to her!
She called me a whore and you believed her?
(Dattani Bravely fought the Queen 95)*

Jiten is a heartless womaniser who is harsh. He asked his employee, Sridhar to bring a whore for his pleasure. Sridhar forcefully had to bring a woman to satisfy Jiten. Male domination, oppression, and abuse by a man like Jiten cause serious harm to women's lives. He treated women as commodities.

IV. Alka's pain as a wife: Alka is Dolly's younger sister, who is married to Jiten's real brother, Nitin. Alka's married life is dull and inactive due to her uninterested husband. Alka does not attain attention by her spouse, as it is required by any of the women in her married life. She was also mistreated by her husband Nitin, who once forced her to leave the house. Alka's brother, Praful share a gay relationship with Alka's husband Nitin (Vasavada 18-24). This is the central reason that Alka is a sufferer in her married life and she is childless. Alka's brother, Praful intentionally made Alka marry with Nitin to keep his selfish interest to be served easily at any point of time. Due to all the hidden realities from the world, Alka is a sufferer in the role of wife due to the gay relation between her husband and brother.

V. Abused by brother: Praful, Alka's brother, mistreats her. Praful once dragged her into the kitchen and put her face close to a burner that was blazing, burning her hair. He violently attacked Alka, because he saw her sitting on the back seat of scooter of one of the neighbouring boy. Alka and Praful's marriage is a great failure as a result of her brother, Praful. Alka agreed when Praful suggested that she wed Nitin. She was unaware that Praful was cheating on her with Nitin, her husband. Her brother is tricking her as well. These siblings do not get along well with one another as a direct consequence.

VI. Baa abused both Daughters-in-law: With her anger and rage, Baa unjustly attacks her daughters-in-law. Baa may fit the caricature of a radical feminist who is trying to harm her own gender and who promotes a patriarchal attitude that opposes gender equality. Baa can still clearly remember the mistreatment she endured at the hands of her husband. In the same cruel manner that her husband had treated her, she is now treating her daughters-in-law. Dolly does not keep Jiten's child in the womb, Baa informed her older son. Jiten's mother planted this mistrust in her son's mind regarding Dolly due to which Jiten harshly il-treated his wife. Alka, her younger daughter-in-law, receives mocking from Baa for being unable to have a child. While acknowledging her own blessing of two sons, Baa informs Alka that her childlessness is the result of personal curses. Alka exhaustedly reacted to Baa as follows:

*Alka. He needs your permission
to have children and by God,
you won't give it to him!
(Dattani CP 284)*

Baa attacks on Alka's weakness again and again. Alka suffers greatly throughout the play as a result of her childlessness, which led to her alcoholism.

VII. Women's safety is questioned: When Lalitha was at Alka's place, women's safety has been discussed through their conversation as:

*Lalitha. But we live in RT nagar.
The other end of the world.
Sridhar thinks it is unsafe for women
to be move about alone at night.
I hate to admit it, but he's right. They should have
women auto drivers. You might still lose
jewellery, but at least you won't get raped.
(Dattani Bravely fought the Queen 7)*

Even Lalitha's dependency on her husband can be noticed, when Dolly asked her to leave as she was getting ready to go out with her husband, sister and brother-in-law. Lalitha told that she cannot go herself, because her living place is far way from theirs and her husband, Sridhar dropped her before going to office.

VIII. Conclusion: Women like Dolly, Lalitha in the play seemed to be dependent on their husbands. Even, Dolly never thinks of going out herself without her husband. Baa, Dolly and Alka were brutally mistreated by their husbands in the play. So, these female characters have presented the suffering of women of middle class residing in the urban environment. Every woman in the play as a wife has scar deep inside the heart due to unhappy married life. Jiten, Niting and Baa's husband are the male characters, who have presented patriarchy in the play. As a result of which, Baa is unable to forget the past sufferings till the present. Dolly seemed to be attracted towards her own servant, Kanhaiya. Dolly is indulged in intoxication of alcohol due to the negligence by her husband. Dolly's daughter suffers from abnormalities due to the violent attack by Jiten on Dolly. These sufferings abruptly disturbed the women characters psychologically as well as physically. But the male characters have no regrets for their deeds towards their own wives. And, they are playing their normal roles in their routine lives, even after being harsh with their own partners. All the women do suffer in one or another way in the play, 'Bravely fought the queen.'

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