

Paternal Impact As Revealed In Vijay Tendulkar's *Kanyadaan*

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Abstract: Parents play a vital role in bringing up the children. Parents are somehow at the core of one's life. The contemporary parents and their characteristics entirely differ from that of the ancient ones. In Vijay Tendulkar's *Kanyadaan*, Nath, an MLA of Indian constitution has brought up his two children with individuality. An idealist immersed in his own idealism, feels elated when his daughter announces her choice of marrying a dalit. This paper aims to highlight the impact of paternal influence on Jyoti, the protagonist of the play.

Keywords: *paternal impact, idealism, self-realization, identity.*

Parents are the first socializing agents to whom children are exposed. The child's social needs are provided directly by sheltering and guiding them about the values of society, culture and family. Rearing children, an effective care taking role is performed by the mother. She plays the initial role in the home and the father has a unique and essential role to play in the child's development. Mother embraces psychologically whereas the father becomes the chief breadwinner and assumes a responsible place in his children's evolution in the society. Father's presence provides physical, fiscal as well as emotional support for the children in developing their selves. Particularly a daughter has a special attachment with her father and takes him as her role model.

In India, a father's role is considered crucial as he is the head of the family and the main earning source as well. Indian literature perhaps depicts the father characters as the dominant one. Not only men, even the women writers project the father characters as the main factor for growing up of women protagonists to become perfect individuals. Vijay Tendulkar, winner of Sahitya Academy Award is one of the major play writers of India. He has portrayed the impact of a father on his daughter in *Kanyadaan*. Originally written in Marathi, it was received many criticisms initially but later received Saraswati Samman Award. Tendulkar portrays the importance of a father's role through Nath Devalalikar who has created both virtuous and depraved impressions in his daughter's miserable life.

Nath Devalalikar, a higher class Indian Brahmin is an MLA in the Indian Constitution who gives much importance to the nation than his family. Being an energetic social activist, he wants to build a good nation as per Gandhian principles and to make his idealistic views come true. Believing in socialism, he tries to implement it in his family too. Seva, Nath's wife is also a socialist and like her husband she too prefers to work for the welfare of the nation. Jyoti and Jayaprakash, their children are also brought up in such a way to lead an independent life. Though it is rare for the whole family to sit together, they respect each other's outlooks when they have important discussions. Everyone in the family can voice out their opinion regarding any issues but the final decision will be taken only by the concerned person.

The democracy in the house leads Jyoti to decide her choice of marriage with a dalit named Arun Athavale, whom she has known for two months through the study group in Library. When the proclamation is given by Jyoti, Seva gets astonished of her decision of marrying a dalit. But Nath feels elated for he feels Jyoti has brought the inter-caste marriage in his home, a reality. The long desire of Nath of abolishing caste system will become true if this marriage becomes a success. He considers that his socialistic ideas have a strong impact on his family and her daughter's marriage would foreshadow casteless India. Nath exclaims about Jyoti's thoughts: "Seva, until today, break the caste system was a mere slogan for us. I've attended many inter caste marriage and made speeches. But today I have broken the caste barrier in the real sense" (I.ii.23).

Seva is totally disappointed on Arun's behaviour and his coarse language. Nath consoles his wife by saying, "He has been brought up in the midst of poverty and hatred. These people's psychological make-up is altogether different. We must try to understand him" (I.ii.27). As she is not consoled, Seva cautions her daughter that, "... don't let a wrong move spoil your life" (I.ii.29). In spite of her warnings on Jyoti's choice, Jyoti stands determined in her words. Her affinity towards Arun and her freedom for expression leads her to marry him.

The primary duty of a father is to create a distinct identity through knowledge and education and it has to make the individual realize the socio-cultural issues of the society. Nath, who desires to alter the caste system in India fails to realize his daughter has chosen a miserable life. He takes her marriage as an experiment that has started from his home itself. His attitude makes the readers to understand his selfish nature and foresee his failure as a lovable father. Yet, these idealistic views of Nath makes him to extend freedom to his daughter. On one hand, Nath can be viewed as a father who assimilates his daughter's individuality; on other hand he fails to teach life, rather he imparts a blind faith on her self-confidence. Vann Woodward observes, "the belief that human nature is mysterious and relatively intractable and that it is not a kind of social putty which can be shaped as the political or the social scientist may be tempted to shape it" (238). Jyoti realizes the fact that his father's socialistic views are failed many a time like that of her marriage.

As a result, her wedding emerges not as colourful as she has expected. The beastly face of Arun is unveiled through his brutal activities. Jyoti becomes a helpless victim in the hands of Arun. She is sent to work and becomes leaner and thin. This

makes her understand that her choice of marriage is wrong. Her heart bleeds but no words of self-reproach uttered by her. Rather she finds herself responsible for her destiny.

The silent torments of Jyoti both physically and psychologically clearly reveals her trauma of having married into a class of society much lower than her Brahmin community. She realizes the truth of her mother's words, "Jyoti can never be happy with that man" (I.ii.28). The significance of Jyoti's silence is emphasized in Act II when she goes inside without uttering any word to Seva. Now she could understand the nuances of life which has both head and tail. She who has led an idealistic life now able to see the darker side which is full of pains. The sense of guilt and her unbearable pain she has been undergoing keeps her isolated. Though she finds herself responsible for her sufferings, it is Nath who has acknowledged her marriage proposal. The principles of Nath has finally trapped her path from where she could never return.

Nath is portrayed as a fervent idealistic person through various situations. Nath is outspoken in his practical thoughts. He feels proud regarding this challenging experiment of erasing casteism from his nation. When Nath and other family members are informed by Arun about his brutal physical tortures towards Jyoti, Seva and Jay gets shattered. Even though Jyoti's love for Arun is vividly depicted, the reader can view the attitude of Nath as intolerable. Once Arun apologizes Jyoti for his ill treatments by saying, "I will see Jyoti and fall at her feet. I will beg her pardon. Don't want anything else" (II.i.42), Nath has not uttered any word and accept Jyoti's departure with him. He even feels proud of his daughter's decision and says, "I feel so proud of you. The training I gave you has not been in vain" (II.i.45). At the time of Seva's interruption, Nath clearly states that this marriage is an experiment. Besides being a lovable father who ceases her darling daughter, he acts as a fellow who is keen in doing his experiment to uproot the casteism from his nation.

The conflict between idealism and realism confuses Jyoti in this stage because her concept of marriage is now exhausted. In reality, she understands a poor man who has been living in a small hut, "[without] clothes on our back, [without] food in our stomach . . ." cannot lead a happy life with her, a girl of higher class (I.i.16). The tortures she undergoes have proved her that Arun being a victim of the dominated society has become the victimizer of the same. The late recognition of the fact of life poses many questions in Jyoti's mind. Though she could not find answers for them, she has decided that it is her life and she has to lead it. This evaluation gives her a clear idea about her father and his false ideals. It makes her to ask Nath who has given a hypocrite speech on Arun's Autobiography at the discussion session that why he has taught her all the honest way of life. She frankly claims that it is he who misguided her and only his impact has made her suffer.

Late realization of the self is agonizing. Nath becomes conscious of his error of allowing his daughter to marry a low person, not in the means of money but as a character who even beats his pregnant wife. As he knows no one can change the past, he tries to bring Arun in comfort zone for the sake of his daughter. He realizes that Arun may torment Jyoti, his daughter, if he does not go to the discussion session. So, he goes and delivers an appreciating speech on his autobiography. But the daughter is able to see through the false deceitful speech, "I heard what you were unable to say. Whenever your eyes fell on him they tripped poison... in your heart there is just hatred for Arun and nothing else" (II.iii.67). With the realization, she decides to return as Arun Athavale's wife.

A healthy father daughter relationship can be developed from open and honest communication, through exchange of ideas and sharing experiences. The progression of father and daughter relationships is crucial to successful socialization of the daughters. Vijay Tendulkar has projected the father daughter relationship in his *Kanyadaan* in an effective way where the paternal impact on Jyoti lasts till her end. Her life exemplifies the fact that the "sins of the father are visited on the children" (Lawrence, 129). The sin of her father being an idealist, costs her life. As a true Indian girl, who has been moulded and shaped by Indian culture and tradition, she decides to continue her life with Arun. She embraces suffering with the confidence that has been fed by his father since her childhood. The concluding lines of Tendulkar clearly expresses the young woman's determination on life. Jyoti who never wants to be sympathized says to her father,

I have my husband. I am not a widow. Even if I become one I won't knock at your door. I am not Jyoti Yadunath Devlalikar now, I am Jyoti Arun Athavale, a scavenger. I don't say harijan. I despise the term. I am an untouchable, a scavenger. I one of them. Don't touch me. Fly from my shadows, otherwise my fire scorch your comfortable values. (II.iii.70)

According to Hinduism, the word "Kanyadhan" means donating a daughter in her marriage for the bridegroom's family and it is considered to be best donation in the world. Therefore, the Title *Kanyadaan*, can be justified by the act of Nath by donating his higher class brahmin daughter Jyoti to a lower class dalit Arun to eradicate the caste system.

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