

Violence Against Women: A study of Monica Ali's Brick Lane

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Abstract

Women are the inseparable part of human society, and more important compared to men as they are the procreator of life. The women, being the life giver are not treated as equal, even they are regularly subject to violence by the men. The violence over them have many forms and are manifold. The most common are domestic violence, sexual violence, Violence through traditions and customs et cetera. The women suffers from minor injuries to death and harassment to psychological disorder for the pleasures and anxieties of the men. Violence over women is prevalent all over the world since beginning of the human civilization till present day. The South-Asian nations are observed to be more prone to violence over women compared to other parts of the world. The tradition comes out as the most hostile form of violence in South-Asian nations. The tradition leads to physical and sexual violence in the South-Asian nations. The 'Son-preference', dowry, arranged marriage tradition are the giant cause for violence against women. The tradition of taking women as object and material needs to be stopped immediately through proper education, policies and rules. The society needs to stop biasness between men and women, and provide both with quality education, facilities and surroundings. The society needs to accept the conditions like love-marriages, lesbians, widows, divorcees', live-in-relation, et cetera for women empowerment and not taking these conditions as taboo. This steps can only stop violence against women in our societies and a better future for them can be achieved.

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Introduction

The birth of human beings on this planet is very much unknown to the humans. There are great differences about human birth in religious ideologies and scientific aura. These two notions claims two very dissimilar faces about the human birth. Religion says humans' are creation of God and science is of opinion that humans' have evolved from monkey, if Charles Darwin's concept of evolution is taken in cognizance. These faces grows into multiple faces with the religion bifurcation, as there is different set of story about human birth in different religion.

We humans are divided into two different sets consisting of minor changes in our body. We are here male and female in gender, men and women in the society, him and her in language et cetera. These differences are formed with our birth in this world. In our society men and women are born with same process and equivalent structure, but the society writes its differences according to the biological criteria of human body. The differences are so harsh that men and

women have been made as master-subject duo. The women are considered the weaker part (sex/gender) in our societies. They are told to follow the paths of men and habitat according to their will. During this habitat timeframe, the men takes the women as some material or object and subjects them to dire violence. Today the condition is so harsh that a large portion of women (girls) are victim of violence for some crime they didn't commit.

"Violence against women and girls is a problem of pandemic proportions. At least one out of every three women around the world has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime with the abuser usually someone known to her" (Moradian M.A. 2013) [5].

There are many types of violence inflicted on women for being a women. Physical violence, is the most common and have live appearance in the society. Sexual violence is common but is generally not live in the society, though it comes to light with passage of time. There is also violence through traditions and customs, it is an abstract kind of

violence without appearance. This type affects the life and thinking of a woman. We also observe tradition and customs to be chaining the lives of women. This becomes a stagnant form of violence for women, as it limits their independent lives and lifestyles, in almost every society of world.

Physical Violence

The world at present time is modern in characteristics, people are using smartphones, hi-tec telecommunications, artificial intelligence et cetera. The society is rapidly going towards an open culture. In the mean time resident of this world, mainly from Africa and South-Asia shows very conservative orthodoxical thinking concerning women. The people have become open in limited terms, if women and her rights is at centre the openness comes under threat. In this 21st century, till present ticking of time the women in many societies are treated as slave. We in our societies expect the women to just obey without a thought. The problems of the east world is so fixed that, migration to west world nation also is not able to change the conditions of women. The people of South-Asia migrates to great open cultural lands but the condition of women don't change much. Ali (2007)^[1] writes about these south-Asian immigrants in the U.K. Ali (2007)^[1] focuses on the physical violence over South-Asian Women and South-Asian Women immigrants at the same time. We witness certain cases of violence against women in her novel. The female character Aleya's husband beats her twice a day because she was gifted a saree at her workplace for good performance. Her husband wanted to know the name of the man who gifted her the saree, as he is of opinion that she is having extra-marital affair and the lover of her have gifted her the saree.

"Aleyas husband give beating. Last month gone she best worker in factory and get bonus. They give a sari and for this sari she take beating. Foot come all big like marrow and little finger broken. Bending over her stomach give trouble. Renu say at least you have a husband to give good beating at least you not alone. The husband say he will beat twice each day until she tell name of the man" (Ali, 2007^[1], pp 156-157). It is very common that women are prone to violence just over some suspicion. It comes out that a friendship between men and women is not accepted by these South-Asian immigrants/people.

We witness murder for dowry or bigamy in South-Asian nations. The people from here are ready to murder the woman if needed, as the woman don't keep much value, as it is obvious that they will get a new one. Ali (2007)^[1] writes about the issue, 'Monju' is attacked by her husband with the help of his sister and brother by pouring acid over her body with a will to murder her.

"I see is Monju. I know by right eye alone. Left eye is narrow and stuff come out. Cheek and mouth is melt and ear have gone like dog chew off. I whisper to her but nurse pass by and tell to shout. Hearing is very small now. 'Monju' I shout. 'Monju'. Is all I can think to say. She say God give them the pain I Suffering now. Mouth cavity shrinking from which she cannot shout cry or talk loud...It is her husband who have done this with his brother and sister. Brother and sister hold tight and husband pour acid overhead face and body. All over is infection on body and smell make it difficult for people to go near" (Ali, 2007^[1], pp 269-270).

There is inference that acid-attack is common in youngsters but the married are also seen prone to it. In the South-Asian nation acid-attack are very common incident to hear about. The men uses it take revenge or punish for a mistake the

women didn't commit. The acid-attack are generally result of unsuccessful relationship, unreciprocated love affairs, enmity, jealousy, one sided infatuation et cetera.

Sexual Violence

Violence has many faces and for women it is manifold with many faces. They are subject to violence not only through physical harm, but are harmed sexually also. The sexual violence occurs through harassment, assault, rape et cetera. The women are very easy victim of teasing or harassment and now-a-days in the society 'Rape' is becoming very common. Ali (2007)^[1] deals with certain issues in her novel, Hasina is not allowed to work at the factory and is kicked out by the manager for only walking with a man 'to and fro' her residence. The society seems to be limited with eyesight, as it is not able to accept men-women walking together without marriage.

This didn't stop here and the character Hasina is raped by her father like figure, her landlord Mr. Chowdhury. It is the evidence that maximum number of rape are done by known person, as M.A. Moradian proclaims. It is the beginning of her fall and and she becomes a fallen or low women, a prostitute, because the society don't accept the raped and the rapist survives with pride. It is the evil face of the society that women are finally on the verge to sell her body for livelihood. It comes out that being women is the giant mistake they commit.

Violence through Tradition

We only know violence through physical or psychological harm, as sexual violence is both a physical and psychological violence, but the violence also has an abstract face and that is violence through tradition and social customs. The traditions and customs in certain societies are very scary in nature for the women like genital mutilation, breast ironing, corrective rapes, forced marriages, menstruation outcasting, forced lifestyles, foot-binding, force-feeding, forced pregnancy, forced abortion et cetera. In the novel of Monica Ali (2007)^[1] the tradition of forced lifestyles and forced marriage is at centre point. We witness that the female are not allowed to wear what they want and are forced to wear according to men. In certain religion there is concept of covering the whole body. Muslim women are still forced to wear hijab and burqa indoor and outdoor. The Hindu women are also expected to wear saree and salwars. The women are forced to leave out dresses as jeans and tops by the men, and this is a type of violence over their psyche, taking place due to tradition which says the women to be covered in whole. The traditional barriers are mainly common in the eastern world nations like Bangladesh, Pakistan, India et cetera. These women, sometime goes to western land as immigrant or as settlers but they are told to follow the tradition in the foreign lands too. Their life are under the clutches of tradition and customs. In the novel Ali (2007)^[1] points out this issue through the character Sahana, a second generation immigrant, who is forced by her father to dress in Bangladeshi ways forcefully. The force is so tormenting that at last the women has to revert, "in the novel Ali (2007)^[1] writes concerning Sahana "She wanted to wear jeans. She hated her kameez and spoiled her entire wardrobe by pouring paint on them" (Ali, 2007^[1], p 180). Sahana is seen reverting this decree of her father in the novel, as she preferred jeans to salwar-kameez, Tongur (2013) puts it "Sahana refuses to wear traditional Bangladeshi clothes and insists on wearing jeans and skirts like her British friends" (Tongur, 2013, p 563).

In the eastern society mostly the tradition of bloodline and heir is very prevalent. This has made 'Son Preference' a tradition. The wives are told to give birth to only male child and if they are unable to do so, they are subjected to verbal abuse and physical violence by the husband and in-laws. There are extreme cases where the husband takes in another wife in want of a male heir or the women are divorced. It is very uncertain for a women to give birth to male child as gender depends on the male chromosome pairs, but the female are only left to blame on. There are sex-selective abortion very common, in this process the female womb is checked by medical equipment for the gender of unborn babies and if it is found to be a female embryo, women are forced to abort. This is a type of physical violence over the women body and emotional violence on their psyche by murdering their unborn child. The cases are very frequent as the birth of male child is taken as the proof of strong seed whereas the females birth as weaker. Here the tradition of male heir makes the women victim of various violences collectively. We get inference of it in the novel of Hanif Kureishi's (1990) [6] *Buddha of Suburbia*, where Karim speaks about his father, Haroon "Dad was very proud that he had two sons. He was convinced it meant he had 'good seed'. As Anwar had only produced one daughter it meant that he had 'weak seed'" (Kureishi, 1990 [6], p 57).

We also witness forced marriage to be taking place in South-Asia nations and among South-Asian immigrants in the U.K. The parents don't allow their child to marry according to their will or outside their religion, caste, clan et cetera. If someone does so honor killing is the result. It is portrayed by Ali (2007) [1] as Hasina elopes with a boy and her father was very eager in anger to separate her head from body. "Hamid ground his teeth and axe besides...and cursing whore-pig daughter whose head would be severed the moment she came crawling back" (Ali, 2007 [1], p 16).

The immigrants are seen to be not getting much affected by the open culture of the U.K. and forces their ward for arranged marriage in same religion, caste, clan et cetera. Ali (2007) [1] put it in the novel through her character Razia, who don't want her daughter to have love marriage, "but Shefali will make a love marriage over my dead body" (Ali, 2007, p 51). It is evident that South-Asian immigrants takes their ward forcefully to their homelands for marriages.

"A key issue is forced marriage. Despite being outlawed in 2014, there have been very few prosecutions. Two of the first successful cases were concluded in May 2018. A mother was found guilty of duping her 17-year daughter to travel to Pakistan to marry an older man; and a couple were found guilty of using violence and threats to take their 18-year old daughter to Bangladesh to marry a cousin". (Minority Rights) This forced marriage comes out as one of the most frequent violence over a woman in our eastern societies and around 9 out of 10 woman suffers the fate of forced marriage and if not the fate of death in the name of honor.

Conclusion

We rise daily with a new sunshine and new hopes for a better day. This hope of better day is more inherent in women, as they always fear uncertainties in life. The morning of women starts with household chores and ends with the same in maximum cases. Their hope for a respectful day, as they fear violence in household, harassment in offices and assault in public places or outdoors. The new sunshine is good for men but women seems to be liking the sunset more comparatively, as they are happy that they passed a day without in any

repercussions. It has come as war for women to survive the whole day. The women live with men, in a 'men dominated society' and they fear these men the most. The world has become modern and almost everything have changed or upgraded but the condition of women is more or less the same. The changes for women seems to be coming crawling and will take a long time to reach the point where the world will become equal for men and women. Till the present day, the women are taught by society to tolerate and compromise the violence over them. This is the reason for regular reports of marital rape, rape, bride murder, dowry killing, acid attacks, domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, divorce et cetera. It is very questionable, that when will the sun rise, whose rays will give hope to women that it will be a better day for them without any turmoils.

The society too needs to change its course and start teaching the men to treat the women as equal and not as an object. The women must also be taught to revert any violence over them. The government needs to ensure proper policies regarding the safety of women. It is very obvious that the present policies are not enough, as regular reports of violence over women are common and observable in the society.

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