



The Study of Socio-Cultural Ethos and Values of Rupa Bajwa's The Sari Shop

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Abstract:

The present research work investigates the role of women in Indian society before and after independence, as well as how feminism has resulted in the development of a concept of a 'new woman'. This new woman is an amalgam of Western influences and her native ethos. Rupa Bajwa's The Sari Shop depicts the challenges faced by people in modern India. It demonstrates class stratification and subjection. In India, the top class enjoys luxurious lifestyles, while the lower class faces misery and poverty. According to conflict theory, societal stratification favors the rich and strong while allowing them to exploit the poor. As a result, it generates a system of winners and losers, which is maintained by those at the top. People who are losers do not have a fair shot to compete and hence end up at the bottom, as seen in the novel through the eyes of the protagonist, Ramchand. The novel depicts class stratification and its repercussions. The purpose of this paper is to determine what causes lower-class people to be stuck in one status, the causes of women's enslavement, and the benefits and drawbacks of various classes in society.

Key Words: new woman, stratification, repercussions, lower class, enslavement

Introduction:

Rupa Bajwa's "The Sari Shop" explores how urbanization shapes identity in contemporary India. It follows the protagonist's attempt to reconcile traditional values with modern influences in the busy city of Amritsar. The abstract examines the protagonist, Ramchand, 's problems in forming his identity in the face of societal changes, focusing on the author's narrative strategies in depicting these complexities. The story effectively depicts the battle for personal identity in an ever-changing urban landscape. Rupa Bajwa's 'The Sari Shop' follows Ramchand, a young man navigating suburbanization and societal changes in Amritsar, India. The story explores the challenges of maintaining traditional values while incorporating modern influences in a changing urban landscape. The current research work highlights the status of women in Indian society and examines how the feminist movement spread throughout Indian writing in English, giving rise to the idea of the "new woman." Indian women's status has been very dissimilar from that of Western women. Indian women have been oppressed for centuries. She was subject to human authority. It has been attempted to apply Charlotte Perkins Gilman's theory of women and economics to "The Sari Shop" by Rupa Bajwa. The researcher has examined the various methods and situations by which the female protagonists were forced to abandon profitable careers in favor of reproductive work, as well as the advantages these positions offered. She has also examined the fallout and how capitalism and patriarchy interact to maintain the subjugation of these women, as well as the outcomes of the protagonists' rebellion, which varied depending on their social status, familial status, and educational background. The research work analyses the conditions of oppression, challenges, and acts of rebellion that everyday women face. These women include the middle-class educated woman and the lower-class subaltern who are the main characters in Rupa Bajwa's The Sari Shop. Understanding the circumstances that the protagonists encounter as barriers and how they respond to them is the primary goal of the study. Individuals resist in their private and public lives as their self-awareness and self-respect improve. The purpose of the study is to follow the effects of this rebellion on each of the individual protagonists, who vary in terms of their upbringing, family stability, educational background, access to privileges, and emotional states being taken seriously.

Objectives: To analyze the empty and monotonous existence of lower-middle-class people and their unfulfilled desires.

Methodology: Gilman contended that male aggression and parental duties for women were artificial and no longer required for survival in post-prehistoric periods. She wrote, "There is no female mind." The sexual brain. We might as well talk about a female liver."

The field explores perception, cognition, emotion, motivation, brain function, and behavior. Ramchand is shown in the text as a person who endures hardships. The average man's desire remains unsatisfied. He is exploited by both the upper class and his community. He used to only exist in the society of fantasy. However, the reality of life surpasses his imagination. Literary works, whether fiction or non-fiction, revolve around the characters who symbolize real-life situations. The issue addresses corrupting influences, wanting fulfillment, and the struggle for life. The emotions of ordinary people and their helplessness. The topic focuses on the challenges faced by everyday people. The protagonist's tone attempts to convey the empty, boring existence of a lower-middle-class person. A common guy is used not just by the higher class, but also by his classmates. The law exists for the wealthy, while the impoverished endure injustice.

The novel's male protagonist, Ramchand, is 27 years old and works as an attendant in a sari shop. He lives a dreary life, in stark contrast to the vibrant, colorful saris in the shop. He began working at the age of 15 and is now in his twenties; all his years have been spent behind the shop's walls, with no exposure to the outside world. He has a Sunday off. Ramchand is inspired by the intelligent customers in his shop and aspires to be as worthy and knowledgeable as them. Ramchand's father wanted him to attend an English-medium school, work hard, and become an educated individual.

If Ramchand's gender were changed, she would face unique challenges. Kamala is the subaltern woman whose plot is used by the book to not only highlight her predicament, but also to demonstrate the unusual situation in which sensitive people are left in a patriarchal setting where they can not only not help, but must continue to act normally as if nothing has changed. Sari Shop is the best example of a novel that combines journalistic fiction with a sensitive depiction of common social reality.

Kamala was the best example of a woman who had to abandon the producing environment to pursue reproductive labor after marriage. Socialist feminists argue that women's exclusion from the public realm and economic dependence on men stem from the gendered division of labor that arises organically from their maternal roles.

Tripartite Exploitation:

Kamala was shown maximizing her meagre finances even prior her marriage. There was no one to help Kamala deal with her sadness when she was a little child and had been frozen to watch her mother die horribly in front of her. It was demonstrated that the youngster, whose eyes, and heart hurt constantly, had to start helping her aunt all day long by chopping vegetables and folding clothing.

Not only had Kamala experienced the unprocessed trauma of witnessing her mother die in front of her as a young child, but she had also experienced extreme fatigue and exhaustion from the miscarriage. Despite all of this, Kamala handled her situation as best she could, going to the hospital while heavily bleeding. She had returned home in a stupor, with no one with whom to share her sorrow, and had fallen asleep from weariness and hopelessness. However, Chander chastised and branded her for addressing her grief in the only way she knew how. As Kamala attempted to share her miscarriage story with an inebriated Chander, he interrupted her with his own tale of job loss and impending homelessness. "You have been very unlucky for me, Kamala," he said in closing. I have been plagued by bad luck ever since I got married.

Kamala demonstrated agency and independence during her miscarriage, indicating that she was a strong individual who would not readily give in to victimization. However, the subsequent stigmatization and discrediting of her efforts, coupled with the absence of any supportive environment, including from her family, the ingrained belief that men would always hit their wives, and her unresolved past traumas, led her to become despondent, act compassionately rebelliously, and yearn to put an end to her suffering. The same Kamala who, prior to marriage, made the most of her limited resources and was observed coping with trauma by engrossing herself in her own world, was now seen completely disintegrating as all of her hopes were dashed by the miscarriage, since pregnancy and childrearing were the only goals of her reproductive labor. From this point on, Kamala began drinking to help her withstand Chander's beatings.

Conclusion:

We discover that no one is willing to accept accountability for Chander's negligent and malignant treatment of Kamala. It was mentioned that Kamala's father had already passed away and that Chander's parents were not well. By himself, Chander was an exploitative institution. Poverty was causing trauma as well, but we had already seen that Kamala was handling it well and was making the most of her circumstances. Although

crimson beads were much harder to find, Kamala believed that marriages were happening virtually every day. Because society had conditioned Kamala to believe that Chander's mistreatment of her was a normal aspect of married life, she had come to accept it. Kamala was therefore a victim of both the patriarchy and the capitalist system.

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